

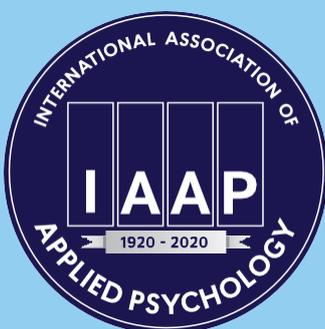


# APPLIED PSYCHOLOGY AROUND THE WORLD

Gender Equality and Applied Psychology

*June 2019*

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Pr. Dr. Christine Roland-Lévy, IAAP President (2018-2022)

## Editorial

This issue of *Applied Psychology Around the World* focuses on *Gender Equality and Applied Psychology* (APAW, Vol.1 Issue 2). Our goal is to draw the attention of the International Association of Applied Psychology's (IAAP) members to this topic, which covers one of the 17 United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals, known as SDGs. It is related to the fifth SDG entitled: *Gender Equality*, knowing that the topic of Gender Equality is also involved in most of the other goals.

For reference, all SDGs are presented on the following illustration – please zoom in on your PDF reader to view:



In fact, one of the IAAP's six key projects is on *Gender Equality*; this **Special Working Project** is chaired by Dr. Kristina Potocnik and she is introducing this issue. We want to share important news and reports highlighting gender equality globally and to show how applied psychology can contribute to better reaching gender equity, based on the work of the Special Working Project on that theme, in relation to various research projects carried out by members of IAAP within and outside that Special Project.

Dr. Luminita Patras and I represented IAAP for the two weeks of work that was part of the United Nations of the **63<sup>rd</sup> Commission on the Status of Woman** this past March. This Commission, as well as some of the sessions of this year's meeting in the direction of Gender equity, are presented in this issue.



Planet 50-50 by 2030  
Step It Up for Gender Equality

Moreover, each year there is what is known as **Psychology Day**, which is organized at the UN with IAAP, under the responsibility of Walter Reichman with Judy Kuriansky, our two main representatives at the United Nations. This year, the 12<sup>th</sup> Annual Psychology Day took place on the 25<sup>th</sup> of April. The theme was "*The Time is Now: Psychological Contributions to Global Gender Equ(al)ity*". The program focused on ways in which psychologists may contribute to promoting SDG 5 - "achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls." Experts in the field of psychology have addressed the challenges in achieving global gender equity; the five speakers, Lilian Comas-Diaz from George Washington University, Olivia Espin from San Diego State University, Shelly Grabe from UC Santa Cruz, and Virginia Shein from Gettysburg College, all have highlighted strategies and programs

that encourage, support, and create conditions to accelerate progress towards making gender equality a reality globally.

## **We believe that Psychology Day should become an International Psychology Day and we are working on this project!**

In this issue, one can also find papers focusing on gender equality and leadership, the role of men's perspective in improving gender equality, and gender and aging in India.



In closing this Editorial, I wish to remind members that we are about to celebrate our **Centennial Anniversary**, and we welcome papers about the past achievements and future goals of IAAP, from the past 100 years to the next 100! Please send your best photos of Congresses, best memories, and especially ideas/challenges that you believe are central in your field of work, as we believe one important way to celebrate this landmark is to look into what we think are the main challenges for applied psychology in the future. Please include a short explanation of these ideas/challenges (max 500 characters). These ideas will be shared in IAAP's Centennial Anniversary issue of this publication (due by December 2019).

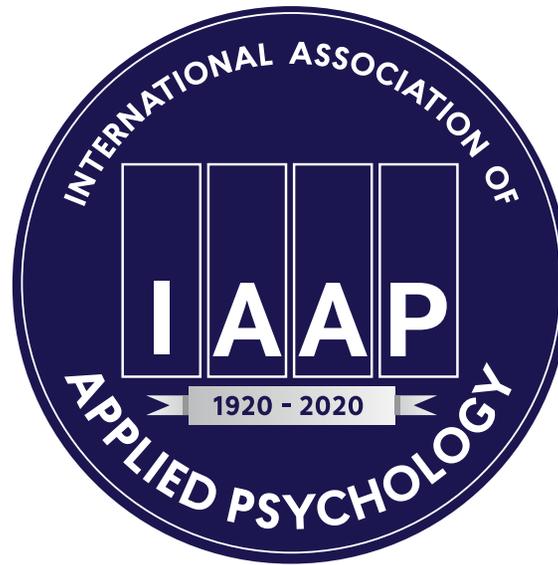
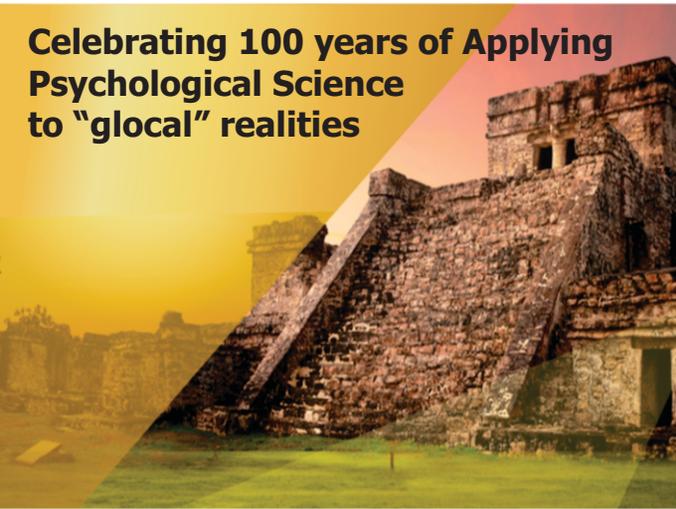
More information on the Centennial Congress of Applied Psychology, scheduled for December 2020 in Cancun, Mexico can be found on the following two pages. We hope you will join us there! There will be a special Track on Gender Equality, and many other interesting topics related to our Divisions.



## **IAAP CENTENNIAL: 1920 - 2020**

Please note that the next issue of will be a **special issue on IAAP's role at the United Nations**: Vol. 1. Issue 3: **IAAP at the United Nations**, papers due by July (September 2019 issue).

**Celebrating 100 years of Applying Psychological Science to “glocal” realities**



**100** | **CENTENNIAL CONGRESS**  
OF APPLIED PSYCHOLOGY  
CANCÚN, MÉXICO  
2020

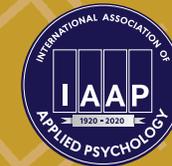
**Celebrating 100 years of Applying Psychological Science to “glocal” realities**

**2020 / 13-17 DECEMBER**

The International Association of Applied Psychology (IAAP) was founded in 1920 and is organized around seventeen divisions and one student division that cover the principal areas of applied psychology. The divisions are:

- Division 1 – Work and Organizational Psychology
- Division 2 – Psychological Assessment and Evaluation
- Division 3 – Psychology and Societal Development
- Division 4 – Environmental Psychology
- Division 5 – Educational, Instructional and School Psychology
- Division 6 – Clinical and Community Psychology
- Division 7 – Applied Gerontology
- Division 8 – Health Psychology
- Division 9 – Economic Psychology
- Division 10 – Psychology and Law
- Division 11 – Political Psychology
- Division 12 – Sport Psychology
- Division 13 – Traffic and Transportation Psychology
- Division 14 – Applied Cognitive Psychology
- Division 15 – Students
- Division 16 – Counseling Psychology
- Division 17 – Professional Psychology
- Division 18 – History of Applied Psychology

[www.ccapcancun2020.com](http://www.ccapcancun2020.com)



UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL  
AUTÓNOMA DE  
MÉXICO



Asociación Mexicana de Psicología Social



The Faculty of Psychology of the National Autonomous University of Mexico and the International Association of Applied Psychology (IAAP) invite everyone to participate in the Centennial Congress of Applied Psychology December 13-17 of 2020, Cancun, Mexico.

### Congress venue

The Centennial Congress of Applied Psychology will take place at the Convention Center, Cancun, Quintana Roo, Mexico

[www.cancunicc.com](http://www.cancunicc.com)

The Scientific Committee for the Centennial Congress of Applied Psychology invites all to submit abstracts for CCAP 2020. Proposals are sought for:

- ✍ Symposia
- ✍ Panel discussions
- ✍ Oral presentations
- ✍ Poster and coffee presentations
- ✍ Book presentations

We invite contributions from all fields of psychology and related areas. We specially appreciate applied research and work that involves evidence based interventions. We expect authors to submit original work that has not been published or accepted for presentation in other conferences. All submissions will be subjected to peer-review under the supervision of the Scientific Committee.

Notification of acceptance for early submissions will be emailed to the corresponding author by December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2019, together with detailed information and guidelines. A second round of submissions will open January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020, ending March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2020.

Kindly submit your abstract/s via online registration system on congress website using the button at the bottom of the chosen presentation format page. Acceptance of abstracts by the Scientific Committee does not imply any financial assistance or fee deduction. Presenting authors must register by June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2020 to ensure that their presentation will be included in the CCAP 2020 programme.

Submission deadline  
October 15<sup>th</sup>, 2019

## Registration fees for the Centennial Congress

Non-member	Early Up to December 31 <sup>st</sup> , 2019	Standard Up to July 1 <sup>st</sup> , 2020	Final After July 1 <sup>st</sup> , 2020
A	500	550	580
B	420	475	500
C	340	375	420
Student	220	245	300
<b>Member</b>			
A	275	310	350
B	200	220	250
C	100	110	150
Student	90	100	120
Accompanying a registered assistant	30	40	50

\*US dollar

### Important dates

Registration opens	May 1 <sup>st</sup> , 2019
Abstract submissions for early review open	May 5 <sup>th</sup> , 2019
Early abstract submission deadline	October 15 <sup>th</sup> , 2019
Communications of acceptance of early submissions	December 1 <sup>st</sup> , 2019
Deadline of early bird registration fee	December 31 <sup>st</sup> , 2019
Opening all abstract submissions	January 1 <sup>st</sup> , 2020
Regular submission deadline	March 31 <sup>st</sup> , 2020
Communication of acceptance of regular submissions	June 1 <sup>st</sup> , 2020
Deadline standard registration fee	July 1 <sup>st</sup> , 2020
Onsite registration	December 12 <sup>th</sup> , 2020
Opening Ceremony	December 13 <sup>th</sup> , 2020
Closing Ceremony	December 17 <sup>th</sup> , 2020

## The IAAP Special Project on Gender Equality

Dr. Kristina Potocnik<sup>1</sup>

During the last ICAP in Montreal, the IAAP established a “special project” on gender equality. This is the first project of this kind in our almost 100-year-long history!

According to the UN, gender equality refers to:

*“The equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men and girls and boys. Equality does not mean that women and men will become the same but that women’s and men’s rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born male or female. Gender equality implies that the interests, needs and priorities of both women and men are taken into consideration, recognizing the diversity of different groups of women and men.”* (<https://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/conceptsanddefinitions.htm>)

Achieving gender equality is a global concern and, although some advances have been made towards this end, the issues of gender pay gap, the low representation of women in top managerial positions, the lack of career progression opportunities for women, and the lack of freedom to make their own vital decisions in some countries are just a few examples of why the issue of gender equality is still a pervasive and contentious matter. It is important to highlight that achieving equality between women and men is a concern of everyone, not women alone. Effectively, gender equality is part of human rights and therefore, the whole society needs to work towards promoting it, achieving it, and protecting and sustaining it.

### Our aims and objectives

The main aim of our project is to gather ideas on what has been done, and still needs to be done, on gender equality and to promote what IAAP can do on gender equality at the UN and other stakeholder organizations. Given its membership from around the world, the IAAP can promote gender equality internationally using research evidence from across the disciplines of psychology. This is particularly important because the advances that have been made towards achieving gender equality vary significantly across different countries.

Keeping this in mind, the main goals of our special project are:

1. To collect the existing evidence on gender equality from across different disciplines of psychology
2. To collect best practices on promoting gender equality across the world
3. To bring together researchers or experts in the field of gender equality
4. To champion and advocate for gender equality at the UN (CSW) and other stakeholder organizations based on scientific evidence in psychological research.

### Our plan of activities

So far, we have sketched out a rather ambitious plan of activities to achieve the above objectives. Whilst some of them are more short-term, others are envisaged to be on-going and completed over a longer period of time. We can cluster the proposed activities into two broader categories: a) capacity building and b) dissemination. I would like to highlight that this is just our initial plan and anyone who would like to join us is more than welcome to suggest further ideas.

#### Capacity building

To start with, we would like to bring together psychologists who are interested in gender equality.

We have created a short online survey that can be found at:

[https://edinburgh.eu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_788WDwMH37qCX8p](https://edinburgh.eu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_788WDwMH37qCX8p)

All IAAP members are invited to complete it in order for us to identify the potential members from across different divisions who are interested in gender equality. We also hope to reach out to other psychologists who are not yet members of the IAAP and encourage them to join us through participating in our special project. We are also planning to create a database with gender equality researchers and experts who could be invited to join our project.

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<sup>1</sup> University of Edinburgh Business School, Edinburgh, EH8 9JS United Kingdom



Dissemination

We plan to engage and participate at different events where we can raise the awareness around the gender inequality issues around the world. What we have in mind are different UN events where gender equality is discussed as well as different psychology conferences, such as our own Centennial Conference of Applied Psychology in 2020 in Mexico and International Conference of Applied Psychology taking place in 2022 in China.

We would also like to encourage our members to disseminate news, research, and any other observation on gender quality via the existing IAAP social media using the #genderequalityIAAP. This will increase the visibility of our project and potentially help us attract more members interested in this topic.

Finally, we aim to publish our news in the IAAP newsletters and bulletins, such as eNews and Applied Psychology Around the World. In a more distant future, we may have gathered enough expertise to consider publishing an edited book or a position paper on gender equality.

**Who we are so far...**

At the moment the special project counts with the following four members: Fanny Cheung, Luminita Patras, Tom Calvard, and Kristina Potočník, with our current IAAP president, Christine Roland-Lévy, actively joining in and overseeing our work. If you are interested in gender equality, please do join our project. Even if gender equality is not amongst your key research interests, but you feel passionate about it and would like to contribute to raising the awareness around it, please do come forward.

You can email me at [Kristina.Potocnik@ed.ac.uk](mailto:Kristina.Potocnik@ed.ac.uk) and I would be happy to discuss your thoughts further. You can also complete the survey and tell us more about what specific angle of gender equality you are interested in.



## Commission on the Status of Women (CSW)

The Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) is the principal global intergovernmental body exclusively dedicated to the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women. A functional commission of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), it was established by Council resolution 11(II) of 21 June 1946.

The CSW is instrumental in promoting women's rights, documenting the reality of women's lives throughout the world, and shaping global standards on gender equality and the empowerment of women.

In 1996, ECOSOC in resolution 1996/6 expanded the Commission's mandate and decided that it should take a leading role in monitoring and reviewing progress and problems in the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, and in mainstreaming a gender perspective in UN activities. Following the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in 2015, the Commission now also contributes to the follow-up to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development so as to accelerate the realization of gender equality and the empowerment of women (ECOSOC resolution 2015/6).

During the Commission's annual two-week session, representatives of UN Member States, civil society organizations and UN entities gather at UN headquarters in New York. They discuss progress and gaps in the implementation of the 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the key global policy document on gender equality, and the 23rd special session of the General Assembly held in 2000 (Beijing+5), as well as emerging issues that affect gender equality and the empowerment of women. Member States agree on further actions to accelerate progress and promote women's enjoyment of their rights in political, economic and social fields. The outcomes and recommendations of each session are forwarded to ECOSOC for follow-up.

UN Women supports all aspects of the Commission's work. The Entity also facilitates the participation of civil society representatives.



### Methods of Work

The Commission adopts multi-year work programs to appraise progress and make further recommendations to accelerate the implementation of the Platform for Action. These recommendations take the form of negotiated agreed conclusions on a priority theme.

Under its current methods of work, established by ECOSOC resolution 2015/6, at each session the Commission:

- Holds a ministerial segment to reaffirm and strengthen political commitment to the realization of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls as well as their human rights and to ensure high-level engagement and the visibility of the deliberations of the Commission;
- Engages in general discussion on the status of gender equality, identifying goals attained, achievements made and efforts under way to close gaps and meet challenges in relation to the priority theme and the review theme;
- Considers one priority theme, based on the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcomes of the 23rd special session of the General Assembly and possible linkages to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;
- Evaluates progress in implementing agreed conclusions from previous sessions as a review theme;
- Addresses emerging issues, trends, focus areas and new approaches to questions affecting the situation of women, that require timely consideration;
- Plays a catalytic role for gender mainstreaming in the United Nations system and contributes gender perspectives to the work of other intergovernmental processes and functional commissions;

- Considers in closed meeting the report of its Working Group on Communications;
- Agrees on further actions for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women by adopting agreed conclusions and resolutions.

Moreover, the **International Women's Day**, 8 March, often falls within its session.



**Themes for 2010–2019 were:**

- **2019:** Priority theme: Social protection systems, access to public services and sustainable infrastructure for gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. Review theme: Women's empowerment and the link to sustainable development, from the 60th session of the CSW.
- **2018:** Priority theme: Challenges and opportunities in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of rural women and girls. Review theme: Participation in and access of women to the media, and information and communications technologies and their impact on and use as an instrument for the advancement and empowerment of women, from the 47th session of the CSW.
- **2017:** Priority theme: Women's economic empowerment in the changing world of work. Review theme: Challenges and achievements in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals for women and girls, from the 58th session of the CSW.
- **2016:** Priority theme: Women's empowerment and the link to sustainable development. Review theme: The elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls, from the 57th session of the CSW.
- **2015:** Review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcomes of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, including current challenges that affect the implementation of the Platform for Action and the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women, as well as opportunities for strengthening gender equality and the empowerment of women in the post-2015 development agenda through the integration of a gender perspective.
- **2014:** Priority theme: Challenges and achievements in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals for women and girls. Review theme: Access and participation of women and girls to education, training, science and technology, including for the promotion of women's equal access to full employment and decent work, from the 54th session of the CSW.
- **2013:** Priority theme: Elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls. Review theme: The equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men, including caregiving in the context of HIV/AIDS, from the 53rd session of the CSW.
- **2012:** Priority theme: The empowerment of rural women and their role in poverty and hunger eradication, development and current challenges. Review theme: Financing for gender equality and the empowerment of women, from the 52nd session of the CSW.
- **2011:** Priority theme: Access and participation of women and girls to education, training, science and technology, including for the promotion of women's equal access to full employment and decent work. Review theme: The elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against the girl child, from the 51st session of the CSW.
- **2010:** Review of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the outcomes of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly and its contribution to shaping a gender perspective towards the full realization of the Millennium Development Goals.

## UN Commission on the Status of Women 63: Observer Report

Dr. Luminița Pătraș<sup>1</sup>

Although the world has achieved certain progress towards gender equality in the last decade, women and girls continue to suffer discrimination in all areas of our lives, in every part of the world. To address this issue, the United Nations included in the Agenda 2030 as a specific Sustainable Development Goal – Gender Equality (SDG 5). I knew about the role of the UN, and I knew about the SDGs. What I did not know, it was the process of shaping the standards and making possible the implementation of this kind of initiatives through policies, programs and direct recommendations. By participating at the 2019 annual gathering on Status of Women, I could have a glance at this formal process (e.g. negotiating and agreeing on a set of recommendation). More importantly for me, during two weeks, together with other 5,000 participants, I participated in a broad range of sessions, all advocating for gender equality.

This brief report of my visit at the UN and my participation in the 63<sup>rd</sup> Edition of Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) includes a short description of the commission in general, and a more detailed description of this year edition. Here, I present some facts and figures on gender equality, I comment on the opening speeches, and I briefly describe the Agreement Conclusions. Further, I summarize the content of some of the side events and cultural events in which I participated and I close with some personal takeaways from this experience.

### Commission on the Status of Women

**The Commission on the Status of Women (CSW)** is global intergovernmental body, the world's main policy-making body dedicated exclusively to gender equality and the advancement of women. It was established by the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) in 1946 and works to promote women's rights at all levels (political, economic, civil, social and educational), documenting the reality of women's lives throughout the world.

Aiming at shaping standards on gender equality and the empowerment of women, the CSW also works for equality, development and peace, by monitoring the implementation of gender equality issues and highlighting urgent problems, such as the situation of women and girls affected by conflict.

For the last 63 years, CSW has organized an annual two-week session, where governs representatives, civil society representatives and women rights defenders gather at UN headquarters in New York. The main points of discussion include the progress in the implementation of [Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action](#), considered the key global policy document on gender equality, as well as emerging issues that affect gender equality and the empowerment of women.

CSW adopts multi-year work programs to appraise progress and make further recommendations that take the form of negotiated agreed conclusions on a priority theme. The agreed conclusions include an in-depth analysis of the priority theme and a set of concrete recommendations for governments, agencies, civil society actors, and other relevant stakeholders.

### 63<sup>rd</sup> Commission on the Status of Women (63CSW)

For 2019, the 63<sup>rd</sup> CSW took place from 11<sup>th</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup> of March, gathering more than 9000 women and men representing civil society, from over 1030 civil society organizations and government delegates. All participants discussed on women's rights issues through the lens of this year priority theme: **“Social protection systems, access to public services and sustainable infrastructure for gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls”**.

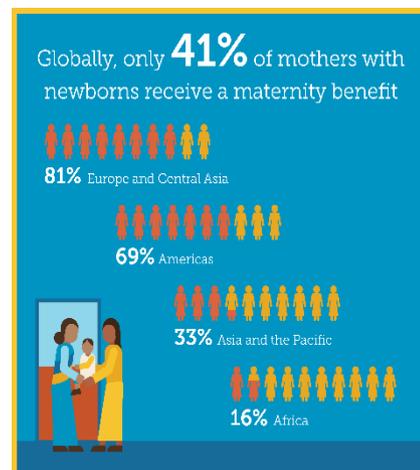
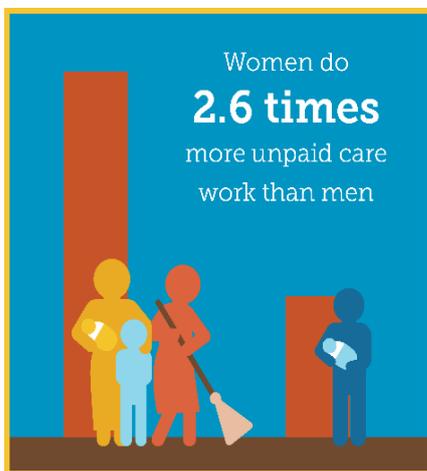
### **Facts and Figures**

This priority theme responds to the precarious situation that women and girls continue to face globally. Some of the findings presented in the [Report of the UN Secretary-General](#) and presented in the press release proceeding the CSW63 meeting, highlights that:

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<sup>1</sup> University of Valencia, Valencia, Spain

- 740 million women currently make their living in the informal economy. They have limited access to social protection, public services and sustainable infrastructure that could increase their productivity and income security.
- More than 50 % of urban women and girls in developing countries live in conditions where they lack at least one of these basic human needs: access to clean water, improved sanitation facilities, durable housing, and sufficient living area.
- Women do 2.6 times more unpaid care and domestic work than men, and only 41 per cent of the world's mothers with new-borns receive maternity benefits.
- The global gender gap in access to old-age pensions stands at 10.6 %; in 2016 68.4 % of men, above retirement age, had access to a pension compared to 57.8 % of women above retirement age.
- One in three women are likely to face violence in their lifetimes, but public services, urban planning and transport systems are rarely planned with women's safety and mobility in mind.
- Critical infrastructure, such as safe sanitation, is lacking in 23 % of the world's schools, disproportionately affecting adolescent girls with menstrual hygiene needs.
- Women's access to sexual and reproductive healthcare services has improved, but the quality of care often remains wanting. For example, rural women's access to skilled birth attendance is 20 % lower than that of urban women; while poor women's access to modern contraceptives is 19 % lower than that of rich women.



Based on these findings, the 63rd CSW focuses on issues at the heart of what matters in the daily lives of women and girls. “By setting new global standards to achieve gender equality, we are working to empower all women and girls to realize their full potential. We want an ambitious agreement on social protection, access to public services and sustainable infrastructure,” said Geraldine Byrne Nason, Chair of the Bureau for the 63rd session of the Commission on the Status of Women, and Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Ireland to the UN. “In focusing on core challenges like affordable childcare, healthcare, education, maternity protection, pensions and safe transport, the CSW can have a transformative impact on the realities faced by women and girls around the world,” she reiterated.

## Opening

Gender-sensitive investment in public services, social protection and infrastructure thus are vital for the achievement of gender equality. However, under the influence of the conservatives in power worldwide, many advances in the provision of social protection and the extension of public services are under threat of cutbacks in the name of austerity. This is where the fear comes in again.



Photo: UN Women/Ryan Brown

“Gender equality is fundamentally a question of power”. In the opening speech of the CSW63, given by the UN Secretary General António Guterres, he framed the struggle for gender equality in a wider political context of a backlash. He explicitly acknowledged a decline in the protection and realization of women’s rights as directly related to increasing conservative developments. Against the backdrop of “a volatile global economy, rising conflict and instability, rapid population ageing, shrinking democratic spaces” he voiced profound concerns about the pushback on women’s rights around the world. In his meeting on Wednesday with NGO representatives, he called on women to resist and push back against the pushback. “Power is not given, it is taken.” In the same line, the UN General Assembly President María Fernanda Espinosa referred to a “serious regression” in the political power of women across the world in recent years. In 2015, with the Sustainable Developmental Goals, it was estimated that it would take 30 years to close the gender gap, but now, she told the CSW Commission, if current trends continue, gender parity would not be reached for “107 years”.

### Priority theme and Agreed Conclusions

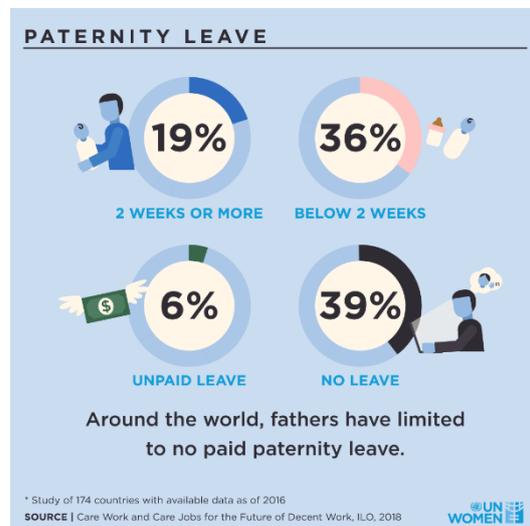
This year priority theme was “**Social protection systems, access to public services and sustainable infrastructure for gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls**”. That means that social protection systems, public services and sustainable infrastructure can respond to the challenges identified across the globe. Specifically, during the two weeks meetings there were discussed key issues related to: **social protection** benefits such as old-age pensions, child and family benefits, maternity protection, unemployment support; **quality public services** such as health, education, and public safety; and **sustainable infrastructure**, including access to clean energy, safe drinking water, safe designing of transport systems and urban spaces.

The outcome of the two-week meeting, known as the [Agreed Conclusions](#), adopted by the UN Member States, puts forth concrete measures to strengthen the voice, agency and leadership of women and girls as beneficiaries and users of social protection systems, public services and sustainable infrastructure. Commenting of the meeting outcome, the Executive Director of UN Women Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, said, “This annual gathering has never been bigger nor more significant for the women and girls of the world. The Commission’s recommendations pave the way for governments to engage and invest differently; involving women in policy dialogue, and targeting initiatives that go to the heart of the largest barriers to the empowerment and voice of women and girls.”

### Side Events

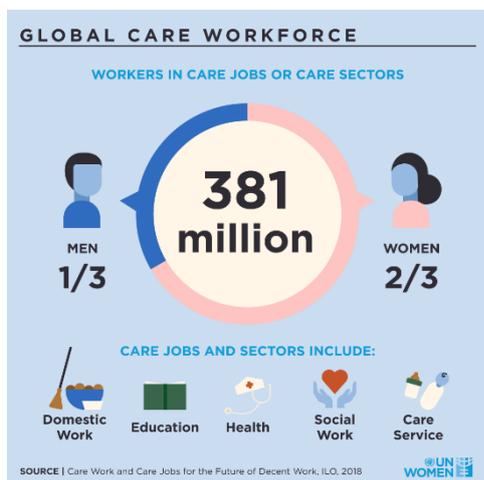
Outside the formal programme of the session of the CSW, the Side Events provided the opportunity for Member States, UN entities and NGOs to discuss themes of the Commission and other critical gender equality issues. During the two weeks, almost 400 sessions were organized as side events. The difficulty during the two weeks was to select the session to attend, when the offerings were so rich both because of the topic, but also because of the value of the panellists. Although the topics of these side events included different aspects of gender

equality around the world, their perspective was always related to the main theme of this year edition of the CSW: “Social protection systems, access to public services and sustainable infrastructure for gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls”.



“Gender Equality and Sustainable Development”, organized by Spain and Socialist International Women, included representatives of different countries such as Nigeria, Angola, Spain and Dominican Republic. The panellists presented different approaches to improve the access to social protection system in their countries. Although there are baseline differences between the countries, the participants agreed that a social protection system needed for reducing inequalities should refer to education, maternity, retiring support system, cities and infrastructures, citizenship empowerment, participation and leadership.

In the same line, Kenya hosted the event called “**Social Protection: Transforming the Social & Economic Landscape for Women, Girls, and other Vulnerable Groups.**” Although the panel was mostly composed by Kenyan Ministers, they detailed best practices for applying regional and international frameworks to help address women’s challenges through social protection and services. They maintained that social protection is protection of human dignity and should rest on three pillars: social assistance, social security, and health insurance. In particular, they highlighted the effectiveness of their Cash Transfer programs, wherein the state provides eligible individuals with direct payments, empowering them to spend the money in whatever way is most helpful to them.



“Empowering women and girls to access social protection systems” event, with a distinguished panel, including the Ambassador of Thailand, Ambassador of Uruguay and the representative of the World Health Organization at the UN, focused on the importance of empowering women and girls by involving all parts: governments and civil society organizations, but mostly through individual commitment. According to the panellists, the steps towards giving the right to decision making for women should include: a) Recognition and validity of previous success stories; b) Acknowledgement of tools and methods for empowerment; c) Work faster on the commitments and d) Overcome barriers on the implementation. As a case study, the

Royal National Lifeboat Institution (Northern Ireland) presented a success story on drowning prevention by teaching women and kids how to swim and what to do to protect themselves.

Advancing in Empowerment for women and girls, the United Nations Global Compact and United Nations Office for Partnerships convened over 600 representatives from business, government and civil society to discuss business action to advance gender equality and women's empowerment. In the side event **"2019 Women's Empowerment Principles Forum"**, it was discussed how the Women's Empowerment Principles can help business, investors, governments and other stakeholders ensure that women help define and benefit from opportunities in the changing world of work. "It's time for all companies to get really serious about women's empowerment," said Lise Kingo, CEO & Executive Director of the UN Global Compact. "Gender equality can drive economic growth, financial performance and corporate sustainability, but we are still 200 years away from economic parity between men and women. We need all stakeholders to take urgent action." The Women's Empowerment Principles emphasize the business case for corporate action to promote gender equality and women's empowerment. Since their launch in 2010, the principles have helped transform business policies, practices and approaches to advance gender equality and create opportunities for women and girls. To date, more than 2,200 businesses have endorsed the principles.

Some of the side events focused more specifically on the sustainable infrastructures. For instance, in the session **"Infrastructure and Sustainable Development: How can infrastructure better contribute to the achievement of SDG 5 Gender Equality?"** leading experts from the governments of Sri Lanka, Estonia, Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency explored how to ensure that infrastructure development contributes effectively to the advancement of women and the attainment of SDG 5 'achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls'. According to the statistics presented, 95 % of the target of SDGs are influenced by infrastructure, but most of the conventional infrastructure is gender blind, as it supports the gender inequality.

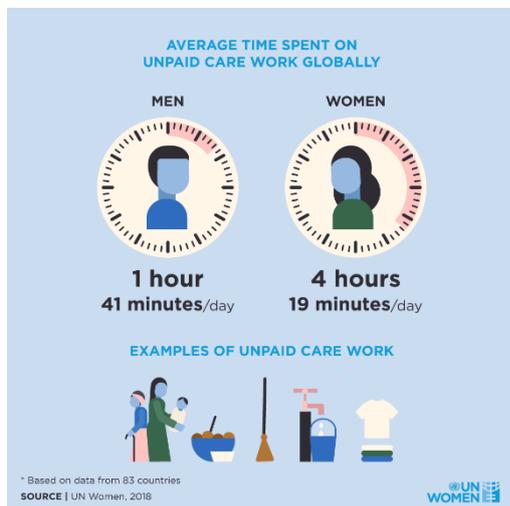


During the session, the panels presented different opportunities and challenges posed by basic infrastructure, such as roads, bridges, electricity, water, transportation, public facilities. They presented country specific experiences to identify key evidence-based choices and activities available to those trying to mainstream equal opportunities into infrastructure development. To support this aim, UNOPS and the University of Oxford launched a publically available tool to help look at project outputs and understand what activities can be completed to improve their positive influences on the communities they serve.

Referring to a different type of space, the side event **"Building safe and empowering digital spaces for women and girls"** explores ways and means on how effectively address and prevent cyber violence and harassment as a forms of gender-based violence and abuse. It highlighted good national, regional and international practices in this field, such as #HerNetHerRights and #Click-off – "Stop Cyber Violence and Harassment against Women and Girls", with the aim of challenging existing traditional gender norms and to foster the development of innovative approaches to combat cyber violence and harassment as well as hate speech against all women and girls. During the meeting, the participants emphasized that despite significant effort to raise awareness and fight against cyber violence and harassment, it is evident that cyber violence and harassment are not recognized as a form of violence against women and girls and consequently existing legislation and activities to prevent cyber violence and harassment do not take into account gender dimension. The risk for cyber victimization is twice as high for young girls and women.

Continuing with the digital world, the session **"Journalism and the Empowerment of Women: New Challenges in the Digital World"** with representatives from France, Lithuania, Reporters without Borders and International Women's Media Foundation, among others, confirmed the importance of the conditions that surround us. It is a turbulent time for journalism but female journalists tend to bear the worst of it. Social media is the ultimate double-edged sword. It can be wielded as a weapon in the fight for our freedom of expression, but it also can cut us up

inside. The panel, composed of one French and three American female journalists, shared their war-stories of sexism, discrimination, and harassment. For them, every day is a fight to have their professional voice heard and respected. Recent statistics show that two out of three female journalists have been harassed online. The panelists fear that these harsh conditions will dissuade girls from considering journalism as a career, which puts democracy itself at risk because “the press cannot be free without equal representation of women.” They must empower themselves. But is self-protection truly empowerment? Is it not still a response to patriarchy rather than an autonomous action? Should female journalists have to bear this burden?



Not focusing only on women and girls, but also considering men, the side event hosted by Italy, Greece, Zambia, UN Women and Council of Europe, discussed “**The use of new technologies for the promotion of work-life balance and the advancement of family policies for the social inclusion of women and men**”. The introduction of new digital and information technologies offer new opportunities able to make local services more efficient and in line with the needs of women and men, families and companies. The innovative use of new technologies allows changing the organization of work schedule, while ensuring an increasing time flexibility. It can provide new tools for both women and men to enter and remain in the labor market through new flexible working arrangements that contribute to enhancing work-life balance in their lives. The panelists presented through their country lenses, different solutions on how digital technologies can be used to improve

work-life balance. UN Women representative added a global perspective, where more than 150 million women need the access to this kind of technology, while some of them do not have access to energy. Council of Europe added that there are other forms of working, such as flexible working and they presented the tool where all organizations are encouraged to report the pay of their employees. In this case, the data can show the gender pay gap in their specific organizations and it increases the transparency in organizations.

More on women at workplace, Australia hosted the side event “**Sexual harassment in the workplace — a global perspective**”, which focused on different national and global programs to prevent sexual harassment at workplace. For instance, the Minister for Women in Australia together with the Australian Human Rights Commission’s National Inquiry presented the “The National Inquiry into Sexual Harassment in Australian Workplaces”. This inquiry is the first of its kind in the world, and Investigates systemic violation of human rights, specifically the nature and prevalence of SX, the drivers and impact, the implication of changes in technology in Australia, at national level. Representing Canada, the Parliamentary Secretary of Women presented the National Program on Sexual Harassment at workplace. Now it addresses specifically to federally regulated business and includes a sexual harassment protocol and it has to report how many times it was followed. It also provides funding for raising awareness programs, and training related to sexual harassment. In the same line, the Chair of the UN Taskforce on Sexual Harassment presented the activity of the taskforce. The statistics show that 1 of 3 UN workers suffer sexual harassment, most of them from a men in superior positions. On behalf of International Labor Organization (ILO), the Special Representative to the UN describes an instrument for preventing sexual harassment and its victim’s protection around the world. This instrument identifies certain sectors where sexual harassment is more common and focuses on actions related to sex, not specifically related to women; it includes physical workplaces, but also beyond that (commuting, toilets, accommodation, leaves) and considers work-life spillover effects.

Talking about data and research, the UN Women represented by the Research and Data Policy Specialist hosted the side event “**Women’s empowerment and sustainable development: data challenges and opportunities**”. Monitoring the implementation of the SDGs proposed by 2030 Agenda, whose principle is “No one left behind” means accounting for the progress of everyone without exception. Doing so will require going beyond national averages to assess the outcomes of different groups of women and girls who, because of entrenched forms of discrimination, are often the most disadvantaged in society. Support for the design of statistical strategies and targeted data collection instruments that adequately capture the realities of disadvantaged groups, including hidden or hard-to-reach groups—while ensuring ethical standards—is of utmost importance. This would make it possible to inform and develop policies and programs that respond to their realities. The distinguished panelists have touch on critical areas for gathering and analyzing the data in such a

complex system. They touched on the following 4 points: (1) Strengthening the link between producers of data (in all their diversity) and users; (2) Prioritizing inclusive data to identify the most vulnerable groups; (3) Develop a national strategy that meets the data requirements for adequately capture the realities of disadvantaged groups, including hidden or hard-to-reach groups; (4) The need to take a Human Rights Approach to data collection (a rights-based approach to data means adherence to international human rights norms and principles in data collection and data dissemination processes, where the rights of individuals are paramount).

### Book Launch

The session led by Georgia, Sweden, and UN Women on **“Nurturing future human capital through equality between girls and boys”** was all about the need to reimagine fairy tales to be gender inclusive—using a Georgian storybook titled *“Once There Was a Girl”* as a model. Changing fairy tales, changes child psychology. Authored by twelve Georgian writers, the collection of 21 fairy tales *“There Once Was a Girl”* features female protagonists throughout, something that up until now, was in short supply among children’s literature, including fiction and school textbooks in Georgia. The book deftly helps to address gender inequality, which is one of the biggest hurdles the country is facing. The book is aimed at children aged 7-15 years, nurturing equality of women and men, girls and boys from an early age.



*“There once was a Girl”*  
book cover illustration; Illustration: UN Women Natia Kvaratskhelia

### Peace Institute Film Festival

The session “”—shares never-before-told stories about women who risked their lives to end conflict and build peace. The first part of the session consisted in screening of scenes from the PBS documentary film series.

The two films selected were:

*“Wave Goodbye to Dinosaurs”* places a spotlight on the all-female political party, comprised of both Catholic and Protestant women, in Northern Ireland, who earned a seat at the negotiating table for the 1998 Good Friday Agreement. Their focus on human rights, equality, and inclusion shaped the historic peace deal, which put an end to years of violent conflict and established sustainable peace.

In *“A Journey of a Thousand Miles”*, an all-female Bangladeshi peacekeeping contingent charts a path forward to international peace and security through the UN peacekeeping mission to Haiti. The film shines a light on stereotypes shattered by the Bangladeshi police unit through their contributions to building peace in a country affected by poverty and natural disaster.

After the screening, it followed a moderated discussion featuring filmmakers and eminent women peacemakers.



### Socially Relevant Annual Film Festival

The sixth edition of this focused on Women and Children in Conflict zones. The session included the film screening “*The man who mends women*” on the life and work of Dr Denis Mukwege. In 2018, Dr. Denis Mukwege, together with Nadia Murad, was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize “for their efforts to end the use of sexual violence as a weapon of war and armed conflict”. After the film screening, a distinguished panel together with the Thierry Michel, the film director, commented on the situation of women during conflict.



### My key takeaways from CSW63

- Although there are important advancements in implementing Gender Equality around the world, as global organizations and policy makers are developing important programs in this sense, there are still huge gaps to be covered and there is still much to do. It was heart-breaking to learn that women’s political participation has regressed, but we must pushback against this tendency.
- By participating in different side events, I understood the that there is an urgent need to ensure women’s access to social protection systems, public services and sustainable infrastructure to level the playing field.
- We cannot have a dialogue on Gender Equality if men and boys are not included on the agenda as partners.
- The role of psychologists was mentioned in various sessions, but the presence of professionals in this area should increase, at least for future CSW. Our perspective and expertise is needed for the developing and implementing of different programs in achieving Gender Equality.

NOTE: I would like to show my gratitude to Dr. Judy Kuriansky and Dr. Walter Reichman, the IAAP Representatives at the UN, for making this experience unique!

### References and more information on CSW63

- <http://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2019/3/press-release-csw63>
- <http://www.unwomen.org/en/news/in-focus/women-and-the-sdgs>
- <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/gender-equality/>

## Gender Equality: The Role of Men's Perspectives

Dr. Thomas Calvard<sup>1</sup>

I believe that men working in social scientific fields of applied psychology today can play helpful roles in shaping and participating in research and practice agendas relating to improving gender equality. At the same time, I would qualify this by saying that a man's 'having a perspective' on gender issues needs to be tempered by an appreciation for women's issues, and a willingness to support, collaborate with, listen to and learn from diverse women first-hand.

There is a helpful starting point of humility and inclusion for men's involvement in gender equality agendas if we are willing to consider the established vocabularies from decades, and centuries, of feminist inquiry. These range from interpersonal micro-level acts of everyday sexism and neologisms like 'mansplaining' through to systemically gendered structures enabling patriarchal and misogynistic institutions to endure amid global capitalism. It is every bit as much struggle as it is science.

Men live and work alongside women and experience these gendered institutions and practices too, often (but not always) benefiting from them. Collectively, and in the long term, we should be receptive to addressing the gendered aspects of our cultures and lives, so that we can emancipate both women and men from serious injustices that threaten economies, workplaces and households. Psychologically, this means reflecting on how men and women experience their genders in a myriad of ways, carrying implications for our identities, well-being and relationships with others. We have a responsibility to not close our eyes to expressions of unjust privilege and disadvantage, of indifference and suffering, of ignorance and marginalisation.

The fifth of the seventeen United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) explicitly concerns gender equality, but surely progress on virtually all the other goals will be seriously hampered if over half the world's population are not empowered and included along the way. In this spirit, I humbly offer four brief proposals around how I believe men who are members of the IAAP, and more generally, can collaborate with women toward greater gender equality.

### Reading and reflecting on feminism, gender and psychology

First, I believe psychologists need to accept that engaging with gender is a lifelong journey of reading, reflection, critical thinking, and learning. There are so many ways of looking at feminism, gender and psychology it can be daunting to know where to direct one's attention. I believe this does not matter so much as starting somewhere - anywhere - that privileges the voices of women and their diverse ways of knowing, doing, and being. Fundamentally, this means granting evidential validity to ideas that many phenomena are 'gendered' in ways that disadvantage women - materially and psychologically.

Breaking gender equality down into some smaller projects of personal relevance and interest seems an inevitable and helpful way to start - namely by reading and engaging with women's studies and commentaries on women's experiences. For example, one Swedish professor (and man), Carl Cederström, following the spate of sexual assault scandals and rise of the #MeToo movement, spent a month reading and re-reading 13 feminist classics (all written by women) (Cederström, 2018). A key conclusion he drew, particularly after reading work by Roxane Gay, is that it is better to be a bad feminist than no feminist at all - an open invitation for men to try to be better feminists and more supportive of women.

Similarly, The Everyday Sexism project is an important and engaging read for any man in its collecting of the testimonies and stories of thousands of women recounting adverse treatment and sexist incidents faced in various domains of everyday life (Bates, 2016). These pervasive daily gendered experiences offer fundamental psychological foci for challenging attitudes and behaviours through activism, solidarity and empathy.

Once men can recognize the issues in the terms of the women who have recounted them, it represents a raising of consciousness and a chance to come together and achieve change. Beyond these two general examples, many more specific journals, articles and sources of evidence on women's experiences and gender (in)equality concerning various countries, industries, theories, disciplines and issues are available. In my view, the more men can come together with women in groups to read, discuss, educate, debate, analyse and write about such issues, the better (Martin et al., 2018).

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## Gender issues include masculinities

A second way for men to engage with gender equality agendas is by appreciating the role that masculinities play in shaping psychological relations between men and women. Masculinities should not re-centre men in dominating over women's issues, but equally they do not need to be kept separate from discussions of gender. They can help men to articulate their experiences and feel less threatened or likely to backlash, by identifying certain forms of masculinity as playing a role, rather than just individual men per se. Men may align with different forms of masculinity from within a hierarchy of other differences, contexts, and experiences.

The more challenging part is that clearly some forms of masculinity are strongly expressed, powerful and extremely toxic to women and other minorities. From a perspective of group power and politics, some men conspire to conform and perform masculinities to maintain the highest possible dominance - sometimes referred to as 'hegemonic masculinity' (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). Challenging a status quo with strong vested interests like this is never easy - it takes courage, role models, and inspired interventions from within communities of men.

One source of hope is research showing that men can 'undo' gender norms to some extent and stop behaving in harmfully masculine ways, if they can find an alternative acceptable means of expressing their identities. This was found to be the case, for example, in workers on offshore oil platforms who managed to shift from a competitive macho culture to a more open culture focused on concern for each other's physical limitations, safety and admission of mistakes (Ely & Meyerson, 2010).

Ultimately, attending to the psychology of masculinities should not overshadow women's voices and experiences, but it does help us to ask insightful questions about why men do and think certain things and not others, and how and why some men accrue considerable power. If feminism can help drive us toward greater gender equality, this drive will also be affected by whether we can co-opt the nurturing of healthier, more inclusive forms of masculinity.

Psychologically, influential masculinities are bound up with the power that goes with needing to show independence and control, which can foster inequality and great costs borne by many others, women and men. Although there are likely many themes here, two example areas where masculinities can be psychologically engaged are: (1) encouraging men to more readily practise help-seeking behaviours when it comes to care and well-being (Addis & Mahalik, 2003), and (2) encouraging men to adopt more involved fathering and caregiving roles in and around workplaces (Ladge et al., 2015).

## Gender issues are plural and intersectional

Third, women are clearly not one monolithic, unitary group, and to universalise women's experiences is to 'essentialise' and reduce them in a biased way. This can be problematic in erasing and further discriminating against the experiences of distinct subgroups of women with plural and *intersectional* identities based on race, class, age, sexuality, disability and other protected characteristics (Cole, 2009).

Intersectionality is complex because it opens the door to many combinations of identity. However, at a common sense level, we all experience multiple identities, and gender in combination with other diverse characteristics is clearly a significant identity combination for understanding most human psychology. Men can help develop a sense of 'identity complexity' in themselves and others by recognising that women can vary in the many other identities defining them and that they choose to express (Roccas & Brewer, 2002).

If we are considering gender equality and women - what kinds of intersections of gender should we be talking about? The answer is any and all that show evidence of distinct experiences of privilege and/or oppression. Gender and ethnicity might draw attention to women from countries in the Global South or postcolonial geographies. Gender and age might include women going through the menopause. Gender and sexuality might include lesbian, bisexual and trans women's experiences. There are clearly many examples of gender intersections, all with distinct implications for addressing equality issues.

Men can therefore consider greater use of intersectional perspectives in their own research, practice and lives to appreciate the many forms gender equality struggles can take. Sheryl Sandberg's famous *Lean In* book on gender equality in workplaces only receives mixed empirical support for its psychological hypotheses (Chrobot-Mason et al., 2019) for precisely this reason - not all women are wealthy white feminists. *Lean In* just scratches the surface, and in any case - why not *Lean Out* instead? (Foster, 2016).

Intersectionality is likely to continue to gain traction in research on psychology and gender, not least because it can be accompanied by both quantitative and qualitative methods, and because it can help to refine social

psychological theories of multiple identities and cross-categorisations (Else-Quest & Hyde, 2016; Nicolas et al., 2017).

### **A man who is a potential ally and change agent**

Finally, if gender equality involves making changes to our societies and organizations, as it surely must, then men should ask themselves how they can be a potential ally or change agent to gender issues, causes and movements. There are many ways men might achieve this - for example, by initiating work-sharing with women, by mentoring women and promoting their careers, and by adopting pro-feminist masculinities (Bjørnholt, 2011). Bystander training for men is another example of a powerful psychological intervention that can safely stop sexual assault and violence, especially against women (Holland et al., 2016). Often it is as simple as recognising unacceptable behaviours and showing zero tolerance in 'seeing, saying and doing' to prevent harm.

Of course, men's power and privilege have to be used constructively and responsibly to further gender equality, but attempting to be an ally and/or active bystander seems well worth the effort, provided it is on terms acceptable to women affected. Certain areas of psychology are calling on men as allies to be included in conversations of gender equity - not because women need 'rescuing', 'saving' or 'protecting' from inequality, but because it does not make sense to leave half of the population out of the conversation (Cheng et al., 2018). Furthermore, systemic gender problems are typically joint problems, and can be perpetuated by both men and women, as well as alleviated by both men and women, too.

The reality is that currently men still exist as powerful majorities in many contexts. Men control most resources and act as gatekeepers to gender equality - gatekeepers who may resist the very changes that they are so well-placed to help implement. Men have problems of their own and these should not be used to fuel antifeminism. Therefore joined-up policy approaches that emphasize the well-being of communities and interdependencies between men and women are most likely to produce lasting support for gender equality, such as the considerable uptake of paternity leave in Scandinavian countries. In the twenty-first century we are still in a gradual transition of gender relations around the world - many men are committed to organising for gender reform, while many others are not, and many others still may be wondering about the possibilities (Connell, 2005).

### **Conclusion**

I would conclude by urging men and women of the IAAP and beyond to come together and explore ways of knowing, doing and being that socially and psychologically support greater gender equality. Gender is a wonderfully interdisciplinary subject, and psychology is a crucial field of the social sciences when it comes to exploring positive ways of changing relationships, attitudes and behaviours. Empathy, perspective-taking and intergroup contact experiences offer us windows into appreciating the psychology of diverse others.

Some commentators are now saying that 'diversity is just the first step, inclusion comes next' (Brooks Taplett et al., 2019). Both these terms continue to be set against a longstanding international backdrop of movements for equality, rights and justice concerning women's bodies, freedoms and aspirations. As men we should find it within ourselves to want to be a part of this journey with a good-natured sense of pride and a generosity of spirit.

I am more than happy to leave the last words here to a woman; specifically, a quote from the Australian sociologist Raewyn Connell (2005, p.1819):

*Gender equality is an undertaking for men that can be creative and joyful. It is a project that realizes high principles of social justice, produces better lives for the women whom men care about, and will produce better lives for the majority of men in the long run. This can and should be a project that generates energy, that finds expression in everyday life and the arts as well as in formal policies, and that can illuminate all aspects of men's lives.*

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# Self-Disclosure as a Tool for Gender Equality Promotion

Ai Ito<sup>1</sup>

## Introduction

In June 2016, Emmanuel Faber, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Danone, gave an emotional commencement address at the graduation ceremony of a French business school. With grace, Faber shared his experience of having lost his schizophrenic brother, the lessons learned about social justice, and what the freshly graduating students can learn in turn from his experience. The month before this speech, Sheryl Sandberg, Facebook's Chief Operating Officer, had also given an emotional commencement address at the graduation ceremony of an American University. Similarly, Sandberg shared the recent experience of having lost her husband, the lessons learned, and what the graduating students can learn from the experience of death. In this article, the act of sharing a story a transformational personal negative event to a follower, as Faber and Sandberg did, is named leader self-disclosure. In the managerial literature, self-disclosure is often qualified to be communal and thus assumed to be used more often by women than men (Fletcher, 1994).

Building upon role congruity theory (Carli & Eagly, 1999), both Faber and Sandberg could have experienced backlash for presenting incongruity between their leader and gender roles. Women are expected to be high in communal traits and low in agentic traits while both men and leaders are expected to be the opposite. Hence, female gender and leader roles show inconsistency for women but not for men. Thus, by using a communal behavior such as self-disclosure, Faber could have been socially rejected for being a man transgressing his gender and leader roles. Sandberg could have experience backlash for expressing too much communality despite her leader role. On the contrary, both speeches received positive reactions for having been human and down to earth (cf., Gunaratna, 2016; Loyle, 2016). The public opinion has recognized Faber and Sandberg to be charismatic before their self-disclosures (e.g., Brunat, 2016). The positive mediatic reactions after their speeches hinted that self-disclosure produces some positive effect such as reinforcing their positive image as charismatic leaders. Furthermore, these two speeches bring us to question that self-disclosure of male and female leaders may be key to humanize organizations and to shade the boundaries set by gender stereotypes. More specifically, Sandberg's speech illustrates that if female leaders dare assuming their communality at the organizational level, communal behaviors such as self-disclosure might have the potential to give a voice to the female sex, which has been historically oppressed (De Beauvoir, 1973). When female leaders have a voice to represent themselves, they weaken the preconceived idea about gender and leader roles, and thus improve partially gender equality in the workplace. In fact, self-disclosure cannot become a verbal tool fostering gender equality, if male leaders do not join the conversation. Therefore, it is also necessary to have male leaders who dare using communal behaviors publicly, in order to expect leader self-disclosure to weaken the powerful effect of gender schema in organizations and to make organizations more gender equal.

Gender equality refers to the state in which "women and men have equal conditions for realizing full human rights and for contributing to, and benefiting from, economic, social, cultural and political development" ("UNESCO's Gender Mainstreaming Implementation Framework", 2003) regardless of gender. Workplace gender equality matters because empirical evidence shows that gender diversity in leadership positions is positively related with organizational performance (e.g., Carter, Simkins, & Simpson, 2003; Erhart, Werbel, & Srdar, 2003). Although three decades have passed since the Wall Street Journal reporters used the metaphor of the "glass ceiling" to describe the invisible obstacles impeding female employees to access leadership positions in organizations (Hymowitz & Schelhardt, 1986), women in leadership positions are still under-represented: only 26 women are occupying CEO positions in Fortune 500 companies, that is 5.2% of the female population ("Women in Leadership", n.d). Even when looking at Fortune 1000 companies, female CEOs only represent 5.4% of the female population. The scientific information that gender inequality is an issue has been popularized through press articles, which often provide a shallow explanation of why gender equality matters. Furthermore, such writings do not explain the problem from its roots, which makes it difficult to get the full spectrum of how to eradicate this issue. In other words, the current situation has no prospect to change if more writings do not make the effort to explain that gender inequality issue in the workplace is systemic. As a system is made out of processes, tackling each of these processes is one solution to improve gender equality in organizations (cf. Bligh & Ito, 2017). Furthermore, tackling the problem from another perspective at the same time, that is the organizational level, may be as effective to give more results in gender equality improvements.

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Hence, this article suggests that leader self-disclosure is a tool to improve gender equality at the organizational level. In order to develop this idea, a brief explanation of gender inequality in organizations as a systemic issue is provided. Second, this article reviews what is leader self-disclosure, how it can lead to attributions of charisma, and how it can be used as a tool to improve gender inequality in organizations from the organizational level.

### **Gender inequality in organizations caused by a gender-biased system**

The organizational system is biased because it is directly affected by the heterosexual family systems attributing men and women specific roles. Drawing upon social role theory (Eagly, 1987), men are seen as “bread makers” and women as “homemakers”. Foucault (1980) supports this idea of gender as being a social construction. The association of a natural sex with a gender and assuming the orientation towards the opposite sex/gender is an artificial construction favoring the reproduction of humanity. Traditionally speaking, organizations have been a place occupied by this male majority of bread makers and have constructed a system based mainly on agentic values. As such, building upon implicit leadership theory (Eden & Leviatan, 1975), prototypical leaders are associated with the image of a male leader who enacts agentic behaviors. Women in leadership positions are fewer than men because they answer less to the expectations of the prototypical leader desirable at a position with high managerial responsibilities. Female leaders tend to experience more backlash as the combination between their domestic and organizational responsibilities is perceived as conflictual. Specifically, women are blamed to transgress the female stereotypes associated with communality when they occupy a leadership position associated with agency, and to transgress the prototypical leader stereotype associated with agentic values.

Several solutions can be suggested to improve gender equality in organizations caused by this gender-biased organizational system. First, given the strong influence of the heteronormative family system, taking into consideration the historical division of labor may be necessary to challenge fundamentally the historical division of labor established by the heteronormative family system. This historical fact may partially answer to the question why we need more women in leadership positions: by having more female leaders, the idea associating gender and social roles may be weakened and gender equality may improve. Second, another solution might be to transform and enlarge the spectrum of the prototypical leader from being only associated with agentic values to being associated to both agentic and communal values. In other words, if more male leaders would dare to act both agentic and communally, the image of the prototypical leader mainly associated with agency may evolve. As a result, female leaders may experience less backlash for transgressing stereotypes and might have the chance to be more represented in leadership positions in organizations. Drawing upon Butler (2005)'s performative theory of gender, gender is a social construction that is performative. The normative ideology is to consider gender as a performance. Under this perspective of gender, individuals act or embody a gender that it is the consequence of a set of decisions. Gender is considered to be the theatrical platform of cultural translation. In other words, gender is limited by cultural norms and its interpretation is different depending on the culture. Butler goes beyond this narrow mindset by considering gender as performative. Gender as being performative implies that the very repetition of verbal and nonverbal behaviors will result in producing and maintaining an identity. As such, men repeatedly behaving communal behaviors have the power to transform the definition of communal behaviors into agentic or gender neutral, and vice versa for women. Building on Butler's gender performative theory, communal behaviors such as leader self-disclosure enacted by male leaders, have the potential to improve gender equality in the workplace. The next section develops how self-disclosure of male and female leaders can improve gender equality by providing a brief review on self-disclosure and by suggesting propositions to test in future empirical research.

### **Self-disclosure to improve gender equality**

#### What is leader self-disclosure?

Self-disclosure is a concept that has emerged and re-emerged over time. More than 2500 years ago, Chinese philosopher Lao Tzu expressed the idea that individuals in powerful positions should only use words in the aim to help others (Stenudd, 2011, p. 223). The motive to self-disclose in this hierarchical relationship is to harmonize power differences with those in lower power status by showing humility rather than overusing words for being in a status where individuals have the power to be listened to and to influence others. The other motive to self-disclose seems to yield growth for both parties as the powerful individual is learning a lesson of humility and that the less powerful individual is being helped by the words shared.

Across religions, self-disclosure plays a central role (Kassin & Gudjonsson, 2004). Religions have built up a routine of confession through which followers self-disclose their sins and are forgiven. Yet, self-disclosure has been used for different purposes depending on the religion. In Christianity, self-disclosure has played a major role to control the sexuality of the society (Foucault, 1976). More particularly, self-disclosure has been a tool used by the Church to control the heterosexuality of their people and to punish homosexuality in order to ensure the reproduction of a

heteronormative system. In Buddhism, self-disclosure of sins has been practiced in front of other disciples in order to clean the soul of the sinner and to avoid the repetition of the same sin within the community.

Although self-disclosure has been used for different religious purposes, traditions to cleanse the body and the soul seem to be practices that have existed across cultures. Northern and Southern Native Americans believed that rituals orchestrated by shamans and witch doctors had the power to purify the body and the mind. (Kassin & Gudjonsson, 2004; La Barre, 1964). Western medicine was partly influenced by this idea of purifying the mind. Breuer and Freud (1955) found out that asking patients to open up had the curing effect to heal psychology maladjusted patients. The Freudian psychotherapy decided to take a negative perspective to health and to focus on fixing maladjusted individuals through self-disclosure of the patient.

Maslow (1954) who is known as the father of the humanistic psychology, attempted to emancipate from the Freudian vision of psychotherapy by bringing importance to personal growth and development instead of focusing on curing mental illness and neuroses. Maslow believed that before understanding mental illness, it was important to have an understanding of what mental health is. Hence, he dedicated his research in exploring positive psychology for the healthy part of the population by theorizing the existence of hierarchy of needs based on urgency. Individuals who fulfill the basic needs of the pyramid are motivated to achieve higher needs. As self-disclosure is a communication, its role resides in fulfilling social needs, which is the third core need of the pyramid. However, most individuals are successful in meeting partially the basic needs. The frustration of not being able to develop themselves further affects human behavior and creates disorder.

Rogers built upon Maslow's work for exploring health as a positive issue. Although Freud and Maslow had a deterministic approach over health, for respectively stating that unconscious antecedents cause psychological maladjustment and that basic needs can only be fulfilled in a certain order. Rogers rather believed on the unique need of self-actualization in addition to nurturing an environment with genuineness, acceptance, and empathy to foster this need. When the ideal self and a behavior one enacts are congruent, individuals feel self-actualized. Individuals are fully functioning when they have a realistic image of themselves by making honest observations of their experiences, behaviors, and thoughts, but also by achieving goals and wishes. Building on Lao Tzu's teaching of helping others, Rogers is known to be the father of client-centered therapy, which accompanies patients to self-actualize. The therapist harmonizes power distance between the doctor and the patient by encouraging to give attention to the patient with empathy, careful listening and the willingness to relate in a transparent manner. Unlike the Freudian psychotherapy, which gives more importance to the diagnosis of self-disclosure than the patient, in Roger's therapy the patient is valued as a human being.

Jourard (1971) is the humanistic psychologist who fundamentally recognized the relationship between self-disclosure and mental health (Argyle, Fuhmam, & Graham, 2004). Self-disclosure was defined as the act of making oneself transparent to enhance the perception of uniqueness as a human being. Based on his work with patients, he brought to evidence that the cause of illness was due to a rejection to self-disclose and thus know the self better. Although the Freudian or the Rogerian therapies were focused on verifying the validity of their dogmas, Jourard's believed that a therapy could be successful only when therapists were able to consider their patients as individuals equal to them, and thus to reciprocate self-disclosure (Jourard, 1971, p. 142). Authentic mutual openness is the foundation of trust-based relationships that allows both patients and therapists to learn and grow continuously. When the therapist shows the willingness to know better the patient, to take risk to be true and vulnerable by exposing his or her core personality in front of the patient, the patient might reciprocate the self-disclosure in turn. When the patient and the therapist are both in this defenseless state, patients are willing to accept interpretations and suggestions that enhance the patient's personal growth (Jourard, 1971, p. 134). Jourard found inspiration in the ideology of Existentialist philosophers who believed that one's existence depends heavily on the Other and that it is only through this Other that we succeed in knowing ourselves better. The idea of mutual self-disclosure hinted toward the direction that self-disclosure also plays a major role in interpersonal relation.

The writings of existentialist philosophers (e.g., Sartre, 2007) also underline that self-disclosure or more generally speaking verbal behaviors help to give sense to one's existence. As essence precedes existence, humans have awareness of the human being they are, have the choice of their behavior regardless of God's presence, and thus are responsible of their acts. It is behaviors such as opening up with words that give sense to the existence of a human being. For instance, influenced by this school of thought, Sartre (1949) implied that self-disclosure's purpose was to provide a sense of responsibility to others, and to enlighten them. Opening-up with words in politically engaged writing is to take action; revealing is to change, and revealing the self is possible only when change is planned. In this matter, words are equal to loaded pistols and must be chosen thoughtfully.

Jourard's work is considered as foundational for research on self-disclosure that followed, for having shed light on the importance of self-disclosure for humanity and for having provided a definition of self-disclosure that led to scale development. Although the context in which self-disclosure is explored goes beyond the field of clinical psychology, Jourard's legacy seems to remain in the essential idea that verbal interactions between two parties have some consequences on the relationship or on the context. Self-disclosure has been subsequently considered as a vehicle to investigate interpersonal relationships (e.g. Altman & Taylor, 1973), customer-based research (e.g. Zimmer, Arsal, Al-Marzouq, Moore, & Grover, 2010), social media (e.g., Koohikamali, Peak & Prybutok, 2017), and more recently on work relationships (e.g. Gibson, 2018). Self-disclosure is also a variable that is often mentioned in managerial literature taking a feminist perspective (e.g., Fletcher, 1994). As women have been socialized to talk more about their emotions, they are more prone to verbalize their thoughts of an emotional range.

Self-disclosure has been explored under different perspectives over time. Self-disclosure in religion implies that it can be a phenomenon constituted with several sentences and that it could be a personal narrative. However, the definitions and descriptions of self-disclosure given in recent research (e.g., Gibson, 2018) implies that self-disclosure is limited to a few sentences or a few words. Such narrow conceptualization of self-disclosure excludes the possibility to consider sharing an experience of several sentences could still constitute a self-disclosure. Furthermore, the different dimensions of self-disclosure as defined in this article (i.d., personal, professional, emotional, positive, negative) and self-disclosure in a leadership context are topics that remain underexplored. Hence the next section explores how self-disclosure can be explored in the leadership context and how leader self-disclosure can serve as a tool to improve gender equality in the workplace.

#### Leader self-disclosure in a leadership context

Leader self-disclosure is defined as the act sharing a story of a transformational personal negative event to a follower. The fact that self-disclosure is seldom performed by leaders creates an effect of surprise in the eyes of followers when they hear such an intimate experience of the leader. The scarcity of leader self-disclosure might have the power to amplify the expected outcomes. Past examples of real public self-disclosure show that the adversity told in a self-disclosure can take the shape of the loss of a close person, the experience of a fatal accident or illness that the leader has survived. Hence, self-disclosure can have both a positive and negative ending. What matters is not the nature of the ending but the motive that encourages the leader to self-disclose. In fact, in order to foster a positive organizational result such as gender equality, the leader should self-disclose only with the intention to share the lessons learned from this experience of adversity. Leader self-disclosure can both happen at the relational level and the organizational level, but the effect produced depending on the context is different. Self-disclosure can be used by leaders at the relational level in order to foster variables that affect the quality of relationship (e.g. follower trust towards leader) or that affect the perception of the leader (e.g. attributions of charisma). However, if the purpose to use leader self-disclosure is to foster follower perceptions of gender equality in the workplace, the self-disclosure needs to be delivered publicly at the organizational level in order to impact a large number of employees. The importance of using this tool at the organizational level can be supported by the social contagion theory of charisma (Meindl, 1990, 1993). This theory explains that attributions of charisma is not limited to the direct interactions of leaders with followers, but also to the follower lateral interactions with their peers. Follower's charismatic experience depends on inter-follower dynamics rather than on their real exposure with the leader as the latter situation may be scarcer in the organizational life of employees. In other words, self-disclosure's effect of promoting gender equality will be effective to a greater extent, if leaders self-disclose publicly so that followers have the opportunity to share with their peers their experience of having been exposed to self-disclosure and to discuss verbally how they felt.

When a leader self-discloses publicly, follower perceptions of climate for inclusion, defined as the sense of belongingness to one's work group and uniqueness among members of one's work group, is increased (Nishii, 2013). Research in diversity hints the role of supervisor-subordinate relationships in producing perceptions of climate for inclusion (Dwertmann & Boehm, 2016). Moreover, research in authentic leadership underscores that leaders can influence individuals in believing in the importance of inclusion in the workplace by using role modeling behaviors (Boekhorst, 2015). Taken together, previous research underscores that leader behaviors can affect perceptions of climate for inclusion, regardless of leader's gender.

As self-disclosure has not been linked yet to perceptions of climate for inclusion, this article makes the first step to link these two concepts. Furthermore, evidence suggests that self-disclosure strengthen interpersonal relationships by decreasing prejudice in intergroup reactions (Dovidio, Gaertner, Validzic, Matoka, Johnson, & Frazier, 1997) or by leading to more positive member evaluations (Ensari & Miller, 2002). However, the role of self-disclosure, as a variable increasing followers' perceptions of climate for inclusion, has not been suggested yet. Thus, we suggest:

**Proposition 1.** Male and female leader self-disclosures will be positively associated with follower perceptions of climate for inclusion.

After a public leader self-disclosure, if followers perceive climate for inclusion, their perceptions of gender equality may increase in turn. Gender equality can be measured by using proxies such as perceptions of gender discrimination and perceptions of glass ceiling (cf. Dalton, Cohen, Harp & McMillan, 2004). As followers feel to be in a work environment in which they feel belongingness and uniqueness in their group, they can have the impression that their organization is fair. The perception that the organization does not practice gender discrimination might increase as followers may perceive that personal decisions about job assignments or promotions are made based on their individual performance rather than their gender (Gutek, Cohen, & Tsui, 1996).

**Proposition 2a.** Follower perceptions of climate for inclusion will be negatively associated with perceptions of gender discrimination.

**Proposition 2b.** Follower perceptions of climate for will be positively associated with perceptions of glass ceiling.

### Discussion / Conclusion

Overall, the model suggested in this conceptual article argues that male and female leader self-disclosure in public have the potential to improve gender equality in the workplace. Female leader self-disclosure contributes in giving a voice to the historically oppressed female sex, to prove wrong about the preconceived idea about gender and leader roles, and thus to improve gender equality. Male leader self-disclosure contributes in modifying the perception of self-disclosure from a communal to a neutral behavior thereby increasing perceptions of gender equality. When male and female leaders self-disclose, the act of sharing their experience facilitates the perception of the work environment strengthening followers' sense of belongingness and uniqueness to a group. After the public apparition of the leader, this perceptions of climate for diffusion spread socially among followers. In turn, followers feel that their workplace is more gender equal as decisions in their workplace are not interfered by gender and that there are no barriers that particularly affect female employees to access leadership positions.

However, both female and male leaders may not find enough motivation in being asked to share a personal and communal story for the sake of gender equality in the workplace. Demonstrating the positive relationship between self-disclosure and a positive outcome such as attributions of charisma, leader likeability, or any kind of outcomes that could serve as a reward for an individual, can be an incentive in leader's eyes to take the risk to transgress gender and leader roles. Leader self-disclosure as a verbal tool to improve gender equality in the workplace can only work if future research manages to find empirical evidence of the positive relationship between leader self-disclosure and attributions of charisma. This premise appears as a condition that needs to be fulfilled before testing empirically the model suggested in this article.

Future research should test empirically the relationship between leader self-disclosure and attributions of charisma in the workplace. Finding evidence of this relationship will contribute in finding some incentives for male and female leaders to use self-disclosure despite transgressing expectations of gender and leader roles. If evidence supports this relationship, future research should focus on testing empirically the relationship between leader self-disclosure of both genders and follower perceptions of workplace gender equality, mediated by follower perceptions of climate for inclusion. Such evidence will support the role of leader self-disclosure as a tool to improve gender equality in the workplace. Further research on scale development for self-disclosure is also needed. This effort will have some practical contributions such as being able to find a systematic method for leaders to share a transformational and personal experience of adversity.

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# Shifting Gaze: Generativity, Gender, And Ageing In India

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## Abstract

This paper presents the results of an urban study on the ageing experience in India and explains the findings using Erik Erikson's concept of generativity. It explores the shifting dynamics of gender and ageing, particularly in relationship with self and others. Men and women age differently; this variation of experience of age is further complicated in dominantly patriarchal societies. Patriarchy here situates in a gaze that is towards the self. Women usually filter this gaze through social-familial roles more than men. The study explores the nature of this gaze and patterns of gendered ageing using concepts of generativity and narcissism.

**Keywords:** Gender, Ageing, Generativity, Gaze, Narcissism

## Introduction

Erik Erikson (1950/1977) positions Generativity vs Stagnation as the seventh stage of the human life cycle. As an individual understands who she is (identity) and gains the capacity to create meaningful relationships (intimacy), she is ready to give back to the system from which she emerged through generativity. Generativity refers to the human will and act of continued existence through transferred knowledge, artifacts, relationships, and memories. It goes beyond the evolutionary perspective of procreation to incorporate the psychic and social 'need to be needed' (Erikson, 1977).

Ageing is social and cultural. Gender and ageing are intricately connected through social and cultural practices (e.g.: Lamb, 1997, 2000; Courtenay, 2008). India, because it is a predominantly patriarchal society, creates space for a gendered experience of age situated in differing socio-cultural positions. Lamb (1997) highlights the role of cultural practices of attachment in creating 'personhood' in ageing women. Attachment in Lamb's work comes close to a connotation of possession. These possessions may be objects, relationships, food choices or anything that is held dear to the self. Social status, such as widowhood and childlessness, heavily punctuate the ageing experience for women in rural (Lamb, 2000) and urban (Courtenay, 2008; Gulati, 1992) spaces. Economic class also plays a crucial role in ageing in India. Kalavar and Jamuna (2011) in their study of women in formal care as they age state, "With the changing social landscape of India, middle-income older women are increasingly opting for 'pay and stay homes', an emerging type of old age home in India" (p.203).

Joan Erikson (1989) argues that young adults do not imagine an old age. Erikson states, "the fabric of society 'does not hold' the aged / old age must be planned..." (Erikson, 1989, p. 14). Aged women may be asked to make their self their closest companion, thus implying a level of involvement and preoccupation with the self rather than worldly matters. As women age, however, Lamb (2000) highlights the relationship women share with their body, self, and community as they grow old. Her rich ethnographic work in rural Bengal illustrates the complexity of relationships in ageing women. The anxiety lies in the power of attachment (*Maya*), which may make detachment at death either difficult or impossible for the wandering soul. "I came across a white-clothed widow in her seventies called Mejo Ma (Middle Mother), sitting in the dusty lane in front of her home. She could not stop complaining about clinging. Her attachments to her family, to things, to good food, and to her own body were so tight, she said, that she was afraid of lingering for years in a decrepit state, unable to die. "How will I leave all these kids and things and go?" she lamented. She feared that after her body died her soul would not ascend but would remain emotionally shackled nearby as a ghost" (Lamb, 2000, p. xi). This pushes women towards a sense of prescribed self-engagement, where the self becomes one's closest possession and companion.

This push towards self-engagement may be viewed as a derivation of narcissism. Narcissism is a state of being that is centered around the self. Paul Nacker (1899) coined the term to connote a state where the person treats the body like one treats a sexual object. Kohut (1966) describes pathological narcissists as people who "are usually easily recognized by the painful affect of embarrassment or shame which accompanies them and by their ideational elaboration which is known as inferiority feeling or hurt pride." (Kohut, 1966 p.244). A narcissistic person may be "full of paradoxes: Self-aggrandizing and self-absorbed, yet easily threatened and overly sensitive to feedback from others." (Morf & Rhodewalt, 2001, p.177). But other authors (e.g., Kohut, 1966; Bartkey, 1982; Campbell, 2001) have cautioned us against the largely negative connotation of narcissism and concepts, such as normal narcissism (e.g. McClelland, 2010) have surfaced in recent time.

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*“...it should be noted that Freud (1931/1950) proposed a more positive (and less clinical) view of narcissism in his work on libidinal types...Rather, narcissistic individuals were seen as embodiments of the survival instinct and praised for their efforts at self-preservation” (Campbell, 2001 p.215).*

It is further theorized to be “a functional and healthy strategy for dealing with the modern world.” (Campbell, 2001 p.215). A significant part of this strategy centers around agency. Narcissism, when seen as a tool of self-preservation, pushes the individual to take control of her life situation in order to live on her own terms.

*“Agency is commonly taken to involve a compound of recognition that one's body is indeed one's own (as a whole), that one's actions are actually initiated by the self, rather than by any other person, and that the actions we initiate belong to us.” (McClelland, 2010 p.91).*

As the self becomes one's closest companion, there is an augmented awareness of agency and control. As one ages, physiological and psychological deficits may result in diminished control over one's body and mind. This may further flip the direction of care and engagement towards the self before others. This form of self-engagement may be seen a derivation of narcissism. In line with the above theoretical discussion, narcissism, when constructed in this manner, acquires a positive and adaptive meaning. Gender plays an interesting role in this form of narcissism as the opposite of generativity is also often conceptualized as narcissism because of the absence of central virtue of care for others (Kotre, 1996). A fine balance needs to be maintained between being generative and detached. Others integrate through changing relationships (owing to the fear of loneliness) and the direction of the gaze might shift inwards. This gaze is argued to lie at the mobius of Lacanian gaze and scrutiny (Krips, 2010). The subject scrutinizes what one looks at whereas gaze is the anxiety of being looked at without subjectivity of one's own. As individuals we might constantly negotiate with the two. Looking at oneself and being looked at, transform with age and cause shifts in gender dynamics. If one equates the body with the self or the Ego, the shift or subtle balance lies in a state where pleasure is derived not from objects outside, but from one's inner being.

Simone de Beauvoir further contributes through an existential caveat. In her seminal work, *The Second Sex* (1961), she comments that women constantly see themselves through the man. Thus, a woman creates a dichotomy in her consciousness through the man's sexual objectification. She is who she sees and is seen. She “becomes an object and she sees herself as object; she discovers this new aspect of her being with surprise: it seems to her has been doubled; instead of coinciding exactly with herself, she now begins to exist” (1961 p.316). These theoretical positions thus raise the question of how individuals through gendered roles place themselves on the generativity-narcissism spectrum as they age. The current study thus explores this shift in gaze in ageing individuals with specific reference to generativity and gender.

Gender, ageing, and generativity have been studied generally in terms of the deficits and challenges of obtaining generativity in middle-aged to aged women. Schwartz (1994) focused on gender role identity and the role of the psychoanalyst. Sagara and Ito's (2017) study on gender differences in generativity among men and women in Japan found that men have higher generative consciousness while women have higher willingness to make social contributions. Similar studies are lacking in the Indian socio-cultural context.

## **Method**

To address this gap in our knowledge of gendered ageing in the Indian socio-cultural context, we conducted the current study. We selected eight men and women in the age group of 55+ years in middle-income households through purposive sampling. Open-ended interviews were conducted in languages comfortable to the speaker. The middle age category (55-64 years) comprised of three females (MF1, MF2, MF3) and one male (MM1) participants; the aged category (65-74 years) of one female (AF1) and one male (AM1) participants; and, the high age category (75+years) of one female (HF1) and one male (HM1) participants. The First Letter marker reflects the age in one of the three categories and the Second Letter marker reflects gender. A thematic narrative analysis (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990; Smith, 2000) was employed. The current study met with the ethical demands through measures such as informed consent, maintenance of confidentiality, and supervised review of interview schedules for screening out items that may lead to potential harm.

## **Analysis and Discussion**

Narratives were analyzed through themes of shifting gaze and gendered ageing. Selected narratives are presented and discussed here.

### Generative-Narcissistic Juncture

The generative-narcissistic juncture creates an interesting space for the study of gender as women are often viewed in such dichotomies in patriarchal societies. The connotation of narcissism in the current analysis borders closer to the theoretical discussion of the term. Logically, for an individual who views the self through others, narcissism as a psychological state lies at a distance. But as discussed, narcissism through self-engagement is also a measure of self-preservation. A person and especially a woman can be both.

The current sample from urban middle-class households illustrates specific patterns of gendered ageing. MF1 referred to her gender when asked how she feels at 56. She states,

*"It feels great. I think the 50s are the best part of a woman's life where you can be what you want to be without putting on any kind of masks...and you can just lead your life the way you want to lead it without any kind of pressures from anybody else."* (MF1, 28/02/2018).

### Masks

Words like "masks" and "pressures from anybody else" point towards an expected gender role. The metaphor of a mask may denote fixed expressions as per situational demands and expectations. The (social-familial) spectator/participant creates and respond to these expectations. As a middle class Indian married woman, one has to engage in relationships and put on certain *masks* against one's wishes for the sake of family, society or partner. As pivotal familial and social expectations gradually dilute, individuals are offered the opportunity to emote beyond such fixed expressions. This choice seems to be augmented in the case of women in a patriarchal society as she is able to view herself beyond the patriarchal gaze:

*"Maybe the fact that...at this age, I am finally... really giving a chance to do what I really want to do.. and... to be authentic to be myself where which I could not do in my 20s 30s 40s because of society pressures... work pressures...family pressures... so I really feel that I am actually discovering myself now."* (MF1, 28/02/2018).

Lacanian gaze differentiates between the object being looked at and the privileged subjective position of looking at the object. But the women's narratives do not show a clear distinction between the two; rather, it may be viewed as a Mobius strip. The objective position of external scrutiny is met with subjective guilt. "This anxiety, in turn, is transformed into an experience of being externally scrutinized – an anonymous look from elsewhere by an invisible other before whom the young Lacan is reduced to anxiety and shame" (Krips, 2010 p.93). The object is invisibly equipped with agency and the subject with anxiety.

The gaze in relationships may shift from self being experienced through others' expectations, to others being experienced through self-perspective:

| Others — (masks) —> Self    to    Self — (no masks) —> Other |

Note that shifting the gaze inwards does not necessarily mean shunning others. It is a matter of choice, similar to the inherent agency of the Lacanian object being gazed at. Agency may also be reflected through a strategic function of narcissism as previously discussed. From everyday life to relationships the women participants keep, even if others are present, the engagement is now increasingly her choice. She thus lives through fewer masks.

In a conventional patriarchal family, the man leads, and the woman adapts to the man's ways. MM1 places adapting to change as a marker of aging men. The theme of accepting and adapting to change emerges strongly and repeatedly in his narrative:

*"And you can actually see that when her concept of traveling, she enjoys a whole lot of things which personally I would not find to be a big deal. right... So, you get to understand and appreciate these aspects of your spouse."* (MM1, 29/02/2018).

The woman adapts within patriarchy as it forces her to put on certain masks. As MM1 stepped away from active productive life, the scope of accepting others' opinions (especially his wife's) broadened. He recalls how in his younger days, the protests to the difference in opinions were stronger:

*"my protests have become less. Right? And more ... in terms of intensity and become considerably less in terms of frequency it's become considerably less. Jaana hai toh jaana hai (if you have to go, you have to go) ...yup that's it"* (MM1, 29/02/2018).

## The Experience of Ageing

In the case of men, the ways of patriarchy also seem to get diffused with professional productivity. The productive man paves the way and thus adapting to change becomes a sign of ageing. This may be seen as the generative need to be needed. Accepting other's position and adapting to it is socially desirable in women within patriarchy, but as men age and move away from their productive patriarchal position, there is a greater need to be needed and thus stronger effort to be accommodated within the system. It doesn't come as systemically as before.

This also falls in line with Arendt's (1958) clear distinction between work and labor. The man (homo-faber) creates an objective world through subjective fabrication (creation) of available natural material which constitutes work. The man also labors, which creates consumable services through exhaustion of the labor force. In view of productivity and work, the male participants spoke extensively on how their identities were tied around their work. For two out of five women participants (former teachers), the creative side of their jobs and now retired lives still resonated with their understanding of being productive. But for women who were homemakers (three out of five), being a homemaker was never considered as work; it was a routine or in Arendt's terms, labor. This is extended into their ageing experience.

One illustration comes from MF2, a 60-year-old grandmother. One of her own unique roles with her young grandchildren is teaching them music. She states it as a matter of fact, "*I narrate short stories. I teach them music*" (MF2, 06-03-2018). One may imagine that teaching music to 4-6-year-olds can be a highly creative process which requires constant churning of pedagogical ideas. She does not view her creative engagement with her grandson as a unique contribution but only a multiplied consumable pedagogic service.

The gendered patterns observed are thus that as men age by leaving their productive lives behind, there is a greater tendency to adapt because of a stronger need to be needed. As women age, they are more easily able to see the self beyond their social-familial roles, and the engagement with self and others is guided by agency, possibly as a function of narcissism. But at the same time, strong reminiscences of patriarchy remain in diminished recognition of one's role in relationships and home as routine labor instead of creative work.

The question that emerges from these findings is, how does an ageing woman create a balance between generativity and the shifting narcissistic gaze? Participants achieved this balance in different ways.

HF1 is a 77-year-old widowed woman staying on her own in a gated residential colony. She has been a widow for 25 years. Her only daughter lives in the same city with her husband and family. She has two grandchildren working in the same city. She speaks of her experience as a wife, mother, mother-in-law and grandmother in the same light as any middle-class Indian homemaker defined by familial contributions. She also states that if the need arises, she is ready to contribute further. But living independently to maintain one's identity is at the core of her narrative. This is somewhat exceptional in the Indian socio-cultural context. This theme recurs over and over again to reify the fact that at her age, it is important to maintain independence in order to preserve one's identity. Note that the participant is choosing an unconventional life for a woman of her age and background. Nonverbal signs through pauses and tone, intermittently expressed a sense of loneliness but her words coherently pointed towards the choice to lead an independent life: "*I am used to staying alone now. I don't want anybody. I am quite happy by myself. Because I know I can spend my time with what I want to do*" (HF1, 16/04/2018).

This core theme comes very close to the self-preservation meaning of narcissism and may be viewed through the juncture of generativity-narcissism. Being generative is who she was and will continue to be as a woman:

*"I was a 'typical' housewife, just cooking, serving, attending to guests, it was a big house, everybody used to come and stay with me,...I used to remain busy like that, now I have nothing to do with the kitchen and looking after the house. That was a 'different' life. Now it's a different life. Now I am not bothered if the house has been cleaned or not, I just get up (laughs). That is the thing... Now you cook for yourself, you keep the house tidy for yourself, .... (pause) It is different."* (HF1, 16/04/2018).

Certain amount of narcissism may set in at her age as her primary responsibilities are now diminished (though one can sense an undercurrent of loneliness in her voice and words). As a woman whose role is to keep the family together, she is no longer left with any such familial duties. She is in touch with her immediate and extended family but is no longer asked to assume any responsibilities. She recounts how she has played an active role as a housewife and in supporting her daughter and her family. Thus, for her, now that she has served all those roles and there are no major familial expectations, she chose to script her life as per her choice. The agency in making this choice is very dear to her, and it is this narcissistic agency that she does not wish to forgo.

HF1 also shares how the phenomenon of forming new peer relationships is easier for women than men of her age as it is a novel and exciting opportunity for women to express their agency and will.

Men have limited opportunity of mingling with each other and they do not feel comfortable entering spaces that are predominantly women spaces. This seems like a role reversal from a socially common middle-class life. This may be the irony of patriarchy, which ageing reveals. When widower men lose their productive life and sense of agency, they implicitly stay away from feminine spaces because patriarchal rules have created watertight hierarchies.

The analysis illustrates the gendered nature of ageing in urban middle-class households in Delhi, India. There is a strong shift in the manner in which men and women view themselves and their relationships as they age in a patriarchal society. Women may view the other through the self rather than its contrary, and men may become open to change. The gaze shifts inwards in women where as men become open to integrating the other's opinions.

It is helpful to recall J. Erikson's comment on how, as young individuals in the momentum of life, we do not envision old age. The defining moment of when we have grown old is blurred and almost unavailable. In the case of HF1, her husband passed away suddenly, and owing to her experience from her younger days and observation of her mother and sisters, she crafted her old age in a different way. Her narrative suggests that she would like to be needed and is willing to contribute further but not be dependent. She actively exerted her agency in staying alone and designing her days with activities and relationships of her choice. There is a desire to give, a need to be needed (as expressed through her daily engagements and an implicit sense of loneliness) and a strong urge to engage as per one's own terms.

## Conclusion

Patriarchal society makes differing opportunities available to men and women. The generative-narcissism spectrum is complicated by gender within a patriarchal society. The current study showed that men experience an inverse relay of power as they become more dependent on their spouses whereas women take this opportunity to create new relationships. The self is idealized more than others as women age. The other is idealized more than the self as men age. A greater agency in the relationship with self and others was observed in women, and a stronger tendency to adapt to others' (mostly women) ways was observed in men. But at the same time, strong reminiscences of patriarchy remain in diminished recognition of one's role in relationships and home as routine labor instead of creative work in women.

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## **Advocating for Gender Equality by IAAP: Strengthen International and Intersectional Perspectives on the Psychology of Women**

Prof. Fanny M. Cheung<sup>1</sup>

### **Psychology supports evidence-based advocacy**

On April 25, 2019, the 12<sup>th</sup> International Psychology Day was held at the United Nations with the theme “*The Time is Now: Psychological Contributions to Global Gender Equ(al)ity*”. One important contributions that psychologists can make to promote SDG 5 “achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls” is to provide the evidence and knowledge base in psychology of women and gender. In my experience of promoting gender equality in Asia as well as other parts of the world in the past 35 years, I found showing the data and scientific evidence is much more convincing than rhetoric and slogans in our advocacy.

When advocating for gender equality, we are often asked whether and how women and men are different, what are the basis of these differences, and how do these differences affect life course development and outcomes as well as the status of women and girls. Psychological research has provided some answers to these questions although we still have many unanswered questions.

### **Need for international and intersectional perspectives in psychology**

As an IAAP Fellow and a Chinese psychologist, my career has focused on raising cultural awareness on our knowledge base and contributing rigorous research evidence from a non-Western perspective. My research in personality assessment has challenged the assumption of universal models of personality that may have ignored important emic dimensions that are more culturally relevant (Cheung, van de Vijver, & Leong, 2011). Many teachers of psychology across the world share my constraints in finding textbooks and references that cover culturally relevant materials beyond western societies, in questioning what we are teaching are also valid in our own societies. There is a need for mainstreaming culture as much as mainstreaming gender in psychology (Cheung, 2012).

Do we know how prevalent violence against women is in different parts of the world? Even within the same society, are some groups of women more vulnerable? Why is suicide among women in some countries increasing but decreasing in others? Are psychological interventions adopted in western societies also effective in other parts of the world? Many of these questions require analyses based on multiple intersections of gender, socioeconomic status, age and race at the individual and societal level. In reviewing the available textbooks and handbooks on psychology of women, few have captured the increasing research studies conducted by international psychologists. A number of these books have invited international scholars to contribute to an overview of gender issues in their countries, but the international literature is not well integrated in the broad range of psychology topics.

### **Cambridge International Handbook on Psychology of Women**

When approached by the Cambridge University Press to write an International Handbook on the Psychology of Women a few years ago, I decided to adopt a more broad-based approach to weave the international knowledge into the basic topics of psychology. I invited my collaborator and good friend, Prof. Diane Halpern, former APA President, to join me as co-editor. We drew up a comprehensive list of topics from the general domains in psychology that are critical to understanding the gendered lives of women. We identified an international lead author with expertise in the topic of each chapter and asked her/him to recruit at least one or more coauthors from or familiar with a different region or culture in the world. The authors were asked to include available non-western research in each chapter to fill the gap in the knowledge base. About 100 authors from six continents contributed to this international handbook.

The *Cambridge International Handbook on Psychology of Women* (Cheung & Halpern, forthcoming) is near completion and we expect it to be available by the IAAP 100 Centennial Congress of Applied Psychology in December, 2020. It consists of 39 chapters grouped under six themes:

- The Underpinnings of Sex and Gender and How to Study Them

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- Developmental Perspectives
- Cognitive and Social Factors
- Work and Family Issues
- Inequality and Social Justice
- Health and Well-being

### **In Support of the IAAP Special Project on Gender Equality**

As a member of the IAAP Special Project on Gender Equality, I believe the timely publication of this international handbook on psychology of women fulfils the main aim of the Project and supports the functions of capacity building and dissemination in its activities. We plan to invite some of our handbook chapter authors to organize a few sessions at the 2020 Centennial Congress to share their overview of their topics from a cross-cultural perspective. This way, we can attract more international scholars in contributing gender research in their cultures to the knowledge base so as to strengthen our advocacy for gender equality.

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*Applied Psychology Around the World* (APAW) is our new publication; APAW has an ISSN registration number: 26939-6521. IAAP members are notified when a new issue is made available online. The APAW is only distributed online, with three thematic issues per year.

The purpose of APAW is to share news and reports about applied psychology, through theme-based articles, written by IAAP members. The themes are determined in advance so that one can prepare a paper in relation to the theme of the issue.

The themes of the three upcoming issues and article deadlines are as follows:

### **Vol. 1. Issue 3: IAAP at the United Nations, papers due by July 15<sup>th</sup> (September issue)**

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APAW welcomes submissions of papers addressing the themes of each issue; around a given theme, one can include scientific research projects, data analysis, information of various kinds (books on the topic, conferences, etc.), and practice related to applied psychology around the world on the theme of the concerned issue.

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