

LEADERSHIP WHERE IT COUNTS

Around the world, women's lack of representation in government, especially high-level ministerial (executive) and legislative bodies, limits their influence over governance and public policies. Worldwide, women held only 14 percent of seats in parliaments in 2001, a slight increase from a decade earlier. In many countries in northern Africa and southern and western Asia, women hold fewer than 10 percent of seats in legislative bodies.

Viewed over the long term, women have made some political progress: Over the last century, voting rights have been extended to women in all but a few countries. Women have also become a growing part of the international political landscape, helped in part by the growing influence of women's groups in UN conferences such as the 1994 "International Conference on Population and Development" and the 1995 "Fourth World Conference on Women." Data from "Women of our World 2002," Population Reference Bureau website <<http://www.prb.org/>>

THE GLASS CEILING IS THICKER THAN IT SEEMS

Equality in the workforce is still a long way from reality. Women typically occupy lower-paid, lower-status jobs than men and have higher unemployment rates than men. Far more women than men work in "informal sector" occupations like street vending and market work, where wages are very low and no other benefits are afforded, such as safety standards, social security, or health insurance. Even when women work in the same sector as men, wages are typically lower. For many women, working outside the home may not be viewed as a gain in status but as an unwelcome economic necessity.

In general, women's opportunities are limited to a narrow range of "feminine jobs" (office work, service, sales and liberal professions at the middle level) that are usually paid lesser and are generally valued lesser than traditionally "male" occupations. data from <<http://www.prb.org/>>

SEXUAL POWER AND HYBRID LOOKS

The new image of sexuality that is fashionable in Asian media is a hybrid face of Asian and Eurasian features. Asian women have come to evoke cosmopolitanism, technological progress, and financial success that are presented as desirable traits. But Eurasian and Asian images undoubtedly represent homogenising and universalising notions of beauty. Eurasian images appeal to male sexual desires, showing beauty, youth, sexuality and fashion. In this sense, Asian and Eurasian iconography appropriates white western standards of beauty and femininity to our liking. Western beliefs in the "sexed" character of bodies are not "natural" in basis but, rather, are a component of specifically western gendering and sexual regimes. From the journal *Intersections: Gender History and Culture in the Asian Context* <<http://www.sshe.murdoch.edu.au/intersections/issue8/matthews.html>>

TO BE A WOMAN IS A NEVER CEASING STRUGGLE TO LIVE AND BE FREE.

From a poem by Joi Barrios, from the book of the same title, Babaylan Women's Publishing Collective, Manila, 1990

SUPERWOMEN OR DOUBLE BURDEN?

Even when women are employed outside the home in full-time employment, the entire burden of the housework continues to fall on their shoulders. Thus women have to work a "double shift" and carry the responsibility of a "double burden" of labor. In Asia and the Pacific, women work longer hours than men. They work twelve hours more per week, performing both paid and unpaid labor.

from *Trade Liberalization in Asia Economics: What it Means to Women's Work* on the International Gender and Trade Network website <<http://www.genderandtrade.net/EconLit/AsiaPacket.pdf>>

TRANSNATIONAL FEMINIST ORGANISING

Women are employing synergistic strategies in addressing power imbalances, not merely through global governance structures and processes but also through transnational organising and action along with other women's groups. These groupings acknowledge that while women's realities differ from North to South, there are still common struggles that cut across geographical, racial, social, class, ethnic, sexual and sectoral lines. Gendered power structures exist in all of those levels, and inter-movement strategies are necessary in transforming these power structures to achieve women's empowerment.

SHAMAN/ REBEL

Priestesses have played significant roles in liberation movements: Nehanda Nyakasiyana in the Shona revolt against the English colonization, for example, and María de la Candelaria in the Maya uprising against the Spanish. The old priestess Cécile Fatiman inaugurated the Haitian revolution against slavery in a

Vodun ceremony in the Bois Caiman in 1791. In recent history, the role of women leaders in indigenous people's rights continues, even more so as many of these indigenous communities face conflict and claims on natural resources that threaten their very existence. Source: "Women in Power," Suppressed Histories website, posted on <http://www.suppressedhistories.net/articles/women_power.html>

HOLDING UP HALF THE SKY, ON OUR BENT BACKS

There is evidence that many of the poor are women. Women in poverty are least likely to take advantage of any opportunities that may be made available by trade liberalization. Trade adjustment assistance and safety nets are at best concessions to market frictions. A more realistic view of the market would not only mean strengthening these mechanisms to protect the vulnerable. It would also mean that trade policy must empower the vulnerable, removing them from a situation of weakness and dependence, and placing them in a position of strength and self-reliance.

from Marina Fe Durano, *Gender Issues in International Trade*, <<http://www.genderandtrade.net/Archives/Marina%27s%20paper.htm>>

WOMEN WARRIORS

Within a community engaged in an armed struggle where notions of the unequivocally political female militant dominate, there is often little space to articulate individualised identities for woman militants. Writing from Sri Lanka, Neloufer De Mel claims that, in such situations, "for the militants, individuality can only be creatively fictionalised.... The politics of self-representation otherwise denies the militant a personality and emotional expression of his/her own; the reality of his/her driving impulses lies in complete obedience to the will of the militant leadership on whose behalf she/he struggles." from "The Female Militant Romanticised" by Sarala Emmanuel as posted on Women in Action, <<http://www.isiswomen.org/pub/wia/wia102/femmilitant.htm>>

BUYING BEAUTY

To gain power through beauty, women pay too high a price: The beauty industry is already a \$160 billion-a-year global industry, encompassing make-up, skin and hair care, fragrances, cosmetic surgery, health clubs and diet pills. It is estimated that the global beauty industry—consisting of skin care worth \$24 billion; make-up, \$18 billion; hair-care products, \$38 billion; and perfumes, \$15 billion—is growing at up to 7% a year, more than twice the rate of the developed world's GDP. Cosmetic surgery is a \$20 billion-a-year business. Data from "Pots of Promise" article, *The Economist* website posted at <<http://www.economist.com/>>

CYBERFEMMES

Positions of power in technology are still dominated by men, creating a technological power imbalance that women face every time they log on. Even as women become an equal percentage of [computer] users, the power dynamic will continue until they also make up an equal percentage of web designers, programmers, owners, and hardware specialists. Women's confidence, ability to operate their own computers, respect in technical environments, career choices, and economic opportunities are all negatively influenced by this power dynamic. The question of differential access and control is also played out in how the Internet is used to further exploit women's labor, bodies and sexuality. For instance, by facilitating sexual trafficking and anti-women pornography, reinforcing the commodified/ objectified view of women's bodies.

From "Why Gender Makes a Difference in Cyberspace" <http://projects.ups.edu/honors_thesis/handytech%20gender.htm>