Distribution Agreement

In presenting this thesis as a partial fulfillment of the requirements for a degree from Emory University, I hereby grant to Emory University and its agents the non-exclusive license to archive, make accessible, and display my thesis in whole or in part in all forms of media, now or hereafter now, including display on the World Wide Web. I understand that I may select some access restrictions as part of the online submission of this thesis. I retain all ownership rights to the copyright of the thesis. I also retain the right to use in future works (such as articles or books) all or part of this thesis.

Drew August Bryant April 13, 2020

International Activism and the Women's Human Rights Movement: 1990-2000

by

Drew August Bryant

Dr. Adriana Chira
Adviser

Department of History

Dr. Adriana Chira

Adviser

Dr. Teresa Davis

Committee Member

Dr. Edward Queen

Committee Member

2020

International Activism and the Women's Human Rights Movement: 1990-2000

By

Drew August Bryant

Dr. Adriana Chira

Adviser

An abstract of
a thesis submitted to the Faculty of Emory College of Arts and Sciences
of Emory University in partial fulfillment
of the requirements of the degree of
Bachelor of Arts with Honors

Department of History

2020

Abstract

International Activism and the Women's Human Rights Movement: 1990-2000
By Drew August Bryant

This thesis explores the global women's human rights movement throughout the 1990s. I focus on international conferences as important stages in which activists were able to emphasize violations of women's human rights that were occurring across the globe. These efforts ultimately produced a paradigm shift in the perception of women's rights as human rights. Moreover, towards the end of this decade, the law was more expansive in regard to its view of women's rights as seen through the establishment of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court which criminalized a range of crimes against women as war crimes and crimes against humanity, such as sexual violence, sexual slavery, and enforced pregnancy. My project explores how activists emphasized the overarching problem of violence against women, which served as an issue which could unite women around a global women's human rights agenda despite the varying interests of women transnationally. By focusing on the global problem of violence against women, women's human rights activists in the 1990s were able to overcome some of the vast differences in interests that a transnational movement undoubtedly entailed. Thus, I will demonstrate that central to the growth of the women's human rights movement was the way in which activists portrayed sexual violence abroad as relevant to the lives of women globally, even those far beyond conflict zones. Moreover, I demonstrate how the universal problem of violence against women served as a platform upon which other issues facing women could be introduced into the human rights framework through comparison, such as rights related to reproductive freedom and then later in the movement, economic rights.

International Activism and the Women's Human Rights Movement: 1990-2000

By

Drew August Bryant

Dr. Adriana Chira

Adviser

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Emory College of Arts and Sciences
of Emory University in partial fulfillment
of the requirements of the degree of
Bachelor of Arts with Honors

Department of History

2020

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my advisor, Dr. Chira, as well as my committee members, Dr. Davis and Dr. Queen, for their incredible mentorship and thoughtful guidance throughout this process. I would also like to thank the Fox Center for Humanistic Inquiry for their support of this project and for providing such an inspiring and welcoming academic environment.

I would also like to thank my parents for their continued support and encouragement throughout my education.

Table of Contents

Introduction:

Search for "Women's rights are human rights" on Amazon's website. A never-ending deluge of merchandise will quickly pop up on your computer screen: mugs, t-shirts jewelry--all perfect gifts for female friends and relatives. These objects and the relentlessness with which they present their slogan make the most basic rights of more than half of the population appear both mundane, as well as a horizon that we have not yet reached. This twenty-first century understanding of women's rights as a subset of universal human rights is relatively new: it emerged in the past three decades.

Women activists have walked long and tortuous paths to gain widespread acknowledgment and respect for protections and rights which are specific to women. Moreover, throughout the 1990s, the growth in popularity of "women's rights as human rights" as a feminist motto emerged alongside a wave of activist pleas for legal changes that would come to safeguard and promote women's health and safety globally.

This thesis traces how the women's human rights movement of the 1990s culminated in a shift in both how the law and the public viewed women's rights as human rights. This activist movement emphasized the larger theme of violence against women as a global human rights problem, only to then expand its advocacy into other issues, such as reproductive freedom. I chose this decade because it seemed a fitting period which was reflective of widespread global activism related to women's human rights which culminated near the end of the decade in the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court which outlined important rights for women by criminalizing forms of sexual violence. With the 1998 Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC), a wide range of crimes related to sexual violence were declared war crimes and crimes against humanity--at the time, a significant success for activists in the

Women's Caucus for Gender Justice who had worked hard to make gender-based crimes recognized by the court. During the 1990s, the ICC's work was hailed as instrumental to the protection of women's global human rights-- the court could prosecute extreme sexual violence against women and thus issue decisions that could deter such future violence.

Throughout this thesis, I demonstrate how at international conferences, advocates emphasized the issue of global sexual violence against women particularly in conflict zones and nations in the Global South. This strategy provided a platform for activists in the 1990s to introduce other issues facing women globally into the larger "women's rights as human rights" framework. While this global moment was vast and comprised of many transnational organizations and activists from across the globe, I analyze primarily Global North activists and their methods here. In doing so, I will demonstrate that they attempted to challenge assumptions that human rights abuses only occur in Global South nations. Thus, while the activist movement was undoubtedly aimed at promoting and safeguarding the rights of women globally, I seek to unravel how a global movement strengthened by cases of violence abroad allowed for women's issues in the Global North to be evaluated under a human rights framework as well.

In this line of reasoning, I also propose that Global North activists' primary focusing on violence against women rather than other issues faced by women globally, played a crucial role in the formulation of a global women's human rights movement that included them. By focusing on the global problem of gendered violence, human rights activists in the 1990s were able to overcome the vast differences in interests that a transnational movement undoubtedly entailed. While issues of economic growth and development appealed to women in the Global South, these problems were not as compelling for First World women. By making violence against women an early focal point of the women's human rights movement, the movement could elicit

moral sympathy from the public and appeal to women's interests across boundaries of class, nation, race and so on. Thus, I will demonstrate that central to the growth of the women's human rights movement was the way in which activists portrayed sexual violence abroad as relevant to the lives of women globally, even those far beyond conflict zones as they argued that violence was a defining experience of all women.

The way that activists framed women's rights as originally oriented around the problem of violence against women, and especially sexual violence, as well as reproduction, comes with potential ramifications that are important to consider. For example, while there exists no concrete answer, framing women as victims of violence primarily could re-victimize rather than empower. Moreover, the focus on reproductive coercion could reinforce the narrative that women are objects for reproduction. On the other hand, focusing on economic rights for women might have been a more empowering path as women with economic freedom and agency have access to better resources and thus to a degree are less vulnerable to other kinds of abuses. However, socio-economic rights as human rights for women, while emphasized as important at different stages in the movement, were overshadowed by the focus on forms of physical, sexual, and reproductive violence as shown by the evidence from conference statements, activist efforts, and the media.

Historiography:

My thesis contributes to existing historical human rights scholarship by focusing specifically on how activist efforts brought the category of women's human rights under the larger blanket of universal human rights. Historian Samuel Moyn's comprehensive analysis of human rights history, *The Last Utopia: Human Rights in History*, serves as a useful reference for

how my thesis departs from existing human rights scholarship. In *The Last Utopia: Human Rights in History*, Samuel Moyn traces the factors which allowed for the growth of an international human rights movement in the later decades of the twentieth century. Moyn argues that the growth of a human rights framework sprouted as a replacement of failed political "utopias" such as socialism and nationalism. In this same vein, Moyn proposes international human rights as the "last utopia," one which has offered an attractive moral framework through the promise of individual rights bound to each person's existence as a human being.

While Moyn's analysis provides a comprehensive historical overview of the factors which fostered the growth of an ideological human rights movement, his analysis does not include a thorough examination of the emergence of a women's human rights framework which was wrought with struggle. Moreover, Moyn focuses more on the broader political factors that incubated a human rights movement rather than the specifics of the women's human rights movement. Women's movements are sporadically mentioned throughout the text as brief examples for illuminating larger trends. For example, when explaining how anticolonialists "…rarely framed their cause in rights language before 1945," he also mentions the women's movement as a contrasting example of one of the "…first-world movements that appealed to rights language…"[1] Moreover, when discussing social and economic rights, he refers to women's rights briefly, describing them as "…not a significant part of human rights consciousness in developed countries during its 1970s inception in spite of an exploding domestic and international women's movement…"[2] Thus, Moyn discusses larger historical trends about the emergence of a human rights framework, and while he does briefly mention

[1] Samuel Moyn, *The Last Utopia*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010, 87.
[2] Ibid., 223.

aspects of women's rights movements, such descriptions are restricted to very brief references which illuminate a larger argument not explicitly linked to women's human rights activism. Thus, I depart from his analysis by focusing specifically on the development of a women's human rights framework through the lens of the work of women's human rights activists in order to demonstrate how they crafted a human rights discourse which specifically applied to women.

Terminology:

This work engages with a range of different legal and vernacular forms of activism. Legal activism includes efforts to change legal structures, both domestically and internationally, such as the work of the Women's Caucus for Gender Justice. Vernacular activism seeks to pioneer social change by broadening the perspectives of the larger public, a role played by the participants and organizers of international conferences which were largescale venues for the transferring of information regarding women's human rights to the larger public.

Moreover, as I will reflect throughout this thesis, I refer to the larger coalition of international women's human rights activism as a "movement." However, I use this term loosely. While the use of the word movement suggests that activist efforts globally were very ideologically similar, I will demonstrate that there were ongoing differences between the interests and concerns of women involved across the globe. I find the term "movement" to be permissible because there was an overarching unifying theme throughout the movement which sought to gain recognition for women's rights as human rights through the focus of the broad problem of violence against women. Moreover, the beliefs and goals of global activists were extending into the larger media, as news outlets started to report on women's human rights and cases of violence against women, which serves as further evidence that the women's human

rights activism of the 1990s was a sort of "movement" encompassing a broad range of global participants around a set of goals regarding women's rights.

Throughout the women's human rights movement of the late twentieth century, female survivors of human rights abuses who were willing to testify to their personal experiences played a significant role as activists. While activist organizations provided the framework for women's human rights, it was the experiences of survivors of a wide range of physical abuses and injustices from across the globe who supplied personal meaning to activist pleas for change. Thus, for the purposes of this thesis, survivors and witnesses are also considered to be activist actors in the larger global movement.

Scholars also play an important role in creating and shaping the larger public's view of human rights ideologies and thus scholarly publications reflect ways in which the women's human rights movement was crafted. Scholarly research and publications related to human rights studies play a role in shaping the field of human rights and crafting what ideologies reach the larger public. Sometimes scholars act as both public activists and as activists solely through the research they publish. Regardless of whether the scholar is attached to any formal activist organization, their publications nevertheless contribute to the larger body of knowledge and literature on human rights ideologies. Particularly for the purposes of this thesis, scholarly publications published in the 1990s that would typically be considered older secondary sources on the topic of women's human rights, shed light on the types of arguments that were circulating regarding the women's human rights movement. Moreover, these publications demonstrate the ways in which successes and setbacks of the women's human rights movement were being interpreted by women and presented to larger audiences as significant to the experiences of women transnationally.

Activists involved in NGOs, non-profits, or academic organizations also play a pivotal role in crafting human rights discourses. These activists are often closely involved in the process of legal changes related to the movement whether it be by submitting research briefs to courts or directly participating in legal negotiations. Beyond driving legal changes, these prominent activists also narrate to the public the aims and challenges of a given movement. Thus, these movement leaders play a pivotal role in shaping not only the changing legal structures that arise from activist efforts, but in shaping the public perception of such movements. It is for this reason that I will also refer to the work of several activists in the 1990s and scholarly contributors to the field of women's human rights.

Chapter 1: The Conference as the Site of Women's Human Rights Construction

International human rights conferences played a pivotal role in the creation of a global women's human rights movement that would work to gain greater protections and rights for women particularly regarding violence and reproduction. The array of testimonies and statements occurring before, during, and after women's conferences reflect an attempt to broaden the women's human rights framework by placing testimonies of sexual violence alongside other abuses that were not yet recognized as equally severe in the public eye, such as domestic violence, reproduction, and economic injustices.

Since I primarily analyze this activist movement from the perspective of activists based in the United States, it is helpful to explore what activism in the United States entailed in the decades preceding the 1990s. The second wave feminist movement emerged in the United States in the 1960s and focused on tackling patriarchal barriers to female equality. During this period, there was also a strong activist focus on issues of sexual violence against women and domestic abuse which continued in the following decades. Women raised awareness for this problem within American society and organized to combat violence against women through legal reform efforts. [3] As part of this activist effort, battered women's shelters were opened, places where women whose living situations were made dangerous by an abuser could flee to for a short-term period. [4] Activists also initiated a cascade of legal reforms that would secure greater justice for rape victims. For example, in the 1980s and beyond, "rape shield" laws were used, which acted

[3] Gretchen Arnold, "U.S. Women's Movements to End Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Rape," in *The Oxford Handbook of U.S. Women's Social Movement Activism*, edited by McCammon, Holly J., Verta Taylor, Jo Reger, and Rachel L. Einwohner.: Oxford University Press, 2017-07-27, 2.
[4] Ibid., 4.

as barriers from defense attorneys scrutinizing a victim's sexual history.[5] Thus, activists made advances which protected the rights of women against violence and abuse in several ways, but by the 1990s such violence against women in America was by no means eradicated. This explains why American activists would have found the international human rights framework to be a useful tool in tackling domestic problems facing women.

Large-scale activism regarding greater reproductive rights for American women traces back to the 1960s when movements advocating for the legalization of abortion emerged.[6] The 1973 Supreme Court case *Roe v. Wade* guaranteed abortion as an example of women's constitutionally protected right to privacy, igniting a decades-long and ongoing conflict between pro-life and pro-choice activist groups. The accessibility of abortion services has varied from state to state, making it difficult for women to receive abortion procedures depending on their state of residence, despite the upholding of the federal *Roe v. Wade* decision.[7] Thus, with the raging debates surrounding abortion in the United States throughout the latter decades of the 20th century and into the 21st century, it makes sense that pro-choice American women would have benefitted from an international consensus that reproductive rights are in fact human rights, and that therefore reproductive services such as abortion should be absolutely guaranteed by the legal system.

By the 1990s, American activists had already been extensively engaging with activists abroad and using the international platform of United Nations conferences as stages upon which

---

[5] Gretchen Arnold, "U.S. Women's Movements to End Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Rape," in *The Oxford Handbook of U.S. Women's Social Movement Activism*, edited by McCammon, Holly J., Verta Taylor, Jo Reger, and Rachel L. Einwohner.: Oxford University Press, 2017-07-27, 2.
[6] Suzanne Staggenborg and Marie B. Skoczylas, "Battles over Abortion and Reproductive Rights: Movement Mobilization and Strategy," in *The Oxford Handbook of U.S. Women's Social Movement Activism*, edited by McCammon, Holly J., Verta Taylor, Jo Reger, and Rachel L. Einwohner.: Oxford University Press, 2017-07-27., 3.
[7] Ibid., 5-6.

they could advocate for the rights of women globally. The UN World Conferences on Women allowed women from both the Global North and Global South to interact and advocate for women's rights transnationally.

United Nations conferences have been incredibly useful stages for building awareness of global human rights and a variety of global problems, such as widespread human rights violations which were occurring against women. Conferences served as high-profile stages for activists, scholars, scientists, and government officials among others to convene to discuss and analyze the given topic at hand. During these conferences, activist groups from across the globe are put in conversation with one another, and therefore they also foster the growth of transnational activist networks. Jackie Smith and Dawn Wiest extensively discuss the topic of United Nations conferences, describing them as convened by the United Nations in order to address a specific issue, usually one that has already received activist attention.[8] They describe United Nations conferences as places where "…activist groups scrutinize the negotiating positions of government delegations, lobby official delegates to adopt particular positions or approaches, and work to influence the negotiating process by bringing pressure and sometimes privileged or strategic information or proposals into the process."[9] More specifically, activists are able to use international legal agreements to pressure domestic governments to reform, which explains why an international conference surrounding women's human rights would be of great interest to women globally who could then translate the progress made at the international level to their respective country.

---

[8] Jackie Smith and Dawn Wiest, "Global Conferences and Movement Sectors," In *Social Movements in the World-System: The Politics of Crisis and Transformation*, 100-31. Russell Sage Foundation, 2012, 101-102.
[9] Ibid., 101.

Early conferences in the international women's movement were held during the Decade for Women from 1975-1985. However, activists disagreed on what a global agenda for women should entail, largely based upon the varying interests of women across the globe. The Decade for Women focused around "Equality, Development and Peace" and during this period three World Conferences on Women were held which discussed issues affecting the wellbeing of women globally.[10] However, activists from the Global North and Global South differed in which areas under the umbrella of goals they were most interested. Western activists focused on reproductive freedom and equal treatment under the law for women. On the other hand, women from the Global South had a different set of interests which were more aimed at development and economic rights.[11]

The United Nations conferences in this period especially reflected the tensions regarding the varying interests of activists from the North and the South. In 1975 in Mexico City, the United Nations hosted the First World Conference on Women, an event which brought in delegates from 133 states and more than 6000 women.[12] This conference covered a wide range of issues affecting women globally related to the platform of equality, peace and development. The feminist framework advocated by Western activists was not in alignment with the interests of Southern women and created tensions as a result. As Jutta Joachim explains, the Western activists' feminist framework "…did not resonate with Southern women, who in light of their experiences with colonialism and Northern development assistance viewed feminism as just

[10] "International Decades," United Nations, https://www.un.org/en/sections/observances/international-decades/index.html (accessed March 30, 2020).
[11] Heidi E. Rademacher and Kathleen M. Fallon, "The Historical Roots of a Global Feminist Perspective and the Growing Global Focus among U.S. Feminists" in *The Oxford Handbook of U.S. Women's Social Movement Activism*, edited by McCammon, Holly J., Verta Taylor, Jo Reger, and Rachel L. Einwohner.: Oxford University Press, 2017-07-27, 5.
[12] Martha Alter Chen, "Engendering World Conferences: The International Women's Movement and the United Nations," *Third World Quarterly* 16, no. 3 (1995): 477-93, 478.

another way to dominate and coerce them."[13] Thus, despite this conference being aimed at advancing the broad category of women globally, in some ways the differing interests that the participants arrived in Mexico City with splintered the nascent international women's movement.

The Second World Conference on Women in 1980 in Copenhagen had over 7000 participants in the NGO forum and discussed a wider range of political and economic problems facing women across the globe.[14] However, at this conference, the tensions which emerged in Mexico City between Northern and Southern women, as Joachim puts it, "…erupted with full force.." [15] European and American women were accused of imposing their own perspectives onto conversations and neglecting the unique circumstances and interests of women from developing nations.[16] Much of the disagreement occurred during the NGO Forum at this conference, where for starters, representation between the North and the South was unbalanced, with the most women present from Europe and North America and the lowest amount from Latin America, Africa, and the Middle East.[17] Southern women were disappointed in the lack of representation and criticized the NGO Forum for failing to discuss problems such as "…imperialism, racism, exploitation by multinational corporations, [and] migrant workers…" among other issues of concern to developing nations.[18] Further, the discussed problem of female

---

[13] Jutta M. Joachim, "Equality, Development, and Peace: The UN Decade for Women, 1975–1985," In *Agenda Setting, the UN, and NGOs: Gender Violence and Reproductive Rights*, 73-102, WASHINGTON, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2007, 82.
[14] Ibid., 84.
[15] Ibid.
[16] Heidi E. Rademacher and Kathleen M. Fallon, "The Historical Roots of a Global Feminist Perspective and the Growing Global Focus among U.S. Feminists" in *The Oxford Handbook of U.S. Women's Social Movement Activism*, edited by McCammon, Holly J., Verta Taylor, Jo Reger, and Rachel L. Einwohner.: Oxford University Press, 2017-07-27, 6.
[17] Jutta M. Joachim, "Equality, Development, and Peace: The UN Decade for Women, 1975–1985," In *Agenda Setting, the UN, and NGOs: Gender Violence and Reproductive Rights*, 73-102, WASHINGTON, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2007, 88.
[18] Ibid.

genital mutilation provoked disagreements between Northern and Southern activists. Northern women denounced the practice harshly in a way that was criticized by some Southern women as an example of Northern women imposing their belief system as superior while neglecting to take into account the cultures in which the practice occurs.[19]

While the previous two conferences were stages upon which divisions between global women were made visible, in 1985 with the Third World Conference on Women in Nairobi, international networks between global activists were strengthened. For starters, this conference had greater representation, having welcomed over 14,000 participants and representation from 157 countries.[20] Jutta Joachim explains that intense conflict did not breakout at this conference as much as in Copenhagen, even though controversial issues such as "…neocolonialism, apartheid, Zionism, and the NIEO were still hotly debated."[21] Among the factors that Joachim attributes this shift to, she notes that participating women were more familiar with the processes of an international conference and "…had greater and more direct access to the agenda-setting process…"[22] This conference ultimately resulted in the final report titled "Forward Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women" which outlined different ways to break down barriers blocking women globally from equality.[23]

The Decade for Women oversaw the emergence of large-scale interaction between geographically distant networks and revealed tensions between Northern and Southern women

---

[19] Jutta M. Joachim, "Equality, Development, and Peace: The UN Decade for Women, 1975–1985," In *Agenda Setting, the UN, and NGOs: Gender Violence and Reproductive Rights*, 73-102, WASHINGTON, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2007, 89.
[20] Martha Alter Chen, "Engendering World Conferences: The International Women's Movement and the United Nations," *Third World Quarterly* 16, no. 3 (1995): 477-93, 479.
[21] Jutta M. Joachim, "Equality, Development, and Peace: The UN Decade for Women, 1975–1985," In *Agenda Setting, the UN, and NGOs: Gender Violence and Reproductive Rights*, 73-102, WASHINGTON, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2007, 92.
[22] Ibid.
[23] Ibid., 99.

that later years would have to ameliorate in order to consolidate a global women's movement. Moreover, many new NGOs were born during this period, which represented a diverse set of backgrounds and interests varying from religious and political orientations to geographic origins.[24] NGOs created included organizations such as the International Women's Tribune Center (IWTC) and Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN). DAWN is described by Martha Alter Chen as "…a network of scholars and activists in the South, which was established shortly before the Nairobi conference and has consistently articulated alternative development strategies."[25] Moreover, she explains that the emergence of DAWN provided Southern women with leadership within the international women's movement which was previously dominated by Northern interests.[26] The IWTC was established in 1976 with its roots in the First World Conference on Women and had extensive networks which aided the growth of the international women's movement.[27]

Clearly the conferences of the Decade for Women were significant in the formation of an international women's movement. This period revealed differences in interests and similarities that global women would build upon in the later years of this movement. Moreover, these years put activists from across the globe in contact with one another and contributed to the formation of new NGOs which would play a large role in the women's human rights movement in later years. The conferences of the 1990s would ultimately serve as important stages for activist mobilization for women's rights through a new perspective, one which would frame women's rights as human rights.

---

[24] Martha Alter Chen, "Engendering World Conferences: The International Women's Movement and the United Nations," *Third World Quarterly* 16, no. 3 (1995): 477-93, 478.
[25] Ibid., 480.
[26] Ibid.
[27] Ibid.

Conferences that were significant in the consolidation of a women's human rights movement included the 1993 World Conference on Human Rights, the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development, and the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women. The Center for Women's Global Leadership based out of Rutgers University was a significant contributor to the women's rights agenda that was played out at these conferences by establishing the Global Campaign for Women's Human Rights. As Martha Alter Chen explains, in 1991 the center "…organised a strategic meeting of grassroots activists from 20 countries" and decided to focus on violence against women and the need for a women's human rights framework at the 1993 World Conference on Human Rights.[28] The Center was ultimately responsible for leading women's human rights efforts, and by working with other global organizations, orchestrated hearings at global conferences which featured women voicing the injustices they suffered.[29]

At these international conferences, survivors, witnesses, and experts testified about injustices that women had faced. They included war crimes such as wartime sexual violence as well as crimes within the home such as domestic violence and a lack of reproductive freedom. These testimonies played an important role in crafting an ideological movement that brought public attention to the various forms of injustice that united women transnationally as victims of a universal disrespect for women's safety, health, and freedom. Ultimately, they contributed to the development of a global framework that would declare women's rights as human rights and denounce sexual violence against women, a lack of reproductive freedom, and an array of other injustices as violations of universal human rights principles.

---

[28] Martha Alter Chen, "Engendering World Conferences: The International Women's Movement and the United Nations," *Third World Quarterly* 16, no. 3 (1995): 477-93, 483.
[29] Ibid., 484.

Moreover, these conferences were significant in that they served as stages for activist mobilization. After the conferences, activists conceived of ways to turn the legal declarations produced by the conferences into tangible domestic policy changes. While conference declarations were significant in that they reflected a public acknowledgement under international law of women's rights, in effect they simply outlined the rights that women ought to have. Conference statements could have tangible impacts on the lives of women globally only if activists and citizens took them back home and worked to apply them in domestic settings. Accordingly, a key aspect of women's human rights activism in the 1990s involved creating ways for the human rights principles agreed upon at these conferences to be translated to everyday women globally in order to rally for greater legal changes domestically.

Violence clearly suggests a sort of grave harm inflicted, but it can take other forms that are not directly physical. For example, consider the economic violence pervasive throughout the world. While economic inequality might not provide the shock value or immediate physical harm that a physical assault would, it nonetheless affects an enormous swath of the global population. Significantly, the remedies for economic inequality as opposed to physical violence differ greatly. Perpetrators of acts of physical violence can be punished under the legal system, but tackling economic inequality requires some redistribution of resources. The tensions that arose during the conferences held during the Decade for Women reflect why it might have been much more difficult for activists to place the problem of global economic violence against women at the forefront of this new human rights movement. While the Third World Conference on Women in 1985 represented an easing of tensions between Northern and Southern interests, it seems likely that these issues could easily have been re-ignited without a strong common ground to unite all women regardless of origin around the need for a women's rights as human rights

framework. The problem of violence against women provided this platform, one which surrounded an issue that was both universal and compelling to every woman on the globe.

Focusing on violence against women such as sexual violence not only provided a disturbing shock value that facilitated awareness-building, but in the same vein it provoked the moral sympathies of women and the larger public. The broad problem of violence against women was a universal problem threatening every woman globally, regardless of race or socio-economic status, and thus focusing on this universal injustice was an important aspect of how the movement was constructed by activists. Thus, I argue that this issue served as a useful platform to bridge conflicts of interests in building a transnational coalition of women in both the Global North and the Global South. Moreover, if it seems obvious that forms of violence such as rape were at the forefront of concern, the discussions surrounding reproduction serve as evidence for how violence was in fact constructed. Thus, I will also reflect how statements given during the Cairo Hearing on Reproductive Health and Human Rights at the International Conference on Population and Development in 1994 reflected activist framing of reproductive coercion as a human rights injustice and in turn a sort of violence against women. Thus, consistently violence was constructed by activists and participants in the 1990s women's human rights movement particularly as a harm pertaining to physical violence such as sexual assault and reproductive coercion. As I will also demonstrate, in the earlier aspects of the movement, economic violence was at first largely overshadowed by cases of direct physical violence. It wasn't until the World Summit on Social Development and the Fourth World Conference on Women in the mid-1990s that the women's human rights campaign would begin to more aggressively emphasize economic issues as women's human rights problems.

World Conference on Human Rights, 1993:

At the World Conference on Human Rights in June of 1993 in Vienna, Austria, a hearing took place which highlighted the vast forms of human rights abuses that women globally had been subjected to. The subjects touched upon by the female testifiers included war crimes, violence within the home, economic rights and discrimination, among others. The majority of testimonies were given by women who had experienced human rights abuses first-hand. Other testifiers were women acting as advocates and speaking to the experiences of others. This hearing, called the Global Tribunal on Violations of Women's Human Rights, was organized by the Center for Women's Global Leadership. Based out of Rutgers University, the Center for Women's Global Leadership was a pioneer in the formation of a transnational women's human rights movement, having spearheaded a 1990s campaign titled the "Global Campaign for Women's Human Rights." While the Center was and still is an academic institution, it was nevertheless a prominent actor in the activist movement I analyze throughout this thesis. Publications produced by the Center will be used as a central lens into the methodology of First-World feminists and their engagement with women at home as well as the international arena during the women's human rights movement of the 1990s.

According to the Center for Women's Global Leadership, the Global Tribunal on Violations of Women's Human Rights had several important goals. A document published by the Center before the conference outlines the primary goal of the tribunal as "…to provide a forum for women to make a strong statement protesting the failure of existing human rights laws and mechanisms to protect and promote women's human rights."[30] Moreover, the document explains

[30] Charlotte Bunch Additional papers, 1944-2010; "Global Tribunal on Violations of Women's Human Rights," Center for Women's Global Leadership, MC 708, Box 112, Folder 8, Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe Institute, Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass.
https://id.lib.harvard.edu/ead/sch01377/catalog, accessed February 10, 2020.

that the organization aimed to clearly "[d]ocument, define and make visible violations of women's human rights…," hold countries accountable for a failure to defend women's rights, and to "[r]eassert that women's human rights are indivisible and universal."[31]

I begin my analysis of the activist methodology surrounding the 1993 Global Tribunal on Violations of Women's Human Rights by reflecting on the book produced by the Center for Women's Global Leadership about the events of the conference. Published in 1994, this source summarizes the events of the tribunal as well as reproduces the testimonies given.

Through a rhetorical analysis of the testimonies and written statements included in the publication, we see how human rights abuses abroad were connected to those that occur in the First World. The movement attempted to bring light to not only injustices occurring in places such as conflict zones, but injustices facing First World women which, at the time, were not construed as human rights abuses. This is largely seen in the way that examples of extreme cases of sexual violence against women, particularly in warzones and in Third World nations, are placed alongside cases of violence within the Global North.

The introduction of this publication notes that "…the women who testified at the Tribunal ended the silence surrounding violations of women's human rights and violence against women in particular."[32] While undoubtedly this event was not the first time in history in which women had publicly spoken about injustices they had suffered, this opening statement of the source reflects how the tribunal was perceived as a pivotal moment in which women shattered

---

[31] Charlotte Bunch Additional papers, 1944-2010; "Global Tribunal on Violations of Women's Human Rights," Center for Women's Global Leadership, MC 708, Box 112, Folder 8, Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe Institute, Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass. https://id.lib.harvard.edu/ead/sch01377/catalog, accessed February 10, 2020.

[32] *Testimonies of the Global Tribunal On Violations of Women's Human Rights at the United Nations World Conference on Human Rights, Vienna, June 1993*, New Brunswick, NJ: Center for Women's Global Leadership, 1994, 3.

the longstanding silence surrounding crimes against women. Accordingly, this reflects that the problem of violence against women is identified as a focus of the event despite the range of other abuses.

When discussing the positive change initiated by the public testimonies of human rights abuses against women, the authors state that "[i]f human rights are to be taken seriously, they must be experienced as universal and indivisible…"[33] While this is simply one sentence included in the introduction, it is reflective of a larger trend that we will see echoing throughout this movement in which human rights abuses had to be portrayed as relatable to women far beyond the regions in which they were taking place in order to carry enough weight to initiate societal change. Thus, it makes sense that by primarily focusing on the problem of violence rather than on other injustices, such as those related to economic interests, the movement was able to appeal to a broader audience which included women from a wide range of nations. This trend manifests itself as especially evident related to how extreme cases of sexual violence against women abroad in conflict zones were placed alongside cases of violence that would affect women living in non-conflict zones.

The rest of the book provides reproductions of the testimonies given at the tribunal which serve as primary evidence of which topics were discussed and how they were framed within this conference of global importance. A trend that is repeatedly reflected throughout the testimonies is the attempt of the testimonies to connect their varying experiences of trauma to one another. Despite the wide range of nationalities the testifiers represent or the different abuses they testify

[33] *Testimonies of the Global Tribunal On Violations of Women's Human Rights at the United Nations World Conference on Human Rights, Vienna, June 1993*, New Brunswick, NJ: Center for Women's Global Leadership, 1994, 3.

about, many emphasize that their experiences are part of a larger global disrespect for women's health, safety, and autonomy.

Take, for instance, an American woman named Gayla Thompson who discusses her personal experiences as a survivor of domestic abuse. Under the category of "human rights abuse in the family," she explains that she suffered extreme abuse at the hands of her husband who was a police officer, and notes that the legal system failed her in that she was unable to press criminal charges against her abuser. Towards the end of her testimony, Thompson connects her experience to being a woman. Thompson notes that "[i]f we don't sign petitions, if we don't address the issues and make it clear that women have human rights – period- it doesn't matter what we ask for later. If our basic human rights are not being met, we will have nothing."[34] Thompson thus makes a plea for everyday women to join the activist movement for greater respect for women's human rights. Moreover, she notes that "I think until women unite across the globe, across their colors, and realize that we have things we have to fight and combat as women, not as minority women, but as women as a whole, and until women unite totally, we are always going to have issues and these obstacles."[35] Here, she reflects one of the central goals of the larger movement, to unite women based upon their shared gender identity regardless of distinguishing characteristics.

Another woman, named Sara Patricia Portugués from Costa Rica, testifies to her experiences as a survivor of incest and discussed the need for society to better support victims. However, she doesn't just speak on the topic of sexual violence and incest, but rather draws upon the notion that there is a larger human rights framework that women should be able to rely on.

---

[34] *Testimonies of the Global Tribunal On Violations of Women's Human Rights at the United Nations World Conference on Human Rights, Vienna, June 1993*, New Brunswick, NJ: Center for Women's Global Leadership, 1994, 7.
[35] Ibid.

She notes that "[w]e cannot talk about one right. There is a conglomeration of rights" and that "[w]e cannot restrict ourselves to the traditional legal rights of women because these are not sufficient."[36] These words represent one example of how violence against women provided a platform to discuss other human rights violations faced by women globally.

A testimony provided by another American woman reflects how the topics discussed at this international human rights conference were intended to enact change even in places where women supposedly had human rights, such as in America. Gabrielle Wilders explains her experiences as a victim of incest. In explaining her struggles to receive justice through the legal system, she notes that "…because the systemic bias is so deep and so pervasive and the investment in keeping sexual violence against women invisible so profound, women are in practice denied justice and equal protection under the law."[37] She proceeds to assert that international law needs to better acknowledge the human rights violation of sexual violence and that the United States legal system needs to be improved as well regarding violence against women. Moreover, she notes that "[w]omen of all nationalities have a stake in this task. Violence against women cannot be culturally excused. There must be a universal standard that condemns all sexual violence."[38] With this statement, she thus reinforces the universality of violence against women, a central aspect of the women's human rights movement.

The next category of testimonies is "war crimes against women in conflict situations" and features women from a wide range of countries such as Korea, Palestine, Somalia, Peru, Russia, Croatia, Serbia, and Bosnia/Herzegovina. While the framing of wartime violence against women

---

[36] *Testimonies of the Global Tribunal On Violations of Women's Human Rights at the United Nations World Conference on Human Rights, Vienna, June 1993*, New Brunswick, NJ: Center for Women's Global Leadership, 1994, 16.
[37] Ibid., 19.
[38] Ibid., 20.

would not be immediately concerning to women in places beyond conflict zones, we see in several of the testimonies a plea to the universality of violence against women. For example, a taped testimony from a woman named Ema Hilario from Peru explains the violence she suffered at the hands of the police for protesting against the economic injustices around her such as overpriced food and unemployment. She concludes by reflecting upon the cross-cultural nature of the women's human rights movement. She notes that "[w]e will always struggle for our women's human rights together, despite the distances between us."[39] Thus, Hilario's words unite women globally and across national lines even though she speaks to an experience of injustice in Peru. The rest of the testimonies provided in this section speak more specifically to the experiences of women in conflict zones.

However, it is still important to note that testimonies of war crimes against women is still included in the larger tribunal which also includes testimonies of violence in non-conflict zones. As seen in the section on "human rights abuses in the family," cases of family violence in the United States and other non-conflict zones were discussed. Moreover, in the section titled "testimonies on bodily integrity," cases of sexual violence are discussed which include those which occurred in non-conflict zones. For example, a woman named Johanne Gilbert from Canada discusses having been drugged and assaulted.[40] Thus, violence is portrayed throughout this larger tribunal as occurring regardless of nationality. Moreover, cases which occur in conflict zones and non-conflict zones, in developed nations, and less developed nations, are discussed alongside one another. This thus reflects a key aspect of the movement which

[39] *Testimonies of the Global Tribunal On Violations of Women's Human Rights at the United Nations World Conference on Human Rights, Vienna, June 1993*, New Brunswick, NJ: Center for Women's Global Leadership, 1994, 32.
[40] Ibid., 48.

presented the theme of violence against women as a uniting problem regardless of circumstance or nationality.

A second source published by the Center for Women's Global Leadership in 1994 written by leaders of the Center, Niamh Reilly and Charlotte Bunch, illuminates how despite the wide range of topics covered by the conference, activists conveyed the problem of violence against women as a core focus. Moreover, this source is helpful in understanding the events at the conference because it also includes statements given by the judges at the Global Tribunal on Violations of Women's Human Rights. The name of the publication itself, *Demanding Accountability: The Global Campaign and Vienna Tribunal for Women's Human Rights,* reflects a core aim of the conference: to present the widespread nature of crimes against women and to demand that domestic legal institutions take responsibility for their shortcomings thus far and enact proactive changes to protect the rights and safety of women globally. While many testifiers come from a wide array of nations, the rhetoric used throughout this publication reflects how the concept of "demanding accountability" is meant to encourage women even in First World nations to also petition their governments for greater freedoms.

The publication begins by detailing the process by which the tribunal was organized. It notes that this conference was an effort that grew out of the "16 Days Against Gender Violence" initiatives the Center had organized in 1991 and 1992. The organization of the tribunal thus was an opportunity to extend the movement to a larger scale on the international level.[41] The source notes that while the tribunal was meant to have a direct impact at the conference, it was "…a way to utilize the media present at the World Conference…" and "… also to bring greater

[41] Niamh Reilly and Charlotte Bunch, *Demanding Accountability: The Global Campaign and Vienna Tribunal for Women's Human Rights*, New Brunswick, NJ: Center for Women's Global Leadership, 1994, 9.

mainstream attention to female human rights abuses and violence against women generally."[42] Thus, the conference and the testimonies presented were in fact meant to shift the global public's perceptions of women's rights. This provides evidence that the substance and the organization of the hearing as well as the testimonies were significant in the construction of an ideological women's human rights movement.

The publication delineates several goals of the tribunal's planners, which included highlighting the global problem of violence against women within private and public spheres as well as within conflict zones, evaluating how legal instruments could better support women's human rights, and to emphasize that women's human rights are "indivisible and universal."[43] However, despite the emphasis on the problem of global violence that we see throughout the testimonies, the publication also provides evidence that the aims of the activist movement are equally oriented around social and economic rights for women rather than simply protection from violence. Providing evidence of this, the section detailing the tribunal's purpose, states that "[h]uman rights are called indivisible. Yet, as long as women are socially, economically, and culturally discriminated against and marginalized, the conditions for the realization of their human rights often do not exist.[44] This statement reflects clear activist commitment to pursuing a wider range of rights for women as human rights in addition to the concern with violence against women. However, the testimonies at the Global Tribunal On Violations of Women's Human Rights reflect an overarching theme of physical violence against women.

---

[42] Niamh Reilly and Charlotte Bunch, *Demanding Accountability: The Global Campaign and Vienna Tribunal for Women's Human Rights*, New Brunswick, NJ: Center for Women's Global Leadership, 1994, 10.
[43] Ibid., 11.
[44] Niamh Reilly and Charlotte Bunch, *Demanding Accountability: The Global Campaign and Vienna Tribunal for Women's Human Rights*, New Brunswick, NJ: Center for Women's Global Leadership, 1994, 12.

Moreover, another clearly explained goal of the conference was connecting the experiences of women globally regardless of socio-economic status. For example, the publication explains that the goal was to "[s]how that violations of women's human rights occur in both industrialized and "less developed" countries."[45] The authors proceed:

> The Tribunal organizers included a number of cases involving violations of women's human rights in the North in order to dispel the widespread attitude that human rights violations are confined to so-called underdeveloped countries. This was particularly important because, while there is no country in which women's human rights are secure, industrialized countries often champion women's causes abroad even as they ignore their plight at home.[46]

Here we see how the global nature of the women's human rights movement is at heart about bringing changes made on the international level back home into domestic settings, which reflects how the problem of violence served a useful purpose as the main focus of this event. In order for the women's human rights movement to have gained popularity and filtered into popular global discourse, the injustices focused upon had to be framed in a way that was relatable to all women so as to demonstrate the universality of human rights abuses suffered by women. Without the universal aspect that the topic of violence provides, women's rights seemingly would have been unable to be recognized as transnational *human rights*.

At this conference, violence against women and particularly sexual violence served as a platform upon which other forms of inequality faced by women such as those surrounding economic rights could be discussed. It is important to note that in this tribunal, the topic of

---

[45] Niamh Reilly and Charlotte Bunch, *Demanding Accountability: The Global Campaign and Vienna Tribunal for Women's Human Rights*, New Brunswick, NJ: Center for Women's Global Leadership, 1994, 12.
[46] Ibid., 13.

reproductive rights such as access to abortion and contraceptives, was largely absent. This suggests the conference also provided the basis for later discussions of human rights in which reproductive rights would emerge as a core issue alongside the problem of violence against women.

The problem of financial security and development was a topic addressed within the frame of violence that occurs against women. The platform of violence against women was used in a broad sense. For example, topics discussed in the testimonies in this category include problems that women face during migration, the abuses inflicted upon indigenous women and Native American women, and salary inequality, among others. Most of these testimonies, however, speak about forms of social and economic inequality suffered by women globally by emphasizing how violence against women is often a result of economic inequality. This reflects the overarching topic of the movement at this particular historical moment as one which was aimed at the problem of violence against women.

Violence against women as the main theme certainly served as an issue which could unite women globally. I have previously demonstrated examples in which violence is depicted as a problem affecting women regardless of whether they dwell in conflict or non-conflict zones or countries in the Global North or the Global South. The focus on violence might suggest a sort of equality in interests being represented at this stage in the women's human rights movement since violence was an issue that affected all. However, it is important to note that while Western activists certainly demonstrated a strong desire to end violence against women globally, the framing of all violence against women as a human rights issue undoubtedly imbued violence occurring in First World contexts with a strong sense of urgency. This theme is demonstrated in

this tribunal by how domestic violence in America is discussed alongside cases of violence in conflict zones.

Activist Methodology: Translating the Global Tribunal on Violations of Women's Human Rights to the Public:

Gender-based violence was emphasized in the movement in order to make a compelling case that there actually were a distinct set of human rights held specifically by women. Moreover, activists had to create an encompassing enough framework to appeal to women across class and geographic differences. Even though economic and development rights were consistently mentioned as human rights for women, focusing on violence such as sexual assault and forms of domestic battery provided a more universal platform that economic rights simply could not.

Attention to violence at conferences resonated with the language that feminist activists used to engage with non-activist women. I thus analyze a key aspect of what I refer to as activist methodology, or the way that activists conveyed the meaning of the women's human rights movement to the larger public through petitions, articles, and publications. Similar to what is seen in the conferences, First World activists reinforce the attempt to universalize human rights abuses against women globally by depicting abuses abroad to their audiences as relatable and relevant. In this effort, issues which are widely applicable to women in developed countries, such as violence and reproduction, are emphasized, whereas less emphasis on development and economic rights is immediately visible. Also significant is how activists engage with the public by inviting them to participate in the movement and work towards safeguarding women's global human rights.

One important way that activists were able to communicate with the larger public was through the publications of their larger organizations. Through some of these publications, we see a similar trend as in the conferences. They emphasize injustices occurring across the globe as relatable by virtue of the fact that their victims are women.

A March 1993 bulletin produced by the International Women's Tribune Center (IWTC) reflects how activists were inviting everyday women to participate in the events of the Global Tribunal on Violations of Women's Human Rights in the preceding months. Titled "A CALL TO ACTION!," the bulletin outlines the purpose and activities of the upcoming conference as well as how readers can participate in the women's human rights goals at the conference. Under the title of "NGO Activities at the World Conference," the publication delineates the activities specifically related to women's human rights that will take place at the larger conference including the Tribunal on Violations of Women's Human Rights and several related workshops. The description for the Tribunal on Violations of Women's Human Rights delineates the focus of the tribunal on physical violence, noting that "[a]ttention will be focused on the multiple forms of human rights abuses that confront women, with specific emphasis on rape and other outrageous and unacceptable atrocities perpetuated against women in war and peace."[47] The workshops mentioned include, "Calling for Change" International Strategies to End Violence Against Women, one titled Gender and Human Rights, and one lobbying training workshop.[48] The next page of the newsletter explains events from across the globe organized by women to promote women's human rights. Among the many examples referenced, efforts mentioned

[47] "Charlotte Bunch Additional papers, 1944-2010; "A CALL TO ACTION!" International Women's Tribune Centre, March 1993, MC 708, Box 112, Folder 8, Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe Institute, Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass. https://id.lib.harvard.edu/ead/sch01377/catalog, accessed February 10, 2020, 5.
[48] Ibid.

related to women's human rights advocacy include petition campaigns in Nepal and Israel and rallies held in Tanzania and Switzerland.[49] The publication lists events and campaigns which were launched across the globe, overall emphasizing the truly global nature of women's human rights activism. But what is also significant is that the events mentioned are almost entirely organized around violence against women, including domestic abuse and sexual violence. This reflects how violence was at the core of not only activist rhetoric at the conference, but also in the wide range of activism across the globe preceding the Vienna tribunal.

Most of the campaigns occurring globally which were mentioned were organized by women's groups, or in other words, professional organizations. However, what was significant about this movement was that activists attempted to reach non-activist women, not just other activist organizations. This is seen in the detailed information that the publication provides called "Campaign Tools," regarding how non-activist women can begin their own human rights campaign which is described as "…ideas for "tools" that you might find useful when undertaking a campaign to get women's rights onto the world's agenda."[50]

One of the tools provided by this section is detailed information for women to hold a public hearing regarding violations of women's human rights. The bulletin urges readers to organize a hearing in the period before the World Conference which would take place in June of 1993. It also outlines several important aspects of what a hearing would ideally entail, such as that it "generate media attention" and "target specific policy makers and agencies," while serving the purpose of educating the public on human rights and specifically violations of women's

[49] "Charlotte Bunch Additional papers, 1944-2010; "A CALL TO ACTION!" International Women's Tribune Centre, March 1993, MC 708, Box 112, Folder 8, Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe Institute, Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass. https://id.lib.harvard.edu/ead/sch01377/catalog, accessed February 10, 2020, 6.
[50] Ibid., 8.

human rights.[51] Another important instruction was that any testimony should be documented and sent to the United Nations, which presumably would be used as evidence at the conference for how women's rights are being violated across the globe. The bulletin explains that organizers of campaigns should consider what issues are most pressing in their community, and provide different categories such as "political and civil human rights violations," "equality and citizenship violations," "denial of personhood and inhuman and degrading treatment," and "state-condoned or state-tolerated violations."[52] It is interesting that this comprehensive list would seemingly apply to violations of human rights beyond physical violence against women. Yet, as we have observed and will continue to see reflected in the movement, violations of women's human rights, even in realms not immediately related to physical violence such as the topic of economic freedom, were often imbued with the overarching concern of violence against women.

While this publication was likely intended to reach as wide of an audience as possible, or in other words, women in many different parts of the globe, it is important to consider how participation in this campaign building would have potentially been limited on the basis of socio-economic status. This bulletin and specifically this section about campaign organizing is broadly addressing anyone in the global community who is concerned with women's human rights, as seen by the description that "[w]e call upon all those concerned with securing rights for women to convene public hearings on violations of women's human rights…"[53] However, it should be noted that organizing a campaign which would attract the media's attention would undoubtedly

[51] "Charlotte Bunch Additional papers, 1944-2010; "A CALL TO ACTION!" International Women's Tribune Centre, March 1993, MC 708, Box 112, Folder 8, Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe Institute, Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass. https://id.lib.harvard.edu/ead/sch01377/catalog, accessed February 10, 2020, 10.
[52] Ibid.
[53] Ibid.

require resources that not all women would have. For example, in order to organize a campaign large enough to attract the presence of the media, women would have to have presumably the financial resources to support such an event, and beyond that, the time to organize such an endeavor. This is thus an activity that women in high socio-economic statuses would be more able to participate in than women with less financial freedom to take off time from work to organize a large-scale hearing. Thus, while undoubtedly aimed at reaching women globally, it is important to recognize that such efforts were already placing women in First World nations in a better position to participate in the movement than perhaps women in the Third World.

Other methods to participate in the movement are also explained throughout the bulletin. For example, the bulletin encourages women to document violations against women's human rights and send them to the United Nations.[54] Moreover, it encourages readers to participate by gathering petition signatures, and even emphasizes this as one of the most crucial parts of the movement. The bulletin notes that "[i]t's definitely not too late for you and your group to join the campaign, and one of the most successful ways to do this is to gather signatures on a petition for presentation to the United Nations."[55] It notes that 215,000 signatures had been collected by the work of people globally in the movement, and lists the vast range of international, regional, and national organizations which have thus far participated in the signature gathering effort in the campaign titled the "Petition Campaign to Put Women Rights and Specifically Violence Against Women onto the Agenda of the World Conference on Human Rights, Vienna, 1993."[56] Thus, this source overall reflects several important aspects of activist methodology in the months preceding

[54] "Charlotte Bunch Additional papers, 1944-2010; "A CALL TO ACTION!" International Women's Tribune Centre, March 1993, MC 708, Box 112, Folder 8, Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe Institute, Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass. https://id.lib.harvard.edu/ead/sch01377/catalog, accessed February 10, 2020, 10-12.
[55] Ibid., 15.
[56] Ibid.

the landmark tribunal in Vienna. It demonstrates how activist mobilization was already occurring on a large scale in regard to human rights violations focused specifically on violence and sexual violence against women. The bulletin also reflects how everyday women and even men were invited to participate in the movement through a variety of methods ranging from holding a campaign to asking for petition signatures. Moreover, while a wide range of methods were presented to the public through this bulletin regarding ways to become involved with the movement, some routes of action such as organizing a hearing are more feasible for people in privileged positions in which they would have both the time and resources to organize such work.

This bulletin was included in a bi-annual newsletter of the International Women's Tribune Center, and while it was helpful in understanding activist mobilization of the public in the months before the tribunal in Vienna, other articles from their newsletter reflect how the event was conveyed to an audience unable to attend the conference. The transnational women's human rights movement and specifically the women's presence at the World Conference on Human Rights is portrayed as circling around the topic of violence and as a movement that connected women together regardless of national or other boundaries. The March 1994 edition of *The Tribune*, the IWTC's newsletter, discusses the events at the conference in Vienna. The article describes the women-centered advocacy efforts around the conference such as different rallies, public displays, and petition gathering which occurred by the work of many different women and groups globally. It describes the efforts resulting in the World Conference for Human Rights as "[c]reating strategies, disseminating information, mobilizing women, and pulling together all the resulting efforts into one common voice of women with a common

objective was a mammoth task…"[57] The phrase "one common voice of women" implies that there is strong unity in the interests of women globally. While this might have been true that generally women globally were concerned with the problem of widespread violence against women, this phrase erases the differences in interest that women across the First and Third World nations would have had. Thus, we see how the movement continually employed language that united the interests of global women while attempting to blur differences that certainly existed on the basis of nationality, religion, socio-economic status, and other characteristics. This is also seen throughout the use of the word "we" throughout the article, which implies a strong solidarity among the thousands of participants, implying that they worked as a unit towards a common goal.

The proceeding articles included in this edition of the IWTC newsletter reproduce selected testimonies given at the Global Tribunal On Violations of Women's Human Rights. This newsletter provides another avenue by which the public could be educated about the tribunal. It is important to note that while there were many testimonies given in each section at the tribunal, only one from each section is provided in this newsletter. Each testimony provided in this newsletter discusses cases of extreme violence against women and primarily forms of sexual violence. Thus, not only were most of the testimonies given about physical violence, but those being presented to a larger audience through this medium were about physical violence as well, likely reinforcing the narrative that the fight for women's human rights was primarily oriented around the problem of violence.

I have noted how violence against women was constructed by activists in a way that focused on physical violence such as battery and sexual assault. This constructed violence also

[57] "We Came…" *The Tribune*, International Women's Tribune Centre: New York (Issue 51:6, March 31, 1994).

extended to instances of reproductive coercion. The way that violence was constructed by activists in a particular way is reflected through this newsletter as well in that reproductive coercion is discussed alongside instances of physical violence. For example, another article in this newsletter under the title "We can use words to: reshape the way the world sees us…and the way we see the world…," notes that studies have found that violence and murder against women has recently increased. It suggests that if the media highlighted this violence against women, then perhaps positive changes would be implemented. When discussing the widespread problem of violence against women, it also notes that "[o]ther violations of women's bodily integrity are widespread throughout the country," and discusses issues related to reproduction such as AIDS because women feel unable to express their desire to use contraception to their partners.[58] Thus, we see how physical violence is used in this case as a platform for discussing other human rights violations, such as those related to reproductive freedom or a lack thereof. In other words, physical violence was being related to reproductive issues in a way that allowed activists to construct violence as one about reproduction and physical assault.

While activist media forms such as the IWTC newsletter provides evidence for how activist organizations themselves were portraying and framing the women's human rights movement and the events at the conference in Vienna, the mainstream media provides additional evidence for how non-activist outlets were framing the activism and movement that was forming. It is likely that mainstream news outlets would have reached a larger audience than activist newsletters, so it is important to evaluate the discourse used to describe women's human rights activism in an effort to better understand how the larger public would have been interpreting the

[58] "We can use words to: reshape the way the world sees us…and the way we see the world…" *The Tribune*, International Women's Tribune Centre: New York (Issue 51:22, March 31, 1994).

activist movement. Moreover, it is significant that media outlets were discussing this activist movement in a way that reflects an agreement with its messages and goals.

For example, a 1993 *The Washington Post* article titled "Women Activists in a Hundred Countries" reflects an awareness of the changing perception of women's human rights. Writer Ellen Goodman writes about the upcoming "International Women's Day," noting that "[i]t comes at a time when women's rights are finally being included in the panorama of human rights."[59] She attributes this change to the work of activists, noting that this shift in perception about women's rights is due to "…the work of women activists in a hundred countries where abuse once took place in the shadows."[60] Moreover, she continues to acknowledge this change in public perception even though slowly developing, stating that "[w]e are beginning to change attitudes toward women's status as well" and later, that "[w]omen's rights are being seen, literally seen, as human rights."[61] This reflects how in 1993, there was some media acknowledgment that women's rights as human rights was an emerging paradigm shift filtering into the public's perception of women's rights.

Additionally, a 1994 article published by *The Washington Post* discusses women's human rights in an article titled "Bringing Human Rights to All Women." In this article, writer Judy Mann discusses how there is greater public awareness for violations of women's rights due to a number of reasons. She refers to the work of women activists, noting that "[w]omen's groups are better informed than ever, not only about events in their own countries, but in other countries, and they are demanding that governments be held accountable."[62] Moreover, she attributes this visibility to Human Rights Watch creation of the Women's Rights Project in 1990

[59] Ellen Goodman, "Women Activists in a Hundred Countries," *The Washington Post*, March 6, 1993.
[60] Ibid.
[61] Ibid.
[62] Judy Mann, "Bringing Human Rights to All Women," *The Washington Post*, February 9, 1994.

which raised awareness for violations of women's rights occurring globally. This article ultimately reflects an awareness of women's human rights as related to the work of women's groups, or at least an awareness of the emerging concept of women's human rights, in a mainstream news article. Simply the title, "Bringing Human Rights to All Women," demonstrates an acknowledgment that the work of the women's human rights movement was underway and making its way into public perception.

Similar to how the activist movement placed the problem of violence at the forefront of the movement, certain media outlets also focused on the issue of violence against women, especially cases of extreme sexual violence against women which was occurring abroad. For example, an article from *Ladies' Home Journal* published in August of 1993, a few months after the conference in Vienna, focuses on the experiences of a survivor of sexual violence from Bosnia Herzegovina. The article's front page features a full-page photograph of a woman named Mediha Hotic, described as "…one of the many Muslim women in Bosnia and Herzegovina who have been brutally raped by Serbian soldiers."[63] The description of the following story lays under large, bolded letters titled "A Weapon Called Rape," and uses the words "[r]ead this haunting story of a young woman whose world has been forever shattered."[64] A couple proceeding pages describe the violence that Mediha Hotic survived, with subtitles scattered throughout the larger text such as "A Young Life Ended" and "Soiled Goods'" and describes one of Mediha's quotes as verbalized in a "traumatized monotone."[65] While the story given throughout this article is presumably from the survivor's own words and opinions, the article is nonetheless framed in a way that instrumentalizes the shock value that sexual violence against women provides. The

[63] Ann Leslie, "A WEAPON CALLED RAPE*," Ladies' Home Journal*, Aug. 1993, 120.
[64] Ibid., 121.
[65] Ibid., 122.

article clearly frames her story in a way that highlights her trauma rather than her agency as a survivor. While an example such as this might seem far removed from the activism that was occurring in this time, it is important to see the connection between the way that media outlets were highlighting sexual violence against women abroad at the same time that the women's human rights movement was as well. Gender violence was certainly an important issue in need of awareness, and activist and mainstream medias used it for its shock value.

Chapter 2: Reproductive Rights in the Women's Human Rights Movement

The Cairo Hearing on Reproductive Health and Human Rights was another important step in the women's human rights movement in its highlighting of reproductive injustices faced by women globally. Similar to the tribunal in Vienna, this hearing featured testimonies from women from across the globe in order to bring light to human rights abuses women suffer which are linked to violence and a lack of reproductive autonomy. This hearing was held as part of the larger International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) held in Cairo in September of 1994. The conference centered around the topics of population and development but reflected a shift from previous population policies aimed at population control. This conference adopted a new stance towards population policies which as guided by the work of advocates, would principally focus on women's interests and reproductive health rather than solely population control. The ICPD Programme of Action for example, addressed women's human rights, reproductive freedom, and the problem of violence against women, which contributed to the document having been hailed as a significant advancement for population policy in regard to its treatment of women.[66] For example, under the title "Principle 4," the Programme of Action lays out its commitments to women, stating that "[a]dvancing gender equality and equity and the empowerment of women, and the elimination of all kinds of violence against women, and ensuring women's ability to control their own fertility, are cornerstones of population and development-related programmes."[67]

---

[66] "International Conference on Population and Development Programme of Action," https://www.unfpa.org/publications/international-conference-population-and-development-programme-action (accessed March 31, 2020).

[67] "Program of Action of the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (Chapters I-VIII)," *Population and Development Review* 21, no. 1 (1995): 187-213, 190.

Like the Global Tribunal On Violations of Women's Human Rights, the hearing itself was coordinated by the Center for Women's Global Leadership along with many other organizations as part of the Global Campaign for Women's Human Rights.[68] The Cairo Hearing on Reproductive Health and Human Rights was a pivotal moment in the linking of reproductive rights to the women's human rights framework on a very public international scale. Accordingly, the testimonies and remarks given at the hearing reflect how reproductive rights were being ideologically constructed as human rights during this conference. The Center for Women's Global Leadership released a book similar to the previous two publications explored above which reproduces the testimonies and statements given at the hearing in Cairo. I thus use this source, *From Vienna to Beijing: The Cairo Hearing on Reproductive Health and Human Rights*, as a primary source reflective of the testimonies given as well as how activists were portraying the significance of the event.

The preface of this publication, identified as being written by the Director and Associate Director of the Center for Women's Global Leadership, Charlotte Bunch and Mallika Dutt, provides insight about how activists perceived the importance of the Cairo hearing for the larger women's human rights movement and how they portrayed it to the public. It explains the primary goal of this hearing as "…to emphasize that women's health is a fundamental right which cannot be compromised by any of the actors that claim control over women's bodies."[69] This source also demonstrates how the topic of reproductive health as a human right was used by activists to construct a broader discussion about women's human rights such as those related to social and

[68] *From Vienna to Beijing : The Cairo Hearing on Reproductive Health and Human Rights*, Center for Women's Global Leadership: 1995, 1.
[69] Ibid.

economic rights. For instance, when referring to reproductive rights, the authors explain how reproductive health intersects with other aspects of life. They state that:

> [r]eproductive health must be placed squarely within the broader fundamental right to health which in turn demands respect for human rights not only in the area of reproduction but also in matters of sexuality, environmental impact, and all forms of gender-based violence. The right to health requires the affirmative guarantees to health care, education, housing, employment and access to resources which not only make the right to health meaningful but are human rights in and of themselves.[70]

Thus, while the testimonies featured in the publication are about cases in which women have endured reproductive coercion and violence, the rhetoric used here connects health to a broader set of rights for women, including for example, housing and employment. Thus, we can see how the activist movement slowly built up a platform of human rights for women in which economic and social rights were slowly incorporated. In this case, while all testimonies are related to the topic of reproduction, they share an overarching theme of violence or coercion. Thus, this hearing serves as another example of how activists used the problem of violence against women as a platform upon which they could introduce new human rights for women into the framework.

Moreover, the preface explains another primary goal for the hearing as facilitating legal change in the future. The preface by Bunch and Dutt notes that "[w]e hope that this publication documenting women's human right to health presented at the Cairo Hearing will assist in the process of demanding accountability from those who violate women's fundamental rights."[71] Thus, not only is the hearing meant to bring public awareness to human rights abuses against

---

[70] *From Vienna to Beijing : The Cairo Hearing on Reproductive Health and Human Rights*, Center for Women's Global Leadership: 1995, 2.
[71] Ibid., 3.

women related to reproduction that occur globally, but it is meant to have a legitimate legal impact. The testimonies presented are not meant to simply broadly encourage public awareness, but rather meant to reflect real examples where legal change is needed. Accordingly, the conference material should be interpreted in a way that pays attention to the rhetoric used in describing women's human rights and the discussions presented so as to better understand the change that the conference itself was intended to produce.

The source includes the opening statement given by Charlotte Bunch at the hearing in which she identifies reproductive freedom and safety from violence for women as the core focus of the hearing. Here the rhetoric used reflects the trend exemplified at the tribunal in Vienna in which human rights abuses against women and particularly those linked to violence, are highlighted as universal. For example, Bunch states that: "[w]hat we seek to show is that the torture and imprisonment and the degrading and inhumane treatment that women experience every day in their lives, both through violence against women and the violence of lack of control over their reproductive health, are indeed fundamental human rights abuses."[72] This statement serves a dual role in that it both emphasizes how everyday women across the globe experience a similar sort of violence in their lives and reflects how violence is the primary platform upon which rights for women are framed as human rights. Bunch uses violence as a way to frame reproductive rights as human rights with her referring to "…the violence of lack of control over their reproductive health…"[73] With this discourse, reproductive health is thus transformed into a human right that is of equal gravity with the problem of violence against women.

[72] *From Vienna to Beijing : The Cairo Hearing on Reproductive Health and Human Rights*, Center for Women's Global Leadership: 1995, 7.
[73] Ibid.

As mentioned before, activists aimed to overcome national boundaries that might have separated women on the basis of their varying experiences and interests. Some of the discourse at this conference reflects this trend. For example, the publication reproduces a statement given in the introduction of the conference by Stephen Lewis, introduced as a former Canadian United Nations Ambassador.[74] His words actively connect the experiences of women globally to each other. Lewis states that, "[i]n a sense, all women through the generations have inhabited a sort of third world or disadvantaged class in that they have never anywhere had access to free, informed, educated, fearless, uncoerced information and action in regard to women's own fertility."[75] While it is only one statement given at a conference, it is nevertheless important to evaluate on a micro-level how the at the time fledgling women's human rights movement, was being constructed through discourse. This statement was not unimportant, but rather opened a historic moment in which reproductive rights would be publicly framed as human rights. Thus, it is significant that as part of the opening statement for the Cairo hearing, Lewis suggests that all women regardless of nationality or socio-economic status, occupy a "…third world or disadvantaged class…"[76]

` This serves as an example for how the women's human rights movement was changing the narrative of human rights activism. We see in this movement an attempt to improve the rights of women globally, and even those in First World nations. Implicit in this attempt is the effort to paint abuses against women particularly related to violence as universal. And as we will see in later examples, women's human rights activism was specifically oriented towards altering domestic legal structures. Thus, the platform of violence against women as a human rights

[74] *From Vienna to Beijing : The Cairo Hearing on Reproductive Health and Human Rights*, Center for Women's Global Leadership: 1995, 10.
[75] Ibid.
[76] Ibid.

violation would allow First World activists to tackle a number of issues related to violence against women in the First World context that were not before considered human rights abuses.

The first presented testimony, from Wanda Nowicka from Poland, is reflective of the theme of universality which connects the experiences of women globally. She discusses the difficulty that Polish women have had in accessing legal abortions as well as her own experiences. She speaks about the struggles of women in Poland specifically as related to reproductive health access, but then also concludes with a statement that connects women globally. She notes that "…the process through which the policy makers will recognize this right of all women in the world might be long."[77] In a similar way, a testimony given by a woman named Rubina Lal about the problem of mentally handicapped women receiving nonconsensual hysterectomy procedures at Shirur in India emphasizes the universality of reproductive coercion that women face globally. She states that:

> In India the women with mental handicaps had to suffer hysterectomy. In some developed countries they are treated like guinea pigs when drugs like Depo Provera and Norplant are tested on them. I leave you to decide which society is better for them. One thing which is clear is that exploitation of the weak and disabled does not have geo-political boundaries. Viewed from this angle, Shirur is a global issue.[78]

Thus, Rubina Lal speaks to a widespread problem she has observed in Shirur but connects it to the experiences of women worldwide. Particularly significant is how the testimony reflects the larger theme of the hearing and of the women's human rights movement that we have observed

[77] *From Vienna to Beijing : The Cairo Hearing on Reproductive Health and Human Rights*, Center for Women's Global Leadership: 1995, 15.
[78] Ibid., 23.

thus far in which the distinctions between the realities of First and Third world women are blurred.

The statements provided after the given testimonies also reflect how the discourse surrounding women's reproductive rights as human rights was being built and how it was connected to the problem of violence against women. Introduced as a women's rights activist from Italy, Ivanka Corti speaks on the testimonies provided and connects the testimonies provided to the experiences of women worldwide. She notes that "[t]he testimony illustrates the kinds of violations of their fundamental rights that women experience world-wide. The violations are important in themselves but relate to women's more general discrimination."[79] Thus, in this statement we see how Corti unites the experiences of women worldwide on the basis of the testimonies given about reproductive coercion. Moreover, in this statement, the human rights abuses related to reproduction which are explained are linked to discrimination women face, or in other words, other human rights violations against women. Thus, in this case, reproductive autonomy as a human right is rhetorically used as a platform for discussing a larger set of rights. Moreover, a doctor chosen to provide a statement as well draws upon the theme of universality. In reference to the given testimonies, Dr. Mahmoud Fathalla states that "[t]hey are important in themselves, but they are more important as illustrative examples of thousands and thousands of cases of violations of women's most basic human rights."[80] Thus, the few cases at this hearing were being portrayed as reflective of human rights abuses worldwide.

[79] *From Vienna to Beijing : The Cairo Hearing on Reproductive Health and Human Rights*, Center for Women's Global Leadership: 1995, 29.
[80] Ibid., 30.

Activist Preparation for the Conference:

Activists' efforts ensured that women's interests for reproductive freedom and thus women's human rights were represented at the International Conference for Population and Development. These materials show the same thing as presented before: that violence was a platform for thinking about women's rights broadly. Moreover, we see how the differences between women globally were blurred in order to include as many women as possible in a workshop preparation source.

A source prepared by activists and professors Rhonda Copelon and Berta Hernández for a workshop at the International Conference on Population and Development, provides valuable insight for how the aims of the women's human rights movement in terms of reproductive rights were being communicated to activists at large. Titled, "Sexual and Reproductive Health As Human Rights: Concepts and Strategies. An Introduction for Activists," this publication reflects its primary goal as to convey important legal information to readers so that they are informed of the current terminology and laws relating to women's human rights. For example, this guide reproduces declarations from conferences and legal statements related to human rights and women's rights as well as a chart depicting the organizational structure of the United Nations. This source is a guide prepared for one of the workshops which occurred at the conference. Several other workshops related to women's human rights were also executed at the ICPD conference, as noted by *From Vienna to Beijing : The Cairo Hearing on Reproductive Health and Human Rights.* These other events included workshops such as "Women's Reproduction and

the Political Uses of Religion, Ethnicity and Culture" and "The Political, Social and Economic Rights Context of Women's Health," among others.[81]

The introduction and the conclusion serve as a template for how this guide is meant to be interpreted and used by readers. This source is meant to enable activists worldwide to advocate for women's human rights, especially as they relate to sexual and reproductive health. The introduction of the document reflects the aims of the larger women's movement resulting from women's interests being historically ignored in human rights strategies. Moreover, it reflects how the platform of reproductive rights, which were primarily established at the conference through a correlation to violence, are being used to introduce new rights into the framework. It notes that the goal of achieving recognition for women's sexual and reproductive rights as human rights is part of a larger mission which seeks "…to advance women as full citizens of society."[82] Thus, while reproductive and sexual rights are being introduced as human rights, they are at the same time being used to expand the women's human rights platform. We see this correlation more specifically when the introduction states that "[r]eproductive and sexual rights include the responsibility to assure other basic economic and social rights such as food, shelter, health, social security, livelihood, and education."[83] Reproductive and sexual rights are in this way rhetorically extended to other important aspects of health which are being framed in human rights language as well, such as food and shelter.

The conclusion also clarifies how the guide is supposed to be used by readers and activists globally. It notes that "[i]t is designed to enable women's health advocates to use human

---

[81] *From Vienna to Beijing : The Cairo Hearing on Reproductive Health and Human Rights*, Center for Women's Global Leadership: 1995, 1.
[82] "Sexual and Reproductive Rights and Health as Human Rights: Concepts and Strategies: An Introduction for Activists," Rhonda Copelon Papers, Box 3A, Sophia Smith Collection of Women's History, Smith College, Northampton, MA, 1.
[83] Ibid., 2.

rights concepts in work at all levels – domestically, regionally and internationally."[84] Thus, this source serves as an illuminating example of the methodology for activists so that they could translate international legal achievements into domestic policy changes through advocacy work. Guides such as this one were not meant to serve as a resource for professional activists present at the international gatherings alone, but also for activists working locally. As part of this goal, transnational communication between activists and non-activist women was crucial. The conclusion of this source reflects how important this communication is, encouraging readers to inform each other of updates regarding the women's human rights movement. It encourages those reading the source to "…contribute to the bibliography of materials being prepared as a follow-up to this Series so that it can include perspectives and initiatives of women from around the globe."[85] While only one example of presumably many other similar publications, it shows how the movement aimed to include global perspectives.

[84] "Sexual and Reproductive Rights and Health as Human Rights: Concepts and Strategies: An Introduction for Activists," Rhonda Copelon Papers, Box 3A, Sophia Smith Collection of Women's History, Smith College, Northampton, MA, 75.
[85] Ibid.

Chapter 3: Expanding the Human Rights Framework: The World Summit on Social Development and Fourth World Conference on Women

Activist methodology particularly at international conferences focused on physical violence against women in the forms of abuse, battery and sexual violence. While a larger set of rights that extended to economic rights, housing, and health care were discussed in the context of women's human rights at these events, violence was the core focus. In a way, violence was constructed by activists as a harm imposed primarily through physical assault and especially sexual violence. The focus on violence served many roles in creating a transnational movement in that it provided a sympathetic shock value to bring the public's awareness to basic violations of women's human rights that were occurring globally. Moreover, it was a problem that was not alienating to groups of women based on their nationality, socio-economic status, or any other distinction. Rather, it was a problem that women in all countries, in both First and Third World nations, conflict and non-conflict zones, could agree upon. Thus, violence provided a platform upon which a global framework for women's human rights could be successfully argued for and which would later allow for new rights to be discussed.

The process of introducing new human rights into the framework was piecemeal, as seen by the differences between the women-centered events at the World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna and those at the International Conference on Population and Development. At the former, most testimonies given, even though on a wide range of topics, were discussed through the lens of physical violence to women which were caused in different situations of injustice. In the latter, reproductive coercion was constructed as a form of violence as well. The Cairo Hearing on Reproductive Health and Human Rights drew upon the existing framework and placed women's reproductive rights inside the larger human rights umbrella in public discourse.

Most of the testimonies given emphasized physical violence caused through reproductive coercion, reflecting that violence was used as a unifying concern as even more rights were argued for women. This also serves as evidence for the argument that in this movement, violence served as a unifying platform upon which new human rights for women could be argued for.

The World Summit on Social Development and the Fourth World Conference on Women, both which occurred in 1995, are important moments in the continuation of the women's human rights movement. These events were places in which activists expanded the conversation about women's human rights again, but this time to rights further outside the right to simply be protected from physical violence. The World Summit on Social Development was held in March of 1995 in Copenhagen and focused on development, eliminating poverty, and improving employment rates.[86] As part of this larger Summit, the Center for Women's Global Leadership and DAWN, along with other organizations, organized The Copenhagen Hearing on Economic Justice and Women's Human Rights which brought to light economic human rights violations facing women.[87]

The Copenhagen Hearing on Economic Justice and Women's Human Rights:

Similar to the Center for Women's Global Leadership's publications produced for previous conferences, the Center released a book reproducing the testimonies given at the Copenhagen Hearing on Economic Justice and Women's Human Rights. The testimonies as well as the introduction shed light on the framing of a new set of rights, economic rights, in the

---

[86] "World Summit for Social Development 1995, United Nations, https://www.un.org/development/desa/dspd/world-summit-for-social-development-1995.html (accessed March 31, 2020).

[87] *From Vienna to Beijing: the Copenhagen Hearing on Economic Justice and Women's Human Rights at the United Nations World Summit on Social Development, Copenhagen, March 1995*, Center for Women's Global Leadership: 1995, 1.

women's human rights movement, as well as how activists were portraying the event to the larger public. The testimonies themselves reflect a change from earlier testimonies given in Vienna and Cairo in which direct physical violence was the focus. In this hearing, physical violence is only one section, with two testimonies explicitly focusing on sexual violence against women in the context of economic issues. Nevertheless, in this context too, violence served as a lens through which participants described economic inequality.

The preface of the book lays out the significance of the hearing especially as it relates to creating an indivisible women's human rights framework which includes economic and social rights. It describes the hearing as "…a watershed which challenged the world's governments to incorporate a holistic understanding of women's human rights into their economic and social policies – an understanding which underscored the indivisibility of all human rights."[88] Moreover, it explains that the hearing is aimed at revealing the damaging impacts of various United States policies on women's wellbeing. It credits this hearing with uniting Northern and Southern women, noting that "…the Hearing built solidarity across geographic boundaries by bringing together women from the South and the North to address the impact of United States policies on their lives."[89] This hearing thus is significant in that it represents an expansion of the human rights framework which labeled economic and social rights for women as human rights, and reflects at least the perception of the bridging of Northern and Southern interests.

The opening statement for the conference, given by Mallika Dutt, identified as the Associate Director of the Center for Women's Global Leadership, recognizes the interconnectedness of broad protections for women's human rights and economic policies.

---

[88] *From Vienna to Beijing: the Copenhagen Hearing on Economic Justice and Women's Human Rights at the United Nations World Summit on Social Development, Copenhagen, March 1995*, Center for Women's Global Leadership: 1995, 1.
[89] Ibid.

Moreover, she also reflects on how the women's human rights movement built upon the accomplishments of previous conferences which focused on violence. She notes that "[t]he success of our organizing at Cairo has led us to focus on violations of social and economic rights because we believe that women's experiences demonstrate that human rights must be understood as integrated, indivisible and holistic, and must address what happens to people in all aspects of their lives: civil, political, social, economic, cultural and environmental."[90] This demonstrates how the constructed forms of violence, such as physical violence and reproductive coercion, which were focused on in previous conferences, were used as a platform upon which activists could introduce economic rights for women into the larger framework of women's human rights.

Throughout this conference, there is clearly an explicit attempt to bridge the interests of the North and the South. Significant evidence for this was the coordinating of the conference between the Center for Women's Global Leadership and DAWN (Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era). In one of the opening remarks for the hearing, Peggy Antrobus representing DAWN notes that "[o]ur collaboration with the Center for Women's Global Leadership in these Hearings marks a new phase in our work, reflecting initiatives to build alliances with networks based in the North, which share our concerns and our vision."[91] Thus, the Copenhagen hearing reflects a significant turning point in the movement in which economic rights are framed as women's human rights, and which acknowledges that women from both the North and the South work together in coordinating this framing.

It is important to note that this attempt to bridge women's interests from the North and the South is also reflected in the nationalities of the women who provide testimonies. Five out of

---

[90] *From Vienna to Beijing: the Copenhagen Hearing on Economic Justice and Women's Human Rights at the United Nations World Summit on Social Development, Copenhagen, March 1995*, Center for Women's Global Leadership: 1995, 1.
[91] Ibid., 9.

the ten testimonies presented at this hearing focus on economic problems affecting women in the United States, while other testimonies discuss issues in Cuba, Canada, Mexico, the Philippines, and Tanzania. Violence was a useful platform for advocating for awareness for women's human rights because it was a problem occurring globally. This helped activists attain a universal argument about women's human rights that was necessary in order to build a strong transnational movement that included women from both the North and the South. The Copenhagen Hearing represents a shift in focus onto primarily economic trends but remains aimed in its testimony presentations at connecting the experiences of women in developed and less developed nations. This is evidenced by the fact that testimonies about issues such as poverty and a lack of economic rights are presented from women from the Global North and the Global South in the same hearing. Even more significantly, half of the testimonies discuss cases of injustice facing women in the United States, suggesting how the global women's human rights movement which tended to hinge on extreme cases of violence and injustice abroad was distinctly aimed at improving the conditions of women in the First World context as well.

In the statements given at this hearing, we also see how the idea of a platform of rights is used to expand the framework. While violence provided a strong starting point for the platform, with this hearing we see it expanding to rights even beyond economic rights, such as those associated with other important aspects of livelihood, health and well-being. In one of the concluding remarks, Julia Hausermann, identified as the President of a human rights NGO called Rights and Humanity, gives a statement which reflects how this event drew upon previous notions of human rights in expanding the framework. She notes that "[a]ll the testimonies raise the issue of the right to an adequate standard of living and the right to food, clothing, housing

and adequate health care."[92] Thus, the testimonies about economic rights open up a new conversation about further rights for women being considered under the human rights framework. This evidence reinforces the concept put forth throughout this thesis that in the ideological construction of the women's human rights movement, activists used a method that began by framing violence as a universal platform. This was then used to call for additional rights beyond the right to be protected against gender-based physical violence.

The Fourth World Conference on Women:

The Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995 was a significant moment for progressing the goals of the women's human rights movement that previous activism at stages such as Vienna and Cairo had built up towards. At this conference, women's rights were addressed in the context of a wide range of issues, including violence and health as well as economic rights. The United Nations media outlet called the "UN Chronicle" explains this conference in an article title as "Breaking new ground…" and proceeded to declare the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action which was created out of this conference as "…a comprehensive, ground-breaking plan for the international community to promote the status of women."[93] It explains that the conference welcomed over 5,000 delegates and over 30,0000 participants in the NGO Forum held.[94] Moreover, it explains the areas which the Platform for Action, committed to by 189 governments, seeks to improve related to women's rights in the

[92] *From Vienna to Beijing: the Copenhagen Hearing on Economic Justice and Women's Human Rights at the United Nations World Summit on Social Development, Copenhagen, March 1995*, Center for Women's Global Leadership: 1995, 43.
[93] "Breaking new ground…Women's Conference adopts 'Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action,'" UN Chronicle: New York, Vol. 32, Iss. 4, (Dec. 1995): 29-31, 29.
[94] Ibid.

areas of protection against violence, poverty, the environment, and health and education among other issues.[95]

A source published by the Center for Women's Global Leadership in 1996 reproduces the testimonies given at the Global Tribunal on Accountability for Women's Human Rights. The Center for Women's Global Leadership claims to have made a choice to focus on violence, and that this choice has received criticism. It explains that "[s]ome women were concerned that the focus on gender-based violence in Vienna had detracted attention from other types of human rights issues, especially abuses associated with the actions of non-state actors like international financial institutions and transnational corporations, or around policy areas such as women's health."[96] It explains that the movement then proceeded to expand the platform for women's human rights, and thus "…sought to underscore the indivisibility of women's human rights and the interconnectedness of the civil and political as well as the social, economic, and cultural dimensions of all human rights."[97] This effort explained is clearly seen with further hearings, such as the one held in Copenhagen which highlighted a set of rights related to economic freedom and development as women's human rights.

These remarks reflect the universal theme at previous conferences in which testimonies of human rights abuses were supposed to be reflective of the experiences of women globally. Charlotte Bunch in her opening remark before the Tribunal notes that in reference to the proceeding testimonies: "…although each is an individual story, behind each one there are millions of women whose stories are similar, whose rights are violated in these and other ways

---

[95] "Breaking new ground…Women's Conference adopts 'Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action,'" UN Chronicle: New York, Vol. 32, Iss. 4, (Dec. 1995): 29-31, 30.
[96] *Without Reservation: The Beijing Tribunal on Accountability for Women's Human Rights*, edited by Niamh Reilly, New Brunswick, NJ: Center for Women's Global Leadership, 1996, 6.
[97] Ibid.

every day of every year, in every country of the world."[98] Thus, there is an attempt to portray the 22 proceeding testimonies given at this tribunal as relatable to the experiences of women globally.

Also in similar fashion to the tribunal in Vienna, the testimonies are given by both survivors and advocates from across the globe and are categorized according to several different themes. "Violence against women" was divided up into violence which occurs in conflict situations and within the private sphere, and other categories include economic discrimination and exploitation, violations of health and bodily integrity, and political persecution. As suggested just by the names of the titles, many of the testimonies, despite the widening of the movement to focus on other rights, still circled around the problem of violence. In a similar way to the organization of testimonies in Vienna, there are testimonies of violence in Third World conflict zones placed alongside testimonies of violence in First World contexts, such as domestic abuse. For example, examples of witnesses providing testimonies on conflict zones represent Algeria, Uganda, and Rwanda, and examples of witnesses of violence from within non-conflict zones come from Ireland and the United States. Thus, testimonies about violence and especially sexual violence from women in Third World countries are placed alongside testimonies from women in the First World.

Most of the testimonies at this tribunal broadly discuss the problem of physical violence against women either in the form of assault or some sort of reproductive coercion, except for the section on economic rights. The section on economic human rights violations notes that the following testimonies "…demonstrate the interdependence of all human rights."[99] Thus,

---

[98] *Without Reservation: The Beijing Tribunal on Accountability for Women's Human Rights*, edited by Niamh Reilly, New Brunswick, NJ: Center for Women's Global Leadership, 1996, 21.
[99] Ibid., 59.

previously established human rights for women are being used as evidence for the connection of human rights to economic rights.

The section on violations of health and bodily integrity also reflects how previously established human rights violations are used to expand the platform. In the introduction to the violations of health and bodily integrity section, it explains that reproductive health is a human right and the progress made at the hearing in Cairo in 1994 regarding this topic.[100] Noting the harm of reproductive coercion, it then expands the conversation to human rights connected to environmental issues. For example, the publication discusses "…the insidious impact of environmental destruction – especially nuclear testing – on the health and well-being of present and future generations."[101] Harm caused by environmental factors, is thus a new human rights violation being introduced into the women's human rights framework which the harm of reproductive coercion and other forms of human rights violations provide the basis for.

The judges' statements following the testimonies emphasize the need for governments to actively protect women's human rights related to safety from violence in addition to health, political, social and economic rights. Moreover, these statements connect very different situations and contexts through the notion that violence is a universal problem woman face. For example, Jacqueline Pitanguy, identified as the Founder and Executive Director of an organization called CEPIA, discusses the testimonies and connects the problem of wartime sexual violence to experiences of domestic violence. When discussing the testimonies given about wartime violence against women, she notes that "…it is possible to refer to the same

[100] *Without Reservation: The Beijing Tribunal on Accountability for Women's Human Rights*, edited by Niamh Reilly, New Brunswick, NJ: Center for Women's Global Leadership, 1996, 91.
[101] Ibid., 92.

framework of war to understand the testimonies given by the survivors of family violence."[102] She explains that "[i]n both cases, the woman is the prey and the prisoner, and the perpetrator of the violence and abuse – be it the husband, the father, or the soldier – is the prison guard."[103] While only one statement, it is significant that these sorts of connections between violence in conflict zones and violence beyond conflict zones were occurring.

This publication overall is meant to be a resource to a larger audience about women's human rights activism. The end pages of the publication include a form which can be filled out to explain violations of women's human rights that are occurring, as well as a "Petition to the United Nations to Promote and Protect the Human Rights of Women" which readers are encouraged to copy and return to the Center for Women's Global Leadership.[104] Thus, this source is meant to not only convey information to a larger audience regarding the topic of the women's human rights movement, but is supposed to be informative in a way that mobilizes women and the public to participate in women's human rights activism. The Global Tribunal on Accountability for Women's Human Rights was only one event at a large conference oriented around women's rights. I chose to focus on this tribunal because it is reflective of the way in which a women's human rights framework was expanding and how discourse building upon previous conferences contributed to its growth.

This conference had discussed a wide range of women's human rights, such as those related to economic rights, health, and safety from violence among others. Statements given on September 13, 1995 at the Fourth World Conference on Women by Alda Facio with the Center for Women's Global Leadership, demonstrate how the women's human rights platform had

---

[102] *Without Reservation: The Beijing Tribunal on Accountability for Women's Human Rights*, edited by Niamh Reilly, New Brunswick, NJ: Center for Women's Global Leadership, 1996, 135.
[103] Ibid., 135-136.
[104] Ibid., 175.

expanded through this conference and how activists were pleading for the accomplishments made for women's rights in Beijing to be translated into domestic policy changes. Moreover, this statement reflects how expansive the women's human rights framework advocated by activists at this stage was, including a long list of rights for women. Facio explains that "…all issues of the platform are about the inequality of human rights in the economic, political, and cultural spheres and women's lack of equal access to the fundamental conditions that make the exercise of political and civil rights viable."[105] Thus, while activist efforts around the conference in Vienna in 1993 were focused around violence, we see how in Beijing they were tackling the broadest scope of issues facing women yet. Violence was still discussed as a problem, but violence was no longer the dominating human rights violation against women that activists were focusing on.

Portrayals of the Fourth World Conference on Women:

The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action produced out of the Fourth World Conference on Women was expansive in its goals to improve the lives of women globally. It also was significant as an international legal recognition of a wide range of rights for women. The Fourth World Conference on Women and particularly the Global Tribunal on Accountability for Women's Human Rights discussed a range of human rights violations against women, both in conflict and non-conflict zones and in the Global North and the Global South. The conference was aimed at broadly improving the rights of women globally, but undoubtedly such a goal would require different levels of reform based upon the culture, government, and economic factors in which women's lives are influenced. Thus, it is important to note how articles

[105] Alda Facio, "What Will You Do?: Women's Human Rights: Excerpts, Statement by Center for Women's Global Leadership, 13 September 1995," *Women's Studies Quarterly* 24, no. 1/2 (1996): 66-68, 66-67.

published by attendees of the conference explain the dynamic between Northern and Southern interests at this conference which was aimed at improving the lives of all women globally.

Comparing the Fourth World Conference on Women to other moments explored in this thesis in the 1990s which promoted women's human rights, this conference was undoubtedly important in its emphasis on economic rights for women. As activist Rhonda Copelon explains in a law article, "[t]he Beijing Platform also took a step toward greater concreteness with regard to mitigating (but not undoing) macroeconomic policies and their effect on women's poverty. It also directed the restructuring, but not the stripping away, of safety nets and supportive programs addressed to poor women. These were to be strengthened as basic entitlements."[106] Thus, activist efforts at this conference were directed in a meaningful way towards addressing economic inequality, reflecting how the women's human rights movement at this stage was paying attention to economic rights as just as important as other rights for women.

An article published in the *Signs* journal in 1996 provides evidence that this conference was in some ways dominated by Northern interests despite its diversity of representation and goals. A professor from Rutgers University named Abena P.A. Busia writes about her experience having attended the Fourth World Conference on Women. She begins by explaining that her perspective stems from her "…experience of being African and teaching about Africa from the West for fifteen years, and the experience of being in and teaching in Africa (Ghana) for the past fifteen months."[107] Busia ultimately reflects upon how she observed that the interests of some women from West Africa were overshadowed at the conference. Busia attributes this problem to

[106] Rhonda Copelon, "The Indivisible Framework of International Human Rights: A Source of Social Justice in the U.S.," New York City Law Review: Volume Three, Number 1, Rhonda Copelon Papers, Box 3A, Sophia Smith Collection of Women's History, Smith College, Northampton, MA, 77.
[107] Abena P. A. Busia, "On Cultures of Communication: Reflections from Beijing." *Signs* 22, no. 1 (1996): 204-10, 204.

a communication gap as well as barriers stemming from wealth and politics she observed at the conference in which the input and perspectives of some women from West Africa were excluded. She explains that "[i]t was painful that at a critical moment such as Beijing, some women who had done the work through the NGOs from West Africa had little impact on the final Platform, their wealth of knowledge and experience not tapped, because they were politically out of favor with their governments."[108]

The same journal edition of *Signs* includes the perspective of a conference attendee named Esther Ngan-ling Chow, identified as representing the Sociology Department at American University. She writes about her experience having attended the NGO Forum at the Fourth World Conference on Women and includes in her description a similar reflection about the dynamics between the Northern and Southern advocates. She explains that there was cohesion between the concerns of Southern and Northern women, noting that she "…witnessed a great degree of unity in diversity among women form the North and the South as they articulated their common concerns in coalitions."[109] However, she later explains that she witnessed some conflicts of interest at the events held during the NGO Forum. She explains that "[w]hile sharing some common ground, women from the North were primarily concerned with equality and a better quality of life, and women from the South with issues of basic rights and needs, poverty, development, and human security."[110] Thus, we see in this example how tensions which had arisen over economic interests between Northern and Southern women at activist stages during

[108] Abena P. A. Busia, "On Cultures of Communication: Reflections from Beijing." *Signs* 22, no. 1 (1996): 204-10, 210.
[109] Esther Ngan-ling Chow, "Making Waves, Moving Mountains: Reflections on Beijing '95 and beyond," *Signs* 22, no. 1 (1996): 185-92, 186.
[110] Ibid., 187.

the Decade for Women were in some degree revived at the Fourth World Conference on Women as economic rights were introduced into the human rights agenda.

This also serves as evidence for why the violence platform was so uniting as a theme in the early stages of the women's human rights movement such as in Vienna. During the conferences in the Decade for Women which discussed economic rights for women, tensions arose between Northern and Southern interests. On the other hand, there appeared to be relative cohesion between activists from across the globe during the Global Tribunal on Violations of Women's Human Rights in Vienna because violence was a problem that bridged the interests of all women. Whereas at the Fourth World Conference on Women, where a larger range of issues were discussed, we see evidence that tensions in interests between women from different parts of the globe were revived as the agenda was no longer confined to the problem of violence.

Moreover, how the Fourth World Conference on Women was portrayed to a larger audience as relevant is important to consider because it shows how a global women's human rights movement which focused heavily on abuses in conflict zones and the Global South was also used to improve the rights of women in the Global North. As activists repeatedly emphasized, such declarations were useless if advocates across the globe did not take action to implement changes in domestic policies.

For example, an article published in 1996 out of the Center for Women's Global Leadership by Charlotte Bunch and Susana Fried explains the importance of the conference. It notes that the Platform for Action that was created out of this conference "…is a positive affirmation of women's human rights in many areas" and "[i]t demands the economic and political empowerment of women and calls for more active intervention by governments on

behalf of women's equality."[111] Moreover, it explains the expansiveness of the Platform for Action which "…outlines action for the human rights of women in twelve interrelated critical areas, from poverty and education to violence and the media."[112] Significantly, the article explains the importance of further local activism post-Beijing in which women will need to reform their domestic legal systems to be in alignment with the Platform for Action. It ends with a plea that "…how far the Platform and the concept of women's human rights will take women depends on whether women are able to use them to further their efforts to influence policy and action at all levels from the global to the local."[113] This thus demonstrates the importance of women globally understanding the significance of the gains made at the conference for women's human rights so that they can take it upon themselves to advocate for policy changes in their home countries.

Activists were also involved in mobilizing women in this effort, as seen through activist media outlets. The Center for Women's Global Leadership for example released a "Take Action kit" which included information about the Beijing conference, "[q]uestions to ask your government and generate discussion about the demands" and "[f]ive actions you can take to advance these demands."[114] Under the section about questions that readers can ask their governments, it includes questions regarding government action to protect women against violence for example. Also significant is that it encourages readers to ask what their government's stance is on the International Criminal Court (ICC). Accordingly, it instructs

---

[111] Charlotte Bunch and Susana Fried, "Beijing '95: Moving Women's Human Rights from Margin to Center," *Signs* 22, no. 1 (1996): 200-04, 201.
[112] Ibid.
[113] Ibid., 204.
[114] Charlotte Bunch Additional papers, 1944-2010; "Backgrounds to the Demands including recommendations, questions and actions," Center for Women's Global Leadership, MC 708, Box 58, Folder 2, Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe Institute, Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass. https://id.lib.harvard.edu/ead/sch01377/catalog, accessed February 10, 2020.

readers to "[m]eet with relevant foreign ministry officials to raise their awareness about the importance of integrating a gender perspective into the statute of the *International Criminal Court*…"[115] Activism surrounding the International Criminal Court, an international legal court with the ability to prosecute perpetrators of grave crimes such as war crimes and crimes against humanity, would emerge as another important step in the women's human rights movement.

[115] Charlotte Bunch Additional papers, 1944-2010; "Backgrounds to the Demands including recommendations, questions and actions," Center for Women's Global Leadership, MC 708, Box 58, Folder 2, Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe Institute, Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass. https://id.lib.harvard.edu/ead/sch01377/catalog, accessed February 10, 2020.

Chapter 4: The Women's Human Rights Movement and the International Criminal Court

The International Criminal Court (ICC) was established with the 1998 Rome Statute and was created as an institution separate from the influence of national governments or even the United Nations which would have the power to prosecute perpetrators of grave crimes who otherwise were not being criminally pursued by domestic criminal justice systems.[116] The crimes it could prosecute included genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and the crime of aggression. While in the years post-2000, the ICC has received different criticisms surrounding its effectiveness, at the time of its establishment it was considered especially significant to the women's movement because the Rome Statute explicitly prohibits variations of sexual violence and reproductive coercion as crimes against humanity and war crimes. For example, Article 7 of the Rome Statute lays out what offenses the ICC will consider "crime[s] against humanity," which includes "rape, sexual slavery, enforced prostitution, forced pregnancy, enforced sterilization, or any other form of sexual violence of comparable gravity."[117] Similarly, these crimes fall under the war crimes category as well.

This was the most expansive international legal provision yet in regard to its acknowledgment of the severity of crimes perpetrated against women. Prior to the creation of the International Criminal Court, violence which had occurred against women in conflicts in the Balkans and Rwanda in the 1990s prompted the creation of criminal tribunals which defined new crimes against women as war crimes and crimes against humanity. The International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) and the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda

[116] Pam Spees, "Women's Advocacy in the Creation of the International Criminal Court: Changing the Landscapes of Justice and Power," *Signs* 28, no. 4 (2003): 1233-254, 1233.
[117] "Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court," https://www.icc-cpi.int/resource-library/documents/rs-eng.pdf/ (accessed March 31, 2020).

(ICTR) were set up as United Nations criminal courts to prosecute perpetrators of grave crimes. Significant to the history of the treatment of women's rights under international law, was the ICTR having been "…the first international tribunal to define rape in international criminal law and to recognise rape as a means of perpetrating genocide."[118] The ICTY was also significant in its prosecution of wartime sexual violence committed against women, being "…the first international criminal tribunal to enter convictions for rape as a form of torture…" as well as sexual slavery as a crime against humanity, and the first European tribunal to charge rape as a crime against humanity.[119]

The prosecutions of the ICTY and ICTR expanded how crimes against women were prosecuted under international law, and with the Rome Statute, international law received a lengthier list of crimes based upon gender which were explicitly prohibited. The International Criminal Court was hoped to serve as a venue for survivors of extreme violence to receive justice when their domestic legal systems had failed them, and also to hopefully serve as a deterrent for perpetrators to commit these crimes.[120] Ultimately, dedicated activists in the Women's Caucus for Gender Justice (WCGJ) were responsible for the Rome Statute's inclusion of the list of crimes specifically related to violations of women's health and safety.

The WCGJ had formed in 1997 out of the larger coalition of NGOs known as the Coalition for an International Criminal Court which was advocating for the creation of such a court. Self-described by their website, the WCGJ "…grew out of the work of a last minute organizing effort of a small group of women human rights activists at the February 1997

---

[118] "The ICTR in Brief," United Nations International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals, https://unictr.irmct.org/en/tribunal (accessed March 31, 2020).
[119] Crimes of Sexual Violence," International Criminal Tribunal for Yugoslavia, https://www.icty.org/en/features/crimes-sexual-violence (accessed March 31, 2020).
[120] *If Hope Were Enough*, Directed by Margaret Crehan, Produced by Women's Caucus for Gender Justice, WITNESS (New York, NY – Brooklyn: WITNESS, 2000).

Preparatory Committee for the Establishment of an International Criminal Court at the U.N." who "..realized that without an organized caucus, women's concerns would not be appropriately defended and promoted."[121] Described as a group supported by over 300 organizations, the Caucus was interested in ensuring that the ICC would prosecute crimes based upon gender and include an accurate representation of women's interests. Moreover, it wanted to raise awareness for violence against women and women's human rights more broadly, and hoped to educate and encourage governments and NGOs to "…integrate a gender perspective into the U.N."[122] Moreover, the Caucus represents a stage within the larger women's human rights movement discussed in this thesis because it sought to recognize women's rights as human rights through a focus on the problem of violence against women, and because the Caucus website clearly notes that the founders of the Caucus were "[b]uilding on the work of previous caucuses formed around Vienna, Cairo and Beijing Conferences…"[123]

Moreover, while the WCGJ included a large network of many individuals and organizations, the WCGJ Executive Committee alone as delineated on their website were participants in the global women's human rights movement who represented diverse interests. It is described as including Rhonda Copelon, a New York City scholar, lawyer, and activist who had written extensively about the problem of violence against women and women's human rights; Eleanor Conda, who had served as director for a women's human rights center called the Asian Centre for Women's Human Rights in the Philippines; Lorena Fries, a lawyer who had directed an NGO called La Morada in Latin America; Betty Kaari Murungi, a lawyer who had practiced law in Kenya; Vahida Nainar who has worked on women's rights in Bombay; and

---

[121] "About the Women's Caucus," Women's Caucus for Gender Justice, http://iccwomen.org/wigjdraft1/Archives/oldWCGJ/aboutcaucus.html (accessed March 31, 2020).
[122] Ibid.
[123] Ibid.

Vivian Stromberg, identified as the Executive Director of an organization called MADRE. Thus, the work of the Caucus should be viewed as another stage within the global women's human rights movement that sought to tackle the issue of violence against women and place women's rights within the human rights framework.

The Caucus was present at the ICC negotiations to advocate for women's interests. Beyond making sure that crimes of sexual violence were prosecuted under the statute, as Pam Spees, identified on the WCGJ website as the program director, explains in a scholarly article, the other accomplishments of the Caucus were that they were "…among the strongest voices calling for a more active role for victims and witnesses in the justice process, a broad reparations scheme, strong mandates for protection of victims and witnesses, and gender experts and women on the court and among staff at all levels."[124] Moreover, another accomplishment of the activists is that the Rome Statute defines gender.[125] This is a significant addition because with the definition of gender, the statute is able to include the prosecution of crimes perpetrated on the basis of gender, or crimes against women because of their existence as women.[126]

Evaluating this historical moment in light of the larger women's movement and the tensions which recurrently emerged between the interests of Southern and Northern women begs the question as to if the global activist work of the WCGJ reflects a success in the braiding of transnational interests. A report from the Center for Women's Global Leadership sheds light on the working dynamic between women activists at the Rome Conference. The source is written by Alda Facio, identified as the Director of the WCGJ. She explains that the following report "…is based on oral evaluations and individual reports…by some of the participants to the Rome

[124] Pam Spees, "Women's Advocacy in the Creation of the International Criminal Court: Changing the Landscapes of Justice and Power," *Signs* 28, no. 4 (2003): 1233-254, 1238.
[125] Ibid, 1243.
[126] Ibid.

Conference."[127] The report begins by explaining some of the facts about the Caucus, including its founding and work. Later in the document, Facio identifies how based upon the reports she read, she noticed a "…significantly different approach women from the South and those from the North took when writing their evaluations."[128] Facio explains this discrepancy, noting that "[a]ll of the women from the South,…paid more attention to the process itself, the dynamics and relationships within the caucus and towards the network of women supporters and an analysis of what could be improved within the context of the larger women's movement."[129] She explains what could account for these differences, noting that while not intentional, "…the environment in a Conference, and even more so in a legal context, is more encouraging of northern dynamics than of southern ones."[130] Facio lays out factors which might put northern interests at an advantage at a conference which include the fact that often meetings are held in English, allowing native English speakers to voice their opinions more.[131]

In order to provide readers with more understanding of the Southern perspective, she includes summaries of recurring statements given in evaluations from Southern women. The summary list of points Facio includes is lengthy and provides input on the logistics of the meetings and how some women reflect interest in the need for greater diversity and representation. One perspective which stands out is one which Facio notes that all of the evaluations from Southern women included, noting that "[e]veryone said they would have liked to get to know the other participants a little more so as to feel that they have allies and friends in

---

[127] Charlotte Bunch Additional papers, 1944-2010; Alda Facio, "Women's Caucus for Gender Justice in the International Criminal Court," Center for Women's Global Leadership, MC 708, Box 57, Folder 2, Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe Institute, Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass. https://id.lib.harvard.edu/ead/sch01377/catalog, accessed February 10, 2020.
[128] Ibid.
[129] Ibid.
[130] Ibid.
[131] Ibid.

other parts of the world." Thus, this document reflects that while the work of the WCGJ appeared to be a cohesive effort from advocates from across the globe, subtle tensions between Northern and Southern interests remained. This reinforces how when considering the global women's human rights movement, it is important to acknowledge that, as seen in the Decade for Women and the criticisms of the Fourth World Conference on Women, in some ways Northern interests and perspectives were at an advantage. Ultimately, this serves as further evidence that the women's human rights movement was complicated and encompassed diverse perspectives, interests, and tensions given its global nature even if it worked towards similar goals regarding women's human rights.

Moreover, while it might appear that the activism surrounding the International Criminal Court reflected a shift from previous activism in that it was more aimed at improving the safety and rights of women in conflict zones, evidence reflects that the women's interests included in the ICC's statute was also portrayed as deeply relevant to the lives of women in non-conflict zones. This is clearly seen in a radio broadcasting about the ICC by the United Nations Radio Tapes on Women.

Founded in 1946, the United Nations Department of Public Information was conceived as a way "to promote global awareness and understanding of the work of the United Nations."[132] Throughout the second half of the 20th century, it thus facilitated awareness of important global events through technological mediums such as radio and television.[133] A product of this effort was the U.N. Radio Tapes on Women, a series of weekly radio segments that discussed health and social crises affecting women, such as gender violence and problems surrounding

[132] Mattias Sundholm, "DPI: Department of Public Information," Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth, https://www.un.org/youthenvoy/2013/09/dpi-department-of-public-information/ (accessed Nov. 22, 2019).
[133] Ibid.

reproductive rights.[134] An episode of this series aired on December 9, 1998, titled "The International Criminal Court and Its Significance for Women," reflects one way in which the work of activists on the international scale regarding wartime sexual violence and the ICC was being translated to a larger audience as relevant to the lives of everyday women.

The narrator invites Donna Axel, Co-Founder of the Women's Caucus, to discuss the ICC's woman-centered aspects and the struggles that ensued for the Women's Caucus when advocating for those inclusions. The narrator and Axel discuss the progress made by the ICC in listing rape as a war crime rather than its former category of a "humiliating and degrading treatment."[135] A speaker referred to as Lipton interjects, and passionately emphasizes the offensive nature of rape's previous categorical distinction. She lauds the Women's Caucus' work and the new definition of rape, explaining that "I would never consider rape an affront to personal dignity, I find that very insulting as a woman and to know that they've actually defined this more, although may not be perfect within the context, is something that I think we can work on and work towards achieving a better justice for women I think all around…"[136] She also explains that she is proud of the Women's Caucus achievements and notes that in reference to them, "…the activities that they actively participated in in the Coalition is really something that I think a woman should be enormously proud of."[137]

With this soliloquy, the speaker thus connects the topic of the new legal category of rape as a war crime under the ICC to the concerns of everyday women. It can be assumed that women

---

[134] "U.N. Radio Tapes on Women," https://findingaids.library.northwestern.edu/repositories/7/resources/970 (accessed March 31, 2020).
[135] "The International Criminal Court and Its Significance for Women," Tape 51, December 9, 1998, U.N. Radio Tapes on Women, Collection Identifier 107, Box 9, File 39, McCormick Library of Special Collections and University Archives, Northwestern University, Evanston, IL. https://findingaids.library.northwestern.edu/repositories/7/archival_objects/224683.
[136] Ibid.
[137] Ibid.

globally would sympathize with victims of wartime sexual violence because of human compassion and a shared gender identity. While women in non-conflict zones still suffer from various forms of violence as well as the fear of such violence, wartime rape could be considered to be a more distant concern to women living outside of conflict zones. Yet through her compelling language, the speaker makes this distant topic very relevant to women globally by emphasizing her feelings that as a woman, rape being described as degrading is insulting. She further connects wartime rape to the everyday woman by concluding that the new legal category for wartime rape should make "a woman" proud, not just those directly impacted by this statute. Thus, this clip effectively demonstrates how discourse surrounding the criminalization of sexual violence committed in warzones was being translated as relevant and significant to all women, even those living far from conflict zones.

This airing also discusses the controversy surrounding the ICC prohibition of enforced pregnancy in which this statute was perceived as part of a larger pro-choice effort to hold nations criminally accountable for restrictive reproductive policies. Donna Axel comments on this issue, explaining that such an interpretation is a grave misunderstanding of what the enforced pregnancy prohibition under the ICC was intended to protect against. She dismisses the viewpoints of concerned countries that interpreted this prohibition as such and explains: "We were not talking about the doctor who could be hauled up in front of this court because he wouldn't give someone an abortion. We're talking about women who are forced to carry a pregnancy to term under these excruciating circumstances within the context of crimes against humanity and war crimes."[138] Axel thus separates concern over women being forcibly

[138] "The International Criminal Court and Its Significance for Women," Tape 51, December 9, 1998, U.N. Radio Tapes on Women, Collection Identifier 107, Box 9, File 39, McCormick Library of Special Collections and University Archives, Northwestern University, Evanston, IL. https://findingaids.library.northwestern.edu/repositories/7/archival_objects/224683.

impregnated and forced to give birth in inhumane and coercive environments from the more conservative concern that the ICC was acting as a vehicle for the global pro-choice movement. Whether or not Axel's comments are representative of the Women's Caucus as a whole, it is significant to acknowledge that in this instance, a larger message about women's reproductive rights outside of warzones was not being conveyed like wartime sexual violence was as relevant to women globally. Rather, Axel clearly differentiates the enforced pregnancy prohibition from the larger global struggle of women to gain reproductive freedom.

Thus, this example demonstrates how the topic of the International Criminal Court and its treatment of crimes against women was being portrayed by a United Nations media outlet to presumably a Western audience, as relatable and important to the lives of all women. This one example reflects a trend demonstrated throughout this thesis in which activism which might be aimed at improving the rights and lives of women in the Global South or conflict zones, also can have a positive impact on improving the rights of women in the Global North, or is at least depicted as such. Moreover, such a portrayal is ironic as well considering how the United States under the George W. Bush administration decided that the United States would not ratify the ICC and thus that the ICC would not have any jurisdiction over Americans.[139]

Ultimately, the activism surrounding the creation of the ICC is significant in understanding the history of the women's human rights movement for several reasons. First, as previously mentioned, the WCGJ was comprised of advocates who had already been working in various ways towards improving women's human rights. Additionally, the WCGJ acknowledged that its work was informed by the previous accomplishments of the women's human rights movement and that it sought to raise awareness for gender violence, a theme which dominated

[139] Pam Spees, "Women's Advocacy in the Creation of the International Criminal Court: Changing the Landscapes of Justice and Power," *Signs* 28, no. 4 (2003): 1233-254, 1248.

the early stages of the women's human rights movement. Thus, the creation of the ICC was seen as a method towards protecting women's human rights in relation to gender violence. Moreover, it was an example in which an international legal body reflected a changing perception regarding women's human rights and specifically the problem of sexual violence against women.

Chapter 5: The Women's Human Rights Movement and its Early Focus on Violence

Violence against women as the main theme certainly served as an issue which could unite women globally. I have previously demonstrated examples in which violence is depicted as a problem affecting women regardless of whether they dwell in conflict or non-conflict zones, or countries in the Global North or the Global South. The focus on violence might suggest a sort of equality in interests being represented at this stage in the women's human rights movement since violence was an issue that affected all. However, it is important to note that while Western activists certainly demonstrated a strong desire to end violence against women globally, the framing of all violence against women as a human rights issue undoubtedly imbued violence occurring in First World contexts with a strong sense of urgency. In the tribunal in Vienna, domestic violence in America was discussed alongside cases of violence in conflict zones. In Cairo, reproductive violence in developing nations was also discussed alongside First World examples in which women were unable to receive reproductive services.

As demonstrated throughout this thesis, violence against women was primarily focused on as a human rights violation. Gradually, new rights were incorporated into the human rights framework by activists through the association with violence, such as reproductive rights. At the World Summit on Social Development and the Fourth World Conference on Women, economic rights were incorporated into the framework. Economic rights for women were discussed as part of the Decade for Women, but as previously mentioned, tensions between the interests of Northern and Southern women arose. Thus, with the women's human rights movement of the 1990s and its focus on violence, a transnational movement focused around this platform was able to form.

When considering how the movement in the 1990s gave an earlier preference to the problem of violence instead of economic rights, a 1994 interview published in 1996 in the *Signs* journal which engaged several female scholars on the issue of women's human rights, including Charlotte Bunch, reflects one piece of evidence as to why economic rights possibly were not the focal point of the global human rights movement. This interview discusses the "women's movement" more broadly and in the American context, but its discussion of economic rights is illuminating in terms of the problems associated with activists focusing on economic issues. In one section of the interview, a woman identified as Linda Williams representing the University of Maryland Department of Political Science mentions that "…within the women's movement, economic issues tend to get downplayed in favor of issues like reproductive choice."[140] Charlotte Bunch explains that economic issues "…are the issues that the social structure is the most resistant to changing."[141] She also explains that "…organizations working on economic issues do not have the same visibility because they are not allowed to have the same visibility," attributing this problem to "press manipulation" and that in reference to the press, "[t]hey want to see the women's movement as limited to a narrowly defined set of issues…"[142] Thus, even though not explicitly about the global women's human rights movement, this could reflect one reason why violence was an easier platform to base the early stages of the women's human rights movement on in the 1990s rather than the issue of economic rights. This could thus be due to the possibility that cases of violence carry a greater shock value and is thus more likely to sway public perception regarding the need for a women's human rights framework.

---

[140] Heidi Hartmann, Ellen Bravo, Charlotte Bunch, Nancy Hartsock, Roberta Spalter-Roth, Linda Williams, and Maria Blanco, "Bringing Together Feminist Theory and Practice: A Collective Interview," *Signs* 21, no. 4 (1996): 917-51, 928.
[141] Ibid, 929.
[142] Ibid.

Additionally, later in the interview, Bunch discusses the diversity of the women's human rights movement and reflects how violence was used as a platform for introducing other rights into the framework. She explains that more women's voices should be allowed to be heard and that "[w]hoever does get to speak at any one moment can speak to what she sees, and also she can point to other women, making space for more people to be brought into the discussion."[143] Thus, Bunch demonstrates one strategy of the women's human rights movement in its attempt to include the perspectives and issues facing women globally. She illuminates this example by referring to the activism relating to violence against women, explaining that "…if we are working on violence and women's human rights, we seek to make connections between issues and argue that you cannot look at violence in isolation from the economic dimension of women's lives."[144] Thus, she demonstrates how activists might have tried to pursue a larger agenda in relation to women's rights by using the helpful platform of violence. She reflects how women's human rights activism was distinctly tied to making connections to other issues based upon the platform of violence, a theme which was reflected throughout the conferences explored in this thesis.

An article published in the St. John's Law Review written by activist and scholar Rhonda Copelon, discusses the problem of wartime sexual violence against women broadly and in relation to the human rights movement. Moreover, Copelon also connects this issue occurring against women to problems which face women in the United States. Copelon discusses sexual violence against women in this article and notes that this sort of violence has recently been receiving media attention. Explaining sexual violence against women in Haiti, she notes that

---

[143] Heidi Hartmann, Ellen Bravo, Charlotte Bunch, Nancy Hartsock, Roberta Spalter-Roth, Linda Williams, and Maria Blanco, "Bringing Together Feminist Theory and Practice: A Collective Interview," *Signs* 21, no. 4 (1996): 917-51, 932.
[144] Ibid., 932.

"[u]ntil recently, these kinds of events were virtually invisible to us. Now, stories about them are gradually beginning to creep into the media."[145] Thus, she reflects how the public's awareness for women's human rights and especially violence against women was developing throughout the 1990s. Later she discusses how wartime rape and violence against women more broadly need to be understood as a crime against humanity. At the end of the article, Copelon relates the problem of wartime sexual violence to the problem of broader societal gender violence. She uses the example of domestic violence and connects it to the American context, noting that "…in the United States we are debating in Congress whether or not there should be a civil rights action for battered women."[146] She proceeds to state that "[t]he real issue in this debate is whether this abuse is a violation of women's basic human right to be free from violence."[147] Thus, as reflected in this article, Copelon connects the problem of wartime rape abroad to violence which occurs in the Global North, such as domestic abuse in the United States. This suggests that the platform of violence also allowed advocates from the Global North to tackle women's rights violations occurring in the First World.

A 1998 article by Copelon published in the New York City Law Review about human rights also reflects how global human rights were being perceived and portrayed by activists as relevant on a local level. Copelon discusses human rights and exemplifies a desire to bring awareness to human rights abuses in the domestic context rather than solely those abroad. She explains that "[w]hile the media stokes notions of superiority here by giving increasing attention to human rights violations abroad, the systemic failure to apply the human rights lens at home

[145] Rhonda Copelon, "Women and War Crimes," St. John's Law Review: Volume 69, Winter-Spring, 1995, Numbers 1-2, Rhonda Copelon Papers, Box 3A, Sophia Smith Collection of Women's History, Smith College, Northampton, MA, 62.
[146] Ibid., 68.
[147] Ibid.

continues. Recently I mentioned to a high school teacher that my work involves international women's human rights. Immediately, she said, "Oh yes, all my kids are really upset about female genital mutilation." "What about wife battering or health care here?" I asked."[148] Thus, here Copelon argues that there needs to be greater attention paid to injustices against women occurring in home countries, such as in the United States.

Under the section titled "Toward An Indivisible Human Rights Strategy: Advances and Challenges in Women's Human Rights Advocacy," Copelon clearly lays out why the initial women's human rights movement focused on violence, explaining that this was due to "…the near universality of its occurrence, the gravity of its effects, and its centrality to the classic human rights paradigm."[149] Moreover, she later explains how violence being the focus made it difficult to highlight other important rights, explaining that "[i]t has been difficult to focus attention and resources on the economic and social underpinnings of gender violence."[150]

Thus, as seen through the reflected perspectives of these two activists throughout the women's human rights movement, Charlotte Bunch and Rhonda Copelon, violence provided the most universal and compelling platform to pursue a women's human rights framework with. The demonstrated statements from human rights activists also demonstrate the set of difficulties that came with advocating for economic rights as human rights. Accordingly, activists used this platform surrounding the problem of violence to pursue an agenda that moved beyond physical rights to safety for women that would expand to rights related to reproductive health, poverty, employment, housing, and other rights tied to health and wellbeing. Moreover, violence against

---

[148] Rhonda Copelon, "The Indivisible Framework of International Human Rights: A Source of Social Justice in the U.S.," New York City Law Review: Volume Three, Number 1, Rhonda Copelon Papers, Box 3A, Sophia Smith Collection of Women's History, Smith College, Northampton, MA, 63.
[149] Ibid., 72.
[150] Ibid., 74.

women was an ongoing issue that activists in non-conflict zones, such as the United States, sought to prevent. Thus, it is important to note that by emphasizing and framing universal violence against women across the globe as a human rights issue using extreme examples of violence against women abroad, women's issues in the First World context could benefit as well.

Conclusion:

As demonstrated, the conferences of the 1990s were important stages upon which activists were able to promote a women's human rights agenda by building awareness for human rights abuses which were occurring globally and distinctly related to gender. As in the conferences held in Vienna, Cairo, and Beijing, cases of violence in the Global North and Global South, conflict zones and non-conflict zones, were discussed alongside one another as examples of the universal problem of violence against women. The theme of universal violence provided activists with a uniting issue upon which women globally could join in the movement to promote women's human rights.

As seen in the second wave feminist movement in the United States in the 1960s, activists had battled for greater rights under the U.S. legal system for women related to protections from sexual violence and domestic abuse and related to reproductive freedoms. Activism related to these causes has been ongoing and met with resistance, especially as it relates to the accessibility of reproductive services such as abortion, which is still contested in the 21st century. Thus, the women's human rights movement which sought to label all instances of violence or reproductive coercion against women as human rights violations would have had a powerful effect in promoting the importance of these issues. As explored in this thesis, issues of domestic violence in, for example, the United States, was discussed in different instances alongside cases of extreme wartime sexual violence in conflict zones. While both issues are important and deserving of legal attention, by conflating First World violence to that which occurs in Third World countries or conflict zones, First World issues were able to gain a certain severity and urgency. In other words, examples of extreme wartime violence being compared to

violence in the Global North also served the purpose of helping the cause of Western activists seeking to have women's rights in the First World context viewed as human rights issues.

Another main argument which I have made throughout this thesis is that words matter, especially when the rhetoric used is responsible for constructing a movement that informs public opinion and creates legal change. The discourse of participants in the women's human rights movement, from the survivors who testified their experiences to the mainstream activists to the non-activist women and men who participated in the movement, created a women's human rights framework that we see as being commonly accepted today. The discourse shaped what the public viewed as women's human rights and eventually filtered into legal changes as well as seen in the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. Moreover, the reality that activists emphasized violence against women when framing women's human rights is important to consider in terms of how such framing could have disadvantaged perceptions of women's agency. It is possible that by emphasizing cases of extreme violence against women, activists were re-emphasizing women's vulnerability across the globe rather than empowering women. A similar argument could be made regarding how activist discussions about reproductive rights as human rights emerged through discussions of violence committed against women's reproductive freedom. These discussions about women facing the problem of reproductive coercion might have also victimized women in the public perception as well as reinforced the viewpoint of women's traditional roles as agents of reproduction. As seen by the examples explored in this thesis related to conference testimonies and activist and media publications, cases of violence and reproductive violence dominated discussions about women's human rights in the early stages of the movement rather than socio-economic rights which could have served to provide more freedom and agency for women globally.

Conferences were very important stages for activist mobilization and for public awareness building regarding women's human rights. As described by Charlotte Bunch in a 1995 article about the Fourth World Conference on Women, "[u]ndeniably, international conferences have significantly increased women's participation, not only at the international level but also at the local and national levels, where women's voices have helped to determine how their governments interact with international bodies."[151] Thus, these conferences were conceived by activists such as Bunch as places where change regarding women's human rights could be initiated, and were treated as such through the organization of hearings and other events which placed the spotlight on women's concerns and interests. Testimonies provided by women from across the globe proved that a women's human rights framework was necessary as violations of their human rights were occurring on a large scale. The testimonies provided were powerful and moving, as many of them came from survivors of violence themselves. However, it is important to consider issues of representation that were involved. For example, because of the universalizing language that was continually used throughout the movement, which connected the experiences of survivors of trauma to the experiences of many women worldwide, the question arises as to if the interests and concerns of entire regions of women were being accurately represented by those who testified. The question of representation at these conferences is one that would require further research in the future in order to better understand how testimonies of violence that speak to the experiences of a large group of people accurately convey a larger set of interests. As seen in reflections from women representing the Global South regarding the Fourth World Conference on Women and the Women's Caucus for Gender Justice' negotiations for the International Criminal Court, even in the 1990s there remained slight

[151] Charlotte Bunch, "Beijing, Backlash, and the Future of Women's Human Rights," *Health and Human Rights* 1, no. 4 (1995): 449-53, 451.

tensions between Southern and Northern interests as well as criticisms that Northern perspectives overshadowed Southern interests.

The arguments and information I have provided throughout this thesis are not reflective of the entire history of the women's human rights movement, rather they provide a specific lens through which the construction of the movement can be evaluated. The nature of this topic is almost immeasurable as it was a global movement comprised of activists and participants from around the world. In order to focus my argument, I have chosen to analyze this topic through the lens of primarily First World activists and media outlets due to accessibility and these sources being in the English language. Within such a global topic and because of its recent nature, a vast wealth of publications, articles, and otherwise important material were produced in relation to the topics of women's human rights, violence against women, reproductive rights, and other topics grappled with throughout this thesis. Thus, the evidence I have provided is what I believe to be reflective of a general trend in the movement but is not comprehensive of this historical moment. Even within the realm of the First World context, there are undoubtedly many other human rights organizations and activists who contributed to the movement in meaningful ways and thus future analysis of a broader range of activists and organizations could prove illuminating. For example, researching with a narrower lens focusing on the chronology of work of a singular organization, such as Human Rights Watch and their Women's Rights Project, could be helpful in reflecting how human rights organizations promoted women's human rights through their work. In this same vein of reasoning, there are many organizations and activists from a variety of nations and regions which are equally important to explore in further research with a greater set of language skills as well as travel capabilities. Moreover, efforts played out on both the domestic and international scale, and by having paid attention to the figure heads of

very public activist organizations, I do not intend to argue that the work of these groups overshadowed grassroots level efforts led by women globally.

While I chose the period of 1990-2000, further research could extend the project to earlier or later years to examine the roots or aftermath of the decade I examine. Activists made tangible legal accomplishments regarding women's human rights in the 1990s, as reflected through the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court which criminalized sexual violence. However, activism regarding the safeguarding of women's human rights on the international and domestic scale continued long after the year 2000 as seen by more recent efforts to protect women's rights transnationally. Thus, analyzing women's human rights activism throughout the early 2000s would also provide helpful information in understanding how the movement extended into the 21st century.

What constitutes women's human rights is an ongoing debate seen especially clearly regarding discussions about women's reproductive rights surrounding the topics of abortion and contraceptive access in places such as the United States. The women's human rights framework which emerged in the 1990s thus will likely continue to shift and expand in the public awareness as well as in future laws. Human rights for women was one sector of human rights activism, but this framework has been applied to many different groups of people who might have unique circumstances warranting the creation of their own human rights framework. For example, the human rights framework has been applied through activism to aspects such as LGBTQ+ rights and immigrant rights. Ultimately, women's human rights activism of the past is not only helpful for understanding women's history and how activists can better advocate for women's rights in the future, but for understanding on a larger scale how human rights ideologies are successfully created and strengthened. By analyzing histories of activists who have successfully crafted new

human rights frameworks, it is possible that historians could equip future generations of activists with useful conceptual guides on ways to raise awareness for new human rights concerns.

Bibliography

Primary Sources

Archival Sources:

Charlotte Bunch Additional papers, 1944-2010, Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe Institute, Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass. https://id.lib.harvard.edu/ead/sch01377/catalog.

U.N. Radio Tapes on Women, McCormick Library of Special Collections and University Archives, Northwestern University, Evanston, IL. https://findingaids.library.northwestern.edu/repositories/7/resources/970.

Rhonda Copelon Papers, Sophia Smith Collection of Women's History, Smith College, Northampton, MA. https://findingaids.smith.edu/repositories/2/resources/939/collection_organization.

Published Sources

Abena P. A. Busia. "On Cultures of Communication: Reflections from Beijing." *Signs* 22, no. 1 (1996): 204-10. www.jstor.org/stable/3175049.

Bunch, Charlotte. "Beijing, Backlash, and the Future of Women's Human Rights." *Health and Human Rights* 1, no. 4 (1995): 449-53. doi:10.2307/4065251.

Bunch, Charlotte, and Susana Fried. "Beijing '95: Moving Women's Human Rights from Margin to Center." *Signs* 22, no. 1 (1996): 200-04. www.jstor.org/stable/3175048.

Chow, Esther Ngan-ling. "Making Waves, Moving Mountains: Reflections on Beijing '95 and beyond." *Signs* 22, no. 1 (1996): 185-92. www.jstor.org/stable/3175046.

Facio, Alda. "What Will You Do?: Women's Human Rights: Excerpts, Statement by Center for Women's Global Leadership, 13 September 1995." *Women's Studies Quarterly* 24, no. 1/2 (1996): 66-68. www.jstor.org/stable/40004513.

From Vienna to Beijing : The Cairo Hearing on Reproductive Health and Human Rights. Center for Women's Global Leadership: 1995.https://search-alexanderstreet-com.proxy.library.emory.edu/view/work/bibliographic_entity%7Cbibliographic_details%7C1523149#page/1/mode/1/chapter/bibliographic_entity|bibliographic_details|1523149.

From Vienna to Beijing: the Copenhagen Hearing on Economic Justice and Women's Human Rights at the United Nations World Summit on Social Development, Copenhagen, March 1995. Center for Women's Global Leadership: 1995, https://www.cwgl.rutgers.edu/docman/coalition-building-publications/367-copenhagen-hearing-on-economic-justice/file.

Hartmann, Heidi, Ellen Bravo, Charlotte Bunch, Nancy Hartsock, Roberta Spalter-Roth, Linda Williams, and Maria Blanco. "Bringing Together Feminist Theory and Practice: A Collective Interview." *Signs* 21, no. 4 (1996): 917-51. www.jstor.org/stable/3175029.

"Program of Action of the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (Chapters I-VIII)." *Population and Development Review* 21, no. 1 (1995): 187-213. doi:10.2307/2137429.

Reilly, Niamh, and Charlotte Bunch. *Demanding Accountability: The Global Campaign and Vienna Tribunal for Women's Human Rights*, New Brunswick, NJ: Center for Women's Global Leadership, 1994. https://search-alexanderstreet-com.proxy.library.emory.edu/view/work/bibliographic_entity%7Cbibliographic_details%7C1647304#page/1/mode/1/chapter/bibliographic_entity|bibliographic_details|1647304.

Testimonies of the Global Tribunal On Violations of Women's Human Rights at the United Nations World Conference on Human Rights, Vienna, June 1993. New Brunswick, NJ: Center for Women's Global Leadership, 1994. https://search-alexanderstreet-com.proxy.library.emory.edu/view/work/bibliographic_entity%7Cbibliographic_details%7C910095#page/1/mode/1/chapter/bibliographic_entity|bibliographic_details|910095

Without Reservation: The Beijing Tribunal on Accountability for Women's Human Rights, edited by Niamh Reilly, New Brunswick, NJ: Center for Women's Global Leadership, 1996. https://search-alexanderstreet-com.proxy.library.emory.edu/view/work/bibliographic_entity%7Cbibliographic_details%7C910115#page/1/mode/1/chapter/bibliographic_entity%7Cdocument%7C911698.

Films

If Hope Were Enough. Directed by Margaret Crehan, Produced by Women's Caucus for Gender Justice. WITNESS (New York, NY – Brooklyn: WITNESS, 2000), https://video-alexanderstreet-com.proxy.library.emory.edu/watch/if-hope-were-enough/cite?context=channel:documentary-274.

Newspapers and Periodicals

Ladies' Home Journal
The Tribune
The Washington Post
UN Chronicle

Websites

"About the Women's Caucus," Women's Caucus for Gender Justice, http://iccwomen.org/wigjdraft1/Archives/oldWCGJ/aboutcaucus.html (accessed March 31, 2020).

"Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court," https://www.icc-cpi.int/resource-library/documents/rs-eng.pdf/ (accessed March 31, 2020).

Secondary Sources

Chen, Martha Alter. "Engendering World Conferences: The International Women's Movement and the United Nations." *Third World Quarterly* 16, no. 3 (1995): 477-93. www.jstor.org/stable/3992888.

Joachim, Jutta M. "Equality, Development, and Peace: The UN Decade for Women, 1975–1985." In *Agenda Setting, the UN, and NGOs: Gender Violence and Reproductive Rights*, 73-102. WASHINGTON, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2007. www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt2tt5f5.7.

McCammon, Holly J., Verta Taylor, Jo Reger, Rachel L. Einwohner, and Gretchen Arnold. "U.S. Women's Movements to End Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse, and Rape." In *The Oxford Handbook of U.S. Women's Social Movement Activism*. : Oxford University Press, 2017-07-27. https://www-oxfordhandbooks-com.proxy.library.emory.edu/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780190204204.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780190204204-e-15.

McCammon, Holly J., Verta Taylor, Jo Reger, Rachel L. Einwohner, Heidi E. Rademacher, and Kathleen M. Fallon. "The Historical Roots of a Global Feminist Perspective and the Growing Global Focus among U.S. Feminists." In *The Oxford Handbook of U.S. Women's Social Movement Activism*. : Oxford University Press, 2017-07-27. https://www-oxfordhandbooks-com.proxy.library.emory.edu/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780190204204.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780190204204-e-9.

McCammon, Holly J., Verta Taylor, Jo Reger, Rachel L. Einwohner, Suzanne Staggenborg, and Marie B. Skoczylas. "Battles over Abortion and Reproductive Rights: Movement Mobilization and Strategy." In The Oxford Handbook of U.S. Women's Social Movement Activism. : Oxford University Press, 2017-07-27. https://www-oxfordhandbooks-com.proxy.library.emory.edu/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780190204204.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780190204204-e-11.

Moyn, Samuel. *The Last Utopia*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010.

Smith, Jackie, and Dawn Wiest. "Global Conferences and Movement Sectors." In *Social Movements in the World-System: The Politics of Crisis and Transformation*, 100-31. Russell Sage Foundation, 2012. www.jstor.org/stable/10.7758/9781610447775.9.

Spees, Pam. "Women's Advocacy in the Creation of the International Criminal Court: Changing the Landscapes of Justice and Power." *Signs* 28, no. 4 (2003): 1233-254. doi:10.1086/375498.

Websites

Crimes of Sexual Violence," International Criminal Tribunal for Yugoslavia, https://www.icty.org/en/features/crimes-sexual-violence (accessed March 31, 2020).

"International Conference on Population and Development Programme of Action," https://www.unfpa.org/publications/international-conference-population-and-development-programme-action (accessed March 31, 2020).

"International Decades," United Nations, https://www.un.org/en/sections/observances/international-decades/index.html (accessed March 30, 2020).

Mattias Sundholm, "DPI: Department of Public Information," Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth, https://www.un.org/youthenvoy/2013/09/dpi-department-of-public-information/ (accessed Nov. 22, 2019).

"The ICTR in Brief," United Nations International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals, https://unictr.irmct.org/en/tribunal (accessed March 31, 2020).

U.N. Radio Tapes on Women," https://findingaids.library.northwestern.edu/repositories/7/resources/970 (accessed March 31, 2020).

"World Summit for Social Development 1995, United Nations, https://www.un.org/development/desa/dspd/world-summit-for-social-development-1995.html (accessed March 31, 2020).