

# THE PERSPECTIVE

MAGAZINE

No 2 2019

## WOMEN



**ASSOCIATION OF  
FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

LUND • EST. 1935

## EDITORS' NOTE

**S**ince the first layout week we, the editors, have started singing when exiting the office late at night after countless hours of looking for un-copyrighted photos, discussing whether a text is a feature or an opinion piece, and swearing about texts that refuse to align. Maybe we sang out of exhaustion, maybe out of happiness to have another day of layout week in the books, maybe to suppress the feeling of stress that comes with deadlines. "It's called dead for a reason". Famous last word from one of our members.

**WE WANT TO** thank our excellent editorial team for a fantastic year. We, more than anyone, know it hasn't always been easy but you guys have always had our back supporting us and shown understanding when we fucked up. You guys are great writers, great layouters but more importantly a bunch of fantastic personalities that will stay in our hearts forever.

**A SPECIAL THANKS** to Zigne Edström, one of the previous Heads of Magazine, for always encouraging us and being an experienced shoulder to lean on.

**THE EDITORIAL TEAM** has created four issues that we are really proud of. We hope and have great faith that the new editors will improve and develop the Magazine further. In 20 years The Economist will stand in the shadow of The Perspective Magazine. It's sad to leave but both of us feels that it's time that someone with a new PERSPECTIVE takes over. We are truly proud. Proud of creating

four Magazines from scratch, with no previous experience, that both are interesting and looks great. Even if creating a magazine is an incredible feeling, what we are most proud of is the incredible growth of our team and ourselves. We have strived, developed and achieved a lot together and had loads of fun along the way.

**THE OFFICE REEKS** of pizza cartons and coffee grounds. Snuffboxes and notes are scattered on the table. The bell from the cathedral rings offbeat while music is playing in the speakers. A feeling of accomplishment settles in the office.

**WE EXIT THE** office for the last time as editors. Singing, this time not out of stress or tiredness but out of achievement, louder and prouder than ever:

## THE SHOW MUST GO ON!



ISAK FRITZON & SOFIA GJERTSSON  
EDITORS-IN-CHIEF

## TEAM

### EDITORS-IN-CHIEF:

ISAK FRITZON  
SOFIA GJERTSSON

### LEGALLY RESPONSIBLE PUBLISHERS:

ISAK FRITZON  
SOFIA GJERTSSON

### LAYOUT:

SOFIA GJERTSSON  
ISAK FRITZON  
FREDRIK FAHLMAN  
MORITZ NEUBAUER

### REPORTERS

ISAK FRITZON  
SOFIA GJERTSSON  
EMMA EHRENBORG

ANNA JASTRZEMBSKA

SUHAIB M. IBRAHIM

GABRIEL ZETTERSTRÖM

MORITZ NEUBAUER

FREDRIK FAHLMAN

LIZAVETA ZHUK

ABRISHAM AHMADZADEH

STUART STOKELD

ERLEND MALMER

JESSE WASSON

ZACKARIAS BLAD

LOUISE GRIPENBERG

### ILLUSTRATIONS:

FRONT PAGE & THEME SPREAD:

SIGNE DAVIDSON

EDITORS PORTRAIT:

TILDA KAJBJER

### PRINT:

TRYDELLS TRYCKERI AB

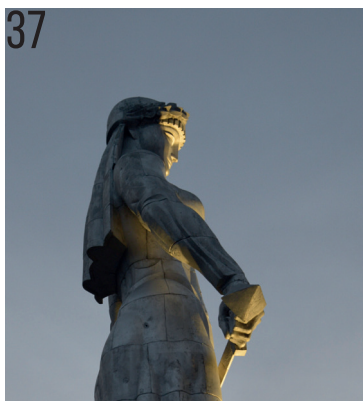
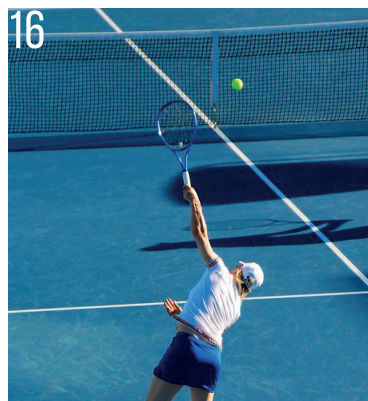
### EDITION:

780

### CONTACT:

UTRIKESPOLITISKA  
FÖRENINGEN  
SANDGATAN 2  
223 50 LUND  
MAGAZINE@UPFLUND.SE

This material is entirely or partly financed by SIDA, Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency. SIDA does not necessarily share the opinions found in the magazine. The responsibility for the content rests fully on the writer.



## CONTENT

4. PRESIDENTS' ADDRESS

6. WORLD BRIEF

8. GUEST ARTICLE

10. UPF TRAVEL IN GEORGIA

12. THE CLASH

**14-61. THEME:  
WOMEN**

16. TRANSGENDER ATHLETES:  
ASKING THE RIGHT QUESTIONS

20. FEMINISM AND DEVELOPMENT:  
THE NEGLECT OF SOCIAL  
AND CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

23. BEYOND THE FATA  
MORGANA

26. THE BURNOUT OF A  
GENERATION

30. TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE

33. LIFE OF A WAR PHOTO-  
GRAPHER

37. ALL HAIL MOTHER GEORGIA

40. THELMA ALDANA: A  
NEW SUN MAY BE RISING IN  
GUATEMALA

44. GAME OF RAPE

47. THE BOTTOM OF THE  
PYRAMID

50. TURNING 'ROMANCE  
TOURISM' ON ITS HEAD

52. QUEERING UP POLITICS

56. PERSPECTIVE ON RWANDA

58. THE REAL BATTLEFIELD  
FOR THE VOTES: MEDIA AND  
POLITICAL CANDIDATES

62. WINNER OF UNG MEDIA  
ARTICLE COMPETITION

The Perspective Magazine is the member magazine of the Association of Foreign Affairs at Lund University, published quarterly each year. The magazine has no affiliations with any political parties. Opinions presented are the writers' own.



## PRESIDENTS' ADDRESS

**H**ere we are, at the end of our time as presidents. Another operational year has almost passed, summer is fast approaching, and soon many of us will leave Lund for the time being. If there is one thing we have learnt this year, it is that time goes by incredibly fast. It seems like yesterday we were welcoming our new members at the student fairs, meeting this year's active members for the first time at the Get Active meeting, and setting up a vision for the year together with the new board. Looking back, things never turn out the way you thought they would. Sometimes they turn out even better.

**IF THERE IS** one thing we are proud of, it is our active members and the board, who have worked tirelessly, with a burning engagement that has completely blown our minds. This year we have arranged lectures every week, we have helped students take their first steps towards an international career, and we have organised trips to New York, Georgia, and Berlin. By the end of May we will have published around 150 articles and radio shows altogether in less than a year, and we will be ready to host the first-ever Nordic Convention on International Affairs. Indeed, none of which would have been possible without our hardworking PR committee.

**WE ENDED THIS** year in the most suitable way, with a magical evening at Grand Hotel. An emotional ball for the two of us, filled with gratitude for each and everyone of you. And what can we say other than thank you? Thank you for your dedication. Thank you for encouraging each other, for being supportive, and respectful, and open. To all of you who have attended our events, who have followed our media channels, who have joined us in our quest to learn more, to discuss, and to share different perspectives, thank you. Your voluntary engagement is more important than you might realise, because by participating today you can bring change tomorrow.

**WHEN THIS ISSUE** will have ended up in your hands, we will have elected a new board for next year. In only a month from now, they will take over the responsibility of pushing this association forward. And after summer, we will have a group of old and new members, eager and ready to find new, creative ways to spread knowledge and debate on international affairs. We have no doubt that you will take UPF to the next level, but for the two of us, the journey ends here. What we know, however, is that whether you are leaving Lund for an unforeseeable future or if you are returning after summer, UPF will always be here to welcome you home.



MICHAL GIEDA & ZIGNE EDSTRÖM  
PRESIDENT & VICE PRESIDENT

## BOARD 2018-2019

### PRESIDENT:

MICHAL GIEDA  
PRESIDENT@UPFLUND.SE

### VICE PRESIDENT:

ZIGNE EDSTRÖM  
VICE.PRESIDENT@UPFLUND.SE

### TREASURER:

SIMON LEO  
TREASURE@UPFLUND.SE

### SECRETARY:

CHRISTOPHER ANDERSSON  
SECRETARY@UPFLUND.SE

### LECTURE COMMITTEE:

ANDREW M. NIWAGABA  
JESPER OLSSON  
JONATHAN GARBE  
LECTURE@UPFLUND.SE

### PR COMMITTEE:

JOEL EKSTRÖM  
JULIA VÁZQUEZ SANTIAGO  
PR@UPFLUND.SE

### ACTIVITY COMMITTEE:

LOUISE GRÖNSUND  
NINA LANGELOT  
ACTIVITY@UPFLUND.SE

### THE PERSPECTIVE MAGAZINE:

SOFIA GJERTSSON  
ISAK FRITZON  
MAGAZINE@UPFLUND.SE

### THE PERSPECTIVE WEBZINE:

SIGNE DAVIDSON  
TIMOTHY PARKER  
WEBZINE@UPFLUND.SE

### THE PERSPECTIVE RADIO:

OLGA RUDAK  
JONATAN KLEFBOM  
RADIO@UPFLUND.SE

### CAREER COMMITTEE:

ENDRIT BYTYQI  
HENRIETTA TUOMAILA  
CAREER@UPFLUND.SE

### TRAVEL COMMITTEE:

COLETTE HEEFNER  
MATILDA WILHELMSSON  
TRAVEL@UPFLUND.SE

### UFS REPRESENTATIVE:

HANNES BERGGREN  
LUND@UFSVERIGE.ORG

### HEAD OF IT:

JACOB WOLLHEIM  
IT@UPFLUND.SE



# HUMAN RIGHTS CHANGE FOR ALL

Raoul Wallenberg at his graduation 1930

## RAOUL WALLENBERG INSTITUTE

OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND HUMANITARIAN LAW

We combine evidence-based human rights research with direct engagement in close collaboration with our partners to bring about human rights change for all.

The institute is named after Raoul Wallenberg, the Swedish diplomat who saved tens of thousands of Jews and other people at risk in Hungary at the end of World War II.

Want to know more about our work? Sign up for our newsletter at [www.rwi.lu.se](http://www.rwi.lu.se) or follow us on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter & LinkedIn

1.

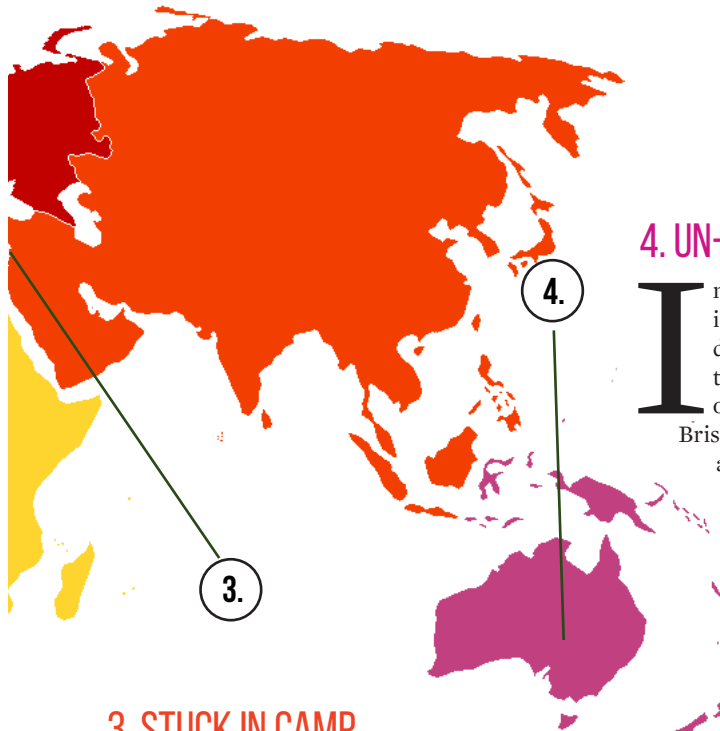
## 1. CUBA LIBRE?

**T**he 12th annual Cuban Conga against Homophobia and Transphobia was cancelled by the Cuban government. National Centre for Sex Education (CENESEX), organizers of the event, explained the cancellation was due to “new tensions in the international and regional context”, but activist is questioning the government’s motives and called the cancellation “a move backward”. Cuba was set on course toward changing the constitution, supporting same-sex marriage, but amended the draft after strong criticism from religious groups. Large groups of Cubans, generally hesitant to criticise the government, opposed the government’s proposal to include same-sex marriage in the draft for the constitution. While the general support for same-sex marriage was strong, the government changed the language, in the constitution, to not forbid same-sex marriage but also not openly supporting it. Some LGBTQ activist believes the cancellation of the Cuban Conga was due to the recent backlash in the public opinion against same-sex marriage rights. Cuba is one of the most liberal countries in Latin America when it comes to LGBTQ rights decriminalizing same-sex relations in 1979, but Cuba still has undertones of conservatives six decades after the revolution. While this might have been a legitimate cancellation, voices are being raised that this was a signal that the LGBTQ community isn’t welcome. ●

2.

## 2. POPE FRANCIS TAKING STANDS

**P**ope Francis is known for being one of the most liberal popes in history. A few years ago he said that homosexuality is not a sin. A liberal statement for the sometimes very conservative Catholic Church. Recently it has been announced that Pope Francis now has made it mandatory clergy to report sexual abuse to their superiors. This is due to the many scandals that have been brought to light in media over the past few years regarding sexual abuse within the Catholic Church. He has admitted that nuns have been sexually abused by priests and even kept as sex slaves, which he says the Church is now working on and taking a stand against. Other big scandals regarding sexual abuse within the Catholic Church often revolve around sexual abuse of children. There have been many coverups and some of the scandals date back to the 1990s with no consequences being enforced until recently. Pope Francis takes a big step in his announcement. Changing the Catholic Church is a difficult task as the worldwide institution is powerful conservative and rigorous. ●



### 3. STUCK IN CAMP

**R**ecently Swedish media has been informing about Swedish children trapped in camps in Syria after the death of their parents whom joined so called-ISIS. A specific case is the Skråmo children who come from Gothenburg (those of them born in Sweden) and whose parents are presumed to be dead. Dagens Nyheter, a Swedish newspaper, illustrated their tragic story in a camp in Syria after their parents had been killed. The children are malnourished and it has been stated that the youngest son would die soon unless given treatment. The reportage from DN put pressure on Swedish government agencies to try and get the children out and they were recently moved from the camp in Syria to a private Swedish hospital in Erbil, Iraq. There they also met their grandfather who also had been visiting them in the camp in Syria. It has also been announced that they will be able to move back to Gothenburg. A happy story for these seven children, but what is going to happen with all the other Swedish children in similar situations? The Swedish prime minister Stefan Löven has announced that each case like this needs to be handled individually but that the children are innocent and deserves to go home. ●

### 4. UN-AUSTRALIAN VEGAN ACTIVISM

**I**n April, vegan activists took to the streets in Australia to protest against the meat industry. The protestors broke into slaughterhouses, chaining themselves to conveyor belts, and blocked main intersections in Brisbane. The aim of the activists was to raise awareness about the meat industry. Australia is the second biggest meat consumer in the world with 95 kilograms of meat per person/year and also one of the biggest meat producers. Australia's prime minister Scott Morrison commented on the protests saying "What you have just described is shameful, it is un-Australian. The real thing that's going on here, is this is just another form of activism that I think runs against the national interest. And the national interest is people being able to farm their own land." Morrison also called for "the full force of the law... against these green-collared criminals". Surely you can criticize the activist's methods but all I can add to this political chilli con carne is that Australians really loves their meat. ●

# MARIELLE FRANCO PRESENTE

On the night of March 14, 2018, the Rio de Janeiro council woman Marielle Franco was brutally killed. However, one year after her execution, her memory and her political battles are still alive. There is still commitment to discover who gave the order to silence her.

**F**rancos was several things; a black woman, human-rights activist, a councilwoman, a fighter against the power of the Brazilian militia and police, and a representative of the Rio de Janeiro favelas to name a few. The life of Franco could be summarized with many identification labels as she embraced each of them to build her path in Brazilian politics. All her characteristics are what in the end got her and her driver Anderson Pedro Gomes killed. Nine shots were fired against her car, to silence her from speaking up against the corrupted tactics of the Rio de Janeiro forces of order.

**FRANCO HAD COMMITTED** her entire life to stand up for groups that are socially excluded in Brazilian society and who are abused by the military groups in particular. These minorities and marginalised groups include e.g. black and indigenous people, the LGBTQ+ community, and favelas inhabitants. Franco advocated for their rights to be respected by the state which too often employed violent repressions against them. But how did Marielle Franco become a human-rights global icon?

**HER POLITICAL AND** personal story starts in the favela Maré, where she was born in 1979. Franco was a young woman when she joined the 'Pre-Vestibular', a collective with the aim of helping Maré inhabitants, like Franco, to enter university. The

affiliation to this social movement allowed her, not only to get into the Faculty of Social Sciences at the Catholic University of Rio de Janeiro but also, to engage with leftist political parties and movements working on the ground to tackle economic inequalities and police repression. It came with no surprise that her master thesis focused on the analysis of the Peace-keeping Police Units (UPPs) projects. In the words of one of her professors Lia De Mattos Rochas, "Her work presents popular resistance and alternatives to produce a different public security which considers the livelihoods of this huge cohort of Brazilian citizens".

**FRANCO JOINED THE** Socialism and Liberty Party (PSOL) and she followed Marcelo Freixo's campaign as state deputy in 2006. She wanted to use her academic and personal experiences and turn them into a political plan in order to help minorities and tackle socio-political issues going on in Rio de Janeiro. She was part of Freixo's Human Rights Commission, where she searched for evidence of mass executions by the Brazilian militia-paramilitary groups who use illegal security services and violent means against those who oppose them. Franco was the voice of families who demanded faster investigations on the homicides of their beloved ones. She contributed to unpack the mafia schemes behind the construction of the stadiums for the World Cup and the Olympic Games.

She also denounced that “order and progress” turned into ferocious repression of the favela’s inhabitants to make Brazil appear less unequal and less poor than it actually was. Franco was always there, putting her heart and brilliant mind at the service of her community. And her people repaid her hard work by electing her as councilwoman of Rio de Janeiro in 2016.

**IN A COUNTRY** like Brazil, run by the all-male and all-white presidency of Michel Temer, she stood up, incorruptible and charismatic. When the president ordered the militarization of the city to put an end to public disorder she denounced the various crimes carried out by two policemen of the Military Police Battalion. It was her last brave action. She was murdered a few weeks later.

**FRANCO’S DEATH DID** not come without reaction, protests arose across Brazil mourning her death and the work she had done for the outcasts of Brazil. Protesters, together with Franco’s family, demanded justice and transparent investigations. There is a fear that the murder was ordered by her political enemies that she worked against through her activism. One year later, giant graffiti paintings of her, proudly smiling, are present in Brazil

and around the world, making her a symbol for feminism and of the fight against any sort of state violence. In social media the hashtag “#Marielle-FrancoPresente” is still used by activists and her party members to not let her legacy and the demand for justice vanish. This slogan means that Marielle Franco is still present, is still alive across the activists and the people who got to know her fights before and after her death.

**THE LATEST INVESTIGATIONS** led to the arrest of two men of “The Crime Bureau”, a mysterious organization committing crimes on behalf of politicians and powerful groups. However, it is still unclear who ordered the homicide to this organization. Perhaps the paramilitary groups operating in the favelas? Perhaps a politician tied with criminal organizations? Every discovery will depend on what the investigative team will find out in the next months.

**THE TRUTH ABOUT** Marielle Franco’s murder might never be unfolded. But her battles, her speeches and her passion remain as a reminder for those who keep fighting in her name and for the sake of Brazil’s people. ●



Photo: Wikimedia Commons

# UPF TRAVEL COMMITTEE

## TBILISI, GEORGIA APRIL 2019

During this trip we met politicians, students and many other people dedicated to their work. One thing they all had in common was a commitment to what appeared to the committee to be, the very bright future of Georgia.

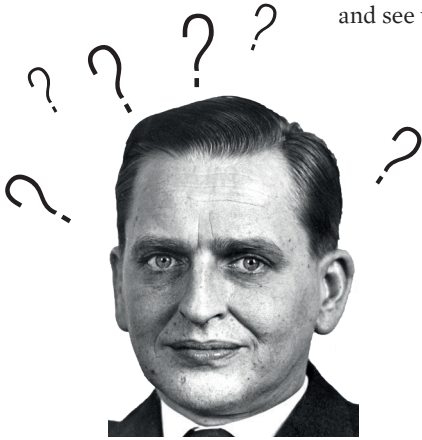
Thank you for this time Georgia, hope to see you soon again.



Photos: UPF Travel Committee



“It’s a whole big fat hoax.” One of the many things that President Trump has said about the Mueller report investigating if people in Trump’s campaign conspired with Russia to help Trump. It’s a whole big fat hoax could also be said about the investigation trying to solve the murder of Swedish prime minister Olof Palme. Let’s have a look and see which investigation will take the crown in the clash of investigations.



**THE PALME INVESTIGATION**



**THE MUELLER REPORT**

VS

33 years ago Palme was shot to death. 33 years of intense investigations led to one conviction. So was the murder solved? Answer: No. Christer Pettersson was convicted for the murder in 1989 but freed the same year. Ironically one of the current investigator's name is Krister Pettersson. Coincidence? Might be a big fat hoax. The investigation takes nine years to read; 130 persons have admitted to killing Palme, and the so-called Palme Group is still investigating the murder. So do we still have a criminal on the run? Probably. Job well done.

The mockumentary “The Palme group takes a long lunch break” recently aired. It portrays the reheated joke that the Palme group don’t have a lot on their plate since the clues from the 33-year-old murder have cooled off. Ten minutes of watching the Palme group playing ping-pong, avoiding questions on what they do on a regular day and disappearing for a three-hour long lunch break still fills a humorous purpose. Should be nominated for Palme d’Or.

Palme was a leading figure fighting against apartheid. One leading theory is that the South African Bureau of State Security, with the cool abbreviation BOSS, are the ones responsible for the murder. The so-called police trail is also an interesting theory suggesting that the police were involved in the murder. It would make sense regarding how little the investigation has led to. Others suspects that conspiracies have brought up: George Bush, August Pinochet, and the Bussman; a man who said he was going to kill Palme to a fellow bus passenger.

ROUND

**1**

OUTCOME

When special counsel Robert Mueller was appointed Trump said: “OMG this is terrible. This is the end of my presidency. I’m fucked.” The quote doesn’t reek of innocence. Mueller report concludes: There was no conspiracy between the Trump campaign and Russian operations to influence the 2016 election. Furthermore, no obstruction of justice from Trump. Well, according to the report there might have been attempts to obstruct justice from President Trump but the attempts failed. So what does that mean? Is Trump a great guy? No, he is just a bad criminal.

ROUND

**2**

BLOCKBUSTERS

Trailer: One man set out to take down the most influential person in the world; The President of The United States. Starring Johnny Depp in the part of Donald Trump and George Clooney playing Robert Mueller. A high stakes political thriller. I am sure Johnny Depp would nail the famous facial expressions and hand movements of Trump and George Clooney does kind of look like Muller. The only problem is that it’s not yet done, nor is it in the pipeline. But I would definitely watch it.

ROUND

**3**

CONSPIRACIES

The QAnon conspiracy has some interesting thoughts. QAnon believes that Barack Obama, Hillary Clinton and others are planning a coup while simultaneously involved as members of an international child sex trafficking network. According to this idea, the Mueller investigation is actually a counter-coup led by Donald Trump, who pretended to collude with Russia in order to hire Robert Mueller to secretly investigate the Democrats. They claim to have real evidence.

**WINNER**

It’s a hard pick but as I like to praise hard work and dedication, the Mueller Report can’t possibly stack up against the biggest murder investigation ever. It might still be a big fat hoax but the Palme group are trying their best despite being mocked and not doing any real progress. For me, the Palme investigation takes the crown in a clash of investigations. Hopefully, they will find the one responsible one day and finally take a permanent lunch break.

# Passion and Global Politics: A Conversation Series

How can we understand today's global collective body of anxiety? The fear of the other? War and hostility?

What is the emotive component of critique, protest and mobilization, challenging authoritarian regimes and power relations?

How do politics of passion contribute to strife and conflict? To ethnic and sectarian categorizations? To loyalties and alliances?

How is passion interrelated with politics of displacement? With senses of uncertainty, experiences of persecution, the loss of a national home?

And how may affect simultaneously work toward strengthening people's sense of belonging and public intimacy?

In order to reflect on such questions, and with the hope of generating new ones, The Center for Middle Eastern Studies at Lund University is bringing together five prominent international scholars for conversations with Associate Professor Maria Frederika Malmström.

September, 30<sup>th</sup>, 2019: Arjun Appadurai

October, 15<sup>th</sup>, 2019: Farha Ghannam

October, 31<sup>st</sup>, 2019: Charles Hirshkind

November, 7<sup>th</sup>, 2019: Stefania Pandolfo

December, 12<sup>th</sup>, 2019: Jessica Winegar

17:00-19:00, Eden Lecture Hall

Centre for Middle Eastern Studies, Lund University, Box 201, 221 00, Lund, Sweden



**LUND**  
UNIVERSITY



**FOCUS: W**

# WOMEN

WITH THIS ISSUE, WE WANTED TO EXPLORE THE CONTESTED QUESTIONS SURROUNDING WOMEN. WOMEN, A TOPIC OFTEN RESEARCHED AND DISCUSSED. WE HAVE ARTICLES RANGING FROM GENERAL QUESTIONS REGARDING WOMEN SUCH AS THE DOUBLE BURDEN TO MORE SPECIFIC QUESTIONS SUCH AS TRANSGENDER WOMEN IN SPORTS. WOMEN ARE OFTEN OVERLOOKED IN POLITICS, FOREIGN AFFAIRS, PROFESSIONAL LIFE AND LIFE IN GENERAL. THIS IS WHY WE CHOSE THE THEME WOMEN.



# TRANSGENDER ATHLETES

## ASKING THE RIGHT QUESTIONS



**FEATURE**  
STUART STOKELD

*Photo: Flickr*

Martina Navratilova, widely considered as one of the best female tennis players of all time, recently sparked a controversial debate about the inclusion and treatment of transgender athletes in women's sports.

**N**avratilova stated: "I am happy to address a transgender woman in whatever form she prefers, but I would not be happy to compete against her. It would not be fair."

**NAV RATILOVA HAS A** long history of fighting for equality in sport, coming out as lesbian in 1981 and campaigning for gay rights ever since. Her friend and coach Renee Richards, previously Richard Raskin, was one of the first transgender tennis players in the late 70s. This was a time where the pair were routinely discriminated against by the media, fellow players and fans. However, Navratilova's comments resulted in her removal from Athlete Ally, an LGBTQ advocacy group, who described her comments as transphobic. Dr Rachel McKinnon, the first transgender world champion cyclist, followed up by arguing that the comments were based on the "myth of an advantage" trans athletes have over their cis gender counterparts. The sensitive nature of this issue requires a discussion that respects the intersection of sport, society and gender, as well as ideas of fairness, equality and discrimination.

**A COMMON IDEA** that surrounds the arena of modern competitive sports is that athletic competition transcends human social difference, a person's performance is the only thing that matters. However, in many sports, participants are segregated into categories based on characteristics such

as weight or age classes, factors that affect their physical capabilities. This separation is generally uncontroversial and is seen to foster broader participation and maintain an aspect of fair play. Women are separated from men, in the same way, to preserve the integrity of athletic competition, values that can be described as internal to sports. However, they are also separated based on external values that relate to broader social norms, particularly notions of equality and anti-discrimination. For example, elite sports is a space that throughout history women have fought to be included in, through the desire to receive equal access to the benefits that it brings, regardless of gender.

**A KEY POINT** that seems to frame the debate around the treatment of transgender athletes is the perceived mutual exclusivity of these values. Solutions that meet sports internal values tend to rest on the importance of biological sex as a marker for categorisation, and therefore athletes are separated in this way to ensure fairness. However, focus on external values prioritise equality and protection from discrimination for emerging forms of gender identity and expression. These are multiple and form a spectrum that challenges the simple categorisation of male and female.

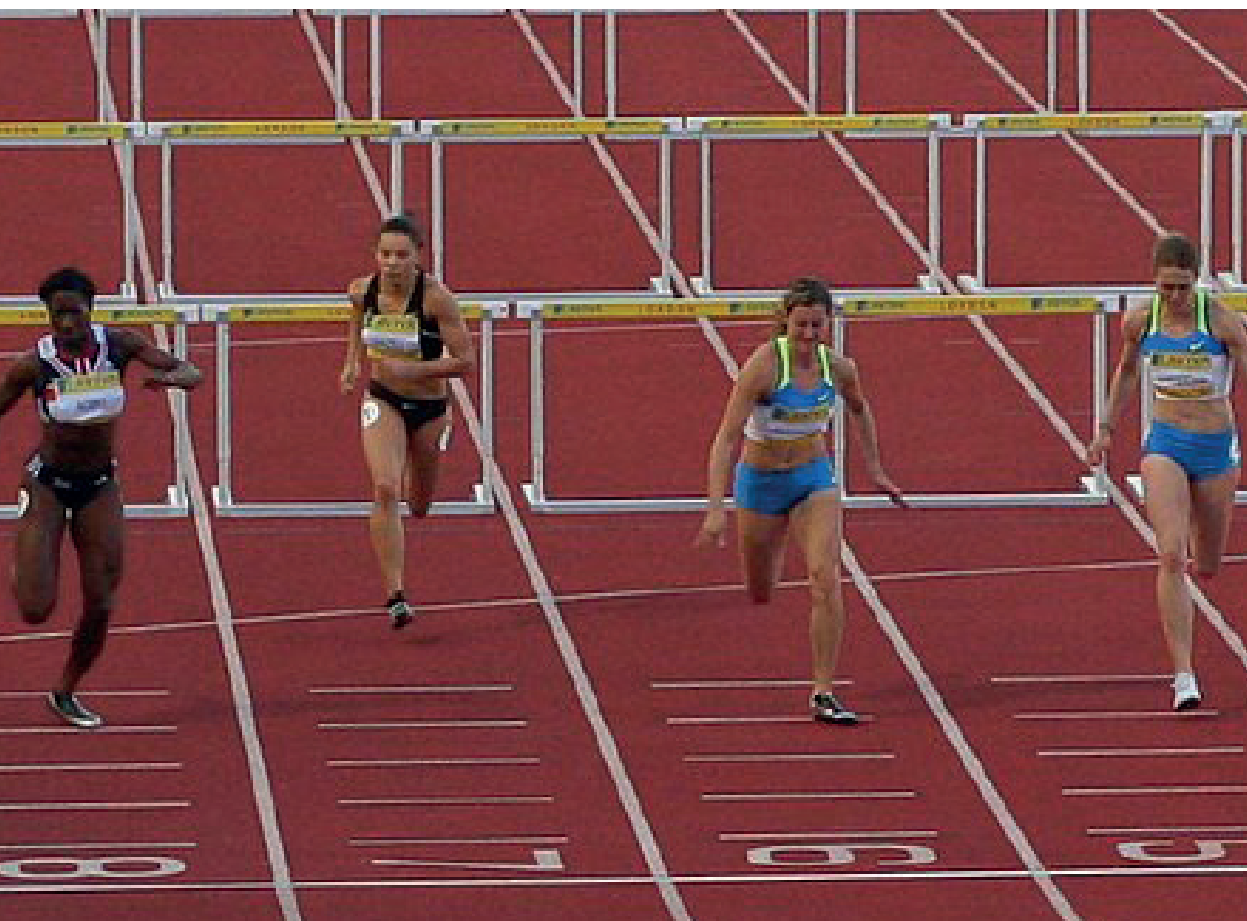
**THIS LEADS TO** the important question of which values should be prioritised, and whether it is possible to work towards both?



**CONSIDER THE CASES** of Terry Miller and Andraya Yearwood, two 17 year old transgender female athletes who have been dominating state track competition in Connecticut, alternating between 1st and 2nd spots in most events. The state athletic commission (CIAC), legally gives athletes the right to compete based on their gender identity, rather than biological sex. However, the success of the pair has led to some students and parents calling for a change in the rules. Selina Soule, who came third in the qualifying race behind Miller and Yearwood, argues “We all know the outcome of the race before it even starts; it’s demoralizing,” she said. “I fully support and am happy for these athletes for being true to themselves. They should have the right to express themselves in school, but athletics have always had extra rules to keep the competition fair.” This mirrors the argument shown in Navratilova’s quote, which prioritises the internal values of sport and it’s right to impose “extra rules” around transgender athletes. These

cases show a double standard between the discussion around gender identity and its expression in social contexts, versus in the context of athletics where gender separation is commonly used to try and achieve fair competition.

**THEREFORE, A FOCUS** on the rules, rather than individuals, is important. The criticism levelled at Yearwood and Miller, particularly from right wing leaning political pundits and media outlets likens the pair’s success to “male athletes taking over a female space”. It is important to recognize that we are talking about two 17 year olds striving for sporting excellence, absolutely within the boundaries of their school and state rules. Singling them out and attacking their gender identity is unfair and does nothing to advance a nuanced conversation. This is taken further by the case of Mack Beggs, a high school wrestler in Texas currently undergoing hormone therapy for gender reassignment from female to male. Beggs is campaigning



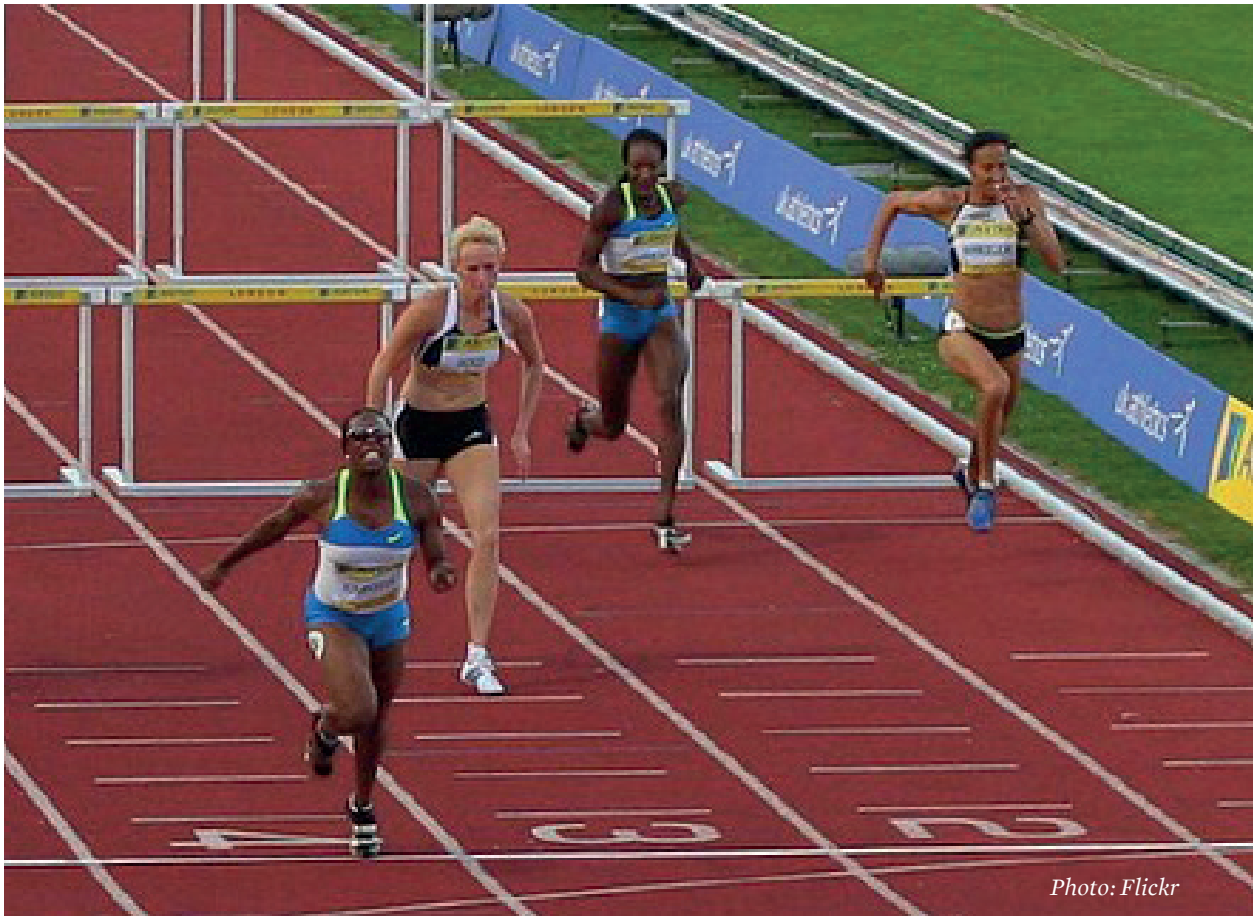
to compete in the male division, however, Texas rules only allow participation based on biological sex.

**IT IS CLEAR** that the rules should be in place to protect and encourage participation from these individuals, rather than subjecting them to discrimination.

**ANOTHER IMPORTANT ASPECT** that frames the debate is the idea that fairness is undermined by the inherent advantage given to trans athletes. This is more the case with male-female transitioning individuals, given that biological male and female bodies develop at different rates. The presence of testosterone during growth, particularly puberty, accounts for much of these differences. In males, testosterone drives an increase in muscle size and strength, bone size and density, tensile strength of ligaments and connective tissue, and an increase in red blood cells. This results in an estimated 10%

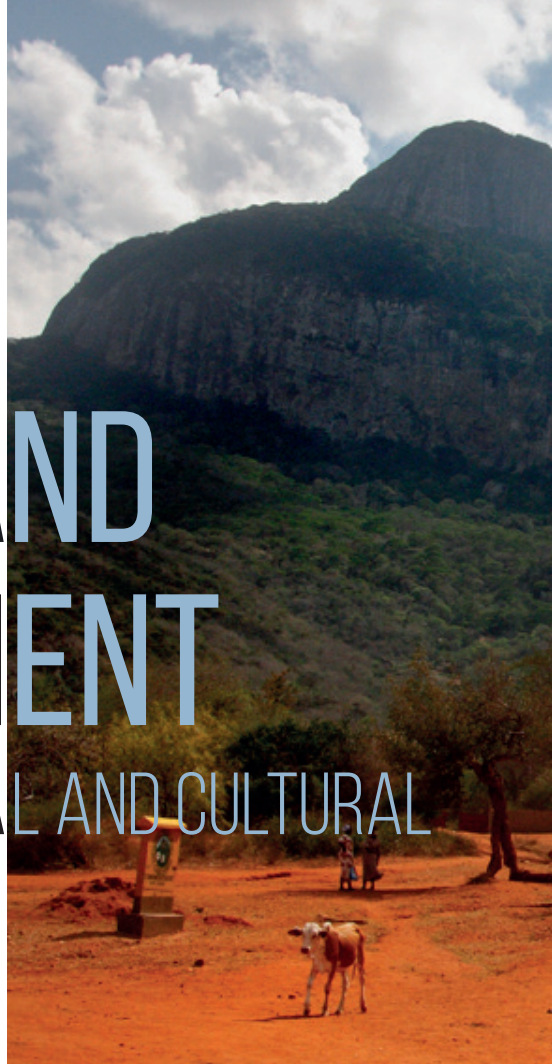
plus athletic performance advantage. However, during male-female transition therapy, hormones such as testosterone are suppressed and replaced with female hormones such as estrogen. Studies suggest that during this phase, athletic performance drops significantly. This has led to most athletic commissions preventing competition until 2 years of therapy is completed. However alternative research suggests that residual benefits, such as the size and structure of the skeletal frame, remain.

**THE IMPORTANT QUESTION**, therefore, is to what extent does transition therapy negate these factors? This complex debate is about how sports and society can attempt to do right by everyone, through providing fair and safe competition, and avoiding discrimination and stigmatisation for all athletes, regardless of gender. The ability to provide solutions rests on the capacity to hold a nuanced discussion that asks the right questions. ●



# FEMINISM AND DEVELOPMENT

## THE NEGLECT OF SOCIAL AND CULTURAL DIFFERENCES



Societies are inherently different; this might sound obvious. However, it's often overlooked or ignored in the development context and within some feminist movements. Many approaches fail to acknowledge social differences and cultural peculiarities.

**I**n a small village in Kenya, a western development agency decided to build a hand pump to spare women fetching the water from the nearby river. They planned and implemented the project without engaging the local community and investigating their social practices. To their surprise, women in that community never used the hand pump, but instead continued to walk 2 kilometres for water. When asked why they didn't use the pump, the reason was that they prefer fetching water in groups. For them, it's a social event, an occasion to be away from their kids, their husbands, and be together chatting and having a good time, something that they didn't want to trade for comfort. This is a sim-

ple example of intervening without understanding the social context. There are many other occasions showing how development programs are causing more harm by disrupting the social peace. This is due to a lack of understanding of the intricate social structures, norms, values, and traditions.

**COMMUNITIES ARE INHERENTLY** different in origin and in their way of evolution. Structures have evolved quite differently from each other, hence it's very difficult to be governed by the same rules and measured by the same indicators. The peculiar evolution path for each society results in distinct social dynamics, a set of norms, values, and social roles. These roles, with its associated responsibil-



*Photo: Wikimedia Commons*

ities and rights cannot be standardized into one normative reference. This ultimately constructs the society in a very sensitive complex manner, so that any unbalanced disruption in these structures disrupt social peace in a destructive manner. More importantly, due to cultural peculiarities, societies have different issues and struggles that are unique to them. This is a natural characteristic of all societies, and the assumption that all societies have the same problems and issues is simplifying and incorrect.

**MANY OF THE** western ideas and prompts of addressing societal issues are originating from a fundamentally different mindset. The nature of society cannot but to affect the way of thinking when approaching social issues. Individuality and self-centered mindset are defining factors in constructing relationships within western societies. Individuals tend to cluster in smaller segments and groups that they can identify more

with, because of a shared history or struggle. On the contrary, in most of the developing countries, individuals tend to think of themselves as a part of a bigger collective and they gain their value, recognition, and identity from that collective. Society, in this case, is a collective of individuals with common values, norms, and traditions. Therefore, the word “society” in different social settings implies different dynamics, roles, responsibilities, and boundaries. This difference should carefully be studied and accommodated when planning for interventions.

**ALSO, EQUATING WEALTHY** societies with a particular functioning social system seriously undermines local needs and aspirations. It only serves a small proportion of humans due to the diverse nature of societies. In the global north, the approach sought was often to think of instigating social change using economic measures, also a fundamental difference. When addressing social issues, economy is

certainly one of the governing factors in shaping societies and its social structures. That's why one of the three primary paradigms in sociology (the conflict theory by Marx) could be seen as analyzing societies through economic lenses. However, despite its analytical and interpretive capacity for a number of social models, it failed to provide a convincing explanation for other models outside its cultural system. Simply because the dynamics, the impetus for social interactions and change are different.

**LOOKING AT WOMEN** positions in various societies equipped with social understanding will greatly impact the approach. It will help recognizing the differences in their struggles between the global north and the global south (if we allow for generalization). This is often what some institutions and development agencies with approaches centred on "western" frameworks fail to recognize and acknowledge in their discourse when intervening. Some foreground feminist movements in the world today also fail to recognize the peculiarity of women struggles around the world as part of societal issues. That's because they fall in assuming identity in social settings. It addresses women issues as if they are the same everywhere, and their discourse imposes certain defences and arguments which are not necessarily valid everywhere. Therefore, many female activist movements in regions far from the west have several objections that led them somehow to separate their struggle from the mainstream movements.

**ON THE OTHER** side, women rights issues are buzzwords used to attract attention. Women's strug-

gles are exploited by organizations in the global south to obtain funding. Unfortunately, this leads to importing the same problems that donors can relate to - to attract funding- and it doesn't necessarily have to be the reality. Approaching a certain society with presumed problems and imported pre-described solutions will not work, but rather disrupt the social peace, the little that this society has. It ruins the existing social structures, which are not necessarily bad, without providing an efficient alternative. Structures that have been functioning well for very long, and proven efficient with some peculiar flaws that are, like in any other society, natural. Those inherent flaws need to be recognized in order for society to move forward.

**GENERALLY, THE ASSUMPTION** of similar societal problems, struggles, and importing blueprint solutions without investigating the social intricacies, In addition to assuming a linear path of development for different societies have been proven inefficient. It failed to deliver social justice and sustainable development. Contrarily, it disturbs social peace and creates new problems that are foreign to the society. Moreover, failing to acknowledge cultural peculiarities when addressing women's struggles by some feminist movements will lead to many more local women movements to feel unrepresented in the discussion and eventually separate their struggle. These are some of the critiques for western centred frameworks of development and liberal feminism movements that are getting more attention in the discourse. Will that change the discourse fast enough to fairly address women issues and social complexities for a fair society and sustainable development? ●





*Photo: Wikimedia Commons*

# BEYOND THE FATA MORGANA

Identical rights and duties for women and men are often seen as the first step towards gender equality. However, even small remaining differences create significant structural challenges over time. One example is to look at society, gender and the military in Israel.

**A** Fata Morgana is an optical reflection in the air that simulates structures on the horizon: the closer one gets to the supposed location, the more blurred it becomes, until it dissolves. Many equality-promoting policies turn out to be much more distinctive and problematic on closer inspection than from distance. Similar to the fata morgana of an oasis in the desert, the general army

“

THE ARMY IS THE SUPREME SYMBOL OF DUTY AND AS LONG AS WOMEN ARE NOT EQUAL TO MEN IN PERFORMING THIS DUTY, THEY HAVE NOT YET OBTAINED TRUE EQUALITY.

*David Ben-Gurion, first Prime Minister of Israel*

service in Israel shows how complex the concept of equal rights and obligations is within society and economy.

**ISRAEL IS OFTEN** considered as an exception in the Middle East, whether politically, economically or socially, with pivotal influence on gender equality. Politically, Israel is the only parliamentary democracy with a separation of powers, functional oppositions, peaceful transfer of power, freedom of opinion and of the press. Israel is the only “developed” and strongly growing economy without oil in the region, member of the OECD since 2000 and ranks 20th in the world in terms of per capita income. Furthermore, it scores 22nd in the Human Development Index, often used to measure the functionality and quality of state institutions. In social terms, Israel distinguishes itself through a high degree of equality for all gender groups,

acceptance of heterosexual and homosexual lifestyles, and public dialogue on the interests of minorities, solely rejected by the ultra-orthodox groups. In only a few countries are social controversies and policies discussed as fiercely and openly in the media as in Israel.

**EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION** were basic values of the early Zionist settler movement since the end of the 18th century. Focused on agriculture, men and women lived, worked and learned together - an approach close to socialist utopias which became the national narrative. Following the idea of equality, a significant proportion of women fought in irregular groups against the British mandated power. In these militias, which later merged into the Israeli army Zahal, the proportion of women was 20 percent and broadly distributed across all roles. This changed after the founding of the state of Israel in 1948. Women took on increasingly supportive roles in logistics, medical support and organizational activities. Even though an amendment to the Military Service law states that “the right of women to serve in any role in the IDF is equal to the right of men”, less than five percent are deployed in active combat groups.

**TODAY, ISRAEL IS** one of the few countries where there is compulsory military service for all. This takes three years for men and 21 months for childless women. Male reservists are drafted up to the age of 45 several weeks per year as reserve services and training. The reservist service also applies to unmarried or childless women up to the age of 24. There is thus an essential difference in the official duties between men and women.

**SOCIALLY, THE MILITARY** service is regarded as part of growing up and an alternative is not planned. Not having served in the army is considered a serious gap in one's CV with a strong impact on education and occupation. In addition to this potential stigma, however, it is the personal networks formed in the army that largely determine future prospects. And there is a serious difference here: men can build up further networks through longer military service and longer reserve periods than women. Especially during their professional careers, repeated contact with military institutions can have a positive impact on their careers and often leads to new and reorienting career opportunities.



Photo: flickr

**ANOTHER REASON FOR** unequal opportunities arises much earlier: Already during their school years, gifted pupils are supported by the army in the areas of technology, engineering and IT. In this young age gaming, programming and informatics are more in the sphere of interest of boys. Therefore, more boys than girls are early prepared and poached for the computer brigades or other special technological units for information gathering and intelligence. Examples are the infamous “Unit 8200” which is responsible for the collection of electronic reconnaissance data and decryption or “Mamram”, the central computer system of the army.

**NOT ONLY DOES** early interest favour men, but from the army’s point of view a longer and more cost-intensive training only pays off if the recruits can be actively deployed for a longer period of time. After working in these units, it is often possible to change directly from uniform to suit. Many IT start-ups have a military background such as Waze, MCQ or Check Point Software. International data companies, banks and biotechnology companies also have research labs in Israel and a great deal of interest in former IT officers.

**THE UNINTENTIONAL STRUCTURAL** discrimination

against women within the military, which is often perceived as quite the opposite of discrimination, becomes apparent later in the labour market. Although more women than men study, full-time women only earn on average 78 percent of what their male peers earned. This is ten percent less than the OECD average and can be partly explained by different working hours and occupations. Still, taking this into account, the salary gap between employed men and women stagnates at 19 percent. One reason for this inequality lies above all in the rapidly growing high-tech sector where women accounts for only 34 percent of employees.

**MANY SIMILAR ECONOMIC** trends show that small differences in description can have a large gender-specific impact on economic opportunities. These are determined early on by school education and training and manifest themselves with the increasing importance of the IT and high-tech sector. The idea that a state should grant equal rights to all citizens in return for equal duties thus reaches its limits in this very specific example: small differences in the duties demanded result in large discrepancies in the later possibilities. The fata morgana of equality is crumbling more and more the closer you look. ●



# THE BURNOUT OF A GENERATION

I am walking on a road I walk on every day, nothing is new, nothing has changed. Somewhere along the way I stop. I look around, and I have no idea where I am.

**B**urnout. Hit the wall. Fatigue syndrome. Long term sick leave. Things we all have heard about. However, they do not happen to us, they do not happen to me. However, I am one of the most likely to at some point in my life suffer from fatigue syndrome or be burned out. I am a woman and I am an academic. The working group in Sweden with the highest rates of burnout.

**SWEDEN IS CURRENTLY** facing a silent epidemic. An epidemic that is not taken seriously by physicians, politicians, or society. Burn out is an increasing problem in Swedish society, with ages of the ones affected are dropping lower and lower, and women are the most affected.

**BEING BURNED OUT**, or fatigue syndrome as the more official name is, really means that a person gets several long term issues, both physical and psychological most often due to long term stress. Symptoms often last over a long time and can range from insomnia, waking up in the morning and still feeling exhausted, to anxiety and depression. But also, difficulties in concentrating and forgetting simple things such as meetings, your wallet to forgetting the name of your friends. The psychological symptoms are often worse than the physical, which are; palpitation, dizziness, long term pain and aching body, sensitivity for sounds, and stomach problems. However, other not so common side effects can be hair loss, rashes, and even allergies.

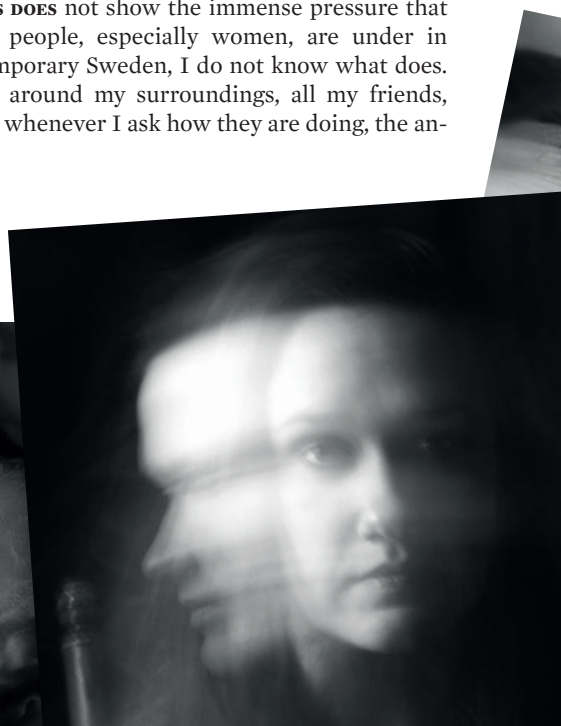
**FATIGUE SYNDROME HAS** a very long recovery period. With the recovery time varying from person to person but can vary from a couple of months to several years, and in some extreme cases, there are those who never recover. The recovery usually entails psychotherapy in some form, can also include pharmaceutical drugs for insomnia or depression. Physiotherapy is also not uncommon during recovery from fatigue syndrome.

**WITH MENTAL HEALTH** issues in general increasing globally there are limited spots, at least in Sweden, to see a therapist and to actually get the diagnosis. Waiting for a time with your general practitioner can take time and then to see a therapist there can be a couple of months even. There are private alternatives in the mental health care where waiting times are much shorter, however, that also comes with a higher price. Which then makes it a case of who is able to afford mental health care. Something that affects all economic classes in society, even though the biggest risk group is academics.

**ALL THIS SHOWS** that this is a serious disease and it should be treated as such. However, since most people with fatigue syndrome in Sweden are women, it is not. Many women in Sweden are burned out even before they enter the labour market, with ages reaching even down to teenagers.

**SVERIGES TELEVISION (SVT)** did a documentary, "We can't do this", regarding this specific topic. One of the women interviewed was in high school and was recovering from her burnout. She said: "I used to love the weekends because then I had 48 hours where I could just study". When the reporter asked her how she would study she explained: "I would study until I had a panic-attack, begun crying and I fainted. When I would wake up, I went straight back to studying."

**IF THIS DOES** not show the immense pressure that young people, especially women, are under in contemporary Sweden, I do not know what does. I look around my surroundings, all my friends, whom whenever I ask how they are doing, the an-



swer is always the same: “I’m really stressed out, but I’m good.” I am sure that for some this may very well be the case. But I think for many, we laugh it off. We are in some twisted way supposed to be under constant stress and pressure.

**I HAVE NOTICED** that most people I know at Lund University often study 100-150 per cent while working on the side or being active in a student organisation. Especially within social sciences where a job after graduation is not at all taken for granted, the stress of getting a better CV, forwarding your career to get a job at all is becoming insane. Stress has probably always been around university students and maybe it is part of the “deal” of getting a degree, it is not easy. However, women are at a major disadvantage.

**WOMEN ARE EXPECTED** to be outstanding academically, since being good is not enough to get a job or be considered at the same level as a man. At the same time, women most often take on an emotional role, both domestically but also at the workplace, where many people turn to women with mental issues, and problems that they have to deal with outside of their regular tasks, which men often do not experience. All this work and roles puts a lot of expectations on young women and it is probably a reason to why we are in the situation we are in today.

**I AM A** textbook example of this. I am a so-called “good girl”. I get good grades, I have several obligations outside of school and I have been given a role as emotional support to many friends and acquaintances. In the end, this led to severe complications. I struggled with remembering meetings, assignments, even exams. I would walk on the way to a meeting, look up and have absolutely no idea where I was going. It never went far enough that I actually burned out. But suffering from fatigue syndrome is not to be taken lightly. It needs to be taken seriously by society and not be swept under the rug like so many other health issues that mainly affects women. We can talk all we want about how equal our society is, but we need to acknowledge that in many cases, women are not treated equally to men, especially regarding health, both physical and mental. Sweden has a silent epidemic, an epidemic of young women who may not be able to contribute to the workforce, which may very well lead to the burnout of an entire generation of women. ●





Photo: Pixabay

# TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE

Gender inequality is not just an imperative social and normative question, it is also a crucial economic challenge. The global economy suffers and will continue to suffer as long as women, who account for half of the world population, cannot achieve their full economic potential. One of the main barriers for work equality is the unproportional unpaid care work, known as the “double burden” and the stereotypes that comes with it.

In recent decades we have witnessed a decrease in the gender divisions of the workforce and many industries and businesses have welcomed gender equality and witnessed an increasing number of women in their workforce. Keeping women away from the workforce is not just a ill-advised idea, it is also economically negative. Christine Lagarde, Head of the International Monetary Fund, stated that the economy will increase as much as 9% in Japan, 5% in the US and 27% in India if the whole women working potential was utilized. Yet, there is a negative correlation between income and level of gender inequality in unpaid care work. Unpaid care work disproportionately affect women, based on the fact that social norms deems this type of work a woman's prerogative. Women spend two to ten hours more than men occupied with unpaid care work every week. Every hour someone (statistically women) spend on unpaid care work leaves less time that could potentially be spent on paid work, vocational skills or investing time in her education.

**UNPAID CARE WORK** is an important factor for the economy, your well-being and the well-being of others. Caring for one's family, cooking, cleaning, childcare and caring for the elderly and sick are all features that are prerequisites in a modern society. These types of unpaid work are often ignored in politics because they are deemed too hard to measure compared to paid labour. The international consulting company Mckinsey believes that this unpaid care work accounts for the equivalent of 13% of worldwide GDP, roughly 10 trillion US-dollars.

**WORLDWIDE, ONLY HALF** of the working-age women are employed. Lagarde proclaims that full participation of women in the workforce is an economic game changer, comparing only having half of the population working is like an airline pilot flying with one engine. In Iraq, women in the workforce give up as much as 10,5 weeks per year for unpaid care work. Sweden, which is considered one of the most egalitarian countries in the work, the difference was still at 1,7 weeks.

**WOMEN'S DISPROPORTIONATE SHARE** of this unpaid care work has a direct negative impact on their ability to participate in the paid economy, leading to gender gaps in employment outcomes. 41% of

those currently inactive women are outside the labour market because of their unpaid care responsibilities. Before World War II, Norway, Sweden and Denmark accounted for unpaid care work in the national GDP, but stopped after the UN standardization of national accounts and now these 10 trillion dollars are unaccounted for in GDP.

**IT IS NOT ENOUGH** that this is unfair. There is also an additional negative side to the disproportionate division of unpaid care work. Sociological studies reveal that the patriarchal organizational life reinforces the notion that male stereotypes are the "ideal worker" and the women being the "good mother" and that these two are incompatible. The idea of the good mother is that she would place her children before all, drop all engagements and responsibility to care for the children, which is very time-consuming, labour-intensive and emotionally absorbing. The double burden brings much more strain on the individual, and therefore some employers might not want to hire a woman, feeling that they cannot handle the workload due to the unpaid care work. Employers can, therefore, think that a woman worker is likely to focus less on paid work and more on family related work and therefore might have higher absence. Sociological studies find that hiring discrimination is mostly based on stereotypes, rather than reality. These are both descriptive stereotypes, based on personal knowledge of men and women's typical skills, and prescriptive, which is a more cultural stereotype such as personal beliefs what men and women ought to do. So not only do women have less time for education, paid work or vocational skills, they might also be discriminated on the labour market due to this double time burden and the stereotypes surrounding it.

**WOMEN WITH CHILDREN** receive fewer interview call-backs than women without any children - based the aforementioned stereotypes that women with children would be less focused on work, more absent and would let her work suffer for the sake of unpaid care work. Importantly, in many cases it is not just hiring discrimination that is a barrier for women. Many women actively choose low-wage part-time jobs to handle the time-consuming and labour-intensive unpaid care work that is socially embedded.

**IN SOME PARTS** of the world, electrification and eas

ier access to water are suggested to alleviate the situation, combined with longer school days and the possibility of pre-school admission for younger children. These are measures that would make unpaid care work easier. It would create a situation where unpaid care workers would have more time to get an education and spend time applying for jobs, but as long as the unpaid care work is unequal, it is not a complete solution to the problem.

**IN OTHER PARTS** of the world, social infrastructure creates a difference. Affordable childcare is one measure that has been proved to have a strong correlation to female employment. Childcare reduces the responsibilities at home and more time can be put on paid work. Promotion of gender equality is

also an important factor for the equal distribution of unpaid care work. A recent study shows that households where unpaid care work is equally divided between the parents, the children of those households have an equal division, of unpaid care work, in their future households. Similarly, daughters of mothers who work have a higher probability of getting employed.

**THERE HAS BEEN** more and more focus on the gender inequality in the workplace, uncovering some of the main barriers such as unpaid care work, which might create solutions to treat this issue more wholesome, which can lead to effective responses. ●



Photo: Pixino

# DAGENS NY



# LIFE OF A WAR PHOTOGRAPHER

Lotta Hårdelin has been a photographer for the Swedish daily Dagens Nyheter since 1993. Recently she won several photojournalistic awards. She had just returned from a reporting assignment to Syria when she meets The Perspective at the editorial office in Stockholm.

“Nothing went right on this trip. Prior to this I have worked intensely for the past four or five months. To be honest I’m quite exhausted.”

In terms of recognition those months have paid off. Recently Hårdelin was granted the Nils Hornér-prize, a prestigious award given to foreign correspondents, and won several prizes for her photography while covering last year’s tsunami and earthquake in Indonesia.

Hårdelin originates from Örebro, two hours west of Stockholm. At the age of 16 she saw that the local paper was hiring a “youth-editor”, upon which she handed in a portfolio with photos of her mom and dog. “I was probably the only one applying, but I got the job”, she says laughingly.

She learned the basics of photography at that paper while covering local events and sports. When she moved to Stockholm after high school, she was employed on a short-term contract at a stock photo news agency. They were cooperating with Dagens Nyheter, where she was employed in 1993 and has worked ever since.

A week before this interview she came back from a ten day trip to northeastern Syria, where she reported on the children of Swedish IS-fighters.

## **How was your recent assignment?**

– We had so much bad luck during it. The original plan was to interview captured Swedish IS-fighters, doing a story on the children was my idea. At first when we arrived at the Iraqi-Syrian border the river had overflowed and the bridge was under water. We were stuck there for a few days. When we came into Syria, we learned that due to some diffuse “security situation”, we would not get access to any of the prisons, hospitals or camps.

– Instead we headed to Baghouz, where the final battles against IS were waged, but our escorts cancelled our trip halfway due to an imminent sandstorm and the increased risks of suicide bombings that meant. The checkpoint we were supposed to pass was actually attacked by a suicide bomber later that day.

–The same thing happened when we were supposed to interview a senior politician, but almost in the last minute got access to the camps where the children were and went there instead. The politician’s office was bombed the very moment we were supposed to be there. The trip was very difficult overall.

## **After experiencing so many conflict zones, what is it like adapting to life in Sweden again?**

– It’s a constant struggle. We have a great system with debriefings, so before I went to Iraq and Syria it was already planned that I would see a trauma counselor upon returning home. It’s also important to know yourself and know how you react to certain situations. For example, neither of us were

“

THE POLITICIAN’S OFFICE  
WAS BOMBED THE VERY  
MOMENT WE WERE SUP-  
POSED TO BE THERE.

– *Lotta Hårdelin, regarding a planned meeting with a politician in Syria.*



tired when we got home, even though we slept on average four hours a night for ten days. We were still in some kind of survival mode. It's first now, after a week, that I am starting to feel tired.

– Family is incredibly important to cope with the stress. Coming home to my husband and three kids gives me a whole different focus. Helping my children do homework in physics, sort out sports clothes and make packed lunch puts the mind on other things. That's helping.

**How has the role of a photojournalist changed since you became one?**

– The difference is huge. When I came to Dagens Nyheter we were only two female photographers. We were seen as a bit weird back then. Despite us sharing neither looks nor style, we were often confused for one another. In the nineties I was the only woman working with sports, and one of the few women assigned to work in conflict zones. Now it's different. Today in Gaza you would see close to an even amount of male and female photographers.

**Your depiction of a floating mosque in Indonesia was recently prized in the Foreign News category for the Swedish Photo of the Year. Tell us more about that trip.**

– That trip was also really difficult. As the flights were cancelled to supply aid for the area we had to take six different flights to get there, so we arrived very fatigued. While there was no place to stay and we had difficulties acquiring even basic commodities, we managed to find a fixer [*local person working with journalists*] and with his help we found a driver. The driver's sister offered to host us and we

“

RIGHT NOW I THINK THAT IT'S WORTH IT. IT FEELS MEANINGFUL.

– Lotta Hårdelin, considering the positive and negative aspects of her profession.

stayed with her for two nights. On the third night there was a second earthquake, with an epicenter just where we were, and our boss decided to fly us home.

– I took the photo the second day we were there. I had seen this mosque in daylight and wondered what it would look like during a sunrise. I convinced the reporter that it was reasonable to sleep three hours and then go find the floating mosque.

**What would you say are good qualities for a photojournalist?**

– I honestly still ask myself that question. I don't think that it's solely about photojournalism, but more about whatever you do in life you truly have to appreciate it. You're never going to do a good job if you prioritize the money or what others think.

– Teamwork is of course also vital. I always think that I should not only bring the best out of me, but also bring the best out of the people around me. Especially for the jobs I am doing now, I find it important to have a strong inner compass. With that said I still often wonder if it's worth the risk.

**Is it worth it?**

– I don't know. I take it month by month. Right now I think that it's worth it. It feels meaningful.

Lotta pauses, collecting her thoughts.

– At least the world is not getting worse by what I am doing. There are many things I could work with but I want to believe that I am making the world at least a slightly better place. I don't know if I am, but at least it's not getting worse.

**What advice would you give to aspiring photojournalists?**

– Pursue your dream. Especially if you are interesting in expressing yourself in different mediums like writing, filming, photographing, there are so many possibilities today to do so. On the other hand the competition is strong. You need to be prepared to not always have a steady income. That being said, the profession has never been as interesting as it is today. ●



*The floating mosque in Indonesia. Photo: Lotta Hårdelin*

# ALL HAIL MOTHER GEORGIA

Georgia: a country at a crossroad, where archaic values from a lasting Soviet imprint test the boundaries of human rights. A country painted to me as a romantic middle ground between the east and west, as a glorification of hope amongst a population fighting for a better future, yet without a doubt, still a hotspot of injustice towards women.



*Kartlis Deda monument in  
Georgia's capital Tbilisi.*

**A**pril 2019: UPF Lund goes to Georgia. Our first day hosts a 3.5-hour walking tour, that peaks at the top of Tbilisi's highest point, Sololaki hill, at the foot of Mother Georgia, or Kartlis Deda. As I gaze up at the giant statue's dominating figure with its recently added bust, I note the cup in one hand, and sword in the other, to welcome friends and intimidate strangers. Her power recalls the myth of Medea, a mother who through her own wit and wiles, stole the golden fleece for Jason and his Argonauts, from her own father. In return, he leaves her for a princess, and her reputation is destroyed, prompting her to kill her own children, and flying off in a golden chariot. Medea was from Georgia.

**WITHOUT MUCH PRIOR** knowledge of the country or the Caucasus region in general, I stared up at Kartlis Deda with great respect for what to me seemed to represent a matriarchal society. It took less time than I thought to smash this idealistic vision of a society which respects the power and importance of women. From the young women, I spoke to amongst the city's evening sparkling lights and music in the distance, to the lack of women in corporate positions in the countless offices we visited, it was clear that women in Georgia are underrepresented.

**FOR ME, MUCH** of the week had been building up to our meeting with Kvinna till Kvinna, a Swedish NGO working heavily in Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan. Whilst we were able to drop in questions here and there regarding the quality of life for women and the LGBTQ+ community elsewhere, this was where we would really get answers. We were met by Ana Nemisitsverize-Daniels and Regina Jegorova-Askerova in true Swedish style at their Tbilisi office, with a bountiful fika table. We settled in with a cup of coffee, and we were definitely not prepared for what we learned in the ensuing 2 hours.

**THEY STARTED BY** introducing themselves as an 'international women's group working for peace and equality' with the main focus for women in war-torn areas, whether the war was in the past or ongoing. The last open warfare in Georgia was in 2008, as well as intermittent conflict occurring between Azerbaijanis and Armenians in the wider region throughout the 20th century. Kvinna till

Kvinna have been active in the area for 15 years, supporting women in the breakaway and frozen zones throughout Armenia and Azerbaijan, more specifically in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, both of which are a large focus for human rights groups throughout Georgia and came up frequently in our meetings, due to serious ethical conflicts. Ana described to us how women are excluded from peace process discussions, despite being the most vulnerable to ensuing conflict. She claimed the atmosphere of discrimination is so prominent due to the vast range of cultures and languages throughout the region, with different scriptures and histories, values and mythologies. This has its roots in years of occupation, in a small valley surrounded by three of the biggest historical superpowers: Russia, Turkey and Iran.

**OUR JAWS DROPPED** as she expanded on the specific cases of injustice towards gender and sexual minorities throughout the Caucasus, and their endeavours to help. First to plant its impact was the idea of sex-selective abortions. Traditionally throughout Georgia, male fetuses will be prioritised over females, due to lasting Soviet familial structures, that require men to stay at home and provide for the rest of the family as they age. Women, however, are expected to move into the husband's family home, and most likely take over the role as the head of the house from the groom's mother. The same tradition renders any attempts to liberate women as futile, as she will still be expected to care for her husband's family, all generations of which continue to reside under one roof. Whilst external parties are trying to work against said selective abortions, the overriding power of the Orthodox church is hard to curb. Regina told us the results of recent national opinion polls showed 95% of the population would put total trust in the head of the church over the government body. Last year, the majority of parliament were affiliated with Georgian Orthodoxy. The church is known for promising baptism to every third child in a family, encouraging population growth and pro-life policies. This has resulted in a 12% population increase. The church's overriding power throughout the country means that any liberal members or political activists are swiftly repressed, silenced, or removed from power. Extreme religious views within the doctrine of the Georgian Orthodox Church result in early marriages and the reinforcement of traditional values.

This means it is impossible to be openly gay in Georgia, and the domestic conditions are sub-par.

**EVERY SECOND WOMAN** in Georgia experiences some form of domestic violence. With a government that doesn't recognise any form of abuse other than that physical, this statistic is all the more shocking. The Human Rights centre in Tbilisi told us that since 2012, the largest human rights issue in Georgia has been violence against women. Their statistics on femicide rates highlighted the horrific living conditions for the majority of women, whilst there is still not a notion to tackle it in national law. Kvinna till Kvinna told us that in the Caucasus region, even the word gender is considered a swear word and minorities are simply not being represented.

**WHEN I ASKED** Regina and Ana about my initial instinct of a matriarchal society, questioning the presence of the mother Georgia statue, and the local pride of being the home of Medea, they laughed in my face. They said this was just another way of keeping women in their place. The glorification here goes to the role of the mother, or the 'producer of the future fighters', not to the women of Georgia. Only those who marry and reproduce for a living are hailed as great, and those who do not provide for their country in this way, such as single women or lesbians, are at the brunt of rampant hate crime. They agreed with my confusion; women are at the centre of most Georgian tradition, be it the famous Georgian toast thanking mothers, or the aforementioned mythological legends, but this is not for their gender, but rather their fertility. Realistically, Medea is shamed for murdering her two young sons, the future fighters of her nation, rather than celebrated for standing up for herself. ●

# THELMA ALDANA

A NEW SUN MAY BE RISING IN GUATEMALA



Two things have long been insufficient in Guatemala; rule of law and politicians who advocate women's rights. Though the last couple of years, a new figure has emerged in Guatemalan politics. Thelma Aldana, a former Attorney General known for her antigraft crusade and promotion of women's rights, is now running for president. Can she bring something new to the table or is she yet another politician who will engage in murky business under the table?

**T**helma Aldana is a beginner neither in politics nor law. Prior to her appointment to the position of Attorney General, she was the president of the Supreme Court. During her time serving in the country's highest jurisprudential body, she helped establish a network of special tribunals and courts. Their objective was to bring justice to the victims of femicide; the intentional murdering of women because they are women.

**THE REASON WHY** Aldana felt that these special courts were necessities requires some political and historical context. Guatemala has a much-troubled past. A CIA-backed coup to overthrow Jacobo Arbenz Guzman in 1954 threw Guatemala into political turmoil which ignited three decades of civil war. Following the coup came a succession of military rulers who set out to eliminate leftist insurgents. The war claimed more than 200,000 lives.

**ACCORDING TO A** 1999 report by the UN-backed Truth Commission, the state security forces committed rape in a systematic manner throughout the war. This resulted in unspeakable traumas and

a bitter collective social memory among the thousands of affected women. More than a million men were trained and ordered to perform these grievous acts and when they returned home they were given no help to readjust. This is regarded as one reason to why Guatemala today has the third highest femicide rate in the world. Helen Mack of the Myrna Mack Foundation, an organization trying to reform the judicial system to help end violence and impunity in the country, says that when the perpetrators returned back home they redirected their aggressions towards their wives, mothers and girlfriends. This, she says, created a vicious culture of violence towards women and expectations of impunity.

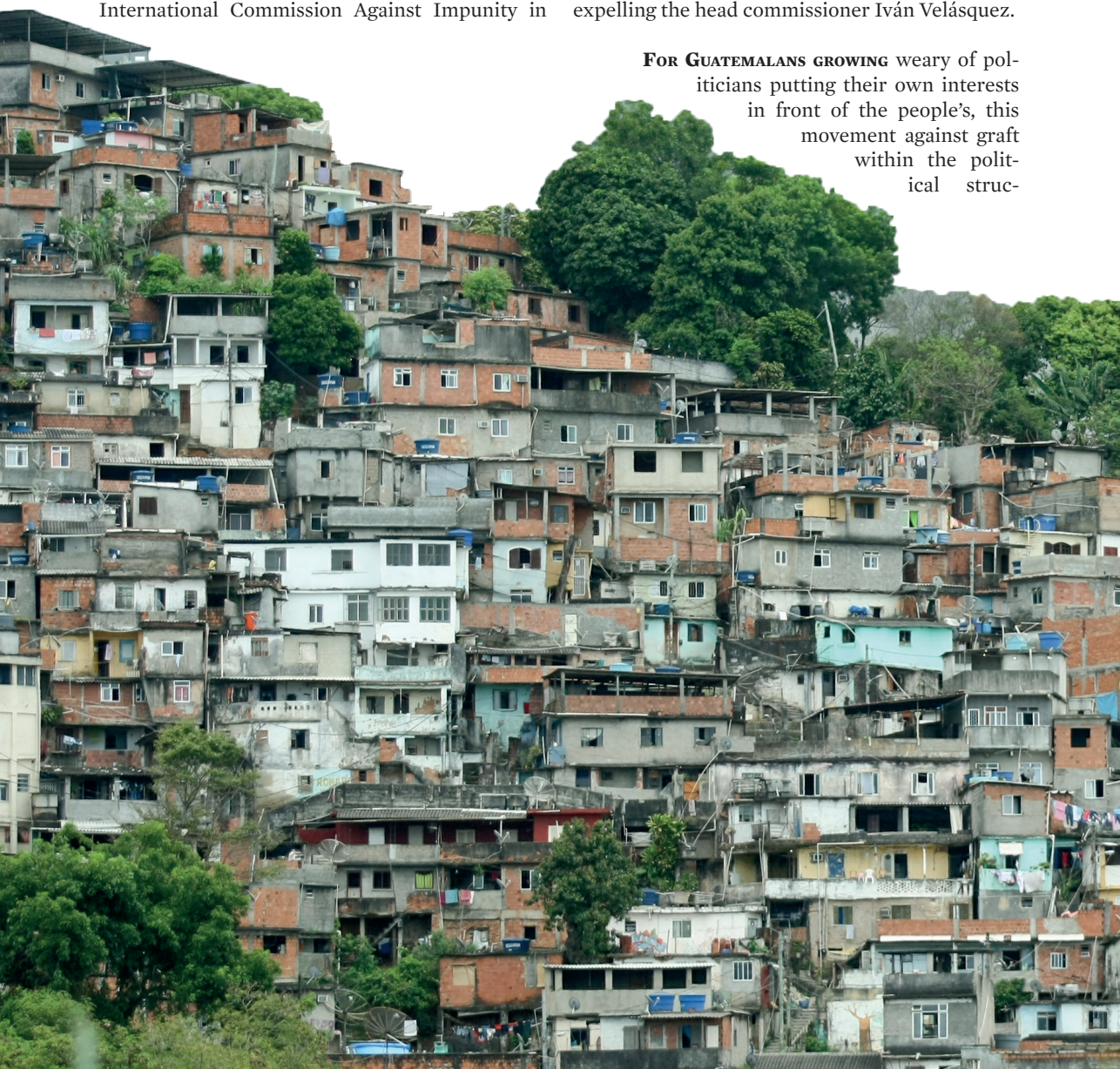
**BY ESTABLISHING COURTS** specialized in femicide Aldana pushed for accountability by trying to eradicate the high levels of impunity for the crime. The effort has shown some results. According to statistics compiled by UN Women, a UN entity dedicated to gender equality, the new special courts set up by Mrs Aldana have been noticeably efficient compared to the regular courts often lacking the required special expertise. As the Attorney General,

she allocated more resources to the prosecutions of the sexual crimes committed under the dictatorship in the 1980s. Regarding this issue, Aldana expressed that “women were the main victims of our armed conflict, but this remains a patriarchal culture, so it hasn’t gotten as much attention.”

**SINCE 2014, WHEN** she became the Attorney General, Aldana has also been in the forefront of a long-anticipated anticorruption campaign. In the political ruckus Guatemala was thrown into after the civil war, no party has managed to grow particularly strong. In this patchwork of politics, corruption has blossomed. In 2006 the UN and the Guatemalan government together established The International Commission Against Impunity in

Guatemala (CICIG) with the objective to identify and dismantle powerful clandestine armed groups and assist Guatemalan state institutions. In 2015 Aldana, together with CICIG, exposed president Otto Pérez Molina’s criminal activities as the head of a vast customs fraud ring, a prosecution that later ousted him out of office. Before leaving office in 2018, Aldana pursued the incumbent president Jimmy Morales for alleged campaign finance violations. He denies any malpractices. As a result of Aldana’s close work with CICIG combating corruption, the people have awakened. Thousands of angry Guatemalans took to the streets following Morales’ bold move of announcing that he would not renew CICIG’s mandate in the country and expelling the head commissioner Iván Velásquez.

**FOR GUATEMALANS GROWING** weary of politicians putting their own interests in front of the people’s, this movement against graft within the political struc-



ture is a breath of fresh air. Her relatively sudden acquiring of celebrity status in the country as the leader of this movement will be beneficial for her candidacy in the presidential election scheduled for June 16th. If she wins, she has vowed to further strengthen CICIG as well as making the government more efficient and transparent. During her time as Attorney General, the chief prosecutor's office worked tirelessly introducing new transparency laws in an effort to modernize the justice system by changing the penal code and the constitution. Judging by her past she would take Guatemala on a new path towards rule of law.

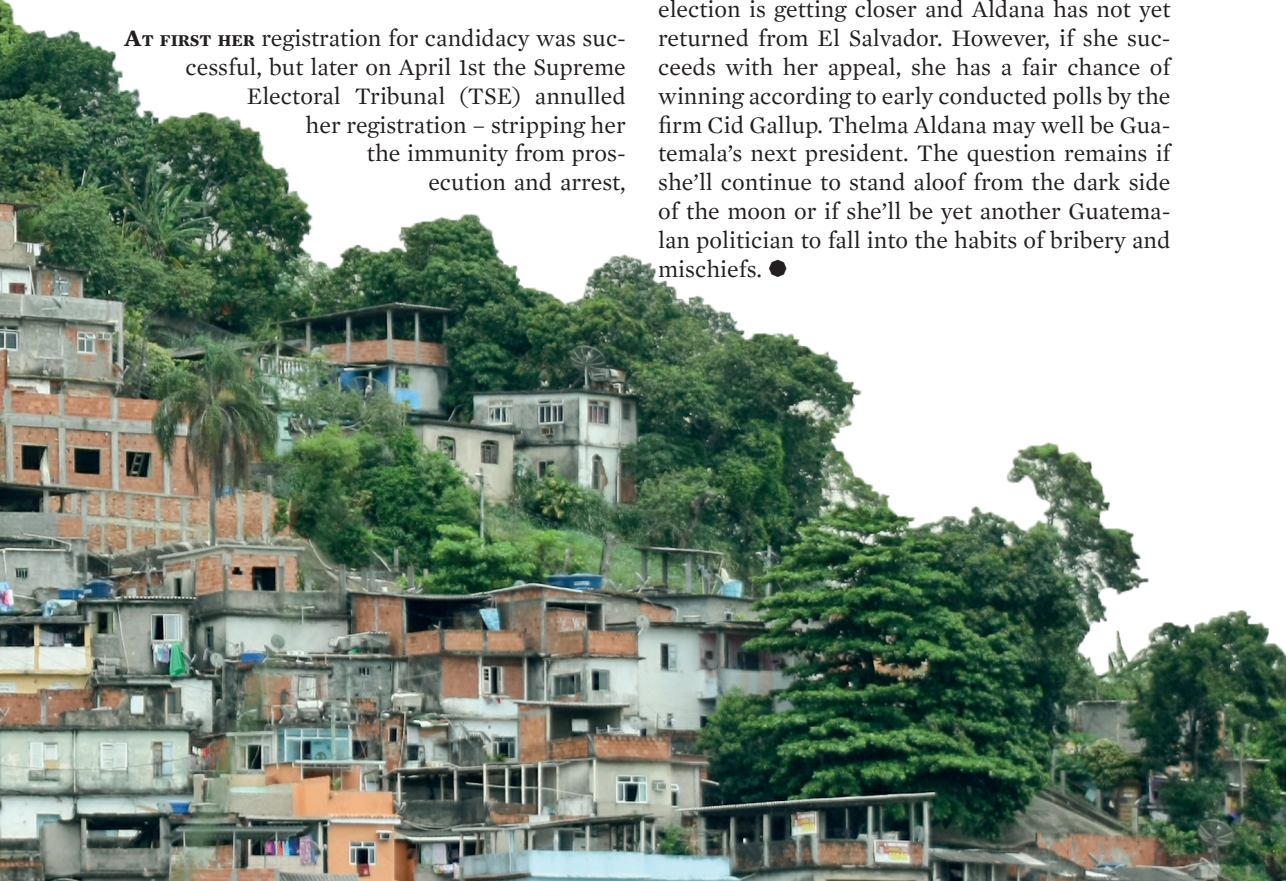
**DESPITE HER POPULARITY**, concerns not too far from what she herself has combated arose. A judge issued a warrant for Aldana's arrest on March 19th leading her to flee to El Salvador. She has been charged with multiple offences, including embezzlement, lying and tax fraud. The charges are related to a payment Aldana made to a university dean during her incumbency as Attorney General. The money, 20 000-quetzal (\$2 600), was supposed to pay for staff training. What is troublesome is that the fee itself seems excessive for a service of this kind and even worse – the training never actually took place.

**AT FIRST HER** registration for candidacy was successful, but later on April 1st the Supreme Electoral Tribunal (TSE) annulled her registration – stripping her the immunity from prosecution and arrest,

which the constitution grants every presidential candidate. Aldana alongside with her party, Semilla (Seed), are forcefully claiming that the charges are politically motivated. A couple of days after her initial registration, a TSE official spoke out about the immense pressure he had to withstand to not register Semilla as a party or Aldana as a candidate, speaking for the possibility of there being other big fish lurking in the background.

**DESPITE ALDANA'S CURRENT** struggles, she isn't the only candidate entangled in legal predicaments. Former First Lady Sandra Torres is also the subject of a corruption investigation aiming at an undocumented campaign donation. Another candidate, Zury Ríos, is the daughter of the genocide-convicted former dictator Efraín Ríos Montt. Her run for the presidency may be forbidden due to the constitution stipulating that a relative to someone who with force took the power of the country is forbidden to run for president.

**WHAT LIES AHEAD** is for Thelma Aldana is unclear. She and her party are currently seeking to overturn the decision of her registration's annulment to get her back on the ballot. The odds are stacked against her though and time is running out. The election is getting closer and Aldana has not yet returned from El Salvador. However, if she succeeds with her appeal, she has a fair chance of winning according to early conducted polls by the firm Cid Gallup. Thelma Aldana may well be Guatemala's next president. The question remains if she'll continue to stand aloof from the dark side of the moon or if she'll be yet another Guatemalan politician to fall into the habits of bribery and mischiefs. ●





*Photo: Flickr*

# GAME OF RAPE

Game of Thrones, season 1, episode 1. The fierce dragon-queen-to-be is crying while bent over and raped. I'm hoping it's a one-time thing. Eight seasons later, it's clear that I was wrong.

**T**he final season of the immensely popular TV show *Game of Thrones*, adapted from George R.R. Martin's series of epic fantasy novels titled *A Song of Ice and Fire*, has just come out. The first episode of the final season was watched by a total of 17.4 million viewers, worldwide, on premiere night, bringing a new record to the series. Being the closest thing television has had to a blockbuster, it's been argued that the show has an unparalleled universal cultural impact.

**MARTIN'S BOOKS ARE** known for being gruesome, which was, to some extent, increased when the books were adapted into the TV-show. Since its first episode, the show has been much debated for its constant use of sex, nakedness, and violence. Although it has been argued that the show accurately depicts the brutal reality of a medieval time, in which the story is set, the show has especially been under fire for recurrently using rape against female characters. This because most rapes in the show do not occur in the books. In fact, similar scenes often exist in the books, but there the sex is consensual.

**RAPE IS A** widespread and structural issue. We're living in a rape culture where physical and emotional terrorism against women are presented as norms. Women, mainly, constantly live under the threat of rape. Rapists, more often than not, walk free. Media coverage of rape cases has shown perpetrators being humanised and excused, while rape survivors are demonised and shamed. How do we react? We hold our keys between our fingers when walking home from nights out. We call fake boyfriends when sitting on public transport with only men as other passengers. We have rape alarms. We avoid certain areas. The list goes on and on.

**BUT, WHAT DOES** all of this have to do with *Game of Thrones*?

**THREE INSTANCES OF** rape in the show are especially worth mentioning. These involve three main female characters and are all transformed from the books' consensual sex to non-consensual in the show. The subject of the first rape is Daenerys

Targaryen, the Mother of Dragons. Now being a badass queen, it's easy to forget that her story began with being married off to a man who initiates their relationship by raping her. Their first sexual encounter is changed from a tender and consensual moment in the first book to a rough rape scene in the show. This is later followed by a succession of near animalistic and, to Daenerys, undeniably unpleasant and painful sex scenes. These early events, however, tend to be forgotten due to the marriage later becoming a loving one.

**THE SECOND RAPE** is subjected to Cersei Lannister. The perpetrator is her brother Jaime, who had by then been given a character arc from villain to fan favourite. The scene in the book was, admittedly, a disturbing, yet consensual, sexual reunion between brother and sister atop their incestuous son's grave. In the show, however, this was changed into a scene where Jaime forces himself on Cersei, despite her repeatedly screaming and telling him 'no' throughout the scene. This encounter was forgotten by the next episode, never to be mentioned again. In fact, the screenwriters themselves argued that the sex had been consensual and that the scene was meant to remind viewers about Jaime's complex personality.

**THE SUBJECT OF** the final rape is Sansa Stark, a character who has developed from a naïve upper-class girl to a strong and capable woman. In the show, Sansa has just been forcibly wed to the sadistic Ramsay. After the ceremony, he takes her to their bedchamber, ordering her to strip down. In the room is also Sansa's stepbrother Theon, who Ramsay forces to watch. As Ramsay bends Sansa forward and enters her from behind, the camera shifts focus from her to Theon's distraught face whilst Sansa's cries echo in the background. It is, thus, Theon's reaction and feelings that matter, and the event affects his character more than Sansa's. Sansa is never raped in the books, nor does she marry Ramsay. However, a similar scene exists where the victim is another, smaller character.

**RAPE CAN CERTAINLY** be used in story-telling; it can emphasise the severity of the issue. However, it has to be done with respect for the assaulted character. *Game of Thrones'* writers don't show

their characters such respect but assault them for shock-value. Both Daenerys and Sansa are robbed of their strength and agency, and both Cersei and Sansa are raped for the benefit of male characters. While the assaults advance the male characters' storylines, it's done at the expense of the women. Furthermore, rape is a traumatising event that can have lasting effects on the survivor. Such impacts, however, are rarely shown in Game of Thrones. To mention better examples: in the TV series Downton Abbey, the rape of a main female character becomes a long and important plotline that portrays the harrowing effects rape can have. In the series Outlander, one instance of rape especially shows such traumatising effects, and of which the viewers are continually reminded. However, this specific instance happens to the main male character. Thus, the most harrowing instance of rape happens to a man whereas raped women are not given the same attention.

**HOW DOES THIS** affect modern rape culture?

**THE RAPE SCENES** in Game of Thrones rarely have consequences and mainly impact male characters. They are also often forgotten by the next episode and never mentioned again. The show's writers sometimes don't even understand that they've created non-consensual sex. Such ignorance fuels normalisation of rape. It risks teaching viewers that rape is common and no big deal. Just turn to online forums for proof. There it's been argued that Sansa wasn't really raped since she was married to her perpetrator, thus reproducing marital rape myths. In Cersei's case, it's been written that "the bitch had it coming", insinuating that some deserve being raped.

**THE BOTTOM-LINE:** rape is trivialised. The show's writers are playing a game of rape, where rape culture is the winner. ●





07/20/2006

*Photo: Flickr*

# THE BOTTOM OF THE PYRAMID

“Bottom of pyramid” entrepreneurship was embraced with enthusiasm in the development community as a way to make a fortune in untapped markets while simultaneously empowering the world’s poorest. A decade later, how have promises of fortune and progress played out?



Photo: Wikimedia Commons

**I**ntegration of women into the labor force is increasingly emphasized as a goal within international development. A trend in poverty alleviation programs incorporates multinational corporations to employ women in impoverished communities as ‘micro-entrepreneurs.’ Armed with bags filled with a variety of consumable products, these women use their social networks to transport goods to villages where rails and roads don’t reach, earning their own income as brand ambassadors for globalized companies. This type of organization is referred to as ‘bottom of pyramid entrepreneurship’ or BoP programs, in which the billions of impoverished, typically excluded from market participation, represent a vast untapped revenue stream and labor force.

**BoP programs** are pitched as a win-win with the twin benefit of lifting people out of poverty while giving corporations access to new markets. In impoverished communities where infrastructure is lacking, the social network of women can provide

the perfect platform for the distribution of goods. When poverty equals opportunity, companies are eager to empower these so-called “under-utilized poor” with targeted training programs. Management scholar C.K Prahalad who popularized the idea claims there exists a “fortune at the bottom of the pyramid” where the world’s poorest people stand to be lifted up by “inclusive capitalism,” all while offering novel frontiers of business growth. Former Coca-Cola CEO Muhtar Kent enthusiastically echoed the optimism, stating that he will get these “micro-entrepreneurs” to “deliver coke to every village, every community, every township.”

**ECONOMIC INDEPENDENCE** is a fundamental aspect of women’s empowerment, hence the focus on labor integration in development schemes. Barriers to women entering the workforce exist globally but due to a lack of regulation and institutional support, women in developing nations often face these problems to the greatest extent. In rural Bangladesh for example, it is common for girls to drop out of school and marry as young as 14,

or pursue hard labor in agriculture or the booming garment industry. These jobs pay low and are strenuous, a common work week in a linen factory consisting of a gruelling 80 hours for a mere 20 US-Dollar of pay. Despite the difficult conditions, promises of economic independence make this an attractive choice for many.

**THE ALLURE OF** BoP initiatives in places like Bangladesh is that women have another option, one which emphasizes empowerment in self-reliance while simultaneously enriching their community with new products. Goods sold include a wide variety of consumables such as cosmetics or hygiene products, but can also extend to communication technologies or quality nutrition. For example, the Bangladeshi Grameen Phone Ladies set up their own cell phone distribution center in villages that lacked landlines, and BoP Inc. created the Profitable Opportunities for Food Security program to improve access to quality food.

**THE TRAINING PROCESS** specifically targets the most vulnerable women, individuals who are chronically poor or have lost familial stability. The idea is to incorporate the very bottom of the pyramid, the poorest of the poor. Women are the preferred targets of microloans for business ventures because they typically represent a lower risk investment than men. However, one must also meet specific criteria to be considered as a viable salesperson, with basic prerequisites of physical mobility. The expected average work day will include visiting between 50 to 100 households to distribute goods. Not only that, but individuals are expected to exhibit the can-do enthusiasm that leads any self-made entrepreneur to fortune, with training sessions emphasizing responsibility for one's own success.

**DESPITE THE OPPORTUNITIES** that inclusive capitalism promises, many are suspicious of the ability of a private enterprise to provide meaningful changes to communities that suffer from chronic poverty. Scholar Catherine Dolan, who conducted fieldwork on Bangladeshi BoP schemes, notes that the neoliberal mantras of self-reliance and personal accountability essentially place the responsibility of systemic poverty reduction on the poor themselves. At the same time, companies keep a degree

of distance from the costs and accountability of managing the labor on the ground. While touting a kind of moral capitalism that empowers women, not much is done to address systemic issues that are often deeply rooted in local cultural traditions or rigid gender roles.

**INTRODUCING GLOBALIZED MARKET** forces into poor communities can have a disruptive effect, especially when employing standards for the ideal salesperson. This can lead to negative consequences by drawing new lines of social exclusion within communities, dividing women into the “deserving” and “undeserving poor.” Furthermore, scholar Aneel Karnani expresses concerns that in emphasizing the ability of the market to reduce poverty, the state's role in providing stable regulatory and legal protections for the poor is undermined. BoP operations typically do not provide critical basic infrastructure such as clean water, sewage treatment, or health care, things that many impoverished regions desperately need. Prahalad argues that the poor inhabiting these conditions have accepted that access to running water is not a “realistic option”, so why should we deny them access to cell-phones and Coca-Cola?

**IT HAS BEEN** over a decade since Prahalad boldly prophesied that by 2020 global poverty will be all but eradicated with the help of bottom of pyramid entrepreneurship operations. According to World Bank statistics, roughly 10 percent of the population remains in extreme poverty, with women particularly affected by bearing the brunt of unpaid labor and suffering a comparative lack of economic independence. However, as Catherine Dolan notes, the women she surveyed saw immediate transformational benefits from participating in entrepreneurship programs, not just in material terms but also in improved self-perception. Despite the benefits, she asks “what does it mean to outsource development to the under-utilized poor?” Clearly exploiting the fortune at the bottom of the pyramid is not the panacea for chronic poverty it was sold as, just as it is not an adequate supplement for stable institutional support or basic infrastructure. But when options are severely restricted, work as a micro-entrepreneur offers the world's poorest women a degree of independence and dignity that is otherwise simply not available. ●



## TURNING “ROMANCE TOURISM” ON ITS HEAD

Sex tourism is a subject beyond conventionality. Although women constitute the vast majority of sex workers across the world, less attention has been directed at the industry of the male counterpart. When investigating so-called “romance tourism” of female sex tourists and male sex workers, more aspects of the apparent story are revealed.

*Photo: Pixabay*

**L**ove has no boundaries is a common phrase. Why should intergenerational or interracial love be of any difference? Older single women travelling to “exotic” countries in the Global South to find younger men is not a new phenomenon. It has been around for decades and is steadily increasing. Gambia and Jamaica are two famous destinations amongst many others. Officially, it is known as “romance tourism”, in which sexual pleasure offered by young local men are exchanged for economic benefits. The concept is broadly used due to the perceived romantic motivations of females. Women with a background in western countries who are relatively economic privileged and white are the providers or the consumers, depending on the perspective. Generally, it is described as something innocent and romantic. A win-win situation for the two partners. Exploring “romance tourism” beneath the surface reveals, however, another story.

**TRADITIONAL SEX TOURISM** pursued by men evokes disgust and almost anger. Women are portrayed as sex objects and men as the perpetrators. Yet, the

controversy of the industry seems to be ignored when gender roles are reversed. Prostitution and exploitation are two lost concepts when female sex tourism is brought to attention. The usage of the term “romance” has led us to believe that older women on holiday engage in foreign relationships that are based on reciprocity. This might be the case. Several reportages and studies have shown that sex tourism is a way to escape poverty for impoverished men while women are able to escape the dull life at home. Many of these women even hold the view that they are helping these younger men. Recognising the sexual activity only as “romance tourism” is, however, not implication-free. The dichotomy is filled with several assumptions about gender, sexuality and “race”.

**FIRST OFF,** it is believed that men, unlike women, have different sexual pursuits when travelling. Men seek out commercialised sex while women are looking for a more romantic experience. The idea of sexuality being gendered goes beyond tourism. It is constantly perpetuated in basically everything we consume from movies to commodities. Studies have however pointed out the

contrariwise. Despite the gendered association, sex and romance tourism are not different in the pursuit. It only upholds the idea that power imbalances are not of relevance for female sex tourism. Some would even go to the length to equate “romance tourism” as liberation for women. From this perspective, it is helping to level the playing field for gender equality. Gender is, however, not the only determinant of power. “Race”, class, religion, status and other categories jointly shape social interactions, including sexual encounters. Social stratification is even based upon such indicators. Female tourists have an economic advantage point and a range of privileges purely based on the colour of their skin, which beg the question if female sex tourism is not just another exploitative industry in disguise?

**SECONDLY, FEMALE SEX** tourism is also termed romantic because of the lack of industrialisation. Male sex workers are not prostitutes but go under other names such as beach boys or boyfriends. Conventional sex tourism, on the other hand, is a money-making industry worth billions of dollars with millions of sex workers across the world. “Only” around 600 000 women from western countries engage in sex tourism each year as stated by the daily mail. It is difficult to estimate the exact number and it might even be higher than anticipated. Also, sex workers mostly approach women on the beach in a seductive way without money or sex being mentioned. “Romantic” relationships are thus created instead of basic monetary prostitute-client affairs. Male sex workers are also motivated by peer group status to partake in “western” life and not only by money. In fact, local men involved with female tourists are much more accepted in their own communities than local female sex workers. This tells us about how we evaluate work in the association of gender, and how the price for male pleasure is much higher than for the counterpart.

**THIRDLY, SEXUAL ACTIVITY** is not only gendered but also racialised meaning that there are inherent differences between so-called “races”. Black men are hypersexual, impulsive and wild, while white people are sexually restrained and thus “civilised”. These are views that continue to run through the global society ever since the colonial period. Interestingly enough, the very women upon who the sex industry is maintained, stand firm in the idea of sexuality as being inherently racialised.

The perception is even used to self-justify why a younger man would want to engage in a sexual interaction with an older woman. Some scholars have even claimed that female sex tourism is an expression of racialised power. Black sexuality is objectified and commodified in a similar fashion as the colonial sex trade to the degree that the gendered identity of black men has even become internalised. Colonialism is in this way a project that was never completed.

**TOURISM IS ITSELF** a complex mediator of symbolic and material power in differentiating gender and race. Sex-specific activities reinforce the definitions and stereotypes of male, female and racial identities. Portraying black men as the “exotic other” means that a certain trait of characteristics is associated with this particular “group”. Practices that would otherwise be condemned as oppressive become legitimised in this way. Consumers feel at ease when they indulge in activities that might be viewed by others as controversial. This is also relevant for the landscapes these “exotic persons” inhabit.

**ALTHOUGH THE SUBJECT** of female sex tourism has received more attention in recent years it remains largely under-discussed. Ignorance or simply lack of interest might be contributing factors as well as the sensitivity surrounding the topic. Perceptions about sexuality, race and gender can help to explain why the terminology for female versus male tourism on sex holiday is divided. While differences exist between the two, it is important to recognise the underlying causes to re-evaluate our perceived stereotypes and our implicit biases. Female sex tourism is another facade of such but gender, sexuality and race are not black and white. ●



# INTERVIEW

ANNA JASTRZEMBSKA





# QUEERING UP POLITICS

Personal is political, says an old feminist slogan. With the political witch-hunt focusing on LGBTQ+ minority in Poland, it is more accurate than ever. Julia and Monika give an insight into what does it mean to be a queer female in Poland right now.

**B**y now, everyone is used to hearing negative things about Poland. For a long time, the Catholic-nationalist government tried to force through a complete ban on abortion, sparking massive protests and critique from the international community. Now, on the eve of European and Polish parliamentary elections, the spotlight fell on the LGBTQ+ community. The instigator was the “Warsaw LGBT Card” that promised safe houses, hotlines, and sexual education in schools. As a reaction to this, a regional minister of education accused the card of “propagating paedophilia,” and a political witch-hunt began.

The Polish public sphere is now filled with opinions about LGBTQ+, however, the minority members themselves are rarely given voice. I had a chance to talk with two girls about what it is like to be a queer female in Poland. Julia and Monika\* have been friends since high school. Julia lives in a big Polish city and Monika in the countryside nearby. They are both twenty-two, graduated from a technical high school, and are currently working before starting university. Julia identifies as romantic asexual and Monika as a lesbian.

#### **What is it like to be a queer female in Poland?**

**JULIA:** It depends where you are. I have an amazing support network, my friends are so tolerant, it couldn't have been better. But in everyday life... well, it's not that you're too scared to leave home because someone will find out, but it's not easy. I work behind the bar so I meet different people and, usually, they just make fun of anyone who looks like they might not be straight. It's very stereotypical. And being asexual in Poland is horrible, especially if you have this romantic attraction. No one knows what asexuality is and I don't live in a perfect world where love is a feeling, I know that people have those physiological needs, too. It would be unfair so if you're someone like me, you just avoid relationships because you can't function in them.

**MONIKA:** The thing is that no one thinks about girls like that, that they have any sort of sexual feelings. Even if you hear about LGBTQ+, they mean gays. That's why it's so hard to realize, even if you are attracted to females. And then you have to be scared if you want to out yourself. For now, only my closest friends know and I'm gauging the opinions of my family. My parents are quite laid-back but I'm still scared. In school, everyone was quite open-minded. On group therapy, where we have people from very different backgrounds, someone was accidentally outed and, even though people had horrible opinions about LGBT before, they were all very nice to her. And we are talking about conservative Polish countryside, farmers and miners. But when I outed myself to my therapist, she was a horrible homophobe. So it depends.

#### **Do you hear about non-heteronormative people in Poland at all?**

**JULIA:** Lately all the time, because of this infamous LGBT Card. The first time I've heard about queer people in Poland was Anna Grodzka, the first transgender MP. And then there is Robert Biedron who sometimes does nice things but sometimes I feel like he's using that he's gay as an advertisement. You definitely don't hear about asexuals, I'm surprised when someone knows what that is. I don't know, Poland for me is standing with one leg in Russia and one leg in Europe. These mentalities collide and on one hand, we're moving forward but then also we're scared of the LGBT Card and stopping using coal.

**MONIKA:** I've first heard that gays actually exist and aren't a media hoax when I started high school in the city. And then it turned out that basically all my friends are queer and I am, too. It's easier in the city but, still, it's mostly something that people just whisper in the corners. And now, with what's happening, it's hard not to hear about it and it's just sad when you hear people being openly homophobic. Because it's about me, my feelings, my friends... And the worst part is that these are the

people who'll go vote. And people who care, who are open-minded, won't vote because they don't see any hope.

### Do you think that there is gender equality in Poland?

**Julia:** People say that it used to be worse and that now we, girls, can do anything, so we have this idea that we have equality. There is no equality. I didn't get a night shift at a printing store because I am a girl and my boss was afraid that something will happen to me. So now I'm working at the bar, struggling with guys all the time. I can't just work, I can't talk to them because if I'm nice it means that I'm into them, I can't smile because suddenly they fall head over heels in love with me. I can't even open the door myself because some guy will run ahead of me to prop it open. Maybe a nice gesture but it comes from this very patronizing point of view. Generally, I think that we are too focused on gender.

**Monika:** It's not necessarily always a worse treatment, it's just this attitude that women are so pretty and sensitive and they have to be protected... it's this kind of sexism that people don't realize is sexism. But also I went to a technical school so I'd never say that we have gender equality. The constant sexism and comments that girls shouldn't be studying computing at all or comparing computer parts to plates "so we can understand better." We had one female teacher who'd give harder tests to girls, to get us used to life being harder for us. And she was right. I don't know what it's like at the university level, there are more girls there, but it was hard. ●

\*All names have been changed.

## A BRIEF HISTORY OF

# LGBTQ+ RIGHTS IN POLAND

1932

Homosexuality is **decriminalized**. While it has never been illegal in Poland, it was outlawed in Prussia, Austria-Hungary and the Russian Empire which ruled over the Polish territories since late 1700s

1960S

First **gender change operations** are performed in Poland. Until today a person must undergo it to legally change their gender

1997

New constitution names marriage "**an institution between a man and a woman**"

2003

**Discrimination** on bases of sexuality in workplace becomes illegal

2011

Anna Grodzka becomes **the first openly transgender person in a national parliament** in any European country

2015

Catholic-conservative **Law and Justice** party wins presidential and parliamentary elections in Poland

FEBRUARY 2019

A regional court in Warsaw transcribes a foreign act of gay marriage. It becomes **the first act of legal recognition of same-gender couples** in Poland. It is later overruled by the Minister of Justice

FEBRUARY 2019

Mayor of Warsaw, Rafal Trzaskowski, passes **LGBT Card**, which, among others, promises safe houses and hotlines for the minority as well as sexual education in schools

FEBRUARY 2019

Robert Biedron, founder of the biggest LGBTQ+ organization in Poland (KPH) and an openly gay politician, forms a **left-wing party Spring** in preparation for elections

FEBRUARY/MARCH 2019

LGBT Card is repeatedly and **viciously criticized** by politicians from various parties, media, and the Catholic church

MARCH 2019

A town in Poland (Swidnica) passes a law "**forbidding LGBTQ ideology**"

**What happens next?**

With approaching European and Polish parliamentary elections the situation doesn't look optimistic

# PERSPECTIVE ON RWANDA



Photo: Flickr

For most people in Europe, Rwanda is likely known for its brutal history. In the 1990s there was a civil war followed by a genocide that killed 1 million people in just three months. Today's news about Rwanda is mostly about the authoritarian President Paul Kagame who has ruled the country for nearly two decades. Oppositional politicians are sent to jail, and freedom of speech is severely limited. But there are always other perspectives.

**M**y first article in The Perspective was about the plastic bag ban implemented in Rwanda. I had then recently visited the country and saw the positive effects with my own eyes. The goal towards making Rwanda plastic-free is within the line of modernizing the country to an "African Singapore". But Rwanda also aims to be a pioneer within equality. "Gender equality is not just women's business, it is everybody's business" President Kagame stated. 64 per cent of the members of parliament are

women - a world record. According to the World Economic Forum, the wage differences between genders are small, and there are more women than men working. After the genocide, many new laws were enforced to strengthen women's rights.. For example, women are now allowed to inherit land the same way as men do.

**WHAT ARE THE** background factors making this possible? The constitution of the country states that at least 30 per cent of the members of parliament must be women. Furthermore, the country



has made big investments in women's education and the role of women in the peacebuilding process, which should not be underestimated. Before 1994, most women worked within agriculture, besides taking care of children and household. The war and the genocide completely destroyed the agriculture-based economy. Thereby, forcing women into the waged labour market as they were in many cases the only ones left alive to provide for the family. In 1996, 34 per cent of all households were provided by widows, unmarried women and prisoners' wives.

**HOWEVER, THINGS AREN'T** as good as statistics may suggest. Many scientific articles point out deep social and patriarchal structures, which do not just disappear by changing the laws. Yes, women are allowed to inherit land just as men. But old traditions make sure that the shares often go to men. Structural inequality is based on structures

and power. 41 per cent of women in Rwanda older than 15 has been subjected to physical violence, with one out of five experiencing sexual violence, most often from a family member.

**THE BELGIAN POLITICAL** scientist and Rwanda expert Filip Reyntjens claims that the parliament representation and quotas system are actually curtains. According to him, they are always for the governing party RPF to strengthen its power and remove focus from the democratic shortcoming.

**DURING MY TIME** at The Perspective, I have learnt that foreign policy rarely is either or. You can always look at something in a different way. We can salute Rwanda for its equality progress but still criticize its lack of democracy and social structures that consolidates discrimination towards women. There are always different perspectives. ●

# THE REAL BATTLEFIELD FOR THE VOTES: MEDIA AND POLITICAL CANDIDATES



“Media tells us our roles in society—it tells us who we are and what we can be. It shows us who matters and what is important to media—and clearly, as of right now, it is not women.”

**-JULIE BURTON, WOMEN'S MEDIA CENTER PRESIDENT**

**T**he road of reaching equality between men and women has been and continue to be rough and dirty. We reinforce and safeguard the premises of inequality through individual and collective actions. We expect men and women, by the virtue of them belonging to a certain sex, to behave in a certain manner. When the image that we have does not correspond to what we observe in the real world, we often experience discomfort and dissatisfaction. We are all to be blamed for reproducing gender stereotypes, but as individuals, we have a different level of influence compared to, for example, opinion leaders and the media.

**THE MEDIA IS** a reflection of how we as individuals and groups view the world around us. The media plays an enormous part in producing gender expectations and stereotypes. Regardless of the position or status, the women remain under-

represented in news stories and tend to appear more frequently in news about fashion and health, whereas men are overrepresented in economic and political news. It reinforces the perception of women being less competent for leadership roles than men. It takes a heavy toll on women running for political office by shifting the attention from what matters in a political campaign to irrelevant facts about the female candidates, their personal life and attributes.

**HILARY CLINTON HAS** a big record of gender influenced coverage in comparison with her male counterparts. Back in 2014, when Clinton was still considering running in the 2016 presidential campaign, USA today when commenting on her daughter's pregnancy wrote: “It's unclear how Chelsea's pregnancy will affect Hillary Clinton, who is considering a race for president in 2016.” It is hard to imagine that such a comment can be



*Photo: Flickr*

made about a male political candidate. And we really should ask ourselves, why do we still associate the success or ability of women to run for office with her personal life and never do the same in connection to men? Can we really say that we think about men and women as equals if we judge them differently?

**ANOTHER RATHER FAMOUS** case is the “Clinton’s cackle” that went on for a long time after first published in the New York Times in 2007. The “cackle” is usually used along with the character of a witch who does not “laugh” but “cackles.” This

one comment made in 2007 led to Clinton being called “The Wicked Witch of the Left” during her presidential campaign in 2016. That is somehow ironic how after more than a hundred years after the last witch trial we continue to observe how the society uses media to police women against socially prescribed behavior.

**IF ASKED WHAT** we look for in a political leader, we would most likely say that we want a strong and decisive political leader – the traits that are usually associated with men rather than women. It does not mean that women cannot be strong, assertive



and decisive. But we as a society appear to have a problem with when it is the case. The 2010 Harvard study by Tyler Okimoto and Victoria Brescoll confirms that women running for leading political roles are associated with the feelings of moral outrage such as contempt, anger or disgust by voters because they appear to be uncaring and unsupportive. The voters see men in the same position as having greater agency, namely being more assertive, stronger and tougher.

**THE TRUTH IS** we would most probably have the same problem with a male political candidate

being warm, caring and passionate. In 1988, Michael Dukakis lost his popular support during the presidential debate when he was asked a question about his opinion on the death penalty in case if his wife were raped and murdered. Dukakis as a long opponent to the death penalty said that he believes “there are better and more effective ways to deal with violent crime.” He appeared to the viewers as dispassionate and dismissive. This “desultory” response that was unpopular even among his staff made the presidential candidate explain himself multiple times, and in the follow-up interview, well, according to the logic, he only made it worse by saying: “Kitty (Dukakis’s wife) is probably the most - is the most - precious thing, she and my family, that I have in this world. And, obviously, if what happened to her was the kind of thing you described, I would have the same feelings as any loving husband and father.” This made his electorate even more uncertain and indecisive about him having a hand firm enough to lead the nation.

**WE HAVE TO** agree that men would also suffer from not conforming to the masculine stereotype of a political candidate. But, unfortunately, most of the traits we expect to find in a political leader are naturally associated with men. We are more comfortable with powerful women than we were a decade ago. Despite the examples given above, we observe more space given to women in media, their increased popular support and ability to reach the heights that no woman could have dreamed of just a few decades back.

**LET’S BE AWARE** of our prejudices and battle them to judge political candidates not according to their behavior or how they appear, but according to their qualifications and accomplishments. The road we have traveled so far has been rough and dirty. It is not going to be easier from the place where we are. But it does not mean that we should stop moving. On the opposite, we have a moral obligation to continue our journey if we believe in the equality between sexes and attest that it is indeed reachable. By slowly changing our opinions, we contribute to the collective thinking that might completely change the course of history. Soon enough having a female President in the U.S. and other places in the world will not come as a surprise but something completely normal. It’s all in our hands. Let’s not waste the momentum and believe that it is possible. Because it is. ●



*Photo: Unsplash*

# YOUNG PEOPLE'S CLIMATE ACTIVISM ARE REDEFINING FOREIGN POLICY

The global school strike movement shows that appetite for change has never been greater. International affairs are no exception. We need a climate-centric foreign policy to meet the challenges of future generations.

**B**y now, it is virtually impossible not to have heard of Greta Thunberg. Having spent the past year making my way from Washington DC's Think Tank Row to the UN offices in Tokyo, the Swedish 16-year old has been a constant topic of discussion wherever I go. School strikers now march in great numbers on streets around the world, often right outside the halls of power capable of determining the fate of our shared planet.

**YET, THESE HALLS** of power are slow to realize the impact young climate protesters will have on future policymaking. Despite Greta Thunberg's frank speeches in prime international forums such as Katowice, Davos, and Brussels, few foreign policy professionals have made the connection between the action on the streets and their

own line of work. Even fewer have realized how these young people are showing how the climate crisis will revolutionize how we see foreign policy altogether.

**YOU MIGHT THINK** they've had long enough to get the idea. As early as the Kyoto Protocol negotiations in the early 2000s, the term "climate diplomacy" had already entered our glossaries. However, the failures of climate negotiators in Kyoto or Copenhagen can be traced to an enduring paradigm of placing climate issues as outside of and subservient to "real" foreign policy. Even now, geopolitical tensions constantly derail and water down global climate commitments. Attempts to establish global governance regimes in climate policy are often seen as infringements of national sovereignty, facing particular difficulty in our current age of rising nationalism.

**THOSE MOST EAGER** to dismiss climate change as a fringe issue with no relation to classic issues of war and peace are often quick to justify themselves on the basis of pragmatism or rationality, even though these principles have are the antithesis with climate denial. After all, what are the goals of any government's foreign policy? Broadly speaking, at least on paper, it is to interact with international actors in order to bring security and prosperity to one's country, region, or global community. Climate change is a threat to all of those things. The rational thing to do as a policymaker is to follow Greta Thunberg's advice: taking rapid action.

**SO WHY DO** are our foreign policy leaders doing so little? We live in a world where our most prolific diplomats and most-quoted experts are trained to view foreign policy through a realist lens. Pursuing state interest, which for powerful states equals the status quo, is given top priority. Even in countries with a relatively higher degree of commitment to climate action, environmental issues are



**Annina is a 24 year old Junior Fellow at the United Nations University and a freelance writer. Her favorite word in english is celadon. She is orgionally from Stockholm but currently lives in Tokyo, Japan. UPF Lund and UF Stockholm had an article competition together with Ung Media, and Annina was one of the winners. This is her contribution.**

still traditionally thought of as the domain of domestic policy.

**THE SCALE AND** force of young people's climate protest movement show that this is bound to change. The foreign policy decisions of today will determine the ability of future generations to live on our shared planet. It will be difficult to maintain a voter base when you ignore the existential demands of an entire generation. Intergenerational equity is already becoming an established term in international law, where many are urging the right of future generations to a safe and livable planet to become further enshrined in legally binding agreements.

**AS MEMBERS OF** civil society, the young school strikers can in fact be considered as foreign policy actors in themselves. For years, IR scholarship has emphasized the emerging importance of sub-state actors, including social movements, in shaping foreign policy. This is further exemplified by the increasingly active role of cities. The withdrawal of the US from the Paris Agreement prompted cities like New York to go out on the world stage to forge international partnerships on climate action. As their streets are filled with protesting school children, cities will need to step up their ambition even further to meet the demands of their future citizens.

**MOREOVER, THE SCHOOL** striker movement shows the appetite for foreign policy to be guided by the interests of citizens. Scholars like Prof. Mary Kaldor have proliferated the concept of human security as the guiding principle that best reflects modern challenges in global governance, with climate security as a key focus. We have already seen how areas affected by climate change are more prone to conflict, making climate policy an imperative dimension of peacebuilding. Countries like Sweden and Canada are catching on slowly but surely, rolling out five-year strategic plans for climate-sensitive sustainable peace and appointing specific diplomatic posts for climate change.

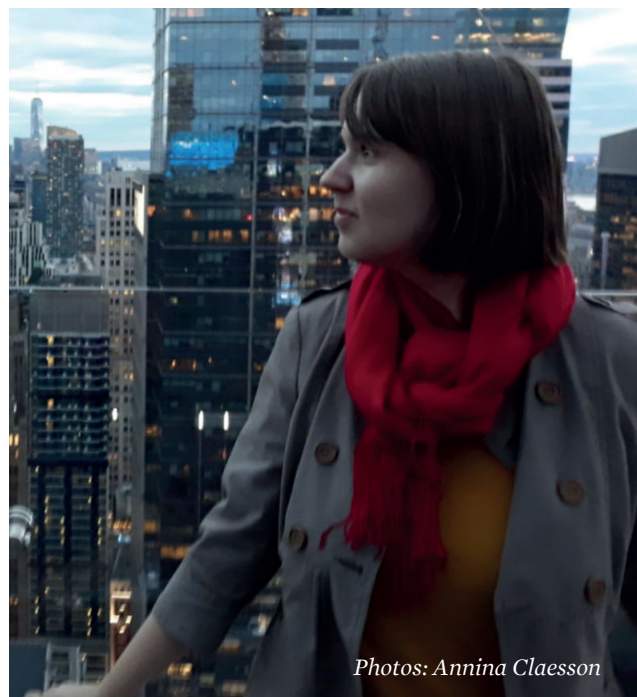
**THE ISSUE OF** climate justice and equity also places new demands on global governance regimes. The global South will be disproportionately affected by climate change in comparison to the global North, which is responsible for the majority of emissions. This "climate debt" introduces a new dimension in the struggle to dismantle colonial legacies, plac-

ing very real economic demands on ODA, regional resource distribution, and migration policy. Greta Thunberg and the school strike movement have made climate justice a priority, and future generations are less likely to let it go ignored.

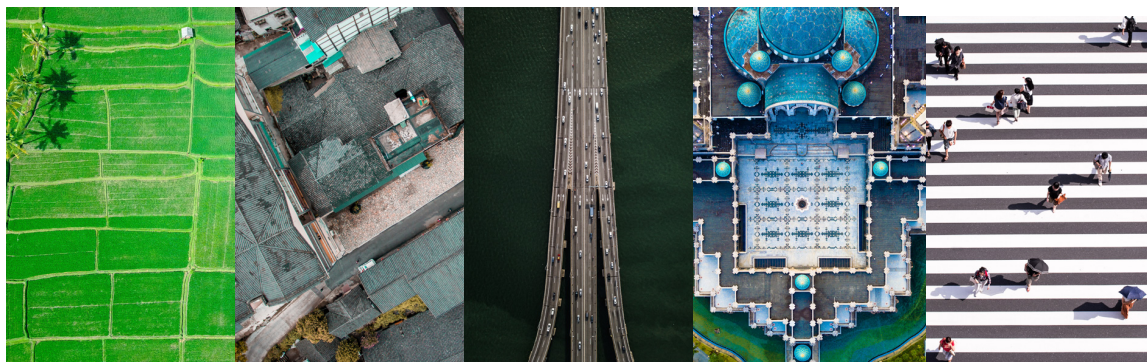
**AT THE MOMENT,** these ideas provoke fear in the halls of Foggy Bottom or Brussels. A climate-focused foreign policy means shifting priorities and power on an unprecedented and uncomfortable scale. Yet, as young climate activists mobilize in great numbers across the world, it is becoming increasingly clear that there is no alternative than to get with the times.

**CLIMATE CHANGE WILL** cause the world in which today's teenagers will grow up, vote, and perhaps even become foreign policy professionals, to look drastically different. The idea of governing the world from a myopic, state-centric perspective where my oil profits take priority over the consequential flooding of my neighboring country's capital will become increasingly absurd. Water and wind, after all, do not care about borders.

**IT IS SIMPLY** irrational to forge today's foreign policy without this future in mind. Luckily, the future is no longer such an abstract concept when it marches on our streets and sits outside our parliament buildings. Let's listen to what it has to say. ●



Photos: Annina Claesson



Photos by Fahrul Azmi, Thana Gu, Ryoji Iwata and Joel Vodell (all on Unsplash)

# Welcome to the Centre for East and South-East Asian Studies!

We organise film-screenings and open lectures with invited experts from all over the world.

In the Asia library we have the crucial readings for you to stay up to date on contemporary East and South-East Asia.

We offer a Masters Programme in Asian Studies as well as a number of freestanding courses.

Read more on our website [www.ace.lu.se](http://www.ace.lu.se) or come and visit us at Sölvegatan 18 B in Lund!

