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GENDER ISSUE

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A Woman's Place in Peace

How Female Inclusion Bolsters Post-Conflict Stability

By Janet Malzahn

As Miriam Coronel Ferrer signed the Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro with Moro Islamic Liberation Front, she not only ended the forty-year-long armed conflict between the Philippines and Moro rebel factions but also became the first woman to sign a final peace accord. The year was 2014. Although glass ceilings around the world are shattering, and women are entering male-dominated industries at higher rates, peacemaking remains men's work. Women are underrepresented in peacekeeping troops and peace delegations—and both women and security are worse for it. Without a sympathetic voice to speak up for women's issues, the problems women face during and after war, like gender-based violence, are left unacknowledged and unresolved. Women need more from peace.

Peace may also need more from women. As conflict evolves to include elaborate terrorist networks and greater civilian targeting, peace has become increasingly fragile and elusive. Almost half of the conflict-resolution agreements from the 1990s crumbled within five years of their creation. Ninety percent of the civil wars in the 2000s broke out in countries that had already fought at least one other civil war within the past 30 years.[i] In order to assure peace and stability in the international system, states must look to new ways to achieve lasting security. Enter: women.

As direct targets of violence from war, women already have a legitimate claim to be included in post-conflict settlements to pursue the justice and help they have been continually denied. But beyond securing justice for themselves, women bring unique benefits and resources to the peace process. Evidence has shown that the inclusion of women in peace negotiations and peacekeeping teams makes the resultant peace stronger, more equal, and more durable. If the world values justice, equality, and security, it will give women

a greater role in the crafting of olive branches.

Women in War

War, today, looks different from the ones fought in the past. Legions of state-sponsored soldiers have been replaced by elaborate terrorist networks. As the tools and rules of warfare evolved, with drones and controlled strikes replacing traditional guns and battles, the lines dividing the war front from the home front have blurred. Civilian casualties have increased. The bulk of refugees driven from their homes are women and their children. War, though rarely initiated or fought by women, still costs them.

While women face the same carnage of conflict that all civilians do, much of the violence women face in war is not just an externality or side-effect. In modern warfare, sexual violence is pervasively used as a war strategy. In ethnic conflicts, raping and impregnating women in another tribe or group is meant to sow shame and dissension into the opponent's community, acting as a tool for social control.[ii] During the Bosnian War in the 1990s, Serbian soldiers made Bosnian women "give birth to Serbian babies" as a tool of ethnic cleansing.[iii]

Although it almost needs no stating, these victims of sexual violence bear social, psychological, and physical trauma for years to come. The rape by an aggressor often brands its victims with overpowering stigma, precluding them from marriage or full integration into society. Since ethnicity is often socially derived from the father rather than the mother, the children of these crimes also face alienation for being of the other ethnic group.[iv]

More than just another form of pillage and spoil collecting, the forced impregnation of women

is an intentional strategic tool of war. It is also a war crime.[v] Previously regarded as a crime against humanity, instances of war-time rape are now being charged as acts of genocide thanks to a recent change in jurisprudence.[vi] Although the prosecution of these crimes is important, it does little to improve the actual situation of their victims.

Punishing the perpetrators of these crimes only goes so far. Evidence shows that the current prosecution of gender-based violence has low deterrent potential, as the victims are still ostracized in society even after the court date.[vii] Peace agreements present post-conflict parties with the opportunity to make meaningful change for women, either by offering them assistance, taking measures to counteract the social stigmatization of rape, or extending their rights during peacetime.

Unfortunately, but unsurprisingly, the vast majority of peace agreements fail to even mention women or gender-based violence. In peace agreements made between 1990 to 2017, 81% do not mention women, and 95% do not mention conflict-related gender-based violence. [viii]

Women in Peace

It is even harder to pursue justice when women's rights are not protected during times of peace. The subordinate status of women often means domestic abuse is deemed acceptable or completely overlooked. The same patriarchal norms weave their way into the manner in which violence in war is handled, deepening their grasp on society. For example, under Peruvian law, up until 1997 men charged with rape could exonerate themselves by marrying their victims. These laws acquitted dozens of Peruvian soldiers who raped women of Shining Path throughout the bloody 20-year civil war and countless other rapists during times of peace.[ix] In *Marrying Your Rapist: Domesticated War Crimes in Peru*, Jelke Boesten, a reader of gender and development at King's College, explains that "rape in

wartime not only unsettles [...] socio-cultural structures, it is also a reflection of these structures." [x]

War is undeniably abominable, but it presents an opportunity at its end. Post-conflict states and societies quite literally reconstruct themselves. New constitutions are written, new laws are passed, and aid is distributed. This period of change can be used to erode and replace prior policies and norms that disadvantaged women.

Presently, such a view seems too optimistic. Unless governments take active steps to promote the rights, welfare, and economic empowerment of women, post-conflict reconstruction often pushes women further back into domestic roles. The wounded state prioritizes maintaining stability and neutralizing the male soldiers who may pose threats in the form of unrest, leaving women behind. As Miriam Coronel Ferrer said, "when the going is difficult and when there are so many other things that have to be settled, most of the time the gender issues are the ones that get sidelined." [xi] Although wars could result in a more progressive society, in reality, the post-war period is often even worse for women: they continue to face vestigial violence from the war and are subject to new, intensified backlash and aggression. [xii]

Why Have Women Make Peace?

A peace process with greater representation and sensitivity towards women's issues would help promote gender equality and more effectively rebuild a society following war. Of course, the inclusion of women in the peace process is no guarantee that gender-based issues will be addressed. As is often the case, quality is more important than quantity: women must be included meaningfully to truly make a change.

Beyond retribution and rehabilitation for specific gender-based crimes and obstacles, the inclusion of women in peace processes—whether it be as peacemakers or peacekeepers—creates

a stronger, more lasting peace. Not only does the presence of female negotiators improve the enforcement, implementation, and efficacy of treaties, but peace accords with female signatories often include more resolutions aimed at government reform to ensure lasting stability.[xiii] Quantitative evidence suggests that peace agreements with female involvement are 35% more likely to last more than 20 years.[xiv]

Women also bring unique value to stabilization efforts as peacekeeping officers. Female peacekeepers can access certain areas and populations that male peacekeepers cannot, allowing them to glean information essential to the implementation of accords.[xv] In addition, increased representation of female officers increases the rate that sexual assault is reported.[xvi] Women have the capacity to connect with an area's female population and other marginalized communities, gaining intelligence and trust.

The Glass Ceiling

Unfortunately, but unsurprisingly, women occupy few seats at the negotiating table for peace accords. In the major peace processes from 1990 to 2017, women made up only 2% of mediators, 5% of witnesses and signatories, and 8% of negotiators.[xvii] This gap persists in enforcement: women only comprise 4% of military peacekeepers and 10% of local police forces.

This is not an obscure problem. The UN has long recognized the need to increase its number of female peacekeepers. Since Security Council Resolution 1325 first recognized the unique ways war impacted women, the UN has passed seven more resolutions directly emphasizing the importance of women in peace processes and calling for greater participation.

How can the UN and negotiating countries increase female peacekeeper representation? One policy proposal is the addition of financial incentives—both at state and individual levels. The UN already offers a financial bonus to peacekeepers who deploy to dangerous locations, and the Council on Foreign Relations suggests that

it also pay this premium for the unique strengths that women bring to peacekeeping. This incentive structure could also work well at the country level: countries who contribute police and troops with high enough proportions of women to UN peacekeeping operations could receive extra compensation.

But only increasing the sheer number of female peacekeepers might not be enough. How and where they are distributed also matters. Sabrina Karim and Kyle Beardsley, political science professors and prominent peacekeeping researchers, find that women are assigned to missions that are safer and carry lower risk.[xviii] This means that the most unstable regions that could benefit the most from the contribution of women security forces, also have the fewest. Even more troubling, their findings suggest that the inclusion of women in peacekeeping efforts is largely symbolic, with women serving as tokens rather than actors.

Increasing the number of women in the creation of the peacekeeping settlements is more difficult, especially from the outside. Since each party selects its own negotiators, women are often excluded due to existing gender biases. Mediators open to the inclusion of marginalized groups, such as women, have been shown to increase the participation in the peace processes.[xix] However, in reality, the inclusion of women's groups is rare and usually for normative reasons. Gender-focused civil society groups can also be effective in wielding influence over the peace process, albeit from the margins.[xx]

The preponderance of evidence suggests that including more women in peacekeeping will improve the outlook of peace agreements for everyone—but especially the women themselves. Given the interplay between existing and persisting social norms and laws, war settlements present a critical opportunity to advance justice and women's rights. Greater representation of women in the peace process helps to ensure that an opportunity for change does not collapse into a setback—or another war.

All That or Tit-for-Tat?

Women's Rights in Saudi Arabia and Iran

By Omar Bekdash

They both call each other criminals, zealots, hypocrites, and supporters of terrorists. They engage in brutal proxy wars across the Middle East and are accused of meddling in the political affairs of nearly every other Arab country. But now, the rivalry between Saudi Arabia and Iran has the two countries squabbling about something else much more surprising: women's rights.

Both countries have, historically, enforced austere interpretations of Islam on their citizens, and it is women who have borne the brunt of the oppression. In recent years, however, the trend of repression has begun to reverse. After decades of gender-apartheid, women in Saudi Arabia and Iran are increasingly being granted more rights. The reason? Certainly not because they have had a sudden revelation about the need to follow basic human rights standards. Many speculate that the recent (albeit limited) relaxation of harsh gender laws could be traced to the two countries' rivalry.

For the past few decades, women have enjoyed many more rights in Iran than in Saudi Arabia. In Iran, women are allowed to vote in every election and stand as candidates: six percent of Iran's parliament is comprised of women, which is greater than the rate in cosmopolitan Lebanon, 4 percent.[i] Women work and open businesses in Iran without the need for male approval—either from their male elders or their husbands. In Iran, there has never been a law banning women from driving or riding bicycles, as there was in Saudi Arabia until 2018.[ii]

Until recently, the Saudi government has placed strict restrictions on women, resulting in a more segregated society than Iran. In Saudi Arabia, everything from public transportation hubs to cafes must adhere to gender separation doctrines. The Saudi government has done its

best to shackle women through the draconian “guardianship laws” that have defined the Kingdom's poor women's rights record: women must obtain the support of male “guardians” to work, open a business, apply for a passport, open a bank account, or even exit prison.[iii]

But in the past few years, Saudi Arabia has started to catch up with Iran. In 2015, Saudi Arabia finally allowed women to vote in municipal elections, and in 2018, Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman (MBS) granted women the right to drive, to much fanfare in the Western media. In 2017, the previous year, MBS stripped Saudi Arabia's religious police of much of their power to harass women for failing to adhere to Wahabi dress codes, and jailed extremist clerics.[iv] Interestingly enough, the Iranian police, which employs a similar vice squad to enforce Islamic dress codes, followed suit. In December of 2017, Tehran's “guidance patrol” grudgingly announced, under the pressure of moderate reformists in Iran's government, that it would cease detaining women who wear the hijab loosely.[v]

Now, the competition has spread to other arenas as well. When MBS announced he wanted to allow women to attend soccer matches (albeit in gender-segregated sections), Iranian women were outraged. Saudi Arabia, which had long been seen as less progressive than Iran, had suddenly one-upped the Islamic Republic. Although Iran did not go so far as to granting women the right to attend sports matches, the government announced they would allow female athletes to compete internationally, a right not given in Saudi Arabia.[vi] As many women's rights activists have concluded, the constant tug-of-war between Saudi Arabia and Iran may have a silver-lining: greater gender equality for women in those countries.

Still, the expansion of women's rights under Iran and Saudi Arabia may not be causally linked, but rather related to similar trends existing in both countries. Iran and Saudi Arabia both have young populations more liberal than their parents' generations. Granting women more rights may just be a way to appease the youth and get them on the side of countries' respective regimes. Or perhaps both countries, after years of ignoring international criticism of their human rights abuses, are trying to brandish their images in front of the world in order to attract international investment. MBS has taken on an ambitious new plan to transform Saudi Arabia from a unidimensional, oil-based economy to one that relies on a number of different industries that would be attractive to a variety of multinational corporations.[vii] In an attempt to woo investors, he has tried to soften Saudi Arabia's image across the world by partly accommodating the women's rights cause, especially after facing international backlash following the Saudi-orchestrated murder of journalist and MBS-critic, Jamal Khashoggi. Iran, which has been able to open up its doors to international investment following the nullification of sanctions due to the 2015 Iran nuclear deal, wants to improve its image as well.

At the same time, Iran and Saudi Arabia's deep enmity could further suggest that their tit-for-tat emancipatory moves may be attributed to their rivalry and its historic roots. Iran is the stronghold of conservative Shia Islam, and Saudi Arabia the embodiment of a reactionary Sunni state. Iran is ethnically Persian, and Saudi Arabia is Arab. Iran is a country is an "Islamic Republic" formed out of an uprising against an unpopular autocrat, Saudi Arabia is a monarchy with an autocrat at its helm. Iran's form of government, an Islamist pseudo-democracy, fundamentally threatens the monarchy in place in Saudi Arabia. Iran, which views the Saudi Arabian system as corrupt, elitist, and un-Islamic, has funded the Muslim Brotherhood across the Middle East in order to promote Islamic democracy and, in effect, delegitimize the Islamic monarchy in Saudi Arabia.[viii] The Saudi government, which is already worrying about the world's

shift away from oil dependence, fears nothing more than an democratic Islamist uprising.

By granting women more rights, the regimes of each country can proudly claim to an increasingly liberal and youthful Middle East that their system works the best—women included. When all is said and done, however, both governments' stance on women's rights is not drastically different today than it was yesterday. Shortly after granting women the right to drive, Crown Prince Salman ordered the arrests of dozens of women's rights activists and charged them with sedition and "treachery" as if to suggest that reform could only happen under his close watch, and only to drum up popular support for the regime. [ix][x] Some activists are now being tried in counter-terror courts, facing sentences of up to 20 years in prison.[xi] "This unprecedented level of persecution of human rights defenders in Saudi Arabia is disturbing," says the Middle East's Human Rights Watch director Lynn Maalouf.[xii] "It's a sign that reform may be as elusive as ever."

Colonial Hangover

LGBT Rights in the Subcontinent

By Hassaan bin Sabir

In remarks that coincided with a 2018 summit of Commonwealth leaders in London, British Prime Minister Theresa May said that she “deeply regrets” Britain’s legacy of promulgating anti-gay laws in its former colonies. She went on to urge Commonwealth leaders to scrap outdated colonial-era legislation that continues to serve as a means for the systematic oppression of LGBT communities in these countries.

May’s expression of regret is invaluable, as it has profound implications for the way in which the contemporary debate surrounding the oppression of the LGBT community plays out within post-colonial societies. This is because it carries the insinuation that the provision of rights to LGBT communities in post-colonial societies is simply an extension of the process of decolonization that began in the aftermath of the Second World War. Historically, efforts to decolonize have served as unifiers in the otherwise fraught and polarized political climate that exists in post-colonial societies.

The British Prime Minister’s words are also a negation of the Eurocentrist belief that although Western society has witnessed tremendous progress in the past few decades—especially when it comes to granting civil liberties and other fundamental rights to the LGBT community—the rest of the world has failed to keep up. This is because, in many developing societies, present-day ostracization of LGBT communities is antithetical to local cultural heritage. Instead, this oppression is a remnant of colonial rule, which was critical in fomenting and institutionalizing anti-LGBT sentiments in colonized societies.

The Impact of Colonialism on Gender and Sexual Norms in Pre-Colonial India

The Indian subcontinent, which is home to

Pakistan, India, and Bangladesh, offers a unique and fascinating prism through which we can analyze the relationship and impact of colonialism on LGBT communities. This is because the region’s religious and cultural heritage has long been more accommodating to multiple gender and sexual expressions than Western societies. Today, however, LGBT communities in South Asia face increased marginalization, more so than their counterparts in the Western world. This change in attitudes can be attributed to nearly two centuries of colonial rule in the subcontinent.

Homosexuality was not outlawed in pre-colonial India. Similarly, for thousands of years, the “khwaja sira” or “hijra” community has been recognized in South Asia as a third gender, playing an important role in the region’s social and political history. Records and accounts from the Mughal Empire and before show that members of the community were invited to sing and dance at festivals, weddings and other celebratory occasions. They also served as advisers to the Mughal court.^[i] However, this culture of acceptance began to erode following the arrival of the British in South Asia.

The subcontinent’s fluid gender and sexual norms did not conform to Britain’s Victorian era conceptions of appropriate sexual behavior.^[ii] As the British Empire consolidated its control on the Indian subcontinent in the 19th Century, its ideas about culture, society, and law began to manifest themselves in Indian society. These included Western, Judeo-Christian sexual norms that viewed local notions of sexuality as barbaric. Homosexuality, for instance, was not outlawed in India until 1861, when British colonizers promulgated Section 377, a law that criminalized homosexuality.^[iii] This crackdown on LGBT communities was not limited solely to the subcontinent. In fact, variations

of the law were instituted by the British in 42 other colonies as well, such as Bhutan, Uganda, Singapore, and Malaysia. LGBT communities in societies that had not been colonized also faced increased marginalization as an indirect^[3] result of colonialism. For instance, influenced by events in neighboring India, Nepal, which was never formally colonized, also incorporated Section 377 into its penal code.^[iv]

Ten years later, in 1871, the British laid the groundwork for the systematic oppression of the subcontinent's transgender communities. The Criminal Tribes Act, inspired by European vagrancy laws, defined certain tribal communities collectively as dacoits, thieves, and undesirables.^[v] The legislation marked out entire communities as intrinsically criminal, and required members of these communities to register with local authorities—or risk prosecution. Once registered, the tribe member's movements were restricted to authorized areas.^[vi] Individuals could be arrested if found outside their designated areas and, if discovered in suspicious circumstances,

even inside them, could be faced with a penalty of up to three years in prison.^[vii] The Act was amended in 1897 to include eunuchs, which was “deemed to include all members of the male sex who admit themselves, or upon medical inspection clearly appear, to be impotent.”^[viii] In practice, this meant India's hijras. Under this law, eunuchs could be arrested without a warrant and imprisoned for up to two years. Not only were they denied the right to draw up a will or adopt children, but their traditional rights, including their rights to land and money, were obstructed by colonial authorities in villages across India.^[ix]

LGBT Rights in India & Pakistan Today

The past few years have been encouraging for LGBT communities in Pakistan and India. Both countries have been in the news for landmark legislation and judicial verdicts that have granted civil liberties to LGBT communities.

In early 2018, Pakistan's parliament passed the “Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act,” a law which ensures transgender citizens the full protection of the laws. The law states that “a person's innermost and individual sense of self as male, female or a blend of both, or neither; that can correspond or not to the sex assigned at birth” must be respected.^[x] Further, it allows citizens to have their gender identity recognized on all state documents, such as passports and drivers' licenses. It also requires the Pakistani government to provide protection centers and safe houses for those who feel at risk. Under this act, trans citizens will also have the right to inheritance and to run for office.^[xi]

Similarly, in September 2018, the Indian Supreme Court legalized homosexuality, overturning a 157-year ban that outlawed sodomy. The law that the Supreme Court overturned, Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code, was first enforced in 1861 by the British as they consolidated their rule over India and included in India's criminal statutes upon their independence.^[xii] The statute could be used to punish those who committed sodomy or other homosexual acts with life in prison.



Illustration by Lane Letourneau

Western observers hailed these events in India and Pakistan as consistent with modern society's changing attitudes towards LGBT communities. However, in many ways, each of these initiatives characterized a return to the fluid conceptions of gender and gender identity that prevailed in the subcontinent prior to the arrival of the British.

Conclusion

The establishment of a causal relationship between colonialism and the oppression of LGBT communities in post-colonial societies carries serious implications. For one, it disempowers right-wing groups in these nations who characterize the provision of rights to these groups as an example of westernization. This, by definition, implies that LGBT rights are antithetical to local traditions, culture, and history. This was evident in the response of Indian right-wing groups to the Supreme Court verdict that legalized homosexual relations. Subramaniam Swamy, a member of India's ruling Bharatiya Janta Party (BJP) stated that homosexuality went "against Hindutva", an ideological framework that is built on Hindu nationalism.[xiii] Similarly, a statement issued by Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), an armed right-wing Hindu group, declared that "Indian society has not supported such relations." [xiv] History suggests that this isn't the case. Pre-colonial India had no qualms with both homosexuality and trans communities; colonial India did.

This aversion to Westernization, coupled with a desire to regain the subcontinent's pre-colonial identity and rich cultural heritage is also part of a broader struggle that has ensued in the aftermath of Britain's departure from the region in 1947. Post-colonial societies such as India and Pakistan are faced with the challenge of initiating reform, while also ensuring that this reform is consistent with their own civilizational history and values—not those espoused by contemporary Western civilizations. As a result, one of the key obstacles for both state and society has been to separate initiatives that are inconsistent with local culture and tradition from those that aren't. Unfortunately, the provision of rights to

the LGBT community has consistently been placed in the former category. This has begun to change in recent years, as evidenced by events in India and Pakistan. However, there is still room for progress, especially with respect to fostering wider societal acceptance of both gay and trans communities. This can only be accelerated by acknowledging colonialism's impact on LGBT communities in the region, and the ways in which colonial-era laws marked a stark departure from the fluid conceptions of gender and sexuality once prevalent in pre-colonial India.

Women & Demographic Transition

The Interplay Between Birthrates & Development

By Anika Bajpai

The supermom: from working a 9–5 job to taking care of her kids, she can do it all. In fact, more often than not, this elusive ideal for modern women is just as fictional as the superheroes it is named after. Women all over the world struggle to balance career aspirations with familial obligations. Beyond the home and the workplace, this conflict plays out in their country's birthrates and consequently, their nation's future.

Demographic researchers typically agree that the most stable fertility rate is just the replacement fertility rate—2.1 children born per woman.[i] However, few countries consistently achieve this rate, with many being stuck above or below. It is no coincidence that a country's birth rate can be predicted by its level of development. Developed countries typically have a rate lower than the 2.1 rate required for replacement, while developing countries usually have a higher rate. Categories aside, both developed and developing countries alike have been working to achieve this perfect replacement in hopes of ensuring a brighter future for their citizens.[ii]

But while success can provide great rewards, failure comes with its own problems. Developing countries, such as Nigeria, have the opportunity to raise their standards of living and strengthen their economies by inducing a population boom. But if such population growth is mismanaged or happens too rapidly, they run the risk of simultaneously depleting finite resources while also creating high youth unemployment. Meanwhile, more developed countries with an aging population, like Germany, serve as a cautionary tale to those younger countries. Many of these nations—especially those with robust social welfare programs—will face the challenge of maintaining economic growth and supporting large amounts of retirees all with a shrinking labor force.

In order to navigate the demographic fluctuations associated with economic development, countries must carefully examine the role and reproductive rights of women in society, past and present.

Development, Technology, and Women

For most of human history, the primary responsibility of women was to bear and raise children. Around the world, it was not uncommon for women to have upwards of half a dozen kids. Kept in check by high death rates, high birthrates did not historically lead to a skyrocketing population. It wasn't until the Industrial Revolution and its advancements in medicine and machinery that the death rate declined significantly in Western countries.[iii] These strides in technology supported the population boom that many developed countries experienced in the 19th century—and the subsequent bust that many of these countries are experiencing now.

In developed countries, the Industrial Age brought unprecedented strides in women's rights. From winning suffrage to becoming leaders of nations and companies, these accomplishments shifted the role of women in society. For the first time, women were no longer confined to the home. Their independence was made possible by improved technology. For example, contraception allowed women to take control of their own bodies and family size, and also shifted perceptions of women in the workforce and in higher education. One can see this in the labor pool of countries like the US, which only had a 17% participation rate for working-age women in 1880, compared to more than 60% in 2000.[iv] Concurrently, the total fertility rate moved from 4 to 2.1.[v]

One of the primary reasons for this decline in birthrates in developed countries was the changing role of women during the last century. Women in developed countries started to get married and have children later and later in life, often times delaying marriage to take advantage of the education and career opportunities that opened up to them.[vi] This means that adults on average are having fewer children than their parents. While this may have dangerous ramifications for the future of these countries, it may also act as a blueprint for developing countries looking to reduce their own birth rate.

Following the Transition: Developing Countries

With almost 200 million people, Nigeria has the largest population in Africa and is still growing. In the mid-20th century, the country's total fertility rate reached a peak of 6.78, but has since dropped to around 5.5 and is projected to continue to lower in the coming years.[vii] Nigeria and other developing countries with similar statistics are all potential candidates for experiencing a demographic dividend, the accelerated economic growth a country experiences due to having a majority working age population.[viii] Harnessing this potential, as many East Asian countries did in the 70s, could raise a country's standard of living, GDP per capita, and quality of infrastructure, all while lowering poverty rates. While promoting a higher birth rate can lead to a better society for a country's citizens, this growth is all contingent on a developing country's ability to create a framework to support this population boom.[ix]

As observed by developed countries such as Sweden and Canada, one of the most effective ways to lower birthrates is to give women access to greater opportunities.[x] While in many developing countries like India, tradition calls for women to stay at home and raise children, removing this mindset and allowing women to pursue other paths would enable countries to not only increase their specialized labor pools, but also to create large economic gains. Governments

are able to move toward this future by taking action like encouraging girls to stay in school, ensuring health care is available and rewarding businesses that hire women. By instituting such policies, governments of developing countries are one step closer to creating a better future for the next generation; without them, the future of these same countries could be quite bleak.

Unchecked growth would have economic, social, and environmental ramifications. When rapid population growth outpaces economic growth, the labor supply exceeds the demand. Such an imbalance leads to high youth unemployment and depressed wages.[xi] As a result of scarce opportunities for working-age people, the bloated labor force—which could have been used for the country's advantage—might turn into a potential source of unrest and destabilization. Further, all nations, no matter how large, are limited by their scarce resources, whether farmland, coal, or the water table. If there are too many people and not enough resources to go around, countries and the quality of life for their citizens could further deteriorate. While this may seem like a scene from a dystopian movie, such alarming events, often times propelled by human interference, are real.

Stopping the Decline: Developed Countries

On the flip-side, many developed countries are facing a crisis of having an aging population. The proportion of people over the age of 80 is expected to rise from the current 1% of the population to 4% in 2050.[xii] This increase means that governments will have to adapt to the needs of an older populace, while simultaneously figuring out a sustainable method to provide them with a social safety net. As the number of older people eclipses the number of workers, the government might not be able to provide the benefits they need.[xiii]

In order to avoid such a future, governments can take action to boost the labor supply. One option open to aging nations is to allow the migration of

younger migrants into the country.[xiv] While a viable option, rapid immigration often results in a xenophobic backlash that further strains societies. Look no further than the social disorder many European countries experienced after an influx of immigration that came with the refugee crisis.

Even still, increasing immigration does not address the underlying problem of low birth rates. Many young adults do not have children because of the sheer cost—from healthcare expenses, childcare costs, and school tuition—but also because of issues of employment flexibility and difficulties conceiving later in life.[xv] According to the Medical Director of the Center of Reproduction and Advanced Technology, Professor Geeta Nargund, to remedy this governments could support grants and tax breaks for families with children, institute paid maternal and paternal leave to help parents balance their careers and family, and provide healthcare education and assistance to couples who wish to have children.[xvi] Doing so would help developed countries avoid the pitfalls that come with an aging population structure.

Conclusion

Countries that have a fertility rate above 2.1 have the issue of managing a growing population, while countries with a rate below 2.1 have to deal with the problems associated with a shrinking population. In both, supporting women in the workplace and home will be an invaluable tool. If mishandled, either scenario could lead to chaos; however, if public policy is formulated thoughtfully, both have a path to improving the lives of citizens.

Feminism in an Authoritarian State

Inside China's Clash with #MeToo

By Christina Lu

On March 6, 2015—two days before International Women's Day—five young Chinese women were confronted separately by police, arrested, and later detained in a Beijing detention center.[i] Alone, scared, and traumatized, the women did not know if they were going to be charged with a crime, or if they would ever be able to go home.[ii] For weeks, as their families anxiously awaited word of their situations, the women were interrogated, mocked, and disparaged by Chinese authorities.[iii]

Their crime?

According to officials, the women, now known as the Feminist Five, were under investigation for “gathering a crowd to disturb public order,” an offense punishable by five years in prison.[iv] In reality, the women were being penalized for planning to circulate critical information about sexual harassment and gender equality for International Women's Day.[v] In trying to raise awareness about feminism and gender equality, the Feminist Five—whom police labeled “sp[ies] subverting state power” while in detainment—had inadvertently challenged the Chinese Communist Party (CCP)'s authority and status quo.[vi]

The CCP's negative reaction to the Feminist Five reflects a clash between current state goals and feminism. Although Mao Zedong championed women as equals during the Cultural Revolution, this is no longer the case. As the Chinese government's political and economic goals evolved over time, so has its treatment of gender equality. The CCP's crackdown on public movements supporting feminism, like its detainment of the Feminist Five and its censoring of the more recent #MeToo movement, reveals an inherent contradiction between the authoritarian Chinese state's current interests and the true promotion of gender equality. The Chinese

state suppresses feminist movements because they threaten to endanger Xi's legitimacy and disrupt China's social stability.[vii] But despite the government's best efforts, these feminist movements have not been stopped. Their resilience suggests that social change may yet come.

Changing Perceptions of Women's Rights

For decades, the Chinese government, like many other authoritarian states, has manipulated societal norms—specifically, norms surrounding the role of women—to achieve its own political goals. In early Confucian China, in order to preserve a rigid social order and societal stability, male-dominated Chinese society placed strict expectations on women and their actions.[viii] Confucius viewed women as the inferior sex.[ix] Therefore, under Confucianism, marriage was turned “into bondage of women,” with women being “treat[ed] [as] possessions for their husbands,” and only valued for their child-bearing ability.[x] Prominent Confucianists like Yang Chen even went so far to theorize: “If women [were] given work that require[d] contact with the outside, they [would] sow disorder and confusion throughout the Empire.”[xi] To avoid sowing this “disorder,” women were largely confined to their homes, restrained by traditional gender roles.[xii] These overarching societal pressures helped establish traditional gender-based norms, all while preserving a patriarchal Chinese society's strict social hierarchy and status quo.

In 1966, the Chinese government's goals evolved when Mao Zedong launched the Cultural Revolution, a decade-long period of dramatic social upheaval. Chinese intellectuals and citizens with Western ties were terrorized and persecuted.[xiii] Officials of the former national government were

purged, and the Red Guard was established.[xiv] To support this sweeping nationalist movement, Mao made it his goal to mobilize large masses of Chinese women, famously declaring: “Women hold up half the sky.”[xv] He later elaborated:

“In order to build a great socialist society, it is of the utmost importance to arouse the broad masses of women to join in productive activity. Men and women must receive equal pay for equal work in production. Genuine equality between the sexes can only be realized in the process of the socialist transformation of society as a whole.”[xvi]

In a stark divergence from Confucian times, the Communist Party only decided to support gender equality when it contributed to party goals: the advancement of the Cultural Revolution. As a result, during this period women were no longer seen as just women, but as comrades—on equal footing with, and with the same rights as, their male counterparts.[xvii] Together, women and men wore identical army uniforms, donned the same Red Guard army caps, and acted with the same revolutionary fervor for one single purpose—to promote the CCP’s interests.[xviii]

Xi Takes Control: Conflicting Perceptions Surrounding #MeToo

Times have since changed. In contemporary Chinese society, the CCP favors a more traditional and docile view of women. This portrayal helps legitimize the power and authority of Chinese President Xi Jinping, whose carefully crafted cult of personality relies on women abiding by traditional gender norms. Xi’s cult of personality depicts him as a Confucian patriarch who treats China—and the Chinese people—as his own traditional family.[xix] In Chinese propaganda, Xi is the strong, protective, and loving father figure, while his wife Peng Liyuan, a former People’s Liberation Army singer, is the warm, nurturing, and supportive wife and mother.[xx] Together, they are the perfect couple: devoted, harmonious, and united in leading a strong China forward.[xxi]

The inherently defiant nature of feminist movements directly opposes the prescribed gender roles that Xi has tried to enforce; they are therefore threats to the delicate social fabric that Xi and the CCP have worked so hard to create.[xxii] In order to prevent social unrest, preserve these prescribed gender norms, and protect the image of a traditional and unified China, the CCP has launched a complete crackdown on China’s growing feminist movements. In 2015, the CCP made international headlines after arresting and detaining the Feminist Five for planning to circulate information about sexual harassment.[xxiii] The arrest of the Feminist Five held enormous political significance: prior to 2015, the Chinese government had not publicly oppressed feminists since 1913.[xxiv] News of the arrest quickly spread across the globe through the viral hashtag #FreeTheFive, just as Xi went to co-host a UN summit on women’s rights in New York.[xxv] As Xi declared the importance of promoting women’s rights, Li Maizi, one of the Feminist Five, was imprisoned, harshly interrogated, and accused of being a lesbian and a whore.[xxvi] Despite the fact that the Five were later released, their arrest and prolonged detainment sent a chilling message to the Chinese public: under Xi’s regime, feminist activism can be criminal.[xxvii]

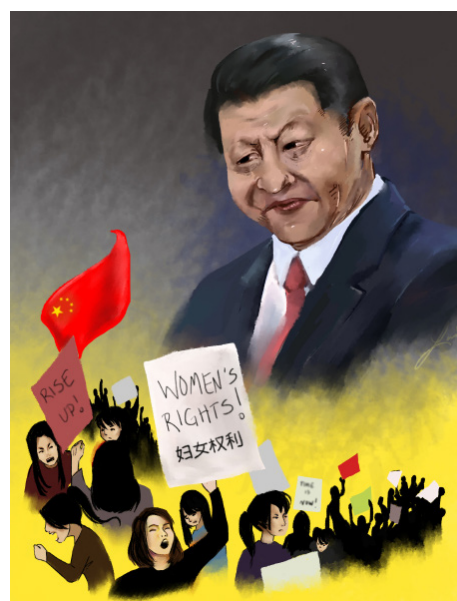


Illustration by Lane Letourneau

But even the threat of detainment could not halt the unstoppable tide of the #MeToo Movement, which exploded on Chinese social media in 2018. Under Xi's regime, #MeToo has been met with substantial government backlash. Social media sites have been censored.[xxviii] The #MeToo hashtag has been disabled on the Chinese social media platform Weibo.[xxix] In order to circumvent these strict censorship mechanisms, activists have grown creative: instead of using the hashtag of #MeToo, they used emoticons—a bowl of rice (mi) in place of “me,” and a rabbit (tu) in place of “too.”[xxx] Although China's #MeToo Movement remains comparatively small, these tactics have given countless women the courage to go public with their own stories—stories that would have been otherwise silenced.[xxxi]

The future of China's #MeToo movement, however, is perhaps most dependent upon the result of one case: the current lawsuit between Zhou Xiaoxuan, a 25-year-old screenwriter, and Zhu Jun, one of China's most well-known news anchors. In 2018, right as #MeToo began to take root in Chinese society, Zhou published a now-viral essay on social media detailing her experience as a young college intern at China Central Television (CCTV), China's largest state-run broadcasting station.[xxxii] Her essay described how Zhu—CCTV royalty—forcibly kissed and groped her one day during her internship.[xxxiii] When Zhou went to police after the incident, the officers tried to convince her to drop her complaint.[xxxiv] Zhu was a “force for good” in society, the police told her, and pursuing a case could endanger her parents' jobs.[xxxv] Zhou decided to remain silent.

It was #MeToo's arrival to China that ultimately inspired Zhou to share her experience online with friends. Since posting her story, Zhou has become a symbol of hope and courage for Chinese feminists. She has also become the target of a new lawsuit: in response to her essay, Zhu Jun filed a lawsuit against her “blatantly fabricated and viciously spread” accusation, suing for \$95,000 for emotional distress and a harmed reputation.[xxxvi] Zhou fired back with a law-

suit of her own, citing damage to her own dignity.[xxxvii] But the potential consequences of losing this high-profile lawsuit are not lost on her. “My lawyer told me that if I lose my case, it's possible that there won't be anyone else to speak up,” Zhou told reporters.[xxxviii]

While Zhou's legal case draws the most public attention, other high-profile cases suggest that China's societal norms are shifting in favor of #MeToo. In 2018, after four students and a female professor lodged formal complaints against Sun Yat-sen University professor Zhang Peng for grabbing, hugging, and forcibly kissing them, the university launched an investigation into his actions.[xxxix] Although the university was criticized for not investigating earlier, its final conclusion was resolute: Zhang Peng would never be able to teach again there.[xl]

Ultimately, the CCP's attack on budding feminist movements like the Feminist Five and the #MeToo movement is indicative of a deep-rooted clash between Xi's political goals, and the true promotion of gender equality. In China, women only hold up half the sky when their equality supports the CCP's interests too. But, by taking a stand against the CCP's prescribed gender roles, Chinese feminists are already shaping China's changing societal norms. Regardless of the outcome of Zhou Xiaoxuan's lawsuit against Zhu Jun, #MeToo has already instilled change in Chinese perceptions of feminism and gender equality.

In an interview outside of her home in east Beijing, Zhou was asked about the future of #MeToo and women in China. She was optimistic that public perception surrounding the movement was changing. “Once you light the spark that starts a fire,” she told reporters, “it will have an impact on people's hearts.”[xli] #MeToo has already lit a spark in Chinese society. Despite Xi's best efforts to extinguish its flame, the movement is catching fire.

Gender Lens Investing

A Dynamic Solution to Gender Inequality

By Akhil Mithal

In the face of the complex and multifaceted nature of many of the global issues that the world faces today, finding solutions can be daunting. In recent years, however, the idea of impact investing has emerged at the center of a movement to connect the developed and developing world, harnessing the mechanisms of the increasingly globalized economy to do so. Impact investing uses the inbuilt incentives of capitalist economics for the benefit of society, while simultaneously creating financial returns for investors. Within this broader umbrella is gender lens investing, which aims to further feminist causes and the economic empowerment of women. It can contain within its scope investment companies that work directly with women's issues, and those run by women themselves.

The feminist movement around the world is in many ways one of the defining universal movements of modern history. With its West-centric ideological bend, feminism has prompted mass mobilization and support for ideas like women's suffrage, social equality, and most recently the fight against sexual harassment and exploitation. The fight for feminist causes, however, has almost invariably involved a bottom-up mobilization. In early 20th Century Britain, for example, the Suffragette movement was one of the key factors in achieving women's enfranchisement. [i] In the mid 20th century, the works of intellectuals such as Betty Friedan and Simone de Beauvoir set the ideological foundation for a movement that unified millions of women against their comparative social inequality in society, at the level of their own individual relationships.[ii] This mobilization effectively combatted localized issues and created change in the societies and issues women faced in them.

The world of these 20th century feminists has become more interconnected. Support for movements can spark in one part of the world and catch fire in another. This means that there is an immense capacity to make change on a scale that has not previously been possible. While the capacity is great, so are the logistical challenges. However, they can be framed as an opportunity to tackle the “intersectional.”[iii] nature of the entrenched problems relating to gender inequality around the world which sees feminist issues as being linked to issues such as race, age, and sexuality.[iv] Emma Goldman, an outspoken early 20th Century-feminist, argued that the “emancipation” of women in one sphere of society—such as the workplace or the home—can often lead to their stifling in another sphere.[v] It is this challenge that gender lens investing seeks to combat.

Theoretically, by combating social inequality through addressing economic inequality, gender lens investing simultaneously unifies and diversifies the fight against these issues. Its general theoretical model is as follows: capital goes from wealthier female investors to working class female entrepreneurs, whose companies directly impact impoverished and/or marginalized women. Furthermore, this type of model can take place both within societies as well as across societies – such as between the developed and developing world.

For Bangladeshi entrepreneur Ivy Haq Russell, this model made a huge difference. A female philanthropist invested in Russell's app Maya, which responds to rural women's questions about their health. Thanks to the investment, Russell was able to ensure the app had the infrastructure it needed to succeed, and Maya has now taken off with millions of users across Asia.[vi] At each level, these women gain empowerment: female investors are motivated to use their own

wealth to combat causes with which they can relate, female entrepreneurs get to see their ideas flourish and grow their businesses, and women who need the most help are able to receive it.

The very nature of investing incentivizes efficiency and maximal returns. Individuals get to be altruistic and support causes that are important to them while also diversifying their own investment portfolios. Furthermore, public companies have increasing incentives to invest in socially responsible ways since their choices can impact their share price. Gender lens investing, therefore, creates incentives, engenders impact, and has an extremely broad reach.

But gender lens investing still has a long way to go. In India, for example, investors almost exclusively focused on female entrepreneurs, ignoring the startups tackling issues directly related to gender.^[vii] While this improves the lives of certain female entrepreneurs, it does little to improve the wellbeing of most women across the country. Hopefully, gender equity will become a consideration for every investor, not just those concerned with social change.

Gender lens investing tackles the historic struggles of the feminist movement, head on, with a unique approach. By connecting women in different economic spheres for their mutual benefit, gender lens investing is a unique way to combat gender inequality. Although still new, the theoretical foundations of gender lens investing are powerful, and its progress thus far has made a difference in the lives of many women.

Apology Politics

Japan & South Korea's Dispute Over Comfort Women

By Jae Chang

In popular Korean blockbuster *I Can Speak* (2017), Ok-bun, an elderly Korean woman and former comfort woman under the Japanese empire, struggles to learn English with the help of a kind public service worker. Unpopular in her town for constantly filing complaints to the city office, Ok-bun keeps her comfort woman past a secret. In a heartbreaking scene, Ok-bun cries in front of her mother's grave, bemoaning how she was forced to keep her past a secret to protect her brother's future. Ultimately, the movie reveals that Ok-bun is learning English to fulfill the wish of her best friend, another former comfort woman, to testify about her past in front of the United States Congress.[i]

Movies of this ilk are extremely popular in South Korea.. On their faces, the movies only appear to vilify the World War II-era Japanese military. A closer view of these movies, howev-

er, reveals their more complex commentaries on Korean society. Not only do the movies lament the Korean government's inability to protect these women during wartime, they also denounce the absence of substantial justice for the victims today. In the heavily politicized treatment of comfort women, these movies illustrate the inherently personal nature of the matter.

Although commonly seen as an intense bilateral conflict, South Korea and Japan's dispute over comfort women transcends the political and enters the personal. Despite their personal stake in the issue, survivors have mostly been left out of the political dialogue. Even the term "comfort women" is a euphemism, masking the real trauma these women experienced.[xxii] In Japan, the term "ianfu" refers to prostitutes, suggesting that these women were voluntary sex workers. In Korea, the term "wianbu" encompasses the idea that the women were taken against their will.[xxiii]

The issue of comfort women presents the critical question of how Japan and South Korea, two allies under the US geopolitical framework, will resolve this conflict, both for the women who demand an apology and the Japanese government. At the heart of any dialogue, policy, or statements must be the women themselves and their experiences—not the interests of the state. Otherwise, Japan and Korea risk burying personal trauma with politics.

History of Japan's Apology and the 2015 Deal to Compensate Comfort Women

In 1993, Japanese Cabinet Secretary Yohei Kono publicly apologized for Japanese army's behavior in World War II, recognizing the Japanese army's coercive actions and its direct and indirect involvement in exploiting comfort women. [ii] The statement acknowledged that the Japa-



Illustration by Lane Letourneau

nese army used private contractors to coerce and coax women against their will. Kono's statement, however, was criticized by both Japanese and South Korean society. The former viewed the apology as unnecessary, and the latter found it inadequate since it was made only by a Cabinet Secretary.[iii] Crucially, Kono's apology was careful to separate the Japanese army's actions from the Japanese government, ensuring that the Japanese government had no legal liability or responsibility for its treatment of the comfort women. Furthermore, in 2007 Prime Minister Shinzo Abe publicly denounced the Kono Statement, citing a lack of evidence supporting that these women were truly coerced.[iv] Abe's pattern of undermining the statement continued into 2012, when he declared that he would formally review the facts.[v] Although Abe ultimately did not change the wording of Kono's apology, he delegitimized the statement and displayed his desire to distance himself from further apologies.

In 1995, former Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama issued a second apology. Wholly acknowledging the government's "colonial rule and aggression" and responsibility for its crimes against the comfort women, the "Murayama Statement" is held up as Japan's only true apology.[vi] However, in 2013, Abe again questioned the validity of the term aggression and Japan's colonialist history. Later in 2015, while commemorating the 70th anniversary of Japan's defeat in World War II, critics wondered whether or not Abe would continue using Murayama's language of apology and acknowledgement. While Abe did use the terms colonial rule and aggression, his tone was markedly different compared to Murayama's statement:[vii]

"Incident, aggression, war –we shall never again resort to any form of the threat or use of force as a means of settling international disputes. We shall abandon colonial rule forever and respect the right of self-determination of all peoples throughout the world."[viii]

In his statement, Abe spoke generally of the need to avoid colonial practices, but did not clearly state that Japan's colonial history con-

tributed to the exploitation of comfort women as Murayama did. As expected, the South Korean public did not view Abe's statement of regret and grief as a direct apology.

In 2015, a "final and irreversible" deal was made between South Korean and Japan when the Japanese government established the Asian Women's Fund, worth \$8.3 million, to support survivors.[ix] The deal was particularly valuable due to the North Korean security threat, making a resolution to the issue and creating a stronger Japanese-South Korean alliance necessary.[x] Again, the women cited a lack of a formal and substantial apology from the Abe administration and absence of a recognition that the government was liable, since the fund was an agency independent from the Japanese government. This sentiment was made clear in a confrontation between a survivor and the Korean Ministry of Foreign Affairs official, where she asked him: "What does the Ministry of Foreign Affairs do? Is it our (Korea's) Ministry? Or is it the Japanese government's Ministry?"[xi] After the election of Moon Jae-in in 2017, the 2015 deal began to unravel as the public's discontent rose to 75%. In response to growing public anger, President Moon began a formal review of the agreement, citing how the deal failed to address the survivors' grievances and experiences.[xii] While the Moon administration did not cancel the agreement, Moon dissolved the foundation and has since apologized for the deal's implementation, including its lack of survivor input and voices.[xiii]

Japan's complicated history of apologies and its 2015 deal highlight how, for the most part, the actual survivors were absent from the dialogue. Abe's politicization of the apologies made by previous administrations ignored the suffering of comfort women survivors. His actions reflected how Japan's apology was not genuine or meaningful, but rather molded to the political whims of different administrations. Even in the case of the Kono statement, Kono's attribution of blame to the Japanese army failed to address the suffering of the comfort women. Their use of technical and distant language such as "co-

erce” and “coax,” as opposed to “rape” or sexual slavery,” did little to explicitly outline the trauma the comfort women experienced.[xiv]

The initial 2015 deal was mired with geopolitical factors that undermined the voices of living survivors. The rising North Korean security threat pushed both parties towards the deal in order to create a stronger relationship between two US allies. Outside the context of survivors, comfort women are also representative of the remains of Japanese colonialism. For South Koreans, the lack of a clear conclusion to this issue means unfinished business with a formerly colonialist Japan.

Politics of Memorials

Outside of the political arena, monuments portraying comfort women under Japanese colonial rule have created tension. These statues depict and legitimize the narratives of the victims; as a result, they have been met with the Japanese government’s ire. When a memorial was constructed outside of the Japanese consulate in Busan, the Japanese government demanded to remove it. This demand, however, was met with anger from the South Korean public.[xv] A statue outside of San Francisco’s Japanese consulate was also met with disdain by the Japanese government.[xvi] While the construction of these statues is not reflective of any of these countries’ direct policies, they serve as a reminder of both Japan’s original atrocities and its continuing unapologetic stance.

Furthermore, memorialization creates a transparent setting for historical discourse. It allows survivors to be acknowledged in a public setting, while opening dialogue to discuss the historical events of the issue.[xvii] Japan’s desire to remove these statues highlights a stark difference from other countries. While the US debates whether to take down statues of war participants, Professor Alexis Dudden from the University of Connecticut notes: “It remains only Japan that is seeking to remove a statue of a victim.”[xviii] In a personal issue that has been so politicized, memorialization is a crucial method to personalizing

the struggles and trauma of each of these women.

Political Questions and Personal Suffering

For the most part, the United States—a mutual ally of the two countries—has remained neutral on the subject of comfort women. In Congress, Rep. Mike Honda authored House Resolution 121, which sought to acknowledge the violence the Japanese government perpetrated against comfort women and to request a formal apology from the Japanese government.[xix] On an international level, however, the US has shied away from taking a clear foreign policy stance on the issue.

Nonetheless, South Korea and Japan remain allies under the US framework, and understand the need to work bilaterally, especially with the security threat of their shared neighbor, North Korea. At its surface, the historical tension of colonialism has not been inhibited economic cooperation and security allies. However, the deeply personalized nature of comfort women themselves makes it difficult to approach the issue solely in the political arena. In between these two countries, there are 31 remaining survivors who testify about abuses and provide explicit details, all in order to seek justice.[xx]

At its core, the individual trauma comfort women experienced has embedded itself in the national consciousness.[xxi] Korean comfort women represent a remnant of Japanese colonialism, violence, and exploitation. Reaching a proper agreement with Japan is a step to addressing such historical wrongs, not only for the survivors but for the nation as well. Any whole, complete agreement worth achieving with Japan will have women at its center.

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