Traveling concepts and local usages in Lebanon.
Acknowledgments

The Lebanon Support team would like to particularly thank the following scholars, experts and activists:


Dictionary team

Research and Lebanon Support consultants
Adriana Qubaia
Dalya Mitri

Translator
Georges Freiji

Copy editor
Randa Baas

Research assistants
Sofia Agosta
Elia el-Khazen

Programme coordinator
Bernadette Daou

Content and communication manager
Léa Yammine

Head of research (Editor)
Mazie-Neélie AbiYaghi

Editorial designer and visual artist
Patil Tchilinguirian

Published by Lebanon Support, Beirut, January 2016
With the support of the Arab Resource Collective (ARC)

Lebanon Support © 2016. All rights reserved.
ISBN: 978-9953-460-29-9

The views expressed in this publication are solely those of the author(s), and do not necessarily reflect the views of Lebanon Support, Diakonia, nor its partners.
To Bassem Chit,
To all feminists and activists in Lebanon.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contents</th>
<th>المحتويات</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Foreword</strong></td>
<td>مقدمة</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Words</strong></td>
<td>كلمات</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Aesthetic standards</td>
<td>المعايير الجمالية</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C Cisgender</td>
<td>الهوية الجندريّة المعايير</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F Feminism</td>
<td>النسوية</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G Gender</td>
<td>النوع الاجتماعي/ الجنس</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H Heteronormativity</td>
<td>المعايير حسب النوع الاجتماعي</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hormones</td>
<td>الهرمونات</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hymen</td>
<td>غشاء البكارة</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I Intersectionality</td>
<td>التناقضية</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L LGBTIQ</td>
<td>المثلية والمثليّات وبنتانجات وثنائيات الميل الجنس و المتحولون</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M Masculinity</td>
<td>الذكورية</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MSM: Men who have sex with men</td>
<td>الرجال الذين يمارسون الجنس مع رجال</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N NGOization</td>
<td>الأنجلاردّ (فرض نهج المنظمات غير الحكومية)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O Orgasm</td>
<td>الرعشة الجنسية</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P Patriarchy</td>
<td>النظام البطريركي/ البطريركية</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power</td>
<td>السلطة</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q Queer</td>
<td>الكوير</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R Reproductive Health/Rights</td>
<td>الصحة/ الحقوق الإنجابية</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S Sex and bodily rights</td>
<td>الجنس والحقوق الجسدية</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex roles</td>
<td>الدورات الجنسية</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexuality</td>
<td>الجنسانية</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex work</td>
<td>العمل في الجنس</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social justice</td>
<td>المفاهيم الاجتماعية</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STD / STI</td>
<td>الأمراض المقلوبة جنسياً/ الإصابات المنقولة جنسياً</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V Violence</td>
<td>العنف</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W Work</td>
<td>العمل</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Selected bibliography</strong></td>
<td>مراجع مختارة</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Lebanon Support launched its Gender Equity and Information Network, part of the Civil Society Knowledge Center, in 2013. The main purpose of this knowledge production and sharing initiative is to bring together civil society organizations, researchers, practitioners and experts working together to enhance the development of, and access to knowledge and evidence-based research, information and literature on gender issues and concerns. Research findings as well as countable discussions all seemed to converge on an important knowledge gap in gender literature in Lebanon: a reflection and knowledge production on concepts and terms related to gender in Arabic was quasi non-existent. Practitioner’s initiatives do exist, but seem to either cover specific areas of focus often limited to gender based violence, or - if emerging ones, in an attempt to highlight the diversity of schools of thought, of paradigms as well as activists in Lebanon. They cover established terms and concepts along with selected based on a series of consultations with gender academics, experts and practitioners equivalent and definitions in both Arabic and English. The terms and concepts have been conceptualized more broadly - are displayed as glossaries.

This dictionary, that we have envisioned as a practical bilingual tool based on theoretical debates and empirical findings, aims to achieve at least the following objectives: to gather, in Arabic and English, original multidisciplinary research on gender and sexuality concepts and terms, from a feminist perspective and in a user and reader friendly format. Our aim is to look at the localized usages of the terms and concepts, examining their history and the contexts in which they have emerged, and how these concepts have “traveled”, transnationally, but also between the different spheres of activism, expertise or academia.

The bilingual dictionary is constituted of 25 entries, organized in alphabetical order with their equivalent and definitions in both Arabic and English. The terms and concepts have been selected based on a series of consultations with gender academics, experts and practitioners as well as activists in Lebanon. They cover established terms and concepts along with emerging ones, in an attempt to highlight the diversity of schools of thought, of paradigms and practices.

Each entry or definition proposes a general presentation of the term, a synthetic overview of its inherent debates with a focus on its local usages and understandings. This bilingual dictionary is the result of a long and intense journey for the Lebanon Support team; we thank all experts, activists, and academics who have contributed at all stages of its inception and production and hope it contributes to creating a space and opportunity for discussions among all actors in Lebanon and the region.

أطلق مركز دعم لبنان شبكة معلومات المعايير العربية في العام 2013 كجزء من رواية المعرفة للمجتمع المدني. يشمل الغرض الرئيسي من هذه المبادرة للتنقل والتضب المعنيين في المجتمع بين منظمات المجتمع المدني والناشطات والناشطين والمرأة والأطفال والخبراء. بدأ بدوره في سبيل الوصول إلى المعلومات والمعلومات والمعلومات المستخدمة إلى اللغة العربية من المفاهيم الاجتماعية، وتطوريادي. وقد بدأ أن ينطلق النشاطات الثقافية المختلفة في لبنان، إذ يكاد ي&utm; أن نكون إنجاز معمرًا في أديان النشوء الاجتماعي في لبنان. إن ذلك يتطلب وجود موارد ومهارات مشتركة تتعلق بنشر مفاهيم اللغة العربية.

غير أن نشاطات عدم المراقبة والممارسات مجموعة بالفعل. لكن يبدو أنها لتكمل ميادين هامة متصلة. مع مرتبة معرفة محددة. غالبًا ما تتمركز على الحضور العام في التوجه الاجتماعي، أو أنها تبدو - إذا ما تمت صياغة مفاهيمها بشكل أوسع - كجزء مساعد.

إذا، يهدف هذا الفائز الذي تذكره آنذاك كأداة فعلية للتفاوت اللغوي تستند إلى المعلومات النظرية والنتائج التحليلية إلى تحقيق هذين السيفين وتحديد على الثقافة. وهو جمع الدروس وال伸びات العديدة يحدث للمفاهيم، مما يتضمن مصطلحات اللغة العربية والإنكليزية. من جهة، نظر نسبية، وتتضمن المكتبة لل مواضيع المتصلة باللغة العربية والإنكليزية. وتتضمن معلومات تتعلق بقضايا الأكاديميات والخبراء والمؤسسات والمراكز، للمفاهيم المتصلة في النشوء الاجتماعي، بما في ذلك ما تمثّل في الفضاء العملي للمفاهيم والثقافة. إن هذا العمل هو جريدة لمساحة من النشاطات الاجتماعية، أو الأكاديمية.

تستقبل المفاهيم التنمية العربية للغة في البدائل المعرفية والبديلات التي تمثلها طرق تطوير مصطلحات اللغة العربية. وقد ذُكِّرنا بحاجة اللغة العربية، أو الأكاديمية.

تتمثل المفاهيم المتصلة باللغة العربيّة، أو التلاعب والبحث وال交流 في مجال النشاط الاجتماعي، خاصة عند نشاطات مع النشاطات وال questões في لبنان. وتشمل المفاهيم المعرفية والثقافة الإنسانية منها ومستجدات، في محاولات لتسليط الضوء على تنوع الفكر والمناهج والممارسات.

يقدم كل عمل عرضًا عامًا للمصطلحات ولهجة ضيقة عن المفاهيم المتصلة. لكنه ينمو ثقة هذا الفائز الذي تذكره آنذاك كأداة فعلية للتفاوت اللغوي تستند إلى المعلومات النظرية والنتائج التحليلية إلى تحقيق هذين السيفين وتحديد على الثقافة. وهو جمع الدروس وال伸びات العديدة يحدث للمفاهيم، مما يتضمن مصطلحات اللغة العربية والإنكليزية. من جهة، نظر نسبية، وتتضمن المكتبة لل مواضيع المتصلة باللغة العربية والإنكليزية. وتتضمن معلومات تتعلق بقضايا الأكاديميات والخبراء والمؤسسات والمراكز، للمفاهيم المتصلة في النشوء الاجتماعي، بما في ذلك ما تمثّل في الفضاء العملي للمفاهيم والثقافة. إن هذا العمل هو جريدة لمساحة من النشاطات الاجتماعية، أو الأكاديمية.

يساهم في خلق مساحة وإباحة فرصة لإجراء المحادثات بين الأطراف المتعلقة كلها في لبنان ومنطقة.
Aesthetic standards

Market forces, modern imperialism and notions of beauty derived from the academic field of aesthetics for the past three centuries are shaping global constructions of gendered beauty norms. Feminist scholars and activists have analyzed beauty standards as oppressive, as limiting freedom, and as exercised through previously criticized beauty rituals, suggesting that feminist thinkers and activists connecting “the personal to the political” offer narrow images of masculinity and femininity, with the latter constructed as exercised through previously criticized beauty rituals, suggesting that feminist thinkers and activists connecting “the personal to the political” offer narrow images of masculinity and femininity, with the latter constructed as exercised through previously criticized beauty rituals, suggesting that feminist thinkers and activists connecting “the personal to the political” offer narrow images of masculinity and femininity, with the latter constructed as exercised through previously criticized beauty rituals, suggesting that

Beauty was not a central discussion issue in postwar European and American feminist thought. This changed in the 1990s, as evidenced by the “Beauty Myth” (1991) a bestseller by liberal, “third wave”, feminist journalist Naomi Wolf. The book argued that——what she terms——the “beauty myth” is partly responsible for women’s inability to achieve equality with men and racism. The “beauty myth” functions as a type of social pressure meant to keep women and non-normative bodies subordinate, since models of feminine beauty take time and energy that could be devoted to other forms of self-development.

Internalized beauty standards are involved in the construction of body images and are based on heteronormative gender ideals. They offer narrow images of masculinity and femininity, with the latter constructed as exercised through previously criticized beauty rituals, suggesting that feminist thinkers and activists connecting “the personal to the political” offer narrow images of masculinity and femininity, with the latter constructed as exercised through previously criticized beauty rituals, suggesting that


Aesthetic standards

Market forces, modern imperialism and notions of beauty derived from the academic field of aesthetics for the past three centuries are shaping global constructions of gendered beauty norms. Feminist scholars and activists have analyzed beauty standards as oppressive, as limiting freedom, and conducive to an unhealthy rapport with one’s body. They have also showed that the discussion about beauty, and especially feminine beauty, requires a corresponding “rethoric about feminine ugliness”, a feature which only reaffirms institutionalized or hegemonic aesthetics. Historians have shown how the philosophical discourse of aesthetic judgment – preoccupied with women’s inability to achieve equality with men 4.

beauty, taste and what is beautiful in art – was influenced by Enlightenment notions of racial difference and hierarchy 2.

But the philosophical discourse of aesthetic judgment – preoccupied with women’s inability to achieve equality with men 4.

beauty, taste and what is beautiful in art – was influenced by Enlightenment notions of racial difference and hierarchy 2.

beauty, taste and what is beautiful in art – was influenced by Enlightenment notions of racial difference and hierarchy 2.

beauty, taste and what is beautiful in art – was influenced by Enlightenment notions of racial difference and hierarchy 2.

beauty, taste and what is beautiful in art – was influenced by Enlightenment notions of racial difference and hierarchy 2.

beauty, taste and what is beautiful in art – was influenced by Enlightenment notions of racial difference and hierarchy 2.

beauty, taste and what is beautiful in art – was influenced by Enlightenment notions of racial difference and hierarchy 2.

beauty, taste and what is beautiful in art – was influenced by Enlightenment notions of racial difference and hierarchy 2.

beauty, taste and what is beautiful in art – was influenced by Enlightenment notions of racial difference and hierarchy 2.

beauty, taste and what is beautiful in art – was influenced by Enlightenment notions of racial difference and hierarchy 2.

beauty, taste and what is beautiful in art – was influenced by Enlightenment notions of racial difference and hierarchy 2.

beauty, taste and what is beautiful in art – was influenced by Enlightenment notions of racial difference and hierarchy 2.

beauty, taste and what is beautiful in art – was influenced by Enlightenment notions of racial difference and hierarchy 2.

beauty, taste and what is beautiful in art – was influenced by Enlightenment notions of racial difference and hierarchy 2.

beauty, taste and what is beautiful in art – was influenced by Enlightenment notions of racial difference and hierarchy 2.

beauty, taste and what is beautiful in art – was influenced by Enlightenment notions of racial difference and hierarchy 2.

beauty, taste and what is beautiful in art – was influenced by Enlightenment notions of racial difference and hierarchy 2.

beauty, taste and what is beautiful in art – was influenced by Enlightenment notions of racial difference and hierarchy 2.

beauty, taste and what is beautiful in art – was influenced by Enlightenment notions of racial difference and hierarchy 2.

beauty, taste and what is beautiful in art – was influenced by Enlightenment notions of racial difference and hierarchy 2.

beauty, taste and what is beautiful in art – was influenced by Enlightenment notions of racial difference and hierarchy 2.

beauty, taste and what is beautiful in art – was influenced by Enlightenment notions of racial difference and hierarchy 2.

beauty, taste and what is beautiful in art – was influenced by Enlightenment notions of racial difference and hierarchy 2.

beauty, taste and what is beautiful in art – was influenced by Enlightenment notions of racial difference and hierarchy 2.

beauty, taste and what is beautiful in art – was influenced by Enlightenment notions of racial difference and hierarchy 2.

beauty, taste and what is beautiful in art – was influenced by Enlightenment notions of racial difference and hierarchy 2.

beauty, taste and what is beautiful in art – was influenced by Enlightenment notions of racial difference and hierarchy 2.

beauty, taste and what is beautiful in art – was influenced by Enlightenment notions of racial difference and hierarchy 2.

beauty, taste and what is beautiful in art – was influenced by Enlightenment notions of racial difference and hierarchy 2.

beauty, taste and what is beautiful in art – was influenced by Enlightenment notions of racial difference and hierarchy 2.

beauty, taste and what is beautiful in art – was influenced by Enlightenment notions of racial difference and hierarchy 2.

beauty, taste and what is beautiful in art – was influenced by Enlightenment notions of racial difference and hierarchy 2.

beauty, taste and what is beautiful in art – was influenced by Enlightenment notions of racial difference and hierarchy 2.

beauty, taste and what is beautiful in art – was influenced by Enlightenment notions of racial difference and hierarchy 2.

beauty, taste and what is beautiful in art – was influenced by Enlightenment notions of racial difference and hierarchy 2.

beauty, taste and what is beautiful in art – was influenced by Enlightenment notions of racial difference and hierarchy 2.

beauty, taste and what is beautiful in art – was influenced by Enlightenment notions of racial difference and hierarchy 2.

beauty, taste and what is beautiful in art – was influenced by Enlightenment notions of racial difference and hierarchy 2.

beauty, taste and what is beautiful in art – was influenced by Enlightenment notions of racial difference and hierarchy 2.

beauty, taste and what is beautiful in art – was influenced by Enlightenment notions of racial difference and hierarchy 2.

beauty, taste and what is beautiful in art – was influenced by Enlightenment notions of racial difference and hierarchy 2.

beauty, taste and what is beautiful in art – was influenced by Enlightenment notions of racial difference and hierarchy 2.

beauty, taste and what is beautiful in art – was influenced by Enlightenment notions of racial difference and hierarchy 2.

beauty, taste and what is beautiful in art – was influenced by Enlightenment notions of racial difference and hierarchy 2.

beauty, taste and what is beautiful in art – was influenced by Enlightenment notions of racial difference and hierarchy 2.

beauty, taste and what is beautiful in art – was influenced by Enlightenment notions of racial difference and hierarchy 2.

beauty, taste and what is beautiful in art – was influenced by Enlightenment notions of racial difference and hierarchy 2.

beauty, taste and what is beautiful in art – was influenced by Enlightenment notions of racial difference and hierarchy 2.
Much of the feminist theorizing of “beauty” and “aesthetic standards” has had an implicit white, middle class bias. Questions of race, (dis)ability, fatness, and sexuality further complicate this discussion. Considering a modern history where being black was associated by dominant groups with being ugly. Anne Cheng summarizes the political dilemma: “between a feminist critique of feminine beauty and a casual denial of nonwhite beauty, where does this leave the woman of color? It is unclear whether asserting the prospect of a ‘beautiful woman of color’ would be disruptive of racist discourse or complicit with gender stereotypes.”

In certain contexts, feminist activists have opposed diets arguing they are viewed as a charm tool for the ‘beautiful woman of color.’ They have also challenged the notion of a ‘beautiful woman of color’ with more curvy bodies. However, the new field of intersectionality has challenged the traditional feminist activism that directly challenges binary and oppressive standards of beauty. Consider a study of Middle Eastern women’s rights activist Josée Johnston’s work. Johnston, along with Judith Taylor, wrote “Feminist Consumerism and Fat Activists: A Comparative Study of Grassroots Activism and the Dove Real Beauty Campaign,” Signs, Vol. 32, No. 4, 2006, p. 945.


In Lebanon too: fairness, thinness, ultra-feminine features, make-up has been constructed since the 19th century around ideals of European facial hair. The Middle Eastern women’s rights activist Josée Johnston, Judith Taylor, wrote “Feminist Consumerism and Fat Activists: A Comparative Study of Grassroots Activism and the Dove Real Beauty Campaign,” Signs, Vol. 32, No. 4, 2006, p. 945.

The performance of femininity and disciplined body hair are unspoken rules for the appropriate (classed) touches Lebanon too: fairness, thinness, ultra-feminine features, make-up has been constructed since the 19th century around ideals of European facial hair. The Middle Eastern women’s rights activist Josée Johnston, Judith Taylor, wrote “Feminist Consumerism and Fat Activists: A Comparative Study of Grassroots Activism and the Dove Real Beauty Campaign,” Signs, Vol. 32, No. 4, 2006, p. 945.

In Lebanon too: fairness, thinness, ultra-feminine features, make-up has been constructed since the 19th century around ideals of European facial hair. The Middle Eastern women’s rights activist Josée Johnston, Judith Taylor, wrote “Feminist Consumerism and Fat Activists: A Comparative Study of Grassroots Activism and the Dove Real Beauty Campaign,” Signs, Vol. 32, No. 4, 2006, p. 945.

In Lebanon too: fairness, thinness, ultra-feminine features, make-up has been constructed since the 19th century around ideals of European facial hair. The Middle Eastern women’s rights activist Josée Johnston, Judith Taylor, wrote “Feminist Consumerism and Fat Activists: A Comparative Study of Grassroots Activism and the Dove Real Beauty Campaign,” Signs, Vol. 32, No. 4, 2006, p. 945.

In Lebanon too: fairness, thinness, ultra-feminine features, make-up has been constructed since the 19th century around ideals of European facial hair. The Middle Eastern women’s rights activist Josée Johnston, Judith Taylor, wrote “Feminist Consumerism and Fat Activists: A Comparative Study of Grassroots Activism and the Dove Real Beauty Campaign,” Signs, Vol. 32, No. 4, 2006, p. 945.

In Lebanon too: fairness, thinness, ultra-feminine features, make-up has been constructed since the 19th century around ideals of European facial hair. The Middle Eastern women’s rights activist Josée Johnston, Judith Taylor, wrote “Feminist Consumerism and Fat Activists: A Comparative Study of Grassroots Activism and the Dove Real Beauty Campaign,” Signs, Vol. 32, No. 4, 2006, p. 945.

In Lebanon too: fairness, thinness, ultra-feminine features, make-up has been constructed since the 19th century around ideals of European facial hair. The Middle Eastern women’s rights activist Josée Johnston, Judith Taylor, wrote “Feminist Consumerism and Fat Activists: A Comparative Study of Grassroots Activism and the Dove Real Beauty Campaign,” Signs, Vol. 32, No. 4, 2006, p. 945.

In Lebanon too: fairness, thinness, ultra-feminine features, make-up has been constructed since the 19th century around ideals of European facial hair. The Middle Eastern women’s rights activist Josée Johnston, Judith Taylor, wrote “Feminist Consumerism and Fat Activists: A Comparative Study of Grassroots Activism and the Dove Real Beauty Campaign,” Signs, Vol. 32, No. 4, 2006, p. 945.
Cisgender is a relatively new term that was popularized only in the last twenty years. Thus, the mainstream definition of cis-gender is as follows: a cis-gender person is someone whose gender identity matches the sex he or she was assigned at birth; meaning, a person born as a female and who identifies as a woman is cisgender. The term is sometimes replaced by "cis-sexual" which specifically refers to one's sex identity matching one's sex assigned at birth; meaning, a person born as a female and who identifies as a woman is cis-gender.


Cisgender or cis is a relatively new term that was popularized only in the last twenty years. Thus, the mainstream definition of cis-gender is as follows: a cis-gender person is someone whose gender identity matches the sex he or she was assigned at birth; meaning, a person born as a female and who identifies as a woman is cisgender. The term is sometimes replaced by "cis-sexual" which specifically refers to one's sex identity matching one's sex assigned at birth; meaning, a person born as a female and who identifies as a woman is cis-gender.

The political power in using cisgender as an identity category for the majority of the population is to reveal the inherent and largely invisible privilege of possessing a normative gender identity and appearance for those who do. Oftentimes positions of privilege remain unnamed and thus become normalized and transparent. Possessing cisgender privileges include, for example, navigating services and spaces such as public bathrooms without the threat of questioning or policing, or navigating checkpoints with a lower likelihood of arrest due to non-normative gender appearance or mismatch of the stated sex on one's identity card and their gendered self-presentation. Navigating daily life in Lebanon for visibly trans* women poses a higher risk than for persons with a normative gender appearance (cisgender), some of this difficulty lies in the fact that these women are more harassed and questioned specifically due to their gender identities and self-presentation.

Despite the term's important political intervention in naming the norm and specifying it, it is critiqued for establishing a falsely coherent binary between trans* and non-trans*. Further, this term has been critiqued for replicating the gender binary, and for reaffirming essentialist positions through building on an assumption that one's gender identity can be static, stable or coherent (meaning that a person possesses a cisgender position that has not changing since their birth) opposed to their gender being a result of performative embodied practices that are shaped by class, race, and a range of temporal factors. In this sense, the transgender versus cisgender binary functions similarly to the heterosexual-homosexual binary: while it is politically important to offset the marginalization and the associated
violence against otherness by making the norm specific, the same imperative risks erasing a plethora of expressions that fall between the two ends of an allegedly coherent binary.

The term remains relatively unused in mainstream Lebanese outlets that are concerned with gender issues, perhaps owing to the fact that trans* issues, communities, and activism are not structured the same way as they are in the United States and Western European countries. Transgender persons – who use the label “trans”, “transsexual”, “shemale” and “ladyboy” when speaking about themselves or others – often use “normal” to describe a non-trans person, and in some cases also using “straight” to communicate the same meaning (as in, a normative gender identity and not only a sexual orientation). Yet, some local uses of the term in activist circles also points to an alteration in the meaning, wherein cisgender is employed as a slur when referring to straight feminine women who display a “normative” gender presentation.

Despite the new introduction of the term in certain activist and academic circles in Lebanon who have access to feminist literature in those countries, the term is largely still unused in mainstream Lebanese outlets that are concerned with gender issues, perhaps owing to the fact that trans* issues, communities, and activism are not structured the same way as they are in the United States and Western European countries.

Transgender persons – who use the label “trans”, “transsexual”, “shemale” and “ladyboy” when speaking about themselves or others – often use “normal” to describe a non-trans person, and in some cases also using “straight” to communicate the same meaning (as in, a normative gender identity and not only a sexual orientation). Yet, some local uses of the term in activist circles also points to an alteration in the meaning, wherein cisgender is employed as a slur when referring to straight feminine women who display a “normative” gender presentation.
“Feminism” is an umbrella-term for an array of global social movements and schools of thought with significant political impact since the early 19th century. Historically, different feminist movements have been shaped by (and shaped) political ideologies such as liberalism, socialism and, recently, Islamism. These multiple feminisms converged around agendas for action against gender oppression, for gender equality and increasingly nowadays, sexual liberation.

From the perspective of social movements, a significant development in the past two decades is the global spread of the Anglo-American version of liberal feminism through international organizations such as the UN, and its institutionalization through NGOization (see NGOization). At the same time, autonomous or semi-autonomous feminist movements that are based on more radical or local critiques, have also witnessed a certain level of institutionalization through NGOization (see NGOization). At the same time, an array of NGO’s have been founded in Lebanon, the history of feminist movements can be – and has been – described as a way of understanding activism, social movements, and queer persons (see patriarchy).

A canonized way of narrating the history of modern feminism in Europe and the United States is also to divide it into three waves: the “first wave” spans the end of the 19th to the middle of the 20th, the “second wave” unfolded in the 1960s and 1970s and the “third wave” began in the 1990s onwards. In the 1960s, distinct autonomous and feminist theories were born out of competing opinions about the manifestations of oppression and discrimination as well as about the best ways to address them. According to this meta-narrative, the main currents were: liberal feminism (claiming that gender inequality is based on cultural beliefs and social constructs that are easy to change), Marxist feminism (linking femininity to the class structure), radical feminism and lesbian feminism. Radical feminism critiques the violence of male domination through familial structures and control on sexuality, and lesbian feminism has been said to have brought in an analysis of heterosexuality as a tool of patriarchy used to dominate women and queer persons (see patriarchy).

In Lebanon, the history of feminist movements can be – and has been – of great importance. The history of feminist movements in Lebanon has been characterized by its institutionalization through NGOization (see NGOization). At the same time, autonomous or semi-autonomous feminist movements that are based on more radical or local critiques, have also witnessed a certain level of institutionalization through NGOization (see NGOization). At the same time, an array of NGO’s have been founded in Lebanon, the history of feminist movements can be – and has been – described as a way of understanding activism, social movements, and queer persons (see patriarchy).

In Lebanon, the history of feminist movements can be – and has been – of great importance. The history of feminist movements in Lebanon has been characterized by its institutionalization through NGOization (see NGOization). At the same time, autonomous or semi-autonomous feminist movements that are based on more radical or local critiques, have also witnessed a certain level of institutionalization through NGOization (see NGOization). At the same time, an array of NGO’s have been founded in Lebanon, the history of feminist movements can be – and has been – described as a way of understanding activism, social movements, and queer persons (see patriarchy).
In the year 1943 and throughout the post-colonial era, feminism emerged as a significant challenge to the traditional role of women and their position in society. The first wave of feminism, which occurred in the early 19th century, was tied to the national struggle for independence in Lebanon. The second wave, which emerged in the post-civil war era and in a rapidly NGO-ized context, ended up being discarded since it did not fit neatly into the three waves of the 20th century grassroots women’s activism and militancy occurring between waves. This critique can also be applied to the “second wave” feminism occurring “between waves.”

These groups, including the women’s rights movement in Lebanon, tackled the social role of gender, the struggle against male oppression and patriarchy, and concentrated on claims for women’s political rights as well as questions of sexual identity, bodily rights, and the right of women to pass on their citizenship. These movements also stressed the need to relate more to local contexts and drew heavily on postcolonial feminism, especially for the period of the civil war. They argued that in “first wave” feminism, the rise of national identity was critical to the development of women’s rights, and that the second generation of feminists expressed their ideas and demands within an emerging Arab left, and thus within the broader socialist movements in the 1960s. The third wave emerged in a post-civil war era and in a rapidly NGO-ized context. The Conference on Women’s Rights to Rojava, ends up being dismissed since it does not fit neatly into the three waves system of categorization. They argued that in “first wave” feminism, the rise of national identity was critical to the development of women’s rights, and that the second generation of feminists expressed their ideas and demands within an emerging Arab left, and thus within the broader socialist movements in the 1960s. The third wave emerged in a post-civil war era and in a rapidly NGO-ized context. The Conference on Women’s Rights to Rojava, ends up being dismissed since it does not fit neatly into the three waves system of categorization. They argued that in “first wave” feminism, the rise of national identity was critical to the development of women’s rights, and that the second generation of feminists expressed their ideas and demands within an emerging Arab left, and thus within the broader socialist movements in the 1960s. The third wave emerged in a post-civil war era and in a rapidly NGO-ized context.

The feminist movement that shaped the most recent, fourth, wave in Lebanon tackled the social role of gender, the struggle against male oppression and patriarchy, and isrooted in local LGBT activism (see LGBT). These groups, activists, and NGOs raised issues that were not addressed previously such as questions of sexual identity, bodily rights, women’s rights to pass on to their future generations, and the need to relate more to local contexts and drew heavily on postcolonial feminism, as well as academic debates on gender and sexuality (see Sexuality).
Feminist activism in Lebanon – whether through NGOs, underground or above ground queer and feminist groups, or through public protests – continues especially in the wake of the Arab revolts and the subsequent political conditions. Various calls for the end to the patriarchal-sectarian system persist, for example through the most recent organizing of a feminist bloc as part of the protests taking place against corruption and the garbage crisis in Beirut. The bloc is not only bringing to light how the corrupted sectarian system is based on patriarchal discrimination – evident for example in the group’s adoption of slogans such as “the patriarchal system is a killer” – but is also challenging sexual harassment and violence against women within the garbage crisis movement itself and its street protests.

Another critique to mainstream North American and European feminism has been branded by Stephanie Latte Abdallah as a “post-ideological” movement 11. Valentine Moghadam in the 1990s, this form of women’s activism has been branded by Stephanie Latte Abdallah, as a “post-ideological” movement 11.

Feminism entails including ethnicity, race and an awareness of colonial pasts and postcolonial contexts in feminist knowledge production. In this sense, feminist approaches have been a central foundation to postcolonial theory. They aim to highlight the effect of colonialism and racism, and ultimately to end an imperialist, universalizing concept of sisterhood among women.

Postcolonial academic feminism has also exposed the inability of white middle class feminism to properly hear the experiences of women living in postcolonial environments 7. For example, in her article on the topic, Chandra Talpade Mohanty pointed to the transformation of so-called “Third World” women within feminist discourses into “objects” of representation, which enables European and North American feminists to turn themselves into self-representing “subjects”, clearly maintaining unequal power relations 8.

According to Misha Kavka, post-feminism denotes an abandonment of women by mainstream North American and European feminism “redefines universalism itself” 13. Another critique to mainstream North American and European feminism has been branded by Stephanie Latte Abdallah, as a “post-ideological” movement 11.

Feminist activism in Lebanon – whether through NGOs, underground or above ground queer and feminist groups, or through public protests – continues especially in the wake of the Arab revolts and the subsequent political conditions. Various calls for the end to the patriarchal-sectarian system persist, for example through the most recent organizing of a feminist bloc as part of the protests taking place against corruption and the garbage crisis in Beirut. The bloc is not only bringing to light how the corrupted sectarian system is based on patriarchal discrimination – evident for example in the group’s adoption of slogans such as “the patriarchal system is a killer” – but is also challenging sexual harassment and violence against women within the garbage crisis movement itself and its street protests.

Another critique to mainstream North American and European feminism has been branded by Stephanie Latte Abdallah, as a “post-ideological” movement 11.
Until the middle of the 20th century, “gender” was used to name only the grammatical category that classifies nouns into feminine, masculine and neuter or distinguishes animate from inanimate objects. Currently, “gender” is used when referring to social identities such as “woman”, “trans”, “man” or “other”. Although the same word “jins” is used to denote both gender and sex in Arabic (as well as “sexual act”), the modern differentiation between sex (male-female; or “other”) and gender (man-woman; or “trans”) exists today. 

In English, a common way to define gender is by distinguishing it from sex, whereas sex is understood as biological, gender is socially constructed. Overall, the differentiation between biological sex and constructed gender is problematic. Recent research has argued that so-called “biological sex” is also gendered. For instance, Anne Fausto-Stelling points out that there is no evidence in biology that suggests that sex is a spectrum of possibilities, rather than a solid male-female binary, which is also argued by Intersex persons. Assumptions about gender have shaped scientific research so that a male-female binary system is imposed on a far greater variety of configurations in humans, animals and plants.

Debates about “gender” (and its relation to “sex” and sexuality) are central to feminist theory. The term “gender” was popularized in the 1970s in the United States and Europe in order to combat biological determinism – claims that sex (male-female; or “other”) exists.

In the North American academic, Maxian feminists such as Shulamith Firestone and Gayle Rubin claimed that “gender” referred to social conceptions about masculinity and femininity that built on an exaggeration of biological differences between women and men. They defined “gender” as a historically variable social construction. Their insights were incorporated into psychoanalytical approaches and constructivist theories which highlight the importance of early childhood socialization for subordinating women to men and creating normative masculinities and femininities. All three stances support the idea that women and men exist as groups and that certain experiences and social expectations bind some persons into the category “women”. Because they have been termed “gender realist” approaches. The political implications of the realist definition of “gender” is that claims for gender
Gender can also be understood as performance. Most famously, Judith Butler has argued that gender must be “repeated” continuously in order to exist. She has argued that gender must be “repeated” continuously in order to exist. Gender can also be understood as performance. Most famously, Judith Butler has argued that gender must be “repeated” continuously in order to exist. Gender can also be understood as performance. Most famously, Judith Butler has argued that gender must be “repeated” continuously in order to exist. Gender can also be understood as performance. Most famously, Judith Butler has argued that gender must be “repeated” continuously in order to exist. Gender can also be understood as performance. Most famously, Judith Butler has argued that gender must be “repeated” continuously in order to exist. Gender can also be understood as performance. Most famously, Judith Butler has argued that gender must be “repeated” continuously in order to exist. Gender can also be understood as performance. Most famously, Judith Butler has argued that gender must be “repeated” continuously in order to exist. Gender can also be understood as performance. Most famously, Judith Butler has argued that gender must be “repeated” continuously in order to exist. Gender can also be understood as performance. Most famously, Judith Butler has argued that gender must be “repeated” continuously in order to exist.
The term heteronormativity is composed of both terms “heterosexual(ity)” and “normativity”, and refers to a social order in which heterosexuality is preferred, celebrated, and therefore normalized as a default sexual system. In this system, heterosexuality is institutionalized in social, legal, political and cultural aspects, thereby leading to the privileging of heterosexuality and the marginalization and stigmatization of non-heterosexual practices and relationships. The term was first coined in 1991 by Michael Warner and has become a central concept in Queer Theory (See Queer Theory) namely because it reveals heterosexuality not only as an already-assumed sexual orientation, but also as a sociopolitical structure that organizes desires, practices, and persons unequally.

Crucially, the system of heteronormativity relies on maintaining the gender and sex binary (male/female, man/woman) as social constructs that classify sex, identity, and gender roles into either sex, and in a hierarchical manner (i.e. male as superior to female). By reaffirming the gender binary, heterosexuality is rendered normative, and sexual orientation becomes understood only as attraction between the two opposite genders/sexes. In this sense, the heteronormative system permeates and organizes all walks of life: from the ideal of a nuclear heterosexual family, to the institution of marriage, to acceptable gender roles, to the enforcement of sex segregation in schools, etc. The impact is the marginalization of all non-normative genders and sexualities.

In the United States and Western Europe, a history of a violent heteronormativity is evident in the forced heterosexualization of society, including through medical interventions such as forced lobotomies and electroshocks for persons identified as homosexual prevalent in the 1930s, 40s and 50s. Today, despite changes in institutional norms, several heterosexist policies continue to marginalize LGBTQ-identified persons, such as the denial of marriage equality and same-sex adoption, continuous policing of non-normative genders and persons, and the identification of persons as sexual converts through “conversion therapy” practices from U.S. evangelicals to countries like Uganda that are taking new and severe measures in criminalizing same-sex attraction and homophobia.

Heteronormativity also informs LGBTQ politics, rights, and demands. A prime example are the top demands from the gay rights movement in the U.S. which mirror heteronormative structures: the right to marriage to form a nuclear family, the right to adopt children, and the right to serve in the military. The newly coined term “homonormativity” from theorist Lisa Duggan aims to encapsulate the previously unacknowledged social and political structures that facilitate the marginalization and stigmatization of LGBTQ identities and practices.
to conceptualize such influence of heteronormative constructs (monogamy, procreation) on homosexual identities and politics, which often come at the expense of marginalizing other groups and individuals, especially trans* demands such as access to hormone therapy and overall proper medical care, continuous police harassment, and killings of trans* women of color. Additional related concepts include cis-heteronormativity, which refers to a set of norms “that favor cis-gendered self-identification and opposite-sex orientation” (see Cisgender).

Examples of heteronormativity are prevalent across the region and in Lebanon. For example, the favoring of the heterosexual “family” as the main social unit of Lebanese society structures desires in a way that clearly favors inter-sectarian marital heterosexual identity (as opposed to cross-sectarian, non-marital heterosexual, or civil marriage, which is currently not possible in Lebanon). Lastly, homonormative attitudes or self-presentation can also be observed among certain practices by gay and queer men in Beirut. Terms such as “straight acting” or “masculine looking” show a preference for a form of heteronormative masculinity which eases daily navigation of the heterosexual structure at work. Likewise, the sub-category of “bear” which is used among some circles of queer and gay men in Beirut falls into ways of negotiating one’s manhood in accordance with societal heteronormativity.
Hormones

Hormones are chemical substances produced by glands for the purpose of regulating the body's physiological and behavioral activities. Sex hormones are essential for the development of the reproductive system as well as some secondary physical and bodily characteristics. Sexual hormones are usually divided into three main classes: estrogen (estradiol, estrone, estanol), progesterone (progesterone) and androgens (testosterone, androstenedione). All bodies have these hormones, but in different amounts. Hormonal levels change either through regular bodily functions including puberty, menstruation, pregnancy, menopause, changes in digestive functions, and hormonal irregularities such as the Polycystic Ovarian Syndrome (PCOS) which is present in nearly 10% of women, among other factors.

Several common social misunderstandings and myths surround hormones. For example, sex hormones do not only regulate sexual and reproductive functions but also have multiple functions in the body including for example digestive roles and body fluid regulation. Further, hormones are often wrongly used to justify women's difference from men, and their subsequent dismissal from positions of power and public life. One of the ways in which this is evident is the social use of the Premenstrual Syndrome (PMS) as a tool for questioning women's competencies, abilities, and opposing opinions. Such attitudes are also practiced in the medical field, where feminist medical practitioners have long argued that classifying PMS as an illness is wrong and is a tool for questioning women's competencies, abilities, and opposing opinions.

In feminist studies, hormones fall into a wider debate over the social use and misuse of biological sex difference(s), and the long history of justifying and misuse of biological sex difference(s), and the long history of justifying

For example, sex hormones do not only regulate sexual and reproductive functions but also have multiple functions in the body including for example digestive roles and body fluid regulation. Further, hormones are often wrongly used to justify women’s difference from men, and their subsequent dismissal from positions of power and public life. One of the ways in which this is evident is the social use of the Premenstrual Syndrome (PMS) as a tool for questioning women’s competencies, abilities, and opposing opinions. Such attitudes are also practiced in the medical field, where feminist medical practitioners have long argued that classifying PMS as an illness is wrong and is a tool for questioning women’s competencies, abilities, and opposing opinions.

In feminist studies, hormones fall into a wider debate over the social use and misuse of biological sex difference(s), and the long history of justifying

\begin{enumerate}
\item Hormonal levels can also be altered through medical interventions such as in the case of hormonal therapy, birth control and the contraception pill, infertility treatment, and hormone replacement therapy (in menopause, but also in the case of transgender persons who would like to transition). Transgender persons’ access to hormone therapy is legal and possible in Lebanon, but it requires a number of visits to numerous doctors first which can render it inaccessible due to the associated high costs. Thus, some transgender persons resort to buying hormones in the informal market and self-administering them.

\item Transgender persons’ access to hormone therapy is legal and possible in Lebanon, but it requires a number of visits to numerous doctors first which can render it inaccessible due to the associated high costs. Thus, some transgender persons resort to buying hormones in the informal market and self-administering them.

\end{enumerate}

\begin{itemize}
\item Hormonal levels can also be altered through medical interventions such as in the case of hormonal therapy, birth control and the contraception pill, infertility treatment, and hormone replacement therapy (in menopause, but also in the case of transgender persons who would like to transition). Transgender persons’ access to hormone therapy is legal and possible in Lebanon, but it requires a number of visits to numerous doctors first which can render it inaccessible due to the associated high costs. Thus, some transgender persons resort to buying hormones in the informal market and self-administering them.

\item Transgender persons’ access to hormone therapy is legal and possible in Lebanon, but it requires a number of visits to numerous doctors first which can render it inaccessible due to the associated high costs. Thus, some transgender persons resort to buying hormones in the informal market and self-administering them.

\end{itemize}

\begin{itemize}
\item Hormonal levels can also be altered through medical interventions such as in the case of hormonal therapy, birth control and the contraception pill, infertility treatment, and hormone replacement therapy (in menopause, but also in the case of transgender persons who would like to transition). Transgender persons’ access to hormone therapy is legal and possible in Lebanon, but it requires a number of visits to numerous doctors first which can render it inaccessible due to the associated high costs. Thus, some transgender persons resort to buying hormones in the informal market and self-administering them.

\item Transgender persons’ access to hormone therapy is legal and possible in Lebanon, but it requires a number of visits to numerous doctors first which can render it inaccessible due to the associated high costs. Thus, some transgender persons resort to buying hormones in the informal market and self-administering them.

\end{itemize}

\begin{itemize}
\item Hormonal levels can also be altered through medical interventions such as in the case of hormonal therapy, birth control and the contraception pill, infertility treatment, and hormone replacement therapy (in menopause, but also in the case of transgender persons who would like to transition). Transgender persons’ access to hormone therapy is legal and possible in Lebanon, but it requires a number of visits to numerous doctors first which can render it inaccessible due to the associated high costs. Thus, some transgender persons resort to buying hormones in the informal market and self-administering them.

\item Transgender persons’ access to hormone therapy is legal and possible in Lebanon, but it requires a number of visits to numerous doctors first which can render it inaccessible due to the associated high costs. Thus, some transgender persons resort to buying hormones in the informal market and self-administering them.

\end{itemize}

\begin{itemize}
\item Hormonal levels can also be altered through medical interventions such as in the case of hormonal therapy, birth control and the contraception pill, infertility treatment, and hormone replacement therapy (in menopause, but also in the case of transgender persons who would like to transition). Transgender persons’ access to hormone therapy is legal and possible in Lebanon, but it requires a number of visits to numerous doctors first which can render it inaccessible due to the associated high costs. Thus, some transgender persons resort to buying hormones in the informal market and self-administering them.

\item Transgender persons’ access to hormone therapy is legal and possible in Lebanon, but it requires a number of visits to numerous doctors first which can render it inaccessible due to the associated high costs. Thus, some transgender persons resort to buying hormones in the informal market and self-administering them.

\end{itemize}

\begin{itemize}
\item Hormonal levels can also be altered through medical interventions such as in the case of hormonal therapy, birth control and the contraception pill, infertility treatment, and hormone replacement therapy (in menopause, but also in the case of transgender persons who would like to transition). Transgender persons’ access to hormone therapy is legal and possible in Lebanon, but it requires a number of visits to numerous doctors first which can render it inaccessible due to the associated high costs. Thus, some transgender persons resort to buying hormones in the informal market and self-administering them.

\item Transgender persons’ access to hormone therapy is legal and possible in Lebanon, but it requires a number of visits to numerous doctors first which can render it inaccessible due to the associated high costs. Thus, some transgender persons resort to buying hormones in the informal market and self-administering them.

\end{itemize}

\begin{itemize}
\item Hormonal levels can also be altered through medical interventions such as in the case of hormonal therapy, birth control and the contraception pill, infertility treatment, and hormone replacement therapy (in menopause, but also in the case of transgender persons who would like to transition). Transgender persons’ access to hormone therapy is legal and possible in Lebanon, but it requires a number of visits to numerous doctors first which can render it inaccessible due to the associated high costs. Thus, some transgender persons resort to buying hormones in the informal market and self-administering them.

\item Transgender persons’ access to hormone therapy is legal and possible in Lebanon, but it requires a number of visits to numerous doctors first which can render it inaccessible due to the associated high costs. Thus, some transgender persons resort to buying hormones in the informal market and self-administering them.

\end{itemize}

\begin{itemize}
\item Hormonal levels can also be altered through medical interventions such as in the case of hormonal therapy, birth control and the contraception pill, infertility treatment, and hormone replacement therapy (in menopause, but also in the case of transgender persons who would like to transition). Transgender persons’ access to hormone therapy is legal and possible in Lebanon, but it requires a number of visits to numerous doctors first which can render it inaccessible due to the associated high costs. Thus, some transgender persons resort to buying hormones in the informal market and self-administering them.

\item Transgender persons’ access to hormone therapy is legal and possible in Lebanon, but it requires a number of visits to numerous doctors first which can render it inaccessible due to the associated high costs. Thus, some transgender persons resort to buying hormones in the informal market and self-administering them.

\end{itemize}

\begin{itemize}
\item Hormonal levels can also be altered through medical interventions such as in the case of hormonal therapy, birth control and the contraception pill, infertility treatment, and hormone replacement therapy (in menopause, but also in the case of transgender persons who would like to transition). Transgender persons’ access to hormone therapy is legal and possible in Lebanon, but it requires a number of visits to numerous doctors first which can render it inaccessible due to the associated high costs. Thus, some transgender persons resort to buying hormones in the informal market and self-administering them.

\item Transgender persons’ access to hormone therapy is legal and possible in Lebanon, but it requires a number of visits to numerous doctors first which can render it inaccessible due to the associated high costs. Thus, some transgender persons resort to buying hormones in the informal market and self-administering them.

\end{itemize}
Hormones

In other words, analyzing the role hormones play in the human body and behavior should take into account the importance of one's environment and socialization as central factors that shape these functions, as well as realize that our scientific lens is always potentially biased.

In Lebanese colloquial sayings, a hormonal woman is not in control of her emotions, of the way she acts, and is unable to take rational decisions. The saying is also sometimes employed to describe and shame women who express their sexual desires openly. Such sexist framings sustain their alleged validity by invoking popularized arguments of biological sex difference which permeate mainstream discourses. This includes for example the use of the highly problematic and highly transnational term hystasia (and its derivative in Arabic "مْهَسـترة") for centuries, hystasia was a frequent diagnosis in Europe that was used to refer to several psychological disorders predominantly in women with varying symptoms including nervousness, irritability, and even sexual desire. The concept derives from the Greek term of hystera, which means Uterus. It may refer to the myth of the "wandering womb" or the "floating uterus" in the female body, which was problematically considered as the source of physiological and psychological pathologies throughout medical history.

The widespread diagnosis claimed to offer evidence about women’s mental instability which was then used to dismiss them as unequal. In Lebanon, hystasia is still diagnosed by mental health practitioners in women who are accused of displaying too much emotion, without questioning the gendered history and sexist undertones behind women's pathologization. Recently, feminist cultural re-appropriation emerged using the term to describe the physiological manifestation of oppression thereby a space for resistance and for reaffirming that hystasia is "patriarchy's disease enacted in women's bodies".

In the context of the "Second Wave" Feminist Cultural Re-appropriation, the term "hystasia" is being re-used, particularly in Lebanon, as an attempt to describe and shame women who are accused of displaying too much emotion, without questioning the gendered history and sexist undertones behind women's pathologization. Recently, feminist cultural re-appropriation emerged using the term to describe the physiological manifestation of oppression thereby a space for resistance and for reaffirming that hystasia is "patriarchy's disease enacted in women's bodies."
Erthymologically, the hymen is an elastic skin tissue that partially surrounds the vaginal opening, for this reason it is also referred to as the hymenal ring. The hymen’s shape, colour, and size varies significantly from person to person and is frequently non-existent. If present, the hymen is rarely an intact membrane. It is typically torn in different patterns, and consists of various folds of skin, which in turn allow for the prevention of menstrual blood. In rare cases the hymen can have a shape that prevents the outflow of menstrual blood, which may then require medical intervention. Biologically, the hymen does not serve any known or vital purpose for the body 1.

Because of its partial tears and elasticity, the hymen can allow for the insertion of tampons or menstrual cups without necessarily causing major changes to its structure (this differs from person to person). The hymen changes shape during puberty and can become weaker, stretched or worn out with activities such as exercise, masturbation, sexual intercourse and childbirth. Yet, its elasticity can also allow it to retain its shape even after penetrative activities, depending, again, on the person’s body. Thus, the lack of an identifiable hymen is just as inaccurate of a signifier of penetrative sexual intercourse’s occurrence as the presence of a hymen, and it cannot determine whether a person is or has been sexually active 2.

Despite this inconstancy, the hymen has been and continues to be considered as the physical representative of virginity for women socially. In patriarchal societies, its presence is required as proof of a woman’s absence from sexual intercourse with men, which is thereby used to represent her purity and suitability for marriage, as well as her family’s honour. In some cases women seek out “restorative surgeries” through which they “re-sew” the hymenal folds to regain their “virginity.” Clearly then, the hymen has become a powerful tool to discredit women socially and politically. For example, the Egyptian regime performed “virginity tests” on women protesters during the Egyptian revolution to discredit them and their politics. For example, the Egyptian regime performed “virginity tests” on women protesters during the Egyptian revolution to discredit them and their politics. For example, the Egyptian regime performed “virginity tests” on women protesters during the Egyptian revolution to discredit them and their politics.


2 Ibid.


9 Ibid.


11 Ibid.

The hymen is an elastic skin tissue that partially surrounds the vaginal opening, for this reason it is also referred to as the hymenal ring. The hymen’s shape, colour, and size varies significantly from person to person and is frequently non-existent. If present, the hymen is rarely an intact membrane. It is typically torn in different patterns, and consists of various folds of skin, which in turn allow for the prevention of menstrual blood. In rare cases the hymen can have a shape that prevents the outflow of menstrual blood, which may then require medical intervention. Biologically, the hymen does not serve any known or vital purpose for the body.

Because of its partial tears and elasticity, the hymen can allow for the insertion of tampons or menstrual cups without necessarily causing major changes to its structure (this differs from person to person). The hymen changes shape during puberty and can become weaker, stretched or worn out with activities such as exercise, masturbation, sexual intercourse and childbirth. Yet, its elasticity can also allow it to retain its shape even after penetrative activities, depending, again, on the person’s body. Thus, the lack of an identifiable hymen is just as inaccurate of a signifier of penetrative sexual intercourse’s occurrence as the presence of a hymen, and it cannot determine whether a person is or has been sexually active.

Despite this inconstancy, the hymen has been and continues to be considered as the physical representative of virginity for women socially. In patriarchal societies, its presence is required as proof of a woman’s absence from sexual intercourse with men, which is thereby used to represent her purity and suitability for marriage, as well as her family’s honour. In some cases women seek out “restorative surgeries” through which they “re-sew” the hymenal folds to regain their “virginity.” Clearly then, the hymen has become a powerful tool to discredit women socially and politically. For example, the Egyptian regime performed “virginity tests” on women protesters during the Egyptian revolution to discredit them and their families as dishonorable persons.

Patriarchal legislators continue to implement laws that reaffirm the hymen’s centrality to women’s virginity and serve to police their bodies and sexuality. For example, the Lebanese penal code differentiates between women who come to the survivor's virginity status when applying this article, the courts usually order or require the performance of medical virginity tests and do not rely.
The patriarchal myth that every female is born with an intact hymen is also often accompanied with the myth that a woman’s first penetrative vaginal intercourse necessarily leads to bleeding due to the “rupturing” of the hymen. While bleeding can occur as a result of tears in the hymenal tissue’s stretching, it is also often caused by trauma to the vaginal opening and walls, due to being tense (out of fear of painful intercourse), lack of lubrication, or too forceful or early penetration. Therefore, the anticipation of vaginal bleeding on the survivor’s testimony. Other reasons may include: lack of consent, the rapist or the doctor can prove a woman’s virginity, but not her; they also limit the survivor’s capacity to prove the crime or have it be taken seriously.

The Swedish Association for Sexuality Education (RFSU), op. cit.

The patriarchal myth that every female is born with an intact hymen is also often accompanied with the myth that a woman’s first penetrative vaginal intercourse necessarily leads to bleeding due to the “rupturing” of the hymen. While bleeding can occur as a result of tears in the hymenal tissue’s stretching, it is also often caused by trauma to the vaginal opening and walls, due to being tense (out of fear of painful intercourse), lack of lubrication, or too forceful or early penetration. Therefore, the anticipation of vaginal bleeding on the survivor’s testimony. Other reasons may include: lack of consent, the rapist or the doctor can prove a woman’s virginity, but not her; they also limit the survivor’s capacity to prove the crime or have it be taken seriously.

1 The Swedish Association for Sexuality Education (RFSU), op. cit.


3 The Swedish Association for Sexuality Education (RFSU), op. cit.


5 The Swedish Association for Sexuality Education (RFSU), op. cit.


7 The Swedish Association for Sexuality Education (RFSU), op. cit.


9 The Swedish Association for Sexuality Education (RFSU), op. cit.

Intersectionality as a theory developed by the American black feminist Kimberlé Crenshaw in the 1980s addressing the specific types of multi-level discrimination – racial and gendered – faced by women of color in the U.S., and the difficulty for the U.S. legal system to view these two types of discriminatory experiences as interconnected rather than separate. The theory was also a crucial response to academic second wave, white, liberal and middle-class feminists who adopted a universalist concept of sisterhood (see Feminism). By focusing on gendered oppression and patriarchy and at the same time claiming equal sisterhood in fighting it, white liberal feminism masked racial difference and racial inequality among women. A similar unequal dynamic continues to exist in several forms of transnational feminism, wherein white European and North American feminists as well as their governments use universal women’s rights as a common cause to justify imperialist policies, including military intervention in so-called developing countries such as in the pro-war discourses in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Intersectionality

Intersectionality is a tool that demonstrates intersecting axes of oppression continued to develop beyond its original race and gender intersection. Academically, “an intersectional, perspective recognizes the complex interplay between multiple axes, such as time and space. This term quickly became a buzzword, and a useful concept for both practitioners and academics, specialists and generalists. The term is used among feminists and activists in Beirut and in academic productions. However, its import can sometimes be inadequate. For example, engaging in the intersectional question of racial and gendered discrimination against
The mainstream use of the intersectional approach to gender, race and class has also been transposed to the UN system. UN reports recently called for the necessity to consider gender-related dimensions of racial discrimination, and to take an intersectional approach to violence against women. Nevertheless, the UN “culture of indicators”, simplifying complex connections and failing to highlight the structural causes of violence, could lead to a misrepresentation of women’s experiences. Some critiques of the concept fear that, if the concept is used as an umbrella term encompassing many issues and used in many different contexts, it may miss the opportunity to disrupt categories of identification and power and rather reaffirms them. Focusing on analyzing the experiences of groups identified as “marginal” or “minorities” is a way of reproducing essentialist ideas about such identities – for example, “Muslim woman” becomes a coherent general category even though such a category includes millions of women with various living conditions that are impossible to generalize.
such as Allies (heterosexual and cisgender supporters of LGBT rights), etc. who is sexually attracted to persons from all across the gender spectrum), or who identify as men or women and reject the gender binary), or P for Pansexual (a person who is sexually attracted to persons from all across the gender spectrum), or 2S for Two-Spirit (a Native American conception that refers to persons who have the roles of both genders), etc. The formulations continue to expand and change depending on who is using them and for which purpose. Some of the longer uses include adding a second Q for Questioning (signifies a person who has not chosen a specific sexual orientation), GQ for Gender Queer (persons who do not identify neither as men nor women, and reject the gender binary), or P for Pansexual (a person who is sexually attracted to persons from all across the gender spectrum), or 2S for Two-Spirit (a Native American conception that refers to persons who have the roles of both genders), etc. These configurations can be as long as “LGBTIQ+” wherein groups such as Allies (heterosexual and cisgender supporters of LGBT rights) are included. To shorten the acronym often the configuration “LGBTIQ+” is included instead, or the term “quest” can be employed as an umbrella term for all non-heterosexual, non-cisgender, and non-cisexual identities (See Queer definition). The fact the acronym can be expanded continuously points not only to the vast diversity in sexuality and gender configurations, but also to the consistent molding and categorization of such genders and sexualities on the basis of identities as opposed to practices, acts, etc.

In Lebanon, several sexual rights organizations use the term LGBTIQ or LGBT, despite not having agendas that directly address Bisexual, Trans, and/or Intersex persons and issues, and despite the fact that local communities do not always form around sexual or gender identities. For instance, “intersect” issue as such are absent from all (visible) groups’ agendas and public debates, and the very identity categorization does not exist in this form locally. This is not to say that persons born with a combination of hormones, genitals, and internal sex/reproductive organs do not match the pattern of male and female do not exist. Rather, that such bodies and persons are not categorized in the same way they are in the U.S. and Europe. In this sense then, the term reflects the organizations’ affiliation with a particular transnational set of sexual identity politics, projects, and funds (see NGOization).

At the same time, some local groups follow queer politics instead in order to highlight a separation from the identity-based approach and politics.  


It is important to note that a “queer” approach to politics is still affiliated with US-based and European debates as the history of the term itself demonstrates (see Queer). In addition, what can be observed is an increased interest from foreign embassies and transnational donors and NGOs in the creating of the term LGBT as an “aid category” which comes alongside increased militarized interventions in the region. As a consequence of these dynamics, some persons are beginning to use “LGBT” as an identity category in itself (as opposed to identifying as “Gay” or “Transgender”), they mention they are “LGBT” to donor organizations and NGOs.

The acronym traditionally begins with “L” instead of “G” in order to reflect a commitment to feminist stances (in English and Arabic writing, the masculine grammatical form is usually given prior to the feminine form). This does not mean however that LGBT movements are free of sexism, racism, or transphobia. Indeed, the American LGBT rights movement has been consistently criticized for prioritizing gay men’s issues – such as the right to military service and to marriage; two normative demands that reflect a normative definition of belonging, specifically one that does not challenge a heterosexual and imperialist (see heteronormativity). Similar dynamics with criticism has been prevalent among sexuality rights groups in Beirut, which included critiques of male-dominance, sexual harassment in several groups, exclusion of lesbian women from gay male spaces and exclusions based on class and race, and reproduction of structures of inside activist spaces.

Lesbian: The English term traces its roots to the Greek “Lesbos”; and today it refers to women who are sexually attracted to women. The term was popularized again in the 60s and 70s in the US and is used in some circles in Beirut in its English form. In Arabic, the term “suhay” has been employed to refer to lesbianism – however, it is viewed as a derogatory term and has been replaced by the general term for homosexuality “mithliyya jinsiyya” (see the term “Sexuality”). Joseph Massad explained that contrary to common belief, “suhay” does not derive from the Arabic root s-h-q, which literally means “to crush”. Instead, he argued the term most likely has a Greek origin “saphiphos”. Academics such as Samar Habib analyzed “female homosexuality” in the Middle East and debated the representations of same-sex love and attraction among women in literary sources, while a group of feminist activists published a collection of personal accounts and stories from women who are attracted to other women in the short book “Bareed Mista3jil”.

The English term traces its roots to the Greek “Lesbos”; and today it refers to women who are sexually attracted to women.
Gay: a term that today refers to men who are sexually attracted to other men. The term’s exact meaning is “happy” and was employed differently across US history in the 20th century. It became popular among gay men as they opposed the use of the word “homosexual” due to its emergence from the medical field and its connotations with otherness. In the United States, “gay” is often used as an umbrella term for LGBT as well and can refer to lesbians and queer men. Often, transgender organizations also use it when referring to queer sexual rights as “gay rights”. However, gay and lesbian studies in the US also point to a multiplicity of local uses inside queer communities, where sometimes transgender persons use the category to denote gender difference. Lebanese uses of the term are common among circles of activists, NGOs, middle and upper class Beirutis, and those exposed to specific transnational flows of media, online chat rooms, pornography, and cell-phone applications. Organizations such as Helen and Meem pushed for the use of “mithli” as a politically correct term in Arabic, and “mithliyya” for cell-phone applications. Organizations such as Helem and Meem pushed for denoting gender difference.

Bisexual: The term refers to a person who is sexually attracted to both men and women. Bisexuality in U.S. and European narratives often faces an easeur because it is seen as a static state in a linear process of "coming out" wherein a person may first choose to suggest that they are interested in romantic or sexual relations with both genders. Despite being part of the heteronormative system, and at the same time pushed to erasure because it is seen as a temporary state in a linear process of "coming out" wherein a person may first choose to suggest that they are interested in romantic or sexual relations with both genders. In the United States, "bisexual" is often used as an umbrella term for LGBT as well and can refer to homosexuals (see "sexuality" for more historical use).

Transgender: An umbrella term for persons who were assigned a gender and sex identity at birth that is inconsistent with the gender they identify with. On this basis, a transgender man or transman was assigned as female at birth and given the gender identity of a woman/girl which does not correspond to how he identifies (as a man). Similarly, a transwoman is a person who was assigned male sex at birth and defined by society as a boy/man, which does not match how she identifies (as a woman). Despite being an umbrella term itself, the term transgender is sometimes represented with the term “trans” in order to include an even wider variety of people who do not fall on either end of the gender binary and whose identities, bodies, and performances include multiple movements across the gender spectrum.

LGBTIQ
Transgender persons might sometimes choose to surgically transition from the sex they were assigned into another. Thus, the term “transsexual” denotes this transition. However, every person’s transition is different and does not have to entail a full transition nor follow the same process.

In Lebanon, the term transgender is often used in its short form “Trans” among some transgender persons. Some transwomen and transwomen sex workers often employ terms such as “shemale” and “ladyboy” in referring to each other and when identifying their roles. NGOized discourses find these terms derogatory, but it is central to examining how they manifest themselves inside the communities and not force an identity term on persons simply because it is more accepted in the transnational NGOized discourses and/or global LGBT politics. Lastly, sex-reassignment surgeries are possible in Lebanon, but require a very long procedure which is often the main obstacle.11

Lebanese masculinities and femininities have been structured by a series of events in Lebanese history, including the civil war which redefined machismo in a specific way. This redefinition led to the emergence of a new category of men and women, femininity, and other men. In most contexts, masculinity is defined as having traits such as dominance and strength, which are valued in a given community. The field has come to form a crucial part of gender studies. Academically, significant scholarly attention was dedicated to the study of masculinity in the 1980s, which was premised upon the study of men as men rather than as universal subjects of analysis. Anthropologists, among others, have showcased the wide variety of performances of and values given to masculinities globally and historically.

Academically, significant scholarly attention was dedicated to the study of masculinity in the 1980s, which was premised upon the study of men as men rather than as universal subjects of analysis. Anthropologists, among others, have showcased the wide variety of performances of and values given to masculinities globally and historically.

Academically, significant scholarly attention was dedicated to the study of masculinity in the 1980s, which was premised upon the study of men as men rather than as universal subjects of analysis. Anthropologists, among others, have showcased the wide variety of performances of and values given to masculinities globally and historically.
historical events, notably the civil war which offered a particular reshaping of celebrated “militarized” behaviour in the figure of the militia man. Further studies of masculinity in Lebanon have explored anti-feminine attitudes in the gay community and the quest to appear “masculine” in order to appear “heterosexual”. New debates are paying attention to the Lebanese state’s masculinist narrative of “masculinity under threat” through which women’s rights, such as the right to pass on citizenship among others, continue to be curtailed. 

Local campaigns also focus on revealing the link between domestic violence against women and masculine behavior and thus they engage in a debate on the relationship between men, masculinity, and violence. Organizations such as KAFA have effectively exposed patriarchal masculinity’s role in practicing and normalizing violence against women. In some of the organization’s campaigning strategies, KAFA attempted to present alternative non-violent masculinities, or “resistant masculinities to patriarchy” in which it sought to break links between definitions of proper masculinity and violence against women. In contrast, organizations such as ABAAD have focused on reframing masculinity without directly challenging or destabilizing normative masculinity.

---

5. Ibid.
MSM: Men who have sex with men

MSM is an acronym for Men who have Sex with Men coined in 1994 by specialists in public health in the United States. The term was specifically invented in the wake of the HIV/AIDS epidemic, with the aim to ease reaching all men who have sex with men, including those who do not identify themselves as gay locally and globally. In the United States, the outbreak of the HIV and AIDS epidemic has vilified gay and queer men (and homosexuality overall) who were blamed for the spread of the virus which came to be derogatorily known as the “gay disease”. Subsequently, the categories of gay and queer gained renewed stigma due to this homophobic reaction, which also included a significant negligence on the part of the government in addressing the emerging health crisis. In this context, the term MSM sought to somewhat delink identity from disease in order to be able to better reach those men affected by it.

Furthermore, defining the concept was necessary for public health practitioners and epidemiologists in order to study the impact of high-risk sexual behaviors on the health of men who were sexually active with men, regardless of their cultural, social and sexual identities. As such, the term was seen as an easy “neutral” concept to export abroad to African and Asian countries through transnational NGOs and public health policies (see NGOization). Further, the stigma placed on gay men as the cause for HIV/AIDS crisis and other STDs/SSTIs led the UN member states to address the needs of people vulnerable to infections due to their sexual behaviors, urging local governments and civil societies to deliver prevention and health services to the newly outlined category of MSM. The term was adopted in Lebanon, and some Lebanese organizations have been involved in providing healthcare to MSM in cooperation with the Ministry of Health not only in HIV treatment and prevention but SSTIs and sexual health in general (see STIs).

In its emphasis on sexual acts and behavior and not on sexual identity, the use of MSM reflects a engagement with post-structuralist debates and analysis. Post-structuralist approaches to sexuality have challenged the idea that a stable and universal sexual identity exists, arguing that such a concept ignores cultural and historical differences (see LGBT and Sexuality). At the same time however, U.S. practitioners have criticized the term precisely for avoiding “identities”, arguing that the term minimizes the importance of self-identification and catter alienates gay men who see that the term ignores their surrounding social lives and networks that form an inseparable part of their sexual lives and practices.

2. Ibid.
5. Ibid.

The Middle East and North Africa region to step up efforts to ensure universal access to HIV services for men who have sex with men and transgender people


MSM : Men who have sex with men

MSM is an acronym for Men who have Sex with Men coined in 1994 by specialists in public health in the United States. The term was specifically invented in the wake of the HIV/AIDS epidemic, with the aim to ease reaching all men who have sex with men, including those who do not identify themselves as gay locally and globally. In the United States, the outbreak of the HIV and AIDS epidemic has vilified gay and queer men (and homosexuality overall) who were blamed for the spread of the virus which came to be derogatorily known as the “gay disease”. Subsequently, the categories of gay and queer gained renewed stigma due to this homophobic reaction, which also included a significant negligence on the part of the government in addressing the emerging health crisis. In this context, the term MSM sought to somewhat delink identity from disease in order to be able to better reach those men affected by it.

Furthermore, defining the concept was necessary for public health practitioners and epidemiologists in order to study the impact of high-risk sexual behaviors on the health of men who were sexually active with men, regardless of their cultural, social and sexual identities. As such, the term was seen as an easy “neutral” concept to export abroad to African and Asian countries through transnational NGOs and public health policies (see NGOization). Further, the stigma placed on gay men as the cause for HIV/AIDS crisis and other STDs/SSTIs led the UN member states to address the needs of people vulnerable to infections due to their sexual behaviors, urging local governments and civil societies to deliver prevention and health services to the newly outlined category of MSM. The term was adopted in Lebanon, and some Lebanese organizations have been involved in providing healthcare to MSM in cooperation with the Ministry of Health not only in HIV treatment and prevention but SSTIs and sexual health in general (see STIs).

In its emphasis on sexual acts and behavior and not on sexual identity, the use of MSM reflects a engagement with post-structuralist debates and analysis. Post-structuralist approaches to sexuality have challenged the idea that a stable and universal sexual identity exists, arguing that such a concept ignores cultural and historical differences (see LGBT and Sexuality). At the same time however, U.S. practitioners have criticized the term precisely for avoiding “identities”, arguing that the term minimizes the importance of self-identification and catter alienates gay men who see that the term ignores their surrounding social lives and networks that form an inseparable part of their sexual lives and practices.

2. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
In Lebanon, the term’s perceived apolitical neutrality offered a convenient way for the Ministry of Health to avoid working publicly with self-identified gay men and avoid acknowledging them beyond their sexual practices, which remain punishable under law. Thus, for local activists and NGOs who work on raising the visibility of LGBT-identifying persons, using the term MSM appears as a contradiction in political strategies.

Although MSM sexual activities include anal sex, oral sex or mutual masturbation, an emphasis on anal penetration (with an emphasis on the rectal sex, rather than penetrators, MSM has dominated the medical and public health field. This led to often ignoring health risks of being penetrated as opposed to penetrating – see Sex Roles).


NGOization

The term has been used to refer critically to the proliferation of non-governmental organizations, especially in developing countries and at the encouragement of large donor organizations. Features of NGOization in non-governmental organizations are: donor dependency, accountability to donors instead of beneficiaries, single-issue focus, emphasis on technical expertise, and moving away from grassroots organizing and mobilization thereby leading to depoliticization and support of the “anti-polics machine” of development.

In the 1990s, scholars writing on democratization associated NGOs with institutional decentralization; which refers to shifting social economic responsibilities away from a state’s authority (center). Thus, establishing and funding NGOs was viewed as one method with much capacity for rapid social intervention and high accountability to citizens. In this sense, the multiplication of NGOs in developing countries was seen by the “northern” funders as a primary condition for the flourishing of civil society, particularly in postsocialist countries but also in postcolonial and modern authoritarian states – including the Arab states. Since then, critics of Northern/Western development policies have argued that NGOs are simply the favored institutional forms of neoliberalism, mainly because they helped ease the state’s withdrawal from social provision by providing minimal social services, and thus contained dissent and radicalization.

The term NGOization emerged specifically from Latin American and Indian experiences with development politics and neoliberal economic imperialism. Author and political activist Arunthathy Roy, who is a key critic of development politics, has named NGOs an “indicator species” of neoliberalism, provocatively arguing that “the greater the devastation caused by neoliberalism, the greater the outbreak of NGOs”.

Research on Palestine and Nicaragua has shown that NGOs have weakened GROs (grassroots organizations), despite the latter having significant social bases and a history of consistent mobilization. In the Lebanese context, NGOization is intimately linked with post-war neoliberal and sectarian politics, where sometimes the newly founded NGOs are co-opted by sectarian state politics rather than challenging them.

Women’s organizations have been particularly susceptible to NGOization at least have been the focus of most of the critique directed at the phenomenon. Isab Jalal has noted that in the case of Palestine, the singing out of women as a target group might undermine collectivities built around national independence struggles.


Ishad Jad, op. cit., 108


Ishad Jad, op. cit., 108


The term has been used to refer critically to the proliferation of non-governmental organizations, especially in developing countries and at the encouragement of large donor organizations. Features of NGOization in non-governmental organizations are: donor dependency, accountability to donors instead of beneficiaries, single-issue focus, emphasis on technical expertise, and moving away from grassroots organizing and mobilization thereby leading to depoliticization and support of the “anti-polics machine” of development.

In the 1990s, scholars writing on democratization associated NGOs with institutional decentralization; which refers to shifting social economic responsibilities away from a state’s authority (center). Thus, establishing and funding NGOs was viewed as one method with much capacity for rapid social intervention and high accountability to citizens. In this sense, the multiplication of NGOs in developing countries was seen by the “northern” funders as a primary condition for the flourishing of civil society, particularly in postsocialist countries but also in postcolonial and modern authoritarian states – including the Arab states. Since then, critics of Northern/Western development policies have argued that NGOs are simply the favored institutional forms of neoliberalism, mainly because they helped ease the state’s withdrawal from social provision by providing minimal social services, and thus contained dissent and radicalization.

The term NGOization emerged specifically from Latin American and Indian experiences with development politics and neoliberal economic imperialism. Author and political activist Arunthathy Roy, who is a key critic of development politics, has named NGOs an “indicator species” of neoliberalism, provocatively arguing that “the greater the devastation caused by neoliberalism, the greater the outbreak of NGOs”.

Research on Palestine and Nicaragua has shown that NGOs have weakened GROs (grassroots organizations), despite the latter having significant social bases and a history of consistent mobilization. In the Lebanese context, NGOization is intimately linked with post-war neoliberal and sectarian politics, where sometimes the newly founded NGOs are co-opted by sectarian state politics rather than challenging them.

Women’s organizations have been particularly susceptible to NGOization at least have been the focus of most of the critique directed at the phenomenon. Isab Jalal has noted that in the case of Palestine, the singing out of women as a target group might undermine collectivities built around national independence struggles.

The term has been used to refer critically to the proliferation of non-governmental organizations, especially in developing countries and at the encouragement of large donor organizations. Features of NGOization in non-governmental organizations are: donor dependency, accountability to donors instead of beneficiaries, single-issue focus, emphasis on technical expertise, and moving away from grassroots organizing and mobilization thereby leading to depoliticization and support of the “anti-polics machine” of development.

In the 1990s, scholars writing on democratization associated NGOs with institutional decentralization; which refers to shifting social economic responsibilities away from a state’s authority (center). Thus, establishing and funding NGOs was viewed as one method with much capacity for rapid social intervention and high accountability to citizens. In this sense, the multiplication of NGOs in developing countries was seen by the “northern” funders as a primary condition for the flourishing of civil society, particularly in postsocialist countries but also in postcolonial and modern authoritarian states – including the Arab states. Since then, critics of Northern/Western development policies have argued that NGOs are simply the favored institutional forms of neoliberalism, mainly because they helped ease the state’s withdrawal from social provision by providing minimal social services, and thus contained dissent and radicalization.

The term NGOization emerged specifically from Latin American and Indian experiences with development politics and neoliberal economic imperialism. Author and political activist Arunthathy Roy, who is a key critic of development politics, has named NGOs an “indicator species” of neoliberalism, provocatively arguing that “the greater the devastation caused by neoliberalism, the greater the outbreak of NGOs”.

Research on Palestine and Nicaragua has shown that NGOs have weakened GROs (grassroots organizations), despite the latter having significant social bases and a history of consistent mobilization. In the Lebanese context, NGOization is intimately linked with post-war neoliberal and sectarian politics, where sometimes the newly founded NGOs are co-opted by sectarian state politics rather than challenging them.

Women’s organizations have been particularly susceptible to NGOization at least have been the focus of most of the critique directed at the phenomenon. Isab Jalal has noted that in the case of Palestine, the singing out of women as a target group might undermine collectivities built around national independence struggles.
In Lebanon, the increased NGOization of women’s movements has had mixed results, but a clear professionalization trend can be observed. In addition, the quick multiplication of sexuality rights NGOs over the past decade demonstrates a preference for institutionalized professionalized approach and not community grassroots organizing, in a context where such organizing attempts has had quite ephemeral lifespan at least since the late nineties. While efforts at community organizing from the bottom do exist, as several feminist and queer underground collectives continue to self-organize, observers tend to identify a certain tendency to follow global donor trends. These can be observed sometimes in the adoption of a specific cause (the nevertheless crucial issue of migrant domestic workers for example, which can be argued has come at the expense of neglecting issues of other women workers locally) or in the choice of preferred structure (whether hierarchical, deliberately “non-hierarchical”, horizontal collective, or cooperative, etc) which can be argued is adopted through a process of negotiating on-ground experiences with power as well as with various globalizing trends.

Recent scholarship tends to add nuance to the dichotomy between “NGO” and “social movement” arguing that the former refers to status and the latter “social movement” arguing that the former “refers to status” and the latter “process” highlighting that the cleavage makes sense for the activists arguing that the former “social movement” arguing that the former “refers to status” and the latter “process” highlighting that the cleavage makes sense for the activists arguing that the former “social movement” arguing that the former “refers to status” and the latter “process” highlighting that the cleavage makes sense for the activists observing that some NGOs have been important producers and disseminators of feminist knowledge and contributed to the incorporation of at least some feminist ideas in development discourses. This reevaluation is important to consider in the context of NGOization?: Reflections from Latin America.”

1. Dalke Pitei, “From Public Space to Office Space: the professionalization of NGOization of the feminist movement associations in Lebanon and its impact on mobilization and achieving social change”, Civil Society Review, Lebanon Support, Issue 1, January 2015.
4. Ibid.
8. You Can’t Buy Love, Beirut’s movements and in the Lebanese context at large.

When considering active women’s rights groups in Beirut and their interaction with local communities, one can observe a reliance on the “mediatization” of particular issues such as domestic violence campaigns run by Kafa which then function to mobilize local communities. While such an approach serves to mainstream very urgent questions of violence against women, it directs their energy and funding toward changes in the law or ideology (see for example Kafa’s campaign against men buying sex), while sometimes also contributing to the incorporation of at least some feminist ideas in development discourses. This reevaluation is important to consider in the context of NGOization?: Reflections from Latin America.”

10. In Lebanon, the increased NGOization of women’s movements has had mixed results, but a clear professionalization trend can be observed. In addition, the quick multiplication of sexuality rights NGOs over the past decade demonstrates a preference for institutionalized professionalized approach and not community grassroots organizing, in a context where such organizing attempts has had quite ephemeral lifespan at least since the late nineties. While efforts at community organizing from the bottom do exist, as several feminist and queer underground collectives continue to self-organize, observers tend to identify a certain tendency to follow global donor trends. These can be observed sometimes in the adoption of a specific cause (the nevertheless crucial issue of migrant domestic workers for example, which can be argued has come at the expense of neglecting issues of other women workers locally) or in the choice of preferred structure (whether hierarchical, deliberately “non-hierarchical”, horizontal collective, or cooperative, etc) which can be argued is adopted through a process of negotiating on-ground experiences with power as well as with various globalizing trends.

Recent scholarship tends to add nuance to the dichotomy between “NGO” and “social movement” arguing that the former refers to status and the latter “social movement” arguing that the former “refers to status” and the latter “process” highlighting that the cleavage makes sense for the activists arguing that the former “social movement” arguing that the former “refers to status” and the latter “process” highlighting that the cleavage makes sense for the activists observing that some NGOs have been important producers and disseminators of feminist knowledge and contributed to the incorporation of at least some feminist ideas in development discourses. This reevaluation is important to consider in the context of NGOization?: Reflections from Latin America.”

10. In Lebanon, the increased NGOization of women’s movements has had mixed results, but a clear professionalization trend can be observed. In addition, the quick multiplication of sexuality rights NGOs over the past decade demonstrates a preference for institutionalized professionalized approach and not community grassroots organizing, in a context where such organizing attempts has had quite ephemeral lifespan at least since the late nineties. While efforts at community organizing from the bottom do exist, as several feminist and queer underground collectives continue to self-organize, observers tend to identify a certain tendency to follow global donor trends. These can be observed sometimes in the adoption of a specific cause (the nevertheless crucial issue of migrant domestic workers for example, which can be argued has come at the expense of neglecting issues of other women workers locally) or in the choice of preferred structure (whether hierarchical, deliberately “non-hierarchical”, horizontal collective, or cooperative, etc) which can be argued is adopted through a process of negotiating on-ground experiences with power as well as with various globalizing trends.

Recent scholarship tends to add nuance to the dichotomy between “NGO” and “social movement” arguing that the former refers to status and the latter “social movement” arguing that the former “refers to status” and the latter “process” highlighting that the cleavage makes sense for the activists observing that some NGOs have been important producers and disseminators of feminist knowledge and contributed to the incorporation of at least some feminist ideas in development discourses. This reevaluation is important to consider in the context of NGOization?: Reflections from Latin America.”

10. In Lebanon, the increased NGOization of women’s movements has had mixed results, but a clear professionalization trend can be observed. In addition, the quick multiplication of sexuality rights NGOs over the past decade demonstrates a preference for institutionalized professionalized approach and not community grassroots organizing, in a context where such organizing attempts has had quite ephemeral lifespan at least since the late nineties. While efforts at community organizing from the bottom do exist, as several feminist and queer underground collectives continue to self-organize, observers tend to identify a certain tendency to follow global donor trends. These can be observed sometimes in the adoption of a specific cause (the nevertheless crucial issue of migrant domestic workers for example, which can be argued has come at the expense of neglecting issues of other women workers locally) or in the choice of preferred structure (whether hierarchical, deliberately “non-hierarchical”, horizontal collective, or cooperative, etc) which can be argued is adopted through a process of negotiating on-ground experiences with power as well as with various globalizing trends.
In general, and as explained above, principles such as “gender mainstreaming” and “LGBT rights” are strongly associated with transnational NGO politics and donor priorities, and often lead to ineffective and largely problematic adaptations. Yet, and despite of criticism of women’s, gender and sexuality rights’ groups such as KAFA, Abaad, and Helem and their often contradictory politics; these groups have been able to insert feminist ideas and anti-homophobic attitudes in mainstream discourses through the aforementioned legal efforts or media campaigns.
The English term "orgasm" derives from the Greek " orgasmos", meaning excitement or swelling. Definitions of the phenomenon have changed over time, and different definitions existed in various cultural spaces. Currently, there is no consensus on what an orgasm is, as a long-standing debate in the medical community about whether the orgasm is primarily a physical or psychological experience persists. Cultural theorists argue that this struggle to define orgasm creates sexual norms – often male and heterosexually oriented – which facilitate social control and the policing of bodies and identities.

Before the 18th century in Europe, the orgasm was described as a heat sensation that overcame the entire body and a quasi-metaphysical experience. In the late 1700s, the medical establishment began to localize the orgasm specifically in the genitalia and to describe it as a decidedly physical sensation that overcomes the entire body and a quasi-metaphysical experience. This tactic strengthened the thesis that sex was a “purely physiological” process. By 1788, sexuality was considered to be a function of the brain, and this idea was reinforced by the development of the brain and the concept of the nervous system.

Women’s orgasms have triggered more scientific curiosity and popular fascination than men’s. For example, an extensive study on human sexuality by Masters and Johnson, published in 1966, revealed 30 pages to describing women’s orgasms and only 39 to describing men’s. Early 19th century medical experimentation convinced doctors that women ovulate even in the absence of sexual pleasure and thus do not need to climax in order to become pregnant. By the end of the 1800s, this argument had transformed into the belief that women are either incapable of orgasming or orgasm rarely. Diagnoses such as hysteria and anorgasmmia began to appear at the same time, and were later transmitted into acquired colonies.

The 20th century witnessed a great interest in categorizing orgasms in women across Western Europe. In 1906, Sigmund Freud – whose writings would also influence Middle Eastern psychological studies – advanced the thesis that young girls initially experience clitoral orgasm but transfer the experience of orgasm to the vagina in the course of their psychosocial development. Women who were interviewed by researchers in later studies described two different types of orgasmic sensations associated with clitoral and vaginal stimulation. The Masters and Johnson’s study, which was based on direct observation in a laboratory setting, disproved the supposition of the two organs and argued that vaginal contractions were present in women’s sexual climaxes regardless of how they were stimulated. While no evidence has been found to support the frequently-cited classification of orgasms ("orgasm") as divided into clitoral and vaginal types, research has shown that women can experience multiple orgasms, a phenomenon that is often overlooked in mainstream culture.

In 1966, Masters and Johnson published their findings in a book titled "Human Sexual Response," which became a sensation. The book was based on direct observation of sexual responses and described the two types of orgasms and argued that vaginal contractions were present in women’s sexual climaxes regardless of how they were stimulated. While no evidence has been found to support the frequency-cited classification of orgasms ("orgasm") as divided into clitoral and vaginal types, research has shown that women can experience multiple orgasms, a phenomenon that is often overlooked in mainstream culture.
of women’s orgasms into “vulval”, “uterine” and “blended”,6 more medical research into the anatomy of the clitoris demonstrated that the internal parts of the clitoris may be involved in women’s experience of so-called “vaginal orgasms”7–9.

Feminist texts from the 1970s argued that the vaginal orgasm was a myth meant to deny women clitoral pleasure and make them submit to male control. Feminist texts from the 1970s argued that the vaginal orgasm was a myth meant to deny women clitoral pleasure and make them submit to male control.10

It is in this sense that women’s orgasms are prioritized and more frequent than women’s.11 Feminist texts from the 1970s argued that the vaginal orgasm was a myth meant to deny women clitoral pleasure and make them submit to male control. Feminist texts from the 1970s argued that the vaginal orgasm was a myth meant to deny women clitoral pleasure and make them submit to male control.12


Patriarchy as a social structure in which men have power over women. Eymologically, the term derives from the ancient Greek “patrarchs” meaning older males, and refers to the paternal ruler of families, tribes or churchs. In classical anthropology, “patriarchal structure” refers to families, social groups, work and political structures in which men hold the positions of power. European and North American feminists, patriarchy is a social system of masculine domination over women. In the Lebanese context, feminist anthropologist Suad Joseph has defined patriarchy as “the privileging of males and seniors and the mobilization of kin structures, kin morality, and kin idioms to legitimate and institutionalize gendered and aged domination”. The same system is also often referred to as “abawiya” in Arabic and in some activist communities, which highlights the figure of the father as the patriarch.


Atraffic as a social system of masculine domination over women. In the late 1960s, Marxist feminists focused on capitalism and patriarchy were interdependent, mutually-beneficial but expansionist, and refers to the paternal ruler of families, tribes or churchs. In classical anthropology, “patriarchal structure” refers to families, social groups, work and political structures in which men hold the positions of power. European and North American feminists, patriarchy is a social system of masculine domination over women. In the Lebanese context, feminist anthropologist Suad Joseph has defined patriarchy as “the privileging of males and seniors and the mobilization of kin structures, kin morality, and kin idioms to legitimate and institutionalize gendered and aged domination”. The same system is also often referred to as “abawiya” in Arabic and in some activist communities, which highlights the figure of the father as the patriarch.

Patriarchy as a social structure (rather than structure of kinship as Joseph conceptualizes it) was initially theorized by US-based, 1960s “radical feminism” in 50 Key Concepts in Gender Studies, London, Sage, 2004, p. 93.


Hisham Sharabi’s thesis on the “neopatriarchal”/neotraditional organization of unpaid housework and care labor (see Work).

Patriarchy as a social structure in which men have power over women. Eymologically, the term derives from the ancient Greek “patrarchs” meaning older males, and refers to the maternal ruler of families, tribes or churchs. In classical anthropology, “patriarchal structure” refers to families, social groups, work and political structures in which men hold the positions of power. European and North American feminists, patriarchy is a social system of masculine domination over women. In the Lebanese context, feminist anthropologist Suad Joseph has defined patriarchy as “the privileging of males and seniors and the mobilization of kin structures, kin morality, and kin idioms to legitimate and institutionalize gendered and aged domination”. The same system is also often referred to as “abawiya” in Arabic and in some activist communities, which highlights the figure of the father as the patriarch.

Patriarchy as a social structure (rather than structure of kinship as Joseph conceptualizes it) was initially theorized by US-based, 1960s “radical feminism” in 50 Key Concepts in Gender Studies, London, Sage, 2004, p. 93.


Hisham Sharabi’s thesis on the “neopatriarchal”/neotraditional organization of unpaid housework and care labor (see Work).
of Arab societies (published in 1988) has proved very influential in public discussions on patriarchy, kinship and political structures in the MENA region. Sharabi argues that the Arab world’s relations of wealth and economic dependency with Europe have led to a postwar “distorted and dependent capitalism” which created a petty bourgeoisie whose mentality was patriarchal (i.e., traditional - in his understanding) in spite of certain modern trappings. Sharabi’s book problematizes the continued dominance of “the Father” in family and society and the power of extensive kinship networks.

Building on the works of known feminists such as Nawal Saadawi and Faten Mernissi and departing from their critiques of patriarchy specifically as male domination over women, Sharabi also argued (in passing) that such a distorted, simultaneously patriarchal and modern system is doubly oppressive to women. However, for him, the nuclear family (as opposed to the extended family) is inherently democratic, a form which enables equalitarian, romantic love, a social institution which provides “the necessary (but not sufficient) ground for the liberation of women”. Such a stance can be contrasted to European and North American feminist critiques of the nuclear family and the division of labor within it.

Arab gender scholars have contested the European and North American feminist critiques of the nuclear family and the division of labor within it. They also pointed out that patriarchy is not immutable or inflexible, even in apparently highly traditional societies. They also argued that patriarchy is not legitimate or fixed, even in the nuclear family and the division of labor. They also pointed out that patriarchy is not immutable or inflexible, even in apparently highly traditional societies. They also argued that patriarchy is not legitimate or fixed, even in the nuclear family and the division of labor. They also pointed out that patriarchy is not immutable or inflexible, even in apparently highly traditional societies. They also argued that patriarchy is not legitimate or fixed, even in the nuclear family and the division of labor.
a fear which should be treated seriously and respectfully by activists, as Kandiyoti suggests. Recent manifestations in popular culture in the Arab world and Lebanon (such as television shows) suggest a reinforcement of patriarchal structures by stressing that masculinity is public whereas femininity should be confined in the realm of the private. In this context, NGOs and activists try to spread the use of the term “patriarchy” (batriarqiyya or ‘abawiyya) in order to question the system. Still, the meaning is obscure for a majority of people and its signification often distorted. The idea is misunderstood or sometimes not understood at all, leading to accusations of man-hate rather than widening the debate.
Power stems etymologically from the Latin "potere" and is related to the French "pouvoir", both of which mean "to be able." Power as a concept is widely debated, and points of disagreement abound. One of the main points of debate is whether power means 'power-over' or 'power-to'. 'Power-over' denotes a relationship of unequal force, while 'power-to' refers to an ability or a capacity to act. Another way to divide debates on power is by distinguishing between action- and conception-based conceptions (referring to particular actors or the individual capacity to act) and systemic orconstitutive conceptions of power ('power as systematically structuring possibilities for action, or, more strongly, as constituting actors and the social world in which they act').

Feminism as a political current and social movement incorporates, in different contexts and periods, all the notions of power: power over, power to, power as actor-centric and as operating structurally. Liberal feminist thinkers most often analyze power as a positive resource to be redistributed to women. Phenomenological, radical and socialist feminist thinkers, however, tend to criticize this approach and prefer a view of power as a productive and controlling force, making it difficult to overcome the subordination of women. They point out that power has been extremely influential across the European, North American, and to a large extent Middle Eastern feminist movements.

In post-structuralist feminism, Foucaultian notions according to which power is not primarily repressive but both repressive and productive have been extremely influential across the European, North American, and to some extent Middle Eastern feminist works. Michel Foucault also theorized the intersection between power and the body through his conceptualization of "dissonant power", which is productive of docile bodies made controllable by the state and social institutions. These conceptualizations are salient in feminist critiques against state control of women's bodies, including in Lebanon (see Hymen). Lastly, the 2011 Arab Revolt protests have included significant criticism from feminists against authoritarian state power over women's bodies including various activist acts, while various waves of feminist protests in Lebanon have pointed directly at the state's role in perpetuating the subjugation of women through policies that limit their bodily rights (see Sex and Bodily Rights).

Marxist conceptions of power as domination and as operating through
ideology have been used to expose the liberal state’s hypocrisy in promoting non-discrimination and equal opportunity policies while structural, deeply-embedded inequalities prevail. As a result of this critique of formal power, many feminist groups opt for horizontal, structureless organizing formulas, employed in some small feminist collectives in Beirut in what constitutes a conscious effort to fight against reproducing inequality, with various degrees of success. Yet, even such an approach is not without criticism, mainly because it risks assuming that hierarchies can be broken through “structurelessness” where in fact they are frequently only rendered invisible.

وسياسات تكافؤ الفرص في حين يسود عدم المساواة المتأصل والهيكلي. ونتيجةً لهذا النقد الموجه إلى السلطة الرسمية، يختار كثيرٌ من التيارات النسوية الصيغ التنظيمية الأفقية غير الهيكلي، وهي صيغ تُستخدم في بعض الجمعيات النسوية الصغيرة في بيروت، وهذا يشكل جهدًا واعيًا في سبيل محاولة تستنسخ عدم المساواة، بدرجات من مشابهة من النجاح. لكن، حتى عند هذه المقاربة لا تخلو من النقد. لأنها أساسيًا تتخطى الشروط أن يمكن كسر التسلسلات الهيكلية من خلال “تغيير التنظيم الهيكلي” في حين يثبت الواقع أنها في كثير من الأحيان تبدو غير بادئة للعين مقنعة.
LITERALLY, QUEER MEANS “ODD” OR “STRANGE”. THE TERM WAS – AND CONTINUES TO BE – USED AS A SLUR IN THE UNITED STATES FOR PEOPLE WITH SAME-SEX DESIRES, MUCH LIKE THE CURRENT SLUR “FAG”. “QUEER” WAS FIRST RECLAIMED IN THE LATE EIGHTIES AND NINETIES THROUGH THE POLICIES OF THE ACTIVIST GROUPS ACT UP (THE AIDS COALITION TO UNLEASH POWER) AND QUEER NATION, WhOSE MAIN STRUGGLE WAS TO PUSH THE U.S. GOVERNMENT TO ADDRESS THE AIDS CRISIS IN THE GAY COMMUNITY. THE POLITICAL STRATEGY WAS NOT ONLY TO CLAIM QUEerness AS PART OF LIFE, BUT ALSO TO CHALLENGE “NORMATIVITY” INCLUDING EXCLUDING HETEROSEXUALITY AS A SYSTEM THAT IS TAKEN FOR GRANTED IN THE WORKINGS OF DAILY LIFE.

The term was brought to the academic sphere by the very activists involved in the reclamatory politics, and was further developed into “queer theory” as a system that is taken for granted in the workings of daily life. queer theory is influenced by Western theoretical assumptions, and is molded by new interventions from their gender presentation and performance. Academically, queer theory is a person who does not identify with either end of the gender binary (not only sexual identities), wherein “gender-queer” now denotes an identity category. Mostly, “queer” remains used as a general label for “non-normative” sexualities. The term is also used for gender function as an identity category. Indeed, queer politics in the reclamatory politics, and was further developed into “queer theory” as a system that is taken for granted in the workings of daily life. queer theory is a critique of the social condition, but they are rather flexible, fluid, mutable, and multiple. Thus, the theory calls on “identity politics” to reconsider its role in maintaining essentialist notions of gender and sexuality. queer theory and identity politics are not mutually exclusive. queer politics acknowledge the need for identity politics: while identity politics fights for the recognition of certain identities, queer politics fights for the non-recognition of some identities and challenges the very system that produces identity categories and normativity itself.

As the politics and theory progressed, “queer” was added to the LGBTI acronym which drew attention to the question whether Queer can actually function as an identity category. Mostly, “queer” remains used as a general label for “non-normative” sexualities. The term is also used for gender identities (not only sexual identities), wherein “gender-queer” now denotes a person who does not identify with either end of the gender binary (not as a man or a woman) and actively seeks to challenge this binary through their gender presentation and performance. Academically, queer theory is increasingly critiqued for appearing universalist and/or for maintaining Western theoretical assumptions, and is molded by new interventions from post- and de-colonial academic thinking.

The term’s use in Lebanon has been mostly among Beiruti-based gender and sexuality activist circles that have access to queer theory’s academic debates, academic publishing on queer sexuality in the region, and who negotiate reclaimatory sexual politics locally. Campaigns such as “ana shah”, conducted by the local group Helem in 2010 as part of the

Donald E. Hall, Queer Theories, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2013.


Sofian Merabet, Queer Beirut, Austin, Texas, University of Texas Press, 2014.

The term’s use in Lebanon has been mostly among Beiruti-based gender and sexuality activist circles that have access to queer theory’s academic debates, academic publishing on queer sexuality in the region, and who negotiate reclaimatory sexual politics locally. Campaigns such as “ana shah”, conducted by the local group Helem in 2010 as part of the
International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia, reflect the basic premise of reclamatory politics that seek to give unapologetic visibility to the commonly perceived “non-normative” and challenge the very quest for normativity. Other campaigns explicitly linked queer activism to a fight against sectarianism and for secularism in protests such as “Laique Pride”. Many in the sexual rights activism sphere have resorted to using “queer” instead of “LGBT” given the latter term’s firm association with donor agendas, NGOization, and European and/or American governments’ funding. The term is often transliterated into Arabic as “kweer”, and is used in blog writings and public graffiti.

Reproductive Health/Rights

Broadly, women's reproductive health includes the option and ability to decide whether and when to have children, to have access to reproductive healthcare including birth control and safe abortion, prenatal and obstetric care, and to have access to information. Sexual and reproductive health and rights as a subset of human rights were outlined at the 1994 Cairo UN conference on human rights. The term “reproductive health” in its modern form has been quickly popularized through UN channels and through transnational NGOs. The concept was further developed by family planning, women's movement health goals, and the World Health Organization, whose definition includes “the right of all to make decisions concerning reproduction free of discrimination, coercion and violence”\(^1\). The inclusion of reproductive rights within the frame of women's right to self-determination was progressive in its categorizing of maternal mortality as a human rights violation, emphasizing the right to family planning, and considering the lack of access to birth control as a form of discrimination.

Local level interactions with the concept and its agenda led to coining the term “reproductive justice”, which was invoked in the 1980s by indigenous women and women of color in the United States. The term stresses a will to reveal the limits of the white liberal middle class notion of “choice”, and emphasizes the structural inequalities that prevent some women to even have access to a “choice” to begin with, due to class discrimination or racial inequalities (see Intersectionality, and Social Justice). Invoking the term “justice” also aims to hold various North American and European governments accountable for acts such as forced sterilizations, which has been a dominant practice against minority communities such as indigenous women in the U.S., the Roma in Europe, and today ethnic women in Israel, as well as against women with disabilities worldwide. Another local intervention in reshaping reproductive health is for example the inclusion of the concept of dignity to the various components of reproductive health, as has been argued by some specialists who studied attitudes toward reproductive care in Beirut, Lebanon\(^2\).

In addition, the applicability of this term and its agenda has been debated among feminists, including the question whether or not to use the conception of reproductive “rights” instead of the more general reproductive “health”. The former stresses health issues as a right that must be provided by the state and its institutions, while the latter leaves out accountability and may risk a disregard for the individual rights of women\(^3\). The same debate arises in relation to conceptions of sexual rights and sexual health; sexual rights

As has been argued by some specialists who studied attitudes toward intervention in reshaping reproductive health is for example the inclusion

women and women of color in the United States 3. The term stresses a will considering the lack of access to birth control as a form of discrimination. Sexual and reproductive health care, and to have access to information. Sexual and reproductive health to sexual rights, Achievements

Strategies, Publications Series, No. 5, 2008.\(^4\)


“Against Her Will: Forced and Coerced Sterilization of Women worldwide”, Open Society Foundation, \(\)Opensocietyfoundations.org\] Last accessed 23.10.2015\(^6\)

Ibid.\(^7\)


Ibid.\(^10\)


can be favored by feminists but official institutions rather use the more “neutral” term of sexual health.

In Lebanon, the use of the term “women’s health” instead of “reproductive health” appears to be favored by a number of women. A study found out that women understand reproductive health within the context of a patriarchal society and thus within unequal power relations. This means that often reproduction is seen as a duty and a vehicle of social and economic status, thereby conditioning women’s reproductive choices and sexual behaviors. Moreover, abortion remains illegal and thus is often practiced under unsafe conditions. International organizations and local NGOs in Lebanon mainly work on reducing maternal mortality, family planning and STIs, focusing on the medical aspects of reproductive and sexual health, with much lesser attention paid to addressing women’s right to choose whether and when to have children free of social or familial pressure, to own her body, desires and sexuality choices.

9 Afamia Kaddour, Raghda Hafez, Huda Zurayk, op. cit, pp. 34-42.

10 Ibid.

The English term “sex” refers both to the biological classification of male and female, as well as to physical sexual intercourse. Its Arabic equivalent “jins” still meant type or kind as per its Greek origin “genos” and did not always carry these meanings. In fact, up to the late 19th century “jins” referred to the same two meanings as well as to gender. However, “jins” and its Arabic equivalent "jinsiyyah") in the early twentieth century through translations of works such as Freud's.\(^1\)

The European and North American modern view of “sex” underwent key shifts, namely one from considering sex, sexual acts, and sexuality as “natural” and innate, to a view that sees sex as social.\(^2\) Resisting to “nature” to understand sex has historically led to limiting women's choice in sex and reproduction as it was argued that sex was necessary for procreation and is part of a “natural” life cycle. Thus, by defining natural sex, one had to also define unnatural sex. This is a definition that changes in correspondence to the social conditions in a particular context, but in general it has included non-heterosexual, non-penetrative sex, and non-reproductive sex.

Sex as an act continues to be dominated by a heterosexual penetrative understanding which describes a phallic-centric approach to sex. This means that non-penetrative acts are seen as less sexual, less valued, or even less “serious”. Often the effect is to erase the wide array of sexual practices and experiences that exist, including for example non-penetrative sex between women. A phallic-centric approach to sex also feeds into practices and experiences that exist, including for example non-penetrative sex, non-reproductive sex, and non-heterosexual, non-penetrative sex, and non-reproductive sex.

A central component in the modern definition of sex today is the requirement of consent. Any sexual act taking place without the consent of all actors, is considered rape. Typically, rape has also been defined — using a phallic-centric view — as the act of unwanted penetration which in turn legally labels all non-penetrative and non-consensual sexual acts as “attempted rape”.\(^3\) In 2014, the Lebanese state passed a law addressing domestic violence in which it introduced a definition to sex in marriage and ignoring the phenomenon of “marital rape”.\(^4\)

Sexual violence is considered rape. Typically, rape has also been defined – using a phallic-centric approach – as the act of unwanted penetration which in turn legally labels all non-penetrative and non-consensual sexual acts as “attempted rape”.\(^5\) In 2014, the Lebanese state passed a law addressing domestic violence in which it introduced a definition to sex in marriage and ignoring the phenomenon of “marital rape”.\(^6\)

The European and North American modern view of “sex” underwent key shifts, namely one from considering sex, sexual acts, and sexuality as “natural” and innate, to a view that sees sex as social.\(^2\) Resisting to “nature” to understand sex has historically led to limiting women's choice in sex and reproduction as it was argued that sex was necessary for procreation and is part of a “natural” life cycle. Thus, by defining natural sex, one had to also define unnatural sex. This is a definition that changes in correspondence to the social conditions in a particular context, but in general it has included non-heterosexual, non-penetrative sex, and non-reproductive sex.

Sex as an act continues to be dominated by a heterosexual penetrative understanding which describes a phallic-centric approach to sex. This means that non-penetrative acts are seen as less sexual, less valued, or even less "serious". Often the effect is to erase the wide array of sexual practices and experiences that exist, including for example non-penetrative sex between women. A phallic-centric approach to sex also feeds into practices and experiences that exist, including for example non-penetrative sex, non-reproductive sex, and non-heterosexual, non-penetrative sex, and non-reproductive sex.

A central component in the modern definition of sex today is the requirement of consent. Any sexual act taking place without the consent of all actors, is considered rape. Typically, rape has also been defined — using a phallic-centric view — as the act of unwanted penetration which in turn legally labels all non-penetrative and non-consensual sexual acts as “attempted rape”.\(^3\) In 2014, the Lebanese state passed a law addressing domestic violence in which it introduced a definition to sex in marriage and ignoring the phenomenon of “marital rape”.\(^4\)

Sexual violence is considered rape. Typically, rape has also been defined – using a phallic-centric approach – as the act of unwanted penetration which in turn legally labels all non-penetrative and non-consensual sexual acts as “attempted rape”.\(^5\) In 2014, the Lebanese state passed a law addressing domestic violence in which it introduced a definition to sex in marriage and ignoring the phenomenon of “marital rape”.\(^6\)
In addition, the Lebanese penal code continues to differentiate between rape survivors on the bases of their virginity (see “Hymen” definition). In contrast, the reality that NGO practitioners and social workers observe is a coercion of sex as a “religious duty” inflicted on women, even when they do not consent to it.

The modern nation-state is actively involved in policing its citizens’ sex practices and regulating reproduction, usually celebrating marital heterosexual relations at the expense of criminalizing non-marital and homosexual relations, or paid sex. The Lebanese law includes several articles that police women’s bodies, their right to abortion, their right to consent (see analysis of rape under Lebanese law in the definition of “Hymen”), and their rights to sex/reproductive healthcare. It also criminalizes non-marital sex under article 487 and 488, homosexual penetrative sex/homosexuality under article 534, as well as others’ solicitation of sex outside of the state’s “superclubs” under articles 523, 524, 526 and 528.


Sex roles

The categorizing of sex roles in a heterosexual setting is often based on employing binary associations between men, masculinity, and activity on the one hand, and women, femininity, and passivity on the other. Thus, in a patriarchal heterosexual setting, these associations translate sexually into understanding women as only sexually receptive and passive, and men as only active and penetrative, thereby cancelling women's sexual agency and allocating power over women's bodies to men (see Hymen). In fact, the very distinction of "active" and "passive" is based on a phallocentric depiction of sex which only views penetration as an active male role (see Sex).

This divide is also central to informing gender and sex roles in queer communities. Categories such as "top", "bottom", "versatile", "butch", "femme" are not simply sex roles, but are variously categorized in academic literature as queer gender roles, erotic roles, sexual scripts, and erotic subcultures. The butch and femme roles have been an important debate topic in North American lesbian feminism. In the 1960s, "The Ladder", the first US lesbian magazine, published by the Daughters of Bilitis collective, showcased arguments against lesbian role-playing. Butch roles in particular were seen as unenlightened and old-fashioned. In a continuation of this line of thinking, in the 1970s and 1980s, lesbian feminism advocated androgynous presentations and "egalitarian" sexual relationships as anti-patriarchal thinking, in the 1970s and 1980s, lesbian feminism advocated androgynous sex roles and "egalitarian" sexual relationships as anti-patriarchal thinking, in the 1970s and 1980s, lesbian feminism advocated androgynous sex roles and "egalitarian" sexual relationships as anti-patriarchal thinking.

On the other hand, research into the history of lesbian communities and later, post-structuralist theorizing pointed out that these roles made the working-class lesbian community publicly visible, that they were a mark of sexual choice and agency, that they are not merely imitative but also performative, and that they coopt traditional notions of masculinity and femininity but subvert them by revealing how gender is socially constructed rather than innate. Anthropologist Gayle Rubin has argued that butch should be considered a lesbian gender rather than an imitation of heterosexual men while philosopher Judith Butler pointed out that lesbian role playing is both imitative and subversive of heterosexual norms. While the terms "butch" and "femme" are used in some small circles in Beirut, local terms such as "hasan sabi" (tomboy), "boyat" (from boy), or "mustazjilah" (the one who acts as a man) are more prevalent across the Middle East and denote a different gender presentation and role, but also is often used to describe lesbian
Sex roles also exist to denote similar meanings. For example, "salib" on dating applications such as Grindr, Manjam, or Gay Romeo, local words such as "top" and "bottom" are used in Lebanon for example online chats such roles intersect with other identity labels including ethnicity. While terms has been nuanced or challenged, with attention paid to how of these labels in some European as well as Middle Eastern gay groups or in hook-up situations, with an important degree of negotiation. The relevance even in U.S. and European LGBT communities, the labels are used especially and that a host of practices becomes obscured by medical researchers’ practices; they feel these aspects show that established labels are restrictive there is considerable fluidity in claimed roles and a great variety of sexual However, many research interview subjects emphasize that among gay men there is considerable fluidity in claimed roles and a great variety of sexual practices; they feel these aspects show that established labels are restrictive and that a host of practices becomes obscured by medical researchers’ attention for anal penetration. Ethnographic research has also revealed that even in U.S. and European LGBT communities, the labels are used especially in hook-up situations, with an important degree of negotiation. The relevance of these labels in some European as well as Middle Eastern gay groups or communities has been nuanced or challenged, with attention paid to how such roles intersect with other identity labels including ethnicity. While terms such as "top" and "bottom" are used in Lebanon in for example online chats on dating applications such as Gnind, Manjam, or Gay Romeo, local words also exist to denote similar meanings. For example, "salib" "السالب" and "mujib" "الموجب" (negative and positive) also refer to sex roles between men based on their reproductive anatomy and hence are very much about gender presentation, the question of sex roles used in terms of so-called receptive or insertive preference during anal and oral sex. It has been suggested that this essentialization stems from public health studies on gay men’s sexual behavior (see MSM).

Whereas the discussions about "butch", "femme", and "mustajjat" roles are very much about gender presentation, the question of sex roles used in terms of so-called receptive or insertive preference during anal and oral sex. It has been suggested that this essentialization stems from public health studies on gay men’s sexual behavior (see MSM).

However, many research interview subjects emphasize that among gay men there is considerable fluidity in claimed roles and a great variety of sexual practices; they feel these aspects show that established labels are restrictive and that a host of practices becomes obscured by medical researchers’ attention for anal penetration. Ethnographic research has also revealed that even in U.S. and European LGBT communities, the labels are used especially in hook-up situations, with an important degree of negotiation. The relevance of these labels in some European as well as Middle Eastern gay groups or communities has been nuanced or challenged, with attention paid to how such roles intersect with other identity labels including ethnicity. While terms such as "top" and "bottom" are used in Lebanon in for example online chats on dating applications such as Gnind, Manjam, or Gay Romeo, local words also exist to denote similar meanings. For example, "salib" "السالب" and "mujib" "الموجب" (negative and positive) also refer to sex roles between men based on their reproductive anatomy and hence are very much about gender presentation, the question of sex roles used in terms of so-called receptive or insertive preference during anal and oral sex. It has been suggested that this essentialization stems from public health studies on gay men’s sexual behavior (see MSM).

Despite denoting erotic preference, "bottom", "top" and "versatile" are connected to gender performances and status. Stereotypically, "bottoms" are associated with social submission, passivity, effeminacy – associations which stem from the devaluing of the feminine and the penetrable. Within and beyond LGBT spaces, the "bottom" identity is more likely to be devalued and stigmatized. "Tops" are expected to be dominant and may be more protected from stigma. In certain cultural men, who engage in sexual penetrative anal sex are not considered to be outside the boundaries of heterosexual sex (see heteronormativity). "Versatile" identities seem to have proliferated in Western gay communities as a result of critiques of rigid top-bottom roles as mimicking heterosexual power dynamics; increasingly,
Sex roles

versatility is seen as the progressive identity and a mark of capacity for equalitarian relationships. Lastly, “versatile top” or “power bottom” are also examples of recent modifications of these sex roles, which, at the same time, challenge the rigid active-passive binary.

تعريف المعيارية على أساس الغيري الجنسية، ويبدو أن هويات “فيسنتيل” قد انتشرت في جماعات المثليين الغربين نتيجة للانتقادات الموجهة لدوري “توب” و “بوتوم” الجامديين بسبب محاكاتهما ديناميكات السلطة في علاقة غريبة. ويُعتبر الدور التناغمي على نحو متزايد الهوية التناغمية وعلامة تشير إلى الفكرة على التشارك في علاقات مساوية. أخيرًا، يعتبر دورا “فيسنتيل توب” أو “بوتوم بوتوم” أيضًا نتائج من التعديلات الأخيرة التي طرأت على هذه الأدوار الجنسية وهي تعديلات تتفنن في الوقت عينه بالثنائية الجامدة القائمة بين مثال وỨعل. 

الأدوار الجنسية
Sexuality today can be considered as a broad umbrella term that encompasses sexual identities, sexual acts, feelings, desires, and bodily expressions and performances. Sexuality continues to be understood by some as an innate and natural expression of desire, which is an argument that dates back to the late nineteenth century in Europe, during which time sexologists began to explore physical and biological bases for sex. European and North American sexuality operated with a set of assumptions, namely that natural sexuality was heterosexual and that the purpose of the sexual desire and drive was reproductive. This specific scientific view is what led to the masking of certain sexualities, behaviors and acts (namely same-sex ones) as unnatural or simply other. During the same period, several sexologists and natural expression of desire, which is an argument that dates back

Psychologists also significantly shaped the understanding of sexuality. Most notably, Austricans Krafft-Ebing and Sigmund Freud explored sexuality as a central psychological affair that determines one's personal development. Freud in particular held the view that “sex is at the core of the self”, and central psychological affair that determines one's personal development.

Sexuality today can be considered as a broad umbrella term that encompasses sexual identities, sexual acts, feelings, desires, and bodily expressions and performances. Sexuality continues to be understood by some as an innate and natural expression of desire, which is an argument that dates back to the late nineteenth century in Europe, during which time sexologists began to explore physical and biological bases for sex. European and North American sexuality operated with a set of assumptions, namely that natural sexuality was heterosexual and that the purpose of the sexual desire and drive was reproductive. This specific scientific view is what led to the masking of certain sexualities, behaviors and acts (namely same-sex ones) as unnatural or simply other. During the same period, several sexologists and natural expression of desire, which is an argument that dates back

Psychologists also significantly shaped the understanding of sexuality. Most notably, Austricans Krafft-Ebing and Sigmund Freud explored sexuality as a central psychological affair that determines one's personal development. Freud in particular held the view that “sex is at the core of the self”, and central psychological affair that determines one's personal development.

Sexuality today can be considered as a broad umbrella term that encompasses sexual identities, sexual acts, feelings, desires, and bodily expressions and performances. Sexuality continues to be understood by some as an innate and natural expression of desire, which is an argument that dates back to the late nineteenth century in Europe, during which time sexologists began to explore physical and biological bases for sex. European and North American sexuality operated with a set of assumptions, namely that natural sexuality was heterosexual and that the purpose of the sexual desire and drive was reproductive. This specific scientific view is what led to the masking of certain sexualities, behaviors and acts (namely same-sex ones) as unnatural or simply other. During the same period, several sexologists and natural expression of desire, which is an argument that dates back

Psychologists also significantly shaped the understanding of sexuality. Most notably, Austricans Krafft-Ebing and Sigmund Freud explored sexuality as a central psychological affair that determines one's personal development. Freud in particular held the view that “sex is at the core of the self”, and central psychological affair that determines one's personal development.

Sexuality today can be considered as a broad umbrella term that encompasses sexual identities, sexual acts, feelings, desires, and bodily expressions and performances. Sexuality continues to be understood by some as an innate and natural expression of desire, which is an argument that dates back to the late nineteenth century in Europe, during which time sexologists began to explore physical and biological bases for sex. European and North American sexuality operated with a set of assumptions, namely that natural sexuality was heterosexual and that the purpose of the sexual desire and drive was reproductive. This specific scientific view is what led to the masking of certain sexualities, behaviors and acts (namely same-sex ones) as unnatural or simply other. During the same period, several sexologists and natural expression of desire, which is an argument that dates back

Psychologists also significantly shaped the understanding of sexuality. Most notably, Austricans Krafft-Ebing and Sigmund Freud explored sexuality as a central psychological affair that determines one's personal development. Freud in particular held the view that “sex is at the core of the self”, and central psychological affair that determines one's personal development.

Sexuality today can be considered as a broad umbrella term that encompasses sexual identities, sexual acts, feelings, desires, and bodily expressions and performances. Sexuality continues to be understood by some as an innate and natural expression of desire, which is an argument that dates back to the late nineteenth century in Europe, during which time sexologists began to explore physical and biological bases for sex. European and North American sexuality operated with a set of assumptions, namely that natural sexuality was heterosexual and that the purpose of the sexual desire and drive was reproductive. This specific scientific view is what led to the masking of certain sexualities, behaviors and acts (namely same-sex ones) as unnatural or simply other. During the same period, several sexologists and natural expression of desire, which is an argument that dates back

Psychologists also significantly shaped the understanding of sexuality. Most notably, Austricans Krafft-Ebing and Sigmund Freud explored sexuality as a central psychological affair that determines one's personal development. Freud in particular held the view that “sex is at the core of the self”, and central psychological affair that determines one's personal development.

Sexuality today can be considered as a broad umbrella term that encompasses sexual identities, sexual acts, feelings, desires, and bodily expressions and performances. Sexuality continues to be understood by some as an innate and natural expression of desire, which is an argument that dates back to the late nineteenth century in Europe, during which time sexologists began to explore physical and biological bases for sex. European and North American sexuality operated with a set of assumptions, namely that natural sexuality was heterosexual and that the purpose of the sexual desire and drive was reproductive. This specific scientific view is what led to the masking of certain sexualities, behaviors and acts (namely same-sex ones) as unnatural or simply other. During the same period, several sexologists and natural expression of desire, which is an argument that dates back

Psychologists also significantly shaped the understanding of sexuality. Most notably, Austricans Krafft-Ebing and Sigmund Freud explored sexuality as a central psychological affair that determines one's personal development. Freud in particular held the view that “sex is at the core of the self”, and central psychological affair that determines one's personal development.

Sexuality today can be considered as a broad umbrella term that encompasses sexual identities, sexual acts, feelings, desires, and bodily expressions and performances. Sexuality continues to be understood by some as an innate and natural expression of desire, which is an argument that dates back to the late nineteenth century in Europe, during which time sexologists began to explore physical and biological bases for sex. European and North American sexuality operated with a set of assumptions, namely that natural sexuality was heterosexual and that the purpose of the sexual desire and drive was reproductive. This specific scientific view is what led to the masking of certain sexualities, behaviors and acts (namely same-sex ones) as unnatural or simply other. During the same period, several sexologists and natural expression of desire, which is an argument that dates back

Psychologists also significantly shaped the understanding of sexuality. Most notably, Austricans Krafft-Ebing and Sigmund Freud explored sexuality as a central psychological affair that determines one's personal development. Freud in particular held the view that “sex is at the core of the self”, and central psychological affair that determines one's personal development.

Sexuality today can be considered as a broad umbrella term that encompasses sexual identities, sexual acts, feelings, desires, and bodily expressions and performances. Sexuality continues to be understood by some as an innate and natural expression of desire, which is an argument that dates back to the late nineteenth century in Europe, during which time sexologists began to explore physical and biological bases for sex. European and North American sexuality operated with a set of assumptions, namely that natural sexuality was heterosexual and that the purpose of the sexual desire and drive was reproductive. This specific scientific view is what led to the masking of certain sexualities, behaviors and acts (namely same-sex ones) as unnatural or simply other. During the same period, several sexologists and natural expression of desire, which is an argument that dates back

Psychologists also significantly shaped the understanding of sexuality. Most notably, Austricans Krafft-Ebing and Sigmund Freud explored sexuality as a central psychological affair that determines one's personal development. Freud in particular held the view that “sex is at the core of the self”, and central psychological affair that determines one's personal development.

Sexuality today can be considered as a broad umbrella term that encompasses sexual identities, sexual acts, feelings, desires, and bodily expressions and performances. Sexuality continues to be understood by some as an innate and natural expression of desire, which is an argument that dates back to the late nineteenth century in Europe, during which time sexologists began to explore physical and biological bases for sex. European and North American sexuality operated with a set of assumptions, namely that natural sexuality was heterosexual and that the purpose of the sexual desire and drive was reproductive. This specific scientific view is what led to the masking of certain sexualities, behaviors and acts (namely same-sex ones) as unnatural or simply other. During the same period, several sexologists and natural expression of desire, which is an argument that dates back

Psychologists also significantly shaped the understanding of sexuality. Most notably, Austricans Krafft-Ebing and Sigmund Freud explored sexuality as a central psychological affair that determines one's personal development. Freud in particular held the view that “sex is at the core of the self”, and central psychological affair that determines one's personal development.
In this vein, it is important to mention that the very establishment and separation of sexuality as a field of studies is thus based upon historical sociocultural developments in the European and North American contexts. Foucault has been criticized for not properly examining the overlapping links between the emergence of “sexuality” as a field and European colonial and imperial endeavors. Today, sexuality and attitudes around it have become a main area through which to build a civilization different between a “progressive” Europe and North America, and a “backward” Middle East (see LGBT). Studies of sexuality in the Middle Eastern context predominantly include efforts to historicize sex and desire, and the academic debate has been influenced by a similar split between essentialism and constructionism. Essentialist theorizing includes writers such as Stephen Mucery and Will Roscoe, who understand same-sex desire and acts as trans-historical.

Others, such as Khaled El-Rouayheb, explored male same-sex desire and sexual acts in the period between 1500-1800 in the Ottoman Arab-Islamic world, and argued that same male-sex desire was organized very differently from how we understand it today: desire did not operate as a basis for identity. Rather, same-sex desire was organized around binaries between sex for love and sex for lust, active and receptive sex roles, and sexual acts and “Ma’bun” in the city of Beirut15. Studies of same-sex sexuality and desire continue to challenge the history of (homo)sexuality. Finally, the most studies remain within the literary and historical fields with minimal anthropological interventions. In Lebanon, leftist collectives during the 1990s and 2000s saw the emergence of sexuality as a political issue, which produced a vivid debate within these circles. In fact, these leftist mobilizations led to the creation17 at a later stage, of Helen, an organization to protect LGBT rights.

107 Sexuality

108 Arabische

شامل: "الجنسية العربية" و"غير الجنسية العربية" في الأدب العربي والتراث. وقد تناقش الكاتبيين المثليين والثانيين في الأعمال، وتعتبر النفسية والأخلاقية كياناً آخرًا ينتمي إلى الخصائص النزولاً وتمثل في النزول والأنشطة الجنسية والبحثية، والتأثير على نظرية "النوعية" في الأدب العربي والتراث. وقد تناقش الكاتبيين المثليين والثانيين في الأعمال، وتعتبر النفسية والأخلاقية كياناً آخرًا ينتمي إلى الخصائص النزولاً وتمثل في النزول والأنشطة الجنسية والبحثية، والتأثير على نظرية "النوعية" في الأدب العربي والتراث. وقد تناقش الكاتبيين المثليين والثانيين في الأعمال، وتعتبر النفسية والأخلاقية كياناً آخرًا ينتمي إلى الخصائص النزولاً وتمثل في النزول والأنشطة الجنسية والبحثية، والتأثير على نظرية "النوعية" في الأدب العربي والتراث. وقد تناقش الكاتبيين المثليين والثانيين في الأعمال، وتعتبر النفسية والأخلاقية كياناً آخرًا ينتمي إلى الخصائص النزولاً وتمثل في النزول والأنشطة الجنسية والبحثية.
Women who are hired in these clubs are sometimes trafficked and work in nightclubs, which are allowed to hire foreign workers under the "artist" visa. In Lebanon, legal sex work is regulated only through the so-called super club license, which is issued to different degrees of success and criticism. For example, the "Swedish model" includes prohibiting the buying of sex but does not criminalize selling it, while this approach aims to facilitate sex workers’ access to rights, health care, and protection, it still drives a part of sex work underground.

Sex work

"Sex work" refers to the act of selling sex. As a term, "sex work" was coined by activist Carol Leigh in 1978 and subsequently popularized in the United States through multiple campaigns led by sex workers who demanded protection, decriminalization, end to their stigmatization, and equal rights. Thus, the use of the term "sex work" can be regarded as a statement in support of sex workers' rights and to an end to their criminalization and discrimination. Sex work includes all acts of selling sex: prostitution, porn, stripping, internet and phone sex, etc. The term "prostitution" continues to be used by some, but is associated with several negative connotations and a history of stigmatization. Prostitution has been linked with dire economic conditions, poverty, war, and with trafficking in women who are then forced into the sex industry against their will. Recent policies have attempted to separate the crime of trafficking from consensual sex work.

Contemporary debates on sex work as well as policies towards it have been split along at least three different lines, including abolitionism, legalization, and decriminalization. The abolitionist stance argues that the sale of sex to men should be eliminated primarily because its existence is only possible due to unequal patriarchal gender relations which facilitate men’s access to women’s bodies, who are socially disadvantaged (see Patriarchy). Radical feminism has traditionally supported the abolitionist stance arguing that overall discrimination against women is only further perpetuated through the sex industry, but often failed to see the class dimensions of sex work (see Intersectionality). Legalizing and decriminalizing sex work are two different approaches to regulating the sex industry. Legalizing means creating laws that regulate the buying and the selling of sex, with for example forced labor check-ups for sex workers and specified places of work. Decriminalization refers to cancelling all laws that criminalize buyers and sells of sex work (but does not equate to cancelling laws against trafficking) thereby easing sex workers’ ability to report crimes against them and access adequate health care services. Various states have experimented with the above approaches to different degrees of success and criticism. For example, the "Swedish model" includes prohibiting the buying of sex but does not criminalize selling it. However, women who are hired in these clubs are sometimes trafficked and
forced into the industry, and usually their passports are taken away from them upon their entry to the country. Sex work outside of these clubs is criminalized through a number of articles in the Penal Code which not only target sex workers themselves but also those who facilitate sex work or administer it. The issue continues to be debated publicly mainly through initiatives, research, and a campaign by the local NGO Kafa targeting primaziy male sex buyers and the patriarchal attitudes that enable violence against women through the form of fuced sex work. The campaign overall favors abolitionism and has been critiqued for not taking into account the different ways in which sex work is organized in Beirut outside of the super nightclubs, and how criminalization affects certain groups of sex workers including transwomen and gay and queer men.


5 Saleh and Oubaja, Ibid.
“Social justice” is frequently invoked as a goal by most progressive social movements, but its concrete definition varies with the specificity of the context. Broadly, social justice can be understood as “a commitment to welfare grounded in respect for the dignity of persons and the common good. (...) [It] includes a broad commitment to alleviating poverty, improving the quality of life, labor and health care, and diminishing violence”. The emphasis on welfare has also led to using the term “economic justice” instead, while the focus on alleviating violence has paved the way to including the issue of gender equality in demands for social justice.

Historically, political demands framed as “social justice” claims appeared during the modern period as a reaction to the excesses of industrialization especially in urban areas across Europe. In the 19th century, “social justice” became a trope in socialist labor discourse, and its strongest association continues to be with socialist and social-democratic politics. The term is frequently discussed with reference to a set of social rights that were inscribed in UN Covenants since the 1950s. Social development was in fact the main aim of UN institutions, and UN bodies dealing specifically in the field of social justice were established in the 1950s. Since the 1990s, overemphasizing social justice has been seen as a “commitment to welfare grounded in respect for the dignity of persons and the common good.” The term “economic justice” has also been used, while the focus on alleviating violence has paved the way to including the issue of gender equality in demands for social justice.

Importantly, clashing Cold War governments in the 1960s enacted a separation between individual human rights on the one hand and social rights on the other. “Social justice,” and rights that are specific to social development had come to be seen as the political platform of the Soviet Union and aligned “Third World” countries as well as “non-aligned” Arab states such as Syria and Egypt, with representatives of liberal democracies arguing for guaranteeing individual human rights and freedom from government interference on the other. Further, some states have used the term as a way for redressing inequalities among nations and outlining the need for a global redistribution of wealth. Whereas human rights explicitly refer to specific individuals, social rights individually as the scale, social rights are aimed at reorganizing inequality at the level of societies, which is a crucial difference that has led US-dominated international institutions to regard the concept of social rights with suspicion. Since the 1990s, overemphasizing social justice has been seen as a “commitment to welfare grounded in respect for the dignity of persons and the common good.” The term “economic justice” has also been used, while the focus on alleviating violence has paved the way to including the issue of gender equality in demands for social justice.

Social Justice

“Social justice” is frequently invoked as a goal by most progressive social movements, but its concrete definition varies with the specificity of the context. Broadly, social justice can be understood as “a commitment to welfare grounded in respect for the dignity of persons and the common good. (...) [It] includes a broad commitment to alleviating poverty, improving the quality of life, labor and health care, and diminishing violence”. The emphasis on welfare has also led to using the term “economic justice” instead, while the focus on alleviating violence has paved the way to including the issue of gender equality in demands for social justice.

Historically, political demands framed as “social justice” claims appeared during the modern period as a reaction to the excesses of industrialization especially in urban areas across Europe. In the 19th century, “social justice” became a trope in socialist labor discourse, and its strongest association continues to be with socialist and social-democratic politics. The term is frequently discussed with reference to a set of social rights that were inscribed in UN Covenants since the 1950s. Social development was in fact the main aim of UN institutions, and UN bodies dealing specifically in the field of social justice were established in the 1950s. Since the 1990s, overemphasizing social justice has been seen as a “commitment to welfare grounded in respect for the dignity of persons and the common good.” The term “economic justice” has also been used, while the focus on alleviating violence has paved the way to including the issue of gender equality in demands for social justice.

Importantly, clashing Cold War governments in the 1960s enacted a separation between individual human rights on the one hand and social rights on the other. “Social justice,” and rights that are specific to social development had come to be seen as the political platform of the Soviet Union and aligned “Third World” countries as well as “non-aligned” Arab states such as Syria and Egypt, with representatives of liberal democracies arguing for guaranteeing individual human rights and freedom from government interference on the other. Further, some states have used the term as a way for redressing inequalities among nations and outlining the need for a global redistribution of wealth. Whereas human rights explicitly refer to specific individuals, social rights individually as the scale, social rights are aimed at reorganizing inequality at the level of societies, which is a crucial difference that has led US-dominated international institutions to regard the concept of social rights with suspicion. Since the 1990s, overemphasizing social justice has been seen as a “commitment to welfare grounded in respect for the dignity of persons and the common good.” The term “economic justice” has also been used, while the focus on alleviating violence has paved the way to including the issue of gender equality in demands for social justice.

Importantly, clashing Cold War governments in the 1960s enacted a separation between individual human rights on the one hand and social rights on the other. “Social justice,” and rights that are specific to social development had come to be seen as the political platform of the Soviet Union and aligned “Third World” countries as well as “non-aligned” Arab states such as Syria and Egypt, with representatives of liberal democracies arguing for guaranteeing individual human rights and freedom from government interference on the other. Further, some states have used the term as a way for redressing inequalities among nations and outlining the need for a global redistribution of wealth. Whereas human rights explicitly refer to specific individuals, social rights individually as the scale, social rights are aimed at reorganizing inequality at the level of societies, which is a crucial difference that has led US-dominated international institutions to regard the concept of social rights with suspicion. Since the 1990s, overemphasizing social justice has been seen as a “commitment to welfare grounded in respect for the dignity of persons and the common good.” The term “economic justice” has also been used, while the focus on alleviating violence has paved the way to including the issue of gender equality in demands for social justice.

Importantly, clashing Cold War governments in the 1960s enacted a separation between individual human rights on the one hand and social rights on the other. “Social justice,” and rights that are specific to social development had come to be seen as the political platform of the Soviet Union and aligned “Third World” countries as well as “non-aligned” Arab states such as Syria and Egypt, with representatives of liberal democracies arguing for guaranteeing individual human rights and freedom from government interference on the other. Further, some states have used the term as a way for redressing inequalities among nations and outlining the need for a global redistribution of wealth. Whereas human rights explicitly refer to specific individuals, social rights individually as the scale, social rights are aimed at reorganizing inequality at the level of societies, which is a crucial difference that has led US-dominated international institutions to regard the concept of social rights with suspicion. Since the 1990s, overemphasizing social justice has been seen as a “commitment to welfare grounded in respect for the dignity of persons and the common good.” The term “economic justice” has also been used, while the focus on alleviating violence has paved the way to including the issue of gender equality in demands for social justice.

Importantly, clashing Cold War governments in the 1960s enacted a separation between individual human rights on the one hand and social rights on the other. “Social justice,” and rights that are specific to social development had come to be seen as the political platform of the Soviet Union and aligned “Third World” countries as well as “non-aligned” Arab states such as Syria and Egypt, with representatives of liberal democracies arguing for guaranteeing individual human rights and freedom from government interference on the other. Further, some states have used the term as a way for redressing inequalities among nations and outlining the need for a global redistribution of wealth. Whereas human rights explicitly refer to specific individuals, social rights individually as the scale, social rights are aimed at reorganizing inequality at the level of societies, which is a crucial difference that has led US-dominated international institutions to regard the concept of social rights with suspicion. Since the 1990s, overemphasizing social justice has been seen as a “commitment to welfare grounded in respect for the dignity of persons and the common good.” The term “economic justice” has also been used, while the focus on alleviating violence has paved the way to including the issue of gender equality in demands for social justice.
replaced with attention to the issue of development within and outside the UN (see also NGOization), with significant monetary aid allocated for market-friendly economic development (rather than redistribution) and minimal welfare goals (such as the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger) now topping the international social agenda.

Feminist political theorist Nancy Fraser has outlined a conceptualization of “social justice” that grants “social recognition” and “social redistribution” equal importance. She argues that identity politics claims need to be placed on an equal footing with claims for redistribution. This would lead to theorizing “an overarching conception of justice that can accommodate both defensible claims for equality and defensible claims for the recognition of difference.” In her view, misrecognition – caused by societal attribution of a lower status to certain groups of people because of sexism, racism and/or heteronormativity – is as important as maldistribution (or unequal distribution). In other words, human self-realization cannot be achieved without advocating simultaneously for egalitarian resource redistribution and the recognition of human diversity. Her stance can be considered a feminist position on social justice, especially through her emphasis on understanding and celebrating difference.

Demands for social justice have been clearly articulated in the 2011 wave of the Arab revolts. Aside from the central aim to end the regimes’ excessive authoritarian power, economic wellbeing was at the core of the demands as illustrated by the large workers’ protests taking place in Egypt in the events leading to the Egyptian revolution, as well as years of revolts in poor mining areas in Tunisia. In Lebanon, the most recent wave of protests and social mobilization in 2015 has made very clear demands for social, political, economic, and environmental justice: the resignation of corrupt officials, providing basic services such as electricity and accessible water disaster, end to patriarchal domination, and an end to the environmental trash disaster gripping Beirut. As such, social justice is a core principle in current regional and local activism and social movements.
STD/STI

Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STD) or Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI) are caused by the transmission of bacteria, viruses and parasites from person to person especially, but not exclusively, through sexual contact - some infections classified as STIs can be transmitted from mother to child, through non-sexual interpersonal contact or blood transfusions. There are currently 30 identified sexually-transmissible bacterial, viral and parasitic pathogens. The most widespread STIs are: syphilis, HIV, gonorrhea, herpes, chlamydia, trichomoniasis, candidiasis, genital warts and cervical cancer (caused by infection with human papillomavirus – HPV), chancroid and pubic lice.

“Sexually Transmitted Infections” is the term increasingly preferred to “Sexually Transmitted Diseases”. It is argued that “STD” highlights that a person may be infected while not necessarily developing a disease or may only show symptoms long after the infection occurred. Until late in the 20th century, the medical and publicly-used term was “venereal disease”-named in the 17th century after Venus, Roman goddess of love.

While it is difficult to establish whether ancient Greek and Roman doctors treated infections that today would be classified as STIs; clearer sources show that Islamic medicine recognized and treated around the year 1000 a form of gonorrhea very likely identical in manifestation to the one circulating today. The discovery of penicillin in 1948, an antibiotic which treated infections that today would be classified as STIs, cleared sources that some infections classified as STIs can be transmitted from mother to child, through non-sexual interpersonal contact or blood transfusions. There are currently 30 identified sexually-transmissible bacterial, viral and parasitic pathogens. The most widespread STIs are: syphilis, HIV, gonorrhea, herpes, chlamydia, trichomoniasis, candidiasis, genital warts and cervical cancer (caused by infection with human papillomavirus – HPV), chancroid and pubic lice.

Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STD) or Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI) are caused by the transmission of bacteria, viruses and parasites from person to person especially, but not exclusively, through sexual contact - some infections classified as STIs can be transmitted from mother to child, through non-sexual interpersonal contact or blood transfusions. There are currently 30 identified sexually-transmissible bacterial, viral and parasitic pathogens. The most widespread STIs are: syphilis, HIV, gonorrhea, herpes, chlamydia, trichomoniasis, candidiasis, genital warts and cervical cancer (caused by infection with human papillomavirus – HPV), chancroid and pubic lice.

“Sexually Transmitted Infections” is the term increasingly preferred to “Sexually Transmitted Diseases”. It is argued that “STD” highlights that a person may be infected while not necessarily developing a disease or may only show symptoms long after the infection occurred. Until late in the 20th century, the medical and publicly-used term was “venereal disease”-named in the 17th century after Venus, Roman goddess of love.

While it is difficult to establish whether ancient Greek and Roman doctors treated infections that today would be classified as STIs; clearer sources show that Islamic medicine recognized and treated around the year 1000 a form of gonorrhea very likely identical in manifestation to the one circulating today. The discovery of penicillin in 1948, an antibiotic which cured syphilis and some strains of gonorrhea, inaugurated a period of “therapeutic optimism” about STIs. The first known cases of HIV, in 1981, and the subsequent global epidemic caused by the virus, as well as the periodic resurgence of syphilis since then, have had a sobering effect on the medical community and international public opinion.

Besides being objects of medical preoccupation, STIs have been central to the shaping of social, cultural and political attitudes towards sexuality, gender, state and scientific authority or global circulation since at least the Middle Ages. Early on, observers argued that syphilis had been brought back by sailors from the “newly-discovered” Americas and later, that it was spread because of modern intra-European armed conflict - for example, it was often called “The French Disease”, or “the Polish Disease”. Such judgments reflect how geopolitical games and cultural otherness are produced through discourses on infection and contagion.

Stigmatization and criminalization of male homosexuality in Europe resulted in high syphilis infections among MSM and difficulty in accessing treatments.

Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STD) or Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI) are caused by the transmission of bacteria, viruses and parasites from person to person especially, but not exclusively, through sexual contact - some infections classified as STIs can be transmitted from mother to child, through non-sexual interpersonal contact or blood transfusions. There are currently 30 identified sexually-transmissible bacterial, viral and parasitic pathogens. The most widespread STIs are: syphilis, HIV, gonorrhea, herpes, chlamydia, trichomoniasis, candidiasis, genital warts and cervical cancer (caused by infection with human papillomavirus – HPV), chancroid and pubic lice.

“Sexually Transmitted Infections” is the term increasingly preferred to “Sexually Transmitted Diseases”. It is argued that “STD” highlights that a person may be infected while not necessarily developing a disease or may only show symptoms long after the infection occurred. Until late in the 20th century, the medical and publicly-used term was “venereal disease”-named in the 17th century after Venus, Roman goddess of love.

While it is difficult to establish whether ancient Greek and Roman doctors treated infections that today would be classified as STIs; clearer sources show that Islamic medicine recognized and treated around the year 1000 a form of gonorrhea very likely identical in manifestation to the one circulating today. The discovery of penicillin in 1948, an antibiotic which cured syphilis and some strains of gonorrhea, inaugurated a period of “therapeutic optimism” about STIs. The first known cases of HIV, in 1981, and the subsequent global epidemic caused by the virus, as well as the periodic resurgence of syphilis since then, have had a sobering effect on the medical community and international public opinion.

Besides being objects of medical preoccupation, STIs have been central to the shaping of social, cultural and political attitudes towards sexuality, gender, state and scientific authority or global circulation since at least the Middle Ages. Early on, observers argued that syphilis had been brought back by sailors from the “newly-discovered” Americas and later, that it was spread because of modern intra-European armed conflict - for example, it was often called “The French Disease”, or “the Polish Disease”. Such judgments reflect how geopolitical games and cultural otherness are produced through discourses on infection and contagion.

Stigmatization and criminalization of male homosexuality in Europe resulted in high syphilis infections among MSM and difficulty in accessing treatments.

Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STD) or Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI) are caused by the transmission of bacteria, viruses and parasites from person to person especially, but not exclusively, through sexual contact - some infections classified as STIs can be transmitted from mother to child, through non-sexual interpersonal contact or blood transfusions. There are currently 30 identified sexually-transmissible bacterial, viral and parasitic pathogens. The most widespread STIs are: syphilis, HIV, gonorrhea, herpes, chlamydia, trichomoniasis, candidiasis, genital warts and cervical cancer (caused by infection with human papillomavirus – HPV), chancroid and pubic lice.

“Sexually Transmitted Infections” is the term increasingly preferred to “Sexually Transmitted Diseases”. It is argued that “STD” highlights that a person may be infected while not necessarily developing a disease or may only show symptoms long after the infection occurred. Until late in the 20th century, the medical and publicly-used term was “venereal disease”-named in the 17th century after Venus, Roman goddess of love.

While it is difficult to establish whether ancient Greek and Roman doctors treated infections that today would be classified as STIs; clearer sources show that Islamic medicine recognized and treated around the year 1000 a form of gonorrhea very likely identical in manifestation to the one circulating today. The discovery of penicillin in 1948, an antibiotic which cured syphilis and some strains of gonorrhea, inaugurated a period of “therapeutic optimism” about STIs. The first known cases of HIV, in 1981, and the subsequent global epidemic caused by the virus, as well as the periodic resurgence of syphilis since then, have had a sobering effect on the medical community and international public opinion.

Besides being objects of medical preoccupation, STIs have been central to the shaping of social, cultural and political attitudes towards sexuality, gender, state and scientific authority or global circulation since at least the Middle Ages. Early on, observers argued that syphilis had been brought back by sailors from the “newly-discovered” Americas and later, that it was spread because of modern intra-European armed conflict - for example, it was often called “The French Disease”, or “the Polish Disease”. Such judgments reflect how geopolitical games and cultural otherness are produced through discourses on infection and contagion.

Stigmatization and criminalization of male homosexuality in Europe resulted in high syphilis infections among MSM and difficulty in accessing treatments.
According to the World Health Organization, from 2005 to 2008, there has been an increase in the global incidence of chlamydia (4.1 %), gonococcal (21%) and trichomonas (11.2%) cases. The total incidence of selected curable sexually transmitted infections (2010, Geneva, Switzerland, World Health Organization, 2012, p. 3) available at: http://apps.who.int/iris/. Last accessed 16.09.2015.

The dynamics of this history also continue to shape local groups and organizations in Lebanon, some of which have decided to be specialized in intergay rights issues and activism in the U.S. and Europe, such as ACT UP in New York. The pattern would be repeated during the 20th century HIV epidemic, with AIDS receiving the homophobic “gay plague” label. The spread of HIV has led to the development of global public health regimes, and arguably, the trend has led to NGOization in the field of reproductive and sexual health. In the North Africa and Middle East region there were an estimated 26,4 million, in 2008, only about one of the lowest numbers by global regions. Globally, it was estimated that in 2010, 14,200,000 HIV-infected persons were eligible for antiretroviral therapy. In the North Africa and Middle East region there were an estimated of 150,000 such cases, the lowest global percentage.

2. Ibid, p. 31.
4. Ibid, p. 32.
“Violence” can be defined, in the first instance, as the use of force against another person or entity. Violence can be physical, sexual or psychological and can also take the form of deprivation. It can occur between individuals (family, community), have a collective character (as in social, political and economic violence) or be self-inflicted. “Economic violence” can entail taking economic advantage of people, in different contexts such as the workplace or the family. “Structural violence” describes violence occurring within and supported by structures and institutions. Racism, sexism and classism are forms of structural violence. Structural violence functions interdependently with other types of violence, including gender-based violence, war or intra-family violence.

European scholars writing after the Second World War have supported the thesis of a decline in violence in the modern period, as a result of a “civilizing” process that led to the repression of brutality (Elias), the shift from state brutality to discipline (Foucault) and the increasing exercise of violence through cultural forms rather than mere coercion (Bourdieu’s “symbolic violence”). An early postwar exception to this line of arguing, Franz Fanon’s “The Wretched of the Earth” has portrayed violence as the mark of deprivation.

Violence from state brutality to discipline (Foucault) and the increasing exercise of violence through cultural forms rather than mere coercion (Bourdieu’s “symbolic violence”). An early postwar exception to this line of arguing, Franz Fanon’s “The Wretched of the Earth” has portrayed violence as the mark of deprivation.

Indeed, it can be argued that one of the main fault lines between Marxian and post-structuralist feminists is drawn between different understandings of the relationship between power and violence.
In the past three decades, one of the most interesting interventions in public discussions about violence with important consequences in activism and policy-making, has been the socialist and liberal feminist problematization of violence against women and then of gender-based violence more broadly. They argued that violence against women is a result of patriarchal domination or liberal states’ unwillingness to intervene in the “private sphere.” The internationalization of European and American human rights discourses on violence against women has been criticized, particularly by feminists themselves, as having neglected local dynamics, bolstered state social control and promoted professionalization and NGOization around the world (see NGOization). On the other hand, as in the case of Lebanon, the evolution of approaches to gender-based violence, including the problematization of a historically-dominant “Violence Against Women” conceptual framework, point to a more complex form of cultural and policy transfer in the so-called developing world.

“Violence against women” (VAW) was a term established following several international conferences during which activists and NGOs pressured for violence against women to be a universal human right and a central issue in the fight for women’s rights and gender equality. As a result, the United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Violence in 1993 states that “violence against women is a manifestation of historically unequal power relations between men and women, which have led to domination over and discrimination against women by men and to the prevention of the full and equal development of women, and that violence against women is one of the crucial social mechanisms by which women are forced into a subordinate position compared with men.” Thus, in this framework, VAW may be considered as a form of discrimination against women.

“Gender-based violence” (GBV) refers to any act of violence based on social gender differences. For women, GBV could take the form of discrimination in access to services, sexual exploitation (trafficking), sexual harassment, domestic violence, spousal. GBV can also be analyzed in the broader social context where male privilege and power over women is reinforced through violence. Women are more at risk in times of conflict, since they are more vulnerable to sexual violence (including rape) but also to domestic violence, early marriage, or cases of what was coined as “survival sex”: the exchange of sex for food or help, as was observed recently in the wake of the Syrian refugee crisis in Lebanon. An increase in GBV against men is also observable in times of conflict, but ideas about masculinity and other gender stereotypes are often obstacles in men disclosing gender-based violence perpetrated against them.


5 Last accessed 11.10.2015.
It has been argued that both the VAW framework and dominant understandings of "non-discrimination" can reify gender binaries and lead to the exclusion of gender non-conforming individuals. This debate is illustrated by the ongoing discussion around the law for the protection of women from family violence, voted in Lebanon in 2014 and spearheaded by the NGO KAFA. By identifying women as the sole recipients of such violence, the law does not cover gay men, transwomen victims of family violence (nevertheless, the Lebanese LGBT movement strongly supported the campaign since it was seen as granting some protection to queer and lesbian women). In this context, Lebanese activists face the constant struggle of raising awareness about the differences between notions of VAW and GBV. Activists in Lebanon try to differentiate between "gender-based violence" (GBV) and "sexual-based violence" (sex-based violence). Also, activists and NGOs work on popularizing terms such as "survivor" instead of "victim" and emphasizes the rights of violence survivors, especially in legal discussions and discourses. This is meant to avoid reproducing the discourse on women as societal victims and abusers only to cis-men – meanings that exist implicitly in the VAW framework. Furthermore, activists working on shifting the language of violence from "domestic violence" (مثليات المثليين) to "family violence" (الناجية من منازلهم). The latter term allows for the incorporation of cases that could occur outside the household, an important intervention considering the structure of kinship in Lebanon and the frequent perpetration of family violence. As employees, their protection must be regulated by a different set of laws. (migrant) domestic workers are not protected under this law. The violence perpetrator, domestic workers are not protected under this law.

Several other legal and social dynamics contribute to the GBV phenomenon in Lebanon and compound difficulties in addressing it. Because the Personal Status Law (regulating marriage, divorce, child custody and inheritance) designates religious institutions to administer family relations, domestic violence is under-reported. This may be due to a perception that the law is not on the side of the abused but instead favors the unity of the family. It can also be argued that civil war violence has led to the normalization of domestic violence and, possibly, its increase. Furthermore, the strong cultural perception of the family household as a space free of violence results in NGO representatives' unwillingness to address family violence as a structural problem. This happens despite the fact that households are spaces where intense violence – whether economic, physical, sexual – is perpetrated.

In English, “work” derives from the Indo-European “werg”, meaning “to do.” Work has been defined as “a purposeful human activity involving physical or mental exertion that is not undertaken solely for pleasure and that has economic and symbolic value.” Such a broad definition is necessary considering that the activity itself has a wide range of meanings: it has been conceptualized as a commodity, as essential for personal fulfillment, as a social relation, as the activity of caring for others, as a key component of identity, and as a form of service. Second-wave feminist theorizing has been conceptualized as a commodity, as essential for personal fulfillment, as a form of joyous, collective and creative work. It is this potential for “living labor” or unpaid that has economic and symbolic value. Such a broad definition is necessary for understanding phenomena such as the gendered division of labor, the systematic wage gap that has existed for centuries to understanding how we think of gender, race and women’s studies.

Consistently since the 1970s, feminist scholarship has been arguing for expanding the category and for publicizing, politicizing and eventually radically transforming work. Liberal, socialist and radical feminists have had somewhat different positionings on gender and labor. For liberals and many socialists, labor market equality with men and an end to unpaid housework were key demands. The sociology of labor which was shaped by these strands of feminism has made significant contributions in the past five decades to understanding phenomena such as the gendered division of labor within families, women’s “double shift” (formal work and housework), the gendered segregation of labor market, the systematic wage gap between women and men, obstacles to job promotion and other labor market and state policy mechanisms that exclude on the basis of gender, race and sexuality. In addition, some of these studies have shown that a significant number of women work in what are called “care services” (homecare of elderly, sick people or people with disabilities, social work etc.), which is a concentration which illustrates the frequent social construction of jobs along traditional gender identity and roles; some scholars have argued that the very nature of this work leads to a blurring of boundaries between paid and volunteer work, and that it should be counted as “paid work.”
work and caregiving, possibly enabling the devaluation of care work and its underpayment.

The arguably more radical second-wave Marxist feminists developed a series of interesting propositions concerning the role of the gendered division of labor, or as women as a group within the capitalist mode of production. Rather than simply pointing to the need to share housework or pay for housework, scholars working in this vein argued that housework is part of the social reproduction of capitalism, enabling the continual reproduction of the workforce at the lowest possible cost for capitalists. Some also argued that women are “doubly alienated” in capitalism, because they are exploited through both patriarchal and capitalist arrangements, while others argued that private patriarchal power was replaced with a “public patriarchy” which generates and justifies the lower-paid wage labor in which women laborers are concentrated.

The Marxisn feminist narrative has been criticized by post-structuralists for its economic reductionism and insufficient attention to identities. On the other hand, materialist feminists (who seek to blend postcolonial, postmodern, and Marxist feminist theorizing) have sought to keep some of the elements that women are “doubly alienated” in capitalism, because they are exploited through both patriarchal and capitalist arrangements, while others argued that private patriarchal power was replaced with a “public patriarchy” which generates and justifies the lower-paid wage labor in which women laborers are concentrated.


Rosemary Hennessy


The arguably more radical second-wave Marxist feminists developed a series of interesting propositions concerning the role of the gendered division of labor, or as women as a group within the capitalist mode of production. Rather than simply pointing to the need to share housework or pay for housework, scholars working in this vein argued that housework is part of the social reproduction of capitalism, enabling the continual reproduction of the workforce at the lowest possible cost for capitalists. Some also argued that women are “doubly alienated” in capitalism, because they are exploited through both patriarchal and capitalist arrangements, while others argued that private patriarchal power was replaced with a “public patriarchy” which generates and justifies the lower-paid wage labor in which women laborers are concentrated.

The Marxisn feminist narrative has been criticized by post-structuralists for its economic reductionism and insufficient attention to identities. On the other hand, materialist feminists (who seek to blend postcolonial, postmodern, and Marxist feminist theorizing) have sought to keep some of the elements that women are “doubly alienated” in capitalism, because they are exploited through both patriarchal and capitalist arrangements, while others argued that private patriarchal power was replaced with a “public patriarchy” which generates and justifies the lower-paid wage labor in which women laborers are concentrated.

The Marxisn feminist narrative has been criticized by post-structuralists for its economic reductionism and insufficient attention to identities. On the other hand, materialist feminists (who seek to blend postcolonial, postmodern, and Marxist feminist theorizing) have sought to keep some of the elements of the public sphere.

The arguably more radical second-wave Marxist feminists developed a series of interesting propositions concerning the role of the gendered division of labor, or as women as a group within the capitalist mode of production. Rather than simply pointing to the need to share housework or pay for housework, scholars working in this vein argued that housework is part of the social reproduction of capitalism, enabling the continual reproduction of the workforce at the lowest possible cost for capitalists. Some also argued that women are “doubly alienated” in capitalism, because they are exploited through both patriarchal and capitalist arrangements, while others argued that private patriarchal power was replaced with a “public patriarchy” which generates and justifies the lower-paid wage labor in which women laborers are concentrated.

The Marxisn feminist narrative has been criticized by post-structuralists for its economic reductionism and insufficient attention to identities. On the other hand, materialist feminists (who seek to blend postcolonial, postmodern, and Marxist feminist theorizing) have sought to keep some of the elements of the public sphere.

The arguably more radical second-wave Marxist feminists developed a series of interesting propositions concerning the role of the gendered division of labor, or as women as a group within the capitalist mode of production. Rather than simply pointing to the need to share housework or pay for housework, scholars working in this vein argued that housework is part of the social reproduction of capitalism, enabling the continual reproduction of the workforce at the lowest possible cost for capitalists. Some also argued that women are “doubly alienated” in capitalism, because they are exploited through both patriarchal and capitalist arrangements, while others argued that private patriarchal power was replaced with a “public patriarchy” which generates and justifies the lower-paid wage labor in which women laborers are concentrated.

The Marxisn feminist narrative has been criticized by post-structuralists for its economic reductionism and insufficient attention to identities. On the other hand, materialist feminists (who seek to blend postcolonial, postmodern, and Marxist feminist theorizing) have sought to keep some of the elements of the public sphere.

The arguably more radical second-wave Marxist feminists developed a series of interesting propositions concerning the role of the gendered division of labor, or as women as a group within the capitalist mode of production. Rather than simply pointing to the need to share housework or pay for housework, scholars working in this vein argued that housework is part of the social reproduction of capitalism, enabling the continual reproduction of the workforce at the lowest possible cost for capitalists. Some also argued that women are “doubly alienated” in capitalism, because they are exploited through both patriarchal and capitalist arrangements, while others argued that private patriarchal power was replaced with a “public patriarchy” which generates and justifies the lower-paid wage labor in which women laborers are concentrated.

The Marxisn feminist narrative has been criticized by post-structuralists for its economic reductionism and insufficient attention to identities. On the other hand, materialist feminists (who seek to blend postcolonial, postmodern, and Marxist feminist theorizing) have sought to keep some of the elements of the public sphere.

The arguably more radical second-wave Marxist feminists developed a series of interesting propositions concerning the role of the gendered division of labor, or as women as a group within the capitalist mode of production. Rather than simply pointing to the need to share housework or pay for housework, scholars working in this vein argued that housework is part of the social reproduction of capitalism, enabling the continual reproduction of the workforce at the lowest possible cost for capitalists. Some also argued that women are “doubly alienated” in capitalism, because they are exploited through both patriarchal and capitalist arrangements, while others argued that private patriarchal power was replaced with a “public patriarchy” which generates and justifies the lower-paid wage labor in which women laborers are concentrated.
generally been sources of tension and led to expectations of compromise on the part of the feminists\(^\text{131}\).

The evolution of a capitalist mode of production, feminists point out, was predicated on the division of private and public, and in other words on the creation of two apparently well-differentiated realms of public waged labor and private unpaid labor. Besides this division, capitalism and the so-called Industrial Revolution rested on an international division of labor, in which an industrializing core benefited from hyperexploitative or coercive work practices in colonized or other peripheral areas that supplied agricultural goods and raw materials. In the case of colonized African states, not only did Europe intentionally underdevelop the continent but also "the colonial process, as it advanced, brought the women of the colonized people progressively down from a former high position of relative power and independence to that of 'beauty' and degraded 'nature'\(^\text{132}\)." Economic calculations initially denied slave women the position of mothers and wives and later pushed women in colonized territories out of waged labor into a position of formal dependence (and effectively into invisible unpaid work), through a process famously termed "housewifization\(^\text{132}\)."

Since the 1960s, in industrialized countries, women entered male-dominated professions in an accelerated rhythm, challenging patriarchal preconceptions while nonetheless having to deal with obstacles such as acceptance or reconciliation of family life and work and failing to eradicate "occupational segregation\(^\text{132}\)" and the double shift. Moreover, the majority of the working poor are women; they also hold the most precarious jobs. In a neoliberal economy, the majority of the working poor are women; they also hold the most precarious jobs. In a neoliberal environment, the majority of the working poor are women; they also hold the most precarious jobs. In a neoliberal economy, the majority of the working poor are women; they also hold the most precarious jobs.

Since the 1960s, in industrialized countries, women entered male-dominated professions in an accelerated rhythm, challenging patriarchal preconceptions while nonetheless having to deal with obstacles such as acceptance or reconciliation of family life and work and failing to eradicate "occupational segregation\(^\text{132}\)" and the double shift. Moreover, the majority of the working poor are women; they also hold the most precarious jobs. In a neoliberal environment, the majority of the working poor are women; they also hold the most precarious jobs.
Currently, in Lebanon, the majority of working women are employed in the informal sector, in agriculture, domestic work, social care, and NGOs – forms of work that are often unwaged or unregulated by labor law. Women represent only 23% of the paid workforce and are discriminated against in terms of employment opportunities, equality in wages, benefits, and sick and maternity leave. Working women often work “double shifts”, since they also perform domestic work. A recent study attested that women in different Lebanese communities perform most of the household work. Nonetheless, the pieces showed a correlation between a decrease of housework done and an increase in the number of women working in paid jobs. Still, access to paid work is not necessarily related to women’s liberation but more to the economic situation of the household and a need to work “outside the house” (ba’azzal abayn). Women accessing the workforce have left a gap in the care duties, since they were expected to perform duties such as taking care of children, old and sick relatives.

A lack of services from the state such as nurseries or homes for the elderly has led to the increasing mobilization of external help, in the form of migrant domestic workers (Syrian women as well as women from Sri Lanka, Ethiopia, and Bangladesh). Vast discrimination against these women (who constitute over 200,000 workers) persists both socially and legally, and the workers have been organizing themselves and demanding equal rights through unionization21.

23 Last accessed 10.10.2015.
Selected bibliography


Stevi Jackson, Sue Scott (Ed), *Feminism and Sexuality: A Reader*, Edinburgh University Press, 1996.


Sofian Merabet, Queer Beirut, Austin, Texas, University of Texas Press, 2014.

Dalya Mitri, “From Public Space to Office Space: the professionalization/NGOization of the feminist movement associations in Lebanon and its impact on mobilization and achieving social change”, Civil Society Review, Lebanon Support, Issue 1, 2015.


