



*Journal of Social Issues*, Vol. 76, No. 2, 2020, pp. 391–415  
doi: 10.1111/josi.12377

This article is part of the Special Issue “Reproductive Justice: Moving the Margins to the Center in Social Issues Research” Asia A. Eaton and Dionne P. Stephens (Special Issue Editors). For a full listing of Special Issue papers, see: <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/josi.2020.76.issue-2/issuetoc>.

## **Reproductive Justice: The Role of Community-Based Organizational Participation in Reproductive Decision-Making and Educational Aspirations among Women in Nicaragua**

**Shelly Grabe\*** and **Daniel Rodríguez Ramírez**

*University of California*

**Anjali Dutt**

*University of Cincinnati*

*Across the world, women experience violations to their reproductive health and threats to their educational aspirations that limit their achievement. Reproductive health and education are examples of women’s human rights that are connected by systemic gender inequalities that lead millions of women to experience discrimination and stereotyping that threaten these basic rights. The current study uses a reproductive justice framework to examine how a community-based organization led by a group of women in rural Nicaragua challenges gendered psychosocial processes related to women’s rights violations. In partnership with a grassroots local organization, we used structural equation modeling to demonstrate, in a sample of almost 300 women, that organizational participation was positively related to women’s reproductive decision-making and educational aspiration, in part due to relationships with women’s self-esteem and sense of powerlessness in sociopolitical matters. Given the persistent role of gendered inequities in the reproductive decision-making and educational aspirations of girls and women,*

---

\* Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Shelly Grabe, Department of Psychology, University of California, Santa Cruz, 1156 High St., Santa Cruz, CA 95064, USA. Phone number: 831-459-2795 [e-mail: [sgrabe@ucsc.edu](mailto:sgrabe@ucsc.edu)].

*considering the social-structural contexts that enable or limit rights is imperative to creating viable routes to gender justice.*

Women and girls' reproductive health and access to education are recognized throughout the world as examples of human rights. In fact, the United Nation's Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) contains two articles that specifically address discrimination against women in educational achievement and reproductive health (Articles 10 and 12, respectively; CEDAW, 1979). As of 2019, more than 189 countries have ratified the convention agreeing to provisions laid out in the articles (UN Treaty Collections, 2019). Nevertheless, the world over, women continue to experience violations to their reproductive health and threats to educational aspiration that limit their achievement. For example, women in many parts of the world are denied birth control or abortion access, and discriminatory stereotypes and limited opportunities threaten girls' and women's educational aspirations nearly everywhere (Kismödi et al., 2012; UN Women, 2015). Given the persistent role of gendered sociostructural inequities in the reproductive decision-making and educational aspirations of girls and women, trying to understand how to enhance these rights, without considering the social-structural contexts that enable or limit rights, is not enough to create viable routes to gender justice.

In the context of persistent rights violations, it is imperative to examine the psychological processes related to violations, and what may influence them, in a manner that can lead to the actualization of women's rights. The current study assesses how organizational participation interrupts sociocultural norms related to structural oppression by impacting women's self-esteem and sense of powerlessness, thereby increasing the potential for women's reproductive decision-making and educational aspiration. Moreover, it should be recognized that because human rights violations are shaped by systemic oppressions, threats to reproductive and educational rights are a greater risk among women from additional marginalized social locations (e.g., women of Color, low-income, majority world<sup>1</sup>). The current study takes a reproductive justice approach to understanding women's reproductive decision-making and educational aspiration, specifically, by examining how a community-based organization led by a group of women in Nicaragua challenges gendered psychosocial processes related to women's rights violations (Ross, 2009; Zucker, 2014).

---

<sup>1</sup>Given that the commonly used terms "developing" and "third world" are often used by so-called "first world" nations to describe the relatively low economic well-being of another country in a manner that implies inferiority, we use the term majority world, borrowed from Cigdem Kagitcibasi (2002) and Kurtiş and Adams (2015) because individuals from "developing" countries constitute the majority of the world's population.

*Human Rights and Reproductive Justice*

International conventions, such as the United Nations' CEDAW, strive to provide legal frameworks through which women's human rights can be protected. Indeed, much that is written about reproductive health has been from a rights, or law-focused perspective (Luna & Luker, 2013). However, this focus inadvertently prioritized efforts led by predominately White women to attain and defend legal rights, with little attention afforded to understanding how sociocultural contexts enable or limit the actualization of women's rights (Luna & Luker, 2013; Silliman, Fried, Ross, & Gutiérrez, 2016). It is plausible that violations against women continue so persistently because a rights-based approach that fails to consider power structures and sociocultural norms that inhibit women cannot adequately alter the contexts in which most women experience violations to their rights. A focus on reproductive *justice*, rather than reproductive *rights*, instead emphasizes the sociostructural factors that foster women's marginalization, as well as community-developed solutions to structural inequalities (Luna & Luker, 2013). Given the persistent violation of women's reproductive and educational rights throughout the world, there remains a crucial need to explore how structural inequities sustain women's rights violations and to better understand the psychosocial processes that facilitate justice.

To date, processes that fuel individuals committed to gendered justice, in general, have received only limited attention from the discipline of psychology. Mainstream psychology has, with few exceptions, largely neglected the voices of globally marginalized women and women of Color in understanding action aimed at change (see Lykes, 1997 for an exception). For example, much of mainstream feminist work in psychology has developed theories and understanding of gender oppression in Western, educated, industrialized, rich, democratic (or WEIRD; Henrich, Heine, & Norenzayan, 2010) contexts and imposed those perspectives across varied settings for understanding what has been conceptualized as "universal" gendered oppression. More specifically, most mainstream psychology employs methodologies that involve sampling predominately White undergraduate college students at U.S. universities. Although recent years have witnessed the introduction of reproductive justice frameworks within psychology (e.g., Chrisler, 2012), what remains necessary are empirical investigations examining and analyzing the influence of power structures and sociocultural norms in women's rights violations from this perspective.

Moreover, a close examination of the scholarship on reproductive *rights* unveils that prior research investigating experiences for women of Color often focuses on the abuses they have suffered, rather than considering women of Color's perspective and experiences as reflecting legitimate sources of knowledge (Silliman et al., 2016; for an exception see Smith, Sundstrom, & Delay, 2020). An underlying goal of social justice research is a reconfiguration of knowledge production

that shifts power and control into the hands of the oppressed or marginalized (Fals Borda, 1985; Sandoval, 2000). Therefore, the current study was designed in accordance with Mohanty's (2003) assertion that understanding women's struggles for justice must involve illuminating majority-world women's engagement with resistance. Although most of the reproductive organizing done by women throughout the world has been undocumented and unanalyzed, this study aims to "put the activism of women of color in the foreground" (Silliman et al., 2016, p. 8) by taking the position that feminist activists in a majority world are setting an example for rethinking conventional scientific wisdom and illuminating concepts related to the broad project of justice (Martín-Baró, 1994; Swarr & Nagar, 2012).

### *Nicaragua: Historical and Social Context*

Although efforts to enhance women's rights are not unique to any part of the world, organizations involved in the *Movimiento Autónomo de Mujeres* (MAM; Women's Autonomous Movement) in Nicaragua provide an ideal context for examining community mobilized efforts to challenge the structural oppressions that marginalize women. Like many Latin American social movements in the 1970s and 1980s, the women's movement in Nicaragua emerged in the context of dictatorial regimes as a marginalized and restricted movement (Molyneux, 2001). However, by 1992 Nicaragua had the largest, most pluralistic, and most autonomous feminist movement in Central America (Kampwirth, 1996).

Since its conception, the movement has strategically organized to advance women's rights—with violations of women's reproductive health and education being at the forefront of activist efforts. A focus on these particular rights has been prioritized because, for example, Nicaragua is one of few countries in the world with a total ban on abortion. Women's rights advocates in Nicaragua have fought decades for policy changes recognizing that the restrictive laws on abortion put girls and women's health and lives at risk (Grabe, 2016a). Moreover, because Nicaragua is one of the poorest countries in the region, reliance on girls and women to contribute to family income from an early age has the potential to interrupt many girls' educational aspirations. For example, starting at 15 years of age, nearly 80% of the informal sector service in Nicaragua is female (World Bank, 2017).

The Women's Autonomous Movement in Nicaragua has focused on promoting women's organizations that address violations of women's rights that are locally and contextually relevant (Kampwirth, 2008; Molyneux, 1985). The organization of focus in the current study, *Centro de Mujeres Xochilt Acalt* (Xochilt Acalt Women's Center), emerged out of the women's movement as an effort to support women in the rural sector. The organization formed shortly after a conservative shift in presidential power in 1990 introduced several structural adjustment policies that yielded severe cutbacks to public sector commitments that disproportionately impacted women. These new economic policies were associated with

weakening the already precarious governmental support for women's rights. It was within this context of increasing structural marginalization that Xochitl Acalt was founded by a self-mobilized group of women in 1992. The initial aims of the organization were rooted in women's reproductive health (i.e., addressing high levels of cervical/uterine cancer), though over the course of the next several decades the aims expanded to address additional problems and demands from women in the local community that included: illiteracy, lack of food, limited resources for family planning, high levels of gender-based violence, male migration for work, and a need to improve unequal power relations between women and men (Montenegro & Cuadra, 2004).

Because a number of women's concerns were tied to their cultural, social, economic, and political locations as women, the organization developed educational and justice-oriented workshops to expand women's knowledge of their human rights and the availability of resources in their community. The workshops were developed in the tradition of Freire's (1972) theories of social change, and aimed to enhance women's knowledge about their rights and capability to contribute to social change through consciousness-raising processes. For example, within the workshops women communally discussed and reflected upon topics including gender roles and identity; sources and consequences of poverty; violence; and gender inequality (Montenegro & Cuadra, 2004). Additionally, information about opportunities for women to participate in activities, such as political decision-making and reproductive and economic rights activism, were provided and discussed. Workshops within the organization were all led by women who had previously completed workshops and had received training on facilitation. The purpose of the current study was to examine how participation in the organization was related to: (1) women's increased ability to voice concerns related to reproductive decision-making with their partners due, in part, to its relation to self-esteem and (2) women's educational aspiration due, in part, to its relation to a sense of powerlessness in sociopolitical matters.

### *Self-Esteem and Reproductive Decision-Making*

One way that self-esteem may impact psychosocial processes is in women's ability to negotiate needs and desires in their relationships with their husbands. It has been demonstrated that women's limited ability to exercise agency over their lives is related to the suppression of reproductive rights, including the inability to refuse unwanted sex or assert the desire to use birth control and protection (Sanchez, Crocker, & Boike, 2005; Sternberg, 2000). If women do not feel they have the right to voice their opinions, it may be difficult to engage in reproductive decision-making with their male partners. Resiliency theories suggest that individuals with high self-esteem may be buffered from engaging in health compromising behaviors in high-risk environments (Garmezy, 1991).

Among adolescent girls, lower self-esteem has been linked to early intercourse, increased number of sexual partners, having had a child, and STD diagnosis (Fisher, Schneider, Pegler, & Napolitano, 1991; Gardner, Frank, & Amankwaa, 1998; Kowaleski-Jones & Mott, 1998; MacDonald & Martineau, 2002; Spencer, Zimet, Aalsma, & Orr, 2002). Research has also found a relationship between women's self-esteem and condom use (Abel, 1998; Somlai et al., 2000; Tigges, 2001), effective condom negotiation (Ghobadzadeh, 2014; Salazar et al., 2005), and involvement in high-risk sexual behaviors (e.g., Beadnell, Baker, Morrison, & Knox, 2000; Cole, 1997; Gullette & Lyons, 2006; Sterk, Klein, & Elifson, 2004; Wild, Flisher, Bhana, & Lombard, 2004; Zimmer-Gembeck & Helfand, 2008). Moreover, self-esteem has been related to constructs such as communication and negotiation skills (Braithwaite & Thomas, 2001; McCree, 1997), suggesting that self-esteem may play an important role in women's reproductive decision-making and may be one route to address processes that threaten these rights.

Although many studies in this area of inquiry have focused on young White women (Goodson et al., 2006), it is possible that psychological processes related to reproductive decision-making impact Latinas in culturally dependent ways. Limited investigation among Latinas in the United States suggests that gendered expectations of who initiates condom-use can limit Latinas' sexual decision-making in order to avoid being labeled as promiscuous or sexually experienced (Castañeda & Collins, 1998; Marín & Gómez, 1997). Similarly, additional research conducted among Latinas has found that gendered scripts, which impose a passive role in sexual decision-making, can limit women's ability to prevent sexually transmitted infections (Altschuler & Rhee, 2015; Jacobs, & Kane, 2011; Salazar et al., 2005). Although experiences of Latinas in the United States and women from Latin America differ in a number of regards, it is also possible that shared experiences surrounding cultural heritage and gender role socialization make previous scholarship conducted with U.S. Latinas more relevant than the scholarship conducted with predominately White college students (Bowleg, Belgrave, & Reisen, 2000).

In sum, the bulk of findings in this literature lend reason to hypothesize that women's self-esteem may be related to their reproductive decision-making. Given that women's self-esteem is linked to larger sociocultural structures surrounding gender inequity (Mahaffy, 2004), it is imperative to examine how social change interventions aimed at shifting women's psychosocial experience may be related to women's reproductive justice. Prior research has found that community interventions raising gender and sexual health awareness have been linked to increases in women's self-esteem (Katz, Joiner, & Kwon, 2002; Macalister, 1999; Saleh-onoya et al., 2009). Therefore, in the current study we explicitly examined whether self-esteem might help explain the impact of organizational participation on reproductive decision-making of women living in a rural area of Central America.

*Sense of Powerlessness and Educational Aspiration*

Another psychosocial process relevant to the actualization of women's rights is women's sense of powerlessness in sociopolitical matters and its relation to educational aspiration. Policies and practices throughout the world often exclude the participation of marginalized community members from the public sphere by making it more difficult for oppressed groups to gain access to education and training which can be considered either implicit or explicit requirements for greater societal participation (Lauder, Brown, Dillabough & Halsey, 2006). However, relatively little psychological research examines the relationship between women's perceived sense of powerlessness and educational aspirations (for an exception, see McLaren, 1982). Nevertheless, there is research to suggest that perceived systemic barriers and gender roles influence women's educational aspirations (Holms & Esses, 1988; Kenny, Blustein, Chaves, Grossman, & Gallagher, 2003; Meinster & Rose, 2001; Rothon, Srephin, Klineberg, Cattell, & Stansfeld, 2011). It is possible that perceived systemic barriers and the belief that gender roles are immutable reflect a sense of powerlessness in sociopolitical matters that can negatively impact women's educational aspiration. In the absence of prior investigations that measure sense of powerlessness specifically, we review how perceived barriers and gender roles (as proxies) may be linked to women's educational aspirations.

In the career psychology literature, it has been widely documented that girls' educational aspirations are limited by systemic barriers. For instance, it has been demonstrated in the United States, that African American girls' aspirations are hindered by financial barriers, limited access to educational opportunities, lacking community infrastructure, pregnancy-risk, and overall constraining sociohistorical inequities (Farmer et al., 2006; Means, Clayton, Conzelmann, Baynes, & Umbach, 2016). Moreover, it has been found that White girls perceive fewer barriers to their aspirations than do their Latino and African American counterparts (Irvin, Byun, Meece, Farmer, & Hutchins, 2012; McWhirter, 1997). There is also ample evidence that gender role expectations (e.g., family obligations and care-giving; prioritizing careers that help others) limit the educational aspiration of girls and women (Ceci & Williams, 2010; Eccles, 2011; Holms & Esses, 1988; Sandberg et al., 1991). In contrast, in egalitarian households that do not assign work and childcare based on gender roles, girls report higher aspirations to attain more education (Davis & Pearce, 2007).

Both of these proxies for sense of powerlessness—systemic barriers and immutable gender roles—have been linked to Latinas' educational aspirations, specifically. For example, research centering Latinas experiences illustrates that perceived educational barriers negatively predict educational aspiration (Flores, Navarro, & DeWitz, 2008; Ojeda & Flores, 2008). More specifically, researchers have found that Latinas report perceived barriers related to family financial struggle, migration status, the pressure to work for income rather than study, and not

believing one has the intellectual capacity to receive admission as negatively impacting their educational aspiration (Gonzalez, Stein, & Huq, 2013; Irvin et al., 2012; McWhirter, Valdez, & Caban, 2013). Researchers in Latin America found that gender moderated the relation between individuals' aspirations and career success among a Peruvian sample. Specifically, individual aspirations predicted career success for men, but not women to the extent that women reported career orientations related to a preference for balance between work and family (Dolan, Bejarano, & Tzafirir, 2011). Several studies have also documented the negative relation between gender role expectations (i.e., being the spiritual pillar of families, prioritizing careers that help others, family obligations, care-giving) and Latinas' educational aspiration (Ojeda & Flores, 2008; Piña-Watson, Lorenzo-Blanco, Dornhecker, Martinez, & Nagoshi, 2016; Toyokawa & Toyokawa, 2019). These findings collectively suggest that girls and women's perceptions related to the possibility of changing political structures (i.e., powerlessness in sociopolitical matters) may be linked to their aspirational goals.

In sum, these findings lend reason to suggest that perceptions of the social-structural context being immutable, or a sense of powerlessness, may negatively impact girls and women's educational aspiration. Prior literature suggests that workshops aimed at raising awareness on the impact of systemic barriers such as racial oppression, economic struggles, and limited schooling have been found to have a positive effect on youth's educational aspirations (Jackson et al., 2006). Because the organization in the current study facilitated women's understanding of gender roles and experiences as related to systemic inequity, we explicitly examined whether sense of powerlessness in sociopolitical matters might help explain the impact of organizational participation on the educational aspiration of women.

### *The Current Study*

One of the underlying goals of collaborative community-based research is to challenge assumptions about knowledge production and raise questions about the purpose of research. Furthermore, feminist approaches to epistemology share in common that women's lived experiences are legitimate sources of knowledge and that feminist thinking and practice requires eliminating the boundaries of division that privilege who can be a knower and what can be known (Hesse-Biber, 2007; Warner, Settles, & Shields, 2016). Research employing a reproductive justice framework should give attention to whose voices are privileged in the production of scholarship that attempts to create a space for the expression of subjugated knowledge (Fals Borda, 1985).

As authors, we are writing from a highly educated social location within the United States underscoring unequal and complex relationships between the authors and the women included in this study. Of particular relevance in this case is



that the United States has a long history of economic exploitation and armed conflict in Nicaragua. Recognizing and understanding how power asymmetries may manifest in the research collaboration was key to this being a liberatory feminist project (Grewal & Kaplan, 1994, 2000; Mohanty, 2003). For example, a critical communicative methodology was followed whereby an egalitarian dialogue between the researcher and leaders of the organization was central to designing and conducting the research (Gómez, Racionero, & Sordé, 2010). This approach is aligned with a reproductive justice framework focused on empowerment within communities of women and using research to contribute to transforming social contexts and improving the lives of the group being studied (for more discussion, see Grabe, 2016b,c).

The current study stemmed from a program of community-based partnership established between the first author and Xochilt Acalt that went back over 10 years (e.g., Grabe, 2010; Grabe, 2016a). The first author initially met the community leaders at Xochilt during a trip to Nicaragua in 2005 in which she visited several key women's rural grassroots organizations that were working to transform gender inequity. Conversations with the organizational leaders led to a mutual interest in using research to support the social change efforts being made by the organization. For the current study, the first and third authors worked together with leaders of the organization to determine the study design and discuss the role of research within the organization's agenda for change. Importantly, this collaboration involved recognizing that an underlying goal of the research was a reconfiguration of knowledge production that shifted power and control into the hands of the marginalized (Fals Borda, 1985).

### *Participants*

Data were collected during February and March of 2015 in the municipality of Malpaisillo-Larreynaga in the department of León, Nicaragua. Participants were 298 women ranging from 18 to 77 years of age, who were living in Malpaisillo-Larreynaga at the time of data collection. Half of the women ( $n = 149$ ) had participated in workshops facilitated by Xochilt Acalt, and the other half ( $n = 149$ ) were women residing in nearby communities, but where Xochilt Acalt was not active. Xochilt Acalt participants were identified and randomly selected to be interviewed from a list of all women who had participated in the organization's education and/or civic participation workshops ( $N = 626$ ).

The 149 women in the non-Xochilt Acalt comparison sample came from five communities that neighbored Malpaisillo-Larreynaga where there were similar levels of poverty and access to education, but where Xochilt Acalt did not currently offer participation. Women residing in communities where Xochilt Acalt hosted workshops, but who had not participated, were not selected for the comparison group because merely living in close proximity to the organization, and regularly

**Table 1.** Participant Demographics

	Xochilt participants ( <i>n</i> = 149)	Comparison participants ( <i>n</i> = 149)	<i>p</i>
Age ( <i>M, SD</i> )	40.56 (14.06)	39.97 (13.37)	.317
Relationship status (% partnered)	71.8	77.9	.108
Age difference between woman and her partner ( <i>M, SD</i> )	4.87 (6.23)	4.5 (8.41)	.719
Number of children ( <i>M, SD</i> )	3.16 (2.03)	3.5 (2.48)	.404
Education (%)			.788
Completed primary	38.3	47.4	
Completed secondary	31.5	22.1	
Additional schooling (e.g., technical or university)	15.4	10.7	
Literacy (% literate)	90.6	85.2	.288
Employed outside the home (%)	30.3	27.6	.230

interacting with participating members, could have exposed women to the values, resources, and mission of the organization. Participants in the five comparison communities were identified using systematic sampling procedures for remote rural areas were employed with the assistance of community leaders (see Grabe, 2010, for more detail).

Demographic statistics broken down by participation in Xochilt Acalt are presented in Table 1. Participants' average age was approximately 40 and about three-quarters were in partnered relationships. The majority had three or more children and most had completed at least some formal schooling (87.2%) and were literate (87.8%). Additionally, about one-third of women were employed outside the home. The two groups did not differ in demographic characteristics; thus, these variables were not included as covariates in subsequent analyses.

### *Procedure*

Participants were interviewed by five trained female interviewers (de Jong, 2016) who were local to Nicaragua, native Spanish speakers, and residents of the capital city, Managua, located approximately 100 kilometers (60 miles) from Malpaisillo. The geographic distance in residence between the interviewer and interviewee was intended to support a sense of anonymity for the interviewee, decreasing the likelihood of social desirability bias within responses, while simultaneously facilitating comfortable communication in Spanish with another woman from Nicaragua.

The interviewers arrived at women's homes and explained that they were surveying women about life in Malpaisillo-Larreynaga, and would be asking women questions about their opinions, interests, relationships, and activities. The interviewers also explained that they were working with researchers from a university in the United States who were not formally associated with Xochilt Acalt. Once a woman agreed to participate, the interviewers read the informed consent which explained that responses would be kept confidential, names would not be attached to responses, and that only an aggregate of responses would be disseminated. Interviews were conducted in private spaces in the interviewees' homes and lasted between 35 minutes and 1 hour.

### *Measures*

Survey items were translated into Spanish, their meaning evaluated in partnership with the research team to ensure relevance in the specific location, and then back-translated to check that the meanings were properly conveyed. Consistent with previous research conducted in remote areas where literacy rates are low, including research conducted in this region, items involving Likert responses were converted to be asked dichotomously (Ellsberg & Heise, 2005; Grabe, 2010).

*Demographic information.* Sociodemographic items included questions about women's age, number of children, education level, occupation, earnings, employment status, and relationship status.

*Organizational participation.* Participants were asked whether or not they had participated in the organization Xochilt Acalt. Organizational participation was coded as (1) if the woman had participated in any Xochilt workshops and (0) if she had not.

*Self-esteem.* The 10-item Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale was used to assess participants' sense of self-worth (Rosenberg, 1965). Sample items included whether or not participants agreed or disagreed with items such as "At times, I think I am no good at all," and "I feel that I am a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others." Mean scores were calculated, and higher scores reflected higher levels of self-esteem. Internal consistency was 0.69.

*Sense of powerlessness.* Four items selected from Neal and Groat's (1974) powerlessness scale were used to measure individuals' beliefs that it is possible to change political structures in society. These items were selected based on relevance to a sense of powerlessness in sociopolitical matters. Mean scores were calculated. Lower scores reflect a lesser sense of powerlessness. Sample items included whether women agreed or disagreed with items such as "The average

citizen can have an influence on government decisions,” and “It is only an illusion to believe that one can really influence what happens in society at large.” Internal consistency was 0.60.

*Reproductive decision-making.* Respondents completed a reproductive decision-making scale designed by the International Center for Research on Women (2006). Women reported whether her partner (coded as 1), both she and her partner equally (coded as 2), or she (coded as 3) made the final decision on four items of reproductive health. Examples included, “use of contraception” and “to have or not have sex.” Responses to the four items were summed with higher scores reflecting more autonomy in decision-making for the respondent. Internal consistency was 0.63.

*Educational aspiration.* Three items were used to assess ambition and desire to complete additional formal education. These included “If you had the means, is going to university something that you would like to do?,” “Have you taken steps to further your education?,” and a reverse coded item, “Would you be satisfied if you did not complete any more schooling?” A sum of affirmative answers was taken as an index of educational aspiration. Because this scale was conceptualized as a manifest count score, internal consistency was not assessed.

### *Analytic Strategy*

First, group difference tests were conducted on all demographic variables based upon whether or not women had participated in Xochilt Acalt, to both contextualize participants and identify potential covariates. Next, a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was conducted to determine mean differences among the variables of interest, based upon participation in Xochilt Acalt. We then used structural equation modeling (SEM) to test a hypothesized model linking organizational participation to greater involvement in reproductive decision-making, and higher levels of educational aspiration, via levels of self-esteem and sense of powerlessness. The model was estimated using AMOS 4.0 structural equation modeling software (Arbuckle & Wothke, 1999). Bootstrapping analyses were used to test for mediation (Preacher & Hayes, 2004, 2008). Alternative models were also tested.

## **Results**

### *Group Differences*

A multivariate analysis of variance test was run to compare differences between Xochilt Acalt participants and nonparticipants across all variables of

**Table 2.** Mean Process Values and Outcomes by Group

	Xochilt Acalt participants <i>n</i> = 149 <i>M</i> ( <i>SD</i> )	Comparison Participants <i>n</i> = 149, <i>M</i> ( <i>SD</i> )	<i>p</i>	<i>d</i>
<b>Process variables</b>				
Self-esteem	0.85 (.14)	0.80 (.17)	.005	0.32
Sense of powerlessness	0.36 (.20)	0.43 (.16)	<.000	0.39
Reproductive decision-making	6.36 (1.98)	5.50 (1.84)	<.000	0.45
Educational aspiration	1.75 (.98)	1.51 (.93)	.035	0.25

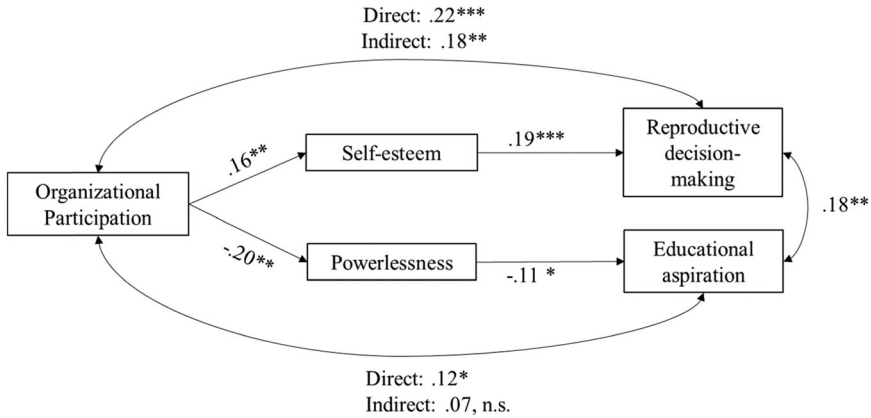
*Note.* Effect sizes (*d*) were calculated as the difference between group means divided by the standardized deviation ( $d = [M1 - M2/s]$ ). Effect sizes are computed to assess the magnitude of the difference between groups. According to Cohen (1988), an effect size of 0.2 might be considered “small” (although still a notable difference), whereas values around 0.5 are “medium” effects, and values of 0.8 or higher considered “large” effects.

interest: self-esteem, sense of powerlessness, reproductive decision-making, and educational aspiration. The omnibus test was significant,  $F(4, 293) = 7.82$   $p < .000$ . As can be seen in Table 2, participants and nonparticipants significantly differed on all of the variables in the expected direction. Women who were participants of Xochilt Acalt reported higher levels of self-esteem, lower sense of powerlessness, a greater voice in reproductive decision-making, and higher levels of educational aspiration.

#### *Testing a Model of Reproductive Justice*

As described in the introduction, we hypothesized that participation in Xochilt Acalt would be linked to greater involvement in reproductive decision-making via self-esteem and to higher levels of educational aspiration via a reduced sense of powerlessness. Multiple fit indices were used as guides to evaluate goodness-of-model fit: Chi square goodness-of-fit statistics, the normed fit index (NFI; Bentler & Bonett, 1980), the comparative fit index (CFI), and the root mean squared error of approximation (RMSEA). A satisfactory fit is indicated by a nonsignificant chi-square or a chi-square lower than double the degrees of freedom, NFI and CFI values greater than .95 (Hu & Bentler, 1999), and an RMSEA value lower than .08 (Steiger, 1990).

Model fit of the hypothesized path model suggest the model provided excellent fit to the data (i.e.,  $\chi^2 = 1.88$ ,  $df = 3$ ,  $p = .60$ ,  $NFI = .97$ ,  $CFI = 1.00$ ,  $RMSEA = .00$ ). As shown in Figure 1, involvement in Xochilt Acalt was related to having a greater role in reproductive decision-making, in part, due to the role of increased self-esteem. Additionally, involvement in Xochilt Acalt was related



**Fig 1.** Model demonstrating significant pathways linking participation in Xochilt Acalt to increased participation in reproductive decision-making and higher levels of educational aspiration via self-esteem and sense of powerlessness. Values are standardized beta weights. \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , and \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

to higher levels of educational aspiration via decreases in sense of powerlessness. Moreover, bootstrapping analyses with 5000 resamples were used to test for mediation, as recommended by Preacher and Hayes (2008). Bootstrapping analyses demonstrated that increased levels of self-esteem partially mediated the relationship between participation in Xochilt Acalt and reproductive decision-making ( $B = .12$ , 95% CI [0.03, 0.28]). More specifically, the relationship between organizational participation and the reproductive decision-making was reduced (from  $B = .22$ ,  $p < .000$ ), though remained significant (to  $B = .18$ ,  $p < .000$ , as reflected in Figure 1) in the presence of the mediating variable indicating partial, rather than full, mediation. Results of the bootstrapping analysis also confirmed the mediating role of sense of powerlessness in the relation between participation in Xochilt Acalt and educational aspiration ( $B = .04$ ; 95% CI = [0.01 to 0.11]). In this case the relationship between organizational participation and educational aspiration became nonsignificant ( $B = .07$ ,  $p = .11$ , as reflected in Figure 1, reduced from  $B = .12$ ,  $p = .047$ ) when controlling for sense of powerlessness, thus suggesting full mediation.

Finally, because it was plausible that both higher self-esteem and a decreased sense of powerlessness could arise as *outcomes* from having a greater role in reproductive decision-making and from developing higher levels of educational aspiration (rather than the other way around), alternative models were tested reversing the order of the data. This model did not provide adequate fit to the data (i.e.,  $\chi^2 = 14.97$ ,  $df = 4$ ,  $p < .000$ , NFI = .78, CFI = .81, RMSEA = .10). Therefore the findings suggest that participation in Xochilt Acalt

is related to outcomes for women in areas related to human rights, namely greater involvement in reproductive decision-making and higher educational aspiration.

### Discussion

As articulated in the introduction to this Special Issue, researchers must recognize that perceptions of rights related to women's reproductive health are outcomes of women and girl's interactions with others and with systems (Eaton & Stephens, 2020). Consistent with this understanding, the current study was designed within a reproductive justice framework to empirically examine whether a community-based organization that addressed gendered psychosocial processes could help in understanding factors that shape women's reproductive health outcomes. The findings from the current study center women's experience from the majority world, and uncover processes surrounding women's reproductive decision-making and educational aspiration that, to our knowledge, have not yet been demonstrated. Specifically, our results yielded support for two primary processes: (1) we found that organizational participation was associated with women's increased ability to voice their concerns and actualize their desires in matters related to reproductive decision-making with their partners, due, in part, to its relation to self-esteem, and (2) organizational participation was also positively associated with educational aspiration, in part, due to its relation to a lower sense of powerlessness among women.

Moreover, the two outcomes of interest—reproductive decision-making and educational aspiration—were also linked to each other. This finding in and of itself is not surprising. According to analyses of data from demographic and health surveys in nine Latin American countries, women's education levels are a significant predictor of family size, with no education being linked to large family sizes (e.g., six to seven children) and higher levels of women's education predicting smaller families (e.g., two to three children; Martin & Juarez, 1995). Given the history and persistence of gendered oppression worldwide, findings that illuminate pathways toward improving equity in matters related to reproductive rights and educational aspiration for women are of critical importance.

The findings from this research may be valuable to both psychology researchers and groups seeking to enhance social justice and uphold values of equity and community well-being. In seeking to promote research that contributes to change, researchers within psychology have encouraged an analysis that goes beyond demonstrating group differences that reflect inequity by shifting the focus to processes that might disrupt their continuation (Dutt & Grabe, 2019; Grabe, 2016a,b,c). Similarly, interdisciplinary scholars have written about methodologies that can expose resistance to and rethinking of social structures by investigating individuals who have developed an oppositional ideology and are engaged in

resisting social structures (Sandoval, 2000). Centering the experiences of women in the majority world who were participating in a community-led organization was an opportunity to rethink conventional research practices, thereby identifying pathways that can contribute knowledge to the psychological processes associated with reproductive decision-making and educational aspiration. In particular, the findings from the current study underscore the value of grassroots empowerment opportunities for women to understand their human rights as they relate to systematic inequities, power dynamics, and social-structural contexts.

Although not having more specific detail on the workshops as an intervention is a limitation, we found that participating in an organizational setting that explicitly conveyed knowledge about women's human rights was positively related to processes that related to the actualization of women's rights. Thus, while the particular participation or outcomes assessed in any given study will certainly vary upon sociocultural context and where such community-based work is happening, the findings have strong implications in the fight for women's rights worldwide. As Geraldine Moane (1999) suggested, psychological research aimed at change "aims to facilitate breaking out of oppression by identifying processes and practices which can transform the psychological patterns associated with oppression and facilitate taking action to bring about change in social conditions" (p. 180). Our findings demonstrated that women who are organizational participants report psychological patterns—higher self-esteem and lowered sense of powerlessness—that are associated with enhanced social conditions—greater reproductive decision-making and lowered sense of powerlessness.

In addition to research implications, the findings also lend evidence to the importance of community-based organizations, and communities of women, challenging structural oppressions in a manner that reduces oppressive contexts and results in outcomes related to reproductive justice. The organization, in their effort to transform traditional power structures—provided an important and effective means to achieving change. Of note, although we had data on the number and type of workshops women attended, the predictor of the outcomes was simply whether or not women had participated in the organization. This finding may demonstrate the importance of empowering "settings," rather than specific curriculums, that serve to increase women's awareness of their rights and provide space for discussion and support during a consciousness-raising process (Dutt, 2018). Demonstrating the importance of the organization suggests that changing laws alone is not enough to bring about significant social change, and that organizational participation may influence gendered psychosocial processes related to rights violations. Although a discourse of human rights is not a widely used perspective among psychologists, these results suggest that knowledge of rights situated in structural understandings may be an important variable in the interruption of psychosocial processes related to inequity and is potentially a fundamental requirement of social justice. Importantly, the organization of focus in the current study was developed



by women familiar with the unique experiences and specific barriers faced by women in this particular community. Consequently, future organizational interventions seeking to enhance women's rights should follow a similar model so as to address the needs and desires of women in a contextually responsible manner.

Eaton and Stephens (2020) also note that, "centering the empowerment of those facing the greatest barriers to reproductive freedom requires a shift from traditional ways of thinking about research." A majority of scholarship and intervention aimed at marginalized women utilizes a "rescue narrative" by intending to rectify injustice experienced by women who are presumably unable to confront without outside help (Alexander, 2005; Cornwall, 2016). In recent decades international agencies have also coopted and depoliticized the concept of empowerment that was once used by progressive social movements to facilitate a struggle for social justice and apply it instead to the context of broad-based neoliberal development strategies that, in many cases, obscures or exacerbates the structural conditions in which women live their lives (Cornwall & Brock, 2005; Perkins, 1995). The results from this study underscore the importance of women with less structural power taking action within their social contexts to improve the social conditions in which they live their lives. Moreover, because the topic and research questions were guided by local women working in areas of change, the results—and what we can discern from them—represent a coconstruction of knowledge (Lykes, 1997; Riessman, 2005). Taking a nontraditional approach within the discipline has the potential for far-reaching influence, both within academia and women's lives.

### *Limitations*

Although the quasi-experimental nature of the study design allowed for cross-group comparisons, the lack of random assignment and longitudinal design limit the conclusiveness of the study findings. For example, it is possible that levels of self-esteem and sense of powerlessness are impacted by high levels of women's decision-making power and aspiration, rather than the other way around. Alternative models did not provide support for this, nor did qualitative data reported elsewhere (Dutt, 2016). Despite the fact that there are always limitations in cross-sectional data, the results from this study lend evidence for the theoretical model. Only a randomly assigned study design, and longitudinal analyses, could more confidently answer these questions. However, such designs raise ethical issues in field research investigating processes surrounding women's rights.

Another potential limitation to our study arises from the insufficient availability of high-quality measures to assess constructs in nontraditional research settings. For example, a standardized scale of educational aspiration for adult women in impoverished rural areas does not exist. As such, we piloted several questions that led to striking results, but we would encourage future researchers

interested in this topic to consider creating a standardized scale of educational aspiration. Moreover, the low internal consistencies reported for several scales raises questions about adequacy of the scales. However, the scales had strong face and construct validity in this sample and the demonstrated relations were as predicted. Nevertheless, future research should aim to construct measures that will more accurately capture the study variables.

Finally, although this study focused on the decisions and aspirations made by women, the aim was not to suggest that the responsibility to improve women's lives rests solely on the backs of women. Women should not be responsible for undoing, at an individual level, their own oppression. Nevertheless, because psychologists argue that wellness must come, in part, from one's own sense of capacity to address oppression, the importance of interrupting the psychosocial processes surrounding women's rights at large should not be understated (Prilleltensky, 2008). The organization evaluated in the present study provided an example of how, at a community level, women can be supported in seeking changes that reduce their marginalization and increase their capacity to have greater agency in reproductive and educational outcomes. Future work should consider interventions and research that explore these mechanisms among male partners and examine the impact this has on women's experiences.

### Conclusion

In sum, employing a reproductive justice framework allowed us to underscore that shifting from traditional ways of conducting research by centering those facing the greatest barriers to reproductive freedom reveals a coproduction of knowledge that to which we would not otherwise have access. This approach revealed that if we are to make serious attempts at shifting women's reproductive justice worldwide, opportunities for women to gain access to knowledge that holds the potential to interrupt sociocultural norms related to power dynamics is necessary.

### References

- Abel, E. (1998). Sexual risk behaviors among ship-and shore-based Navy women. *Military Medicine*, 163(4), 250–256. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/9575773>
- Alexander, M. J. (2005). *Pedagogies of crossing: Meditations on feminism, sexual politics, memory, and the sacred*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Altschuler, J., & Rhee, S. (2015). Relationship power, sexual decision making, and HIV risk among midlife and older women. *Journal of Women & Aging*, 27(4), 290–308. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08952841.2014.954499>
- Arbuckle, J. L., & Wothke, W. (1999). *Amos 4.0 user's guide*. Chicago, IL: Small Waters.
- Beadnell, B., Baker, S. A., Morrison, D. M., & Knox, K. (2000). HIV/STD risk factors for women with violent male partners. *Sex Roles*, 42(7–8), 661–689. <https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1007003623810>
- Bentler, P. M., & Bonett, D. G. (1980). Significance tests and goodness of fit in the analysis of covariance structures. *Psychological Bulletin*, 88(3), 588–606. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.88.3.588>

- Bowleg, L., Belgrave, F. Z., & Reisen, C. A. (2000). Gender roles, power strategies, and precautionary sexual self-efficacy: Implications for Black and Latina women's HIV/AIDS protective behaviors. *Sex Roles, 42*(7–8), 613–635. <https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1007099422902>
- Braithwaite, K., & Thomas, V. G. (2001). HIV/AIDS knowledge, attitudes, and risk-behaviors among African-American and Caribbean college women. *International Journal for the Advancement of Counselling, 23*(2), 115–129. <https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1010611328452>
- Castañeda, D. M., & Collins, B. E. (1998). The effects of gender, ethnicity, and a close relationship theme on perceptions of persons introducing a condom. *Sex Roles, 39*(5–6), 369–390. <https://doi.org/10.1023/A:101881902>
- Ceci, S. J., & Williams, W. M. (2010). Sex differences in math-intensive fields. *Current Directions in Psychological Science, 19*(5), 275–279. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0963721410383241>
- Chrisler, J. C. (2012). *Reproductive justice: A global concern*. Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger.
- Cohen, J. (1988). *Statistical power analysis for the behavioral sciences* (2nd ed.). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Cole, F. L. (1997). The role of self-esteem in safer sexual practices. *Journal of the Association of Nurses in AIDS Care, 8*(6), 64–70. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S1055-3290\(97\)80059-3](https://doi.org/10.1016/S1055-3290(97)80059-3)
- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), UN General Assembly, Dec. 18, 1979, A/RES/34/180, available from <https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/text/econvention.htm>
- Cornwall, A. (2016). Save us from saviours: Disrupting development narratives of the rescue and uplift of the 'third world woman'. In O. Hemer, & T. Tufte (Eds.), *Voice and matter: Communication, development and cultural return*. Göteborg, Sweden: Nordicom. <https://doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.1.1317.9925>
- Cornwall, A., & Brock, K. (2005). What do buzzwords do for development policy? A critical look at 'participation', 'empowerment' and 'poverty reduction'. *Third World Quarterly, 26*(7), 1043–1060. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01436590500235603>
- Davis, S. N., & Pearce, L. D. (2007). Adolescents' work-family gender ideologies and educational expectations. *Sociological Perspectives, 50*(2), 249–271. <https://doi.org/10.1525/sop.2007.50.2.249>
- de Jong, J. (2016). Data collection: Face-to-face surveys. In J. de Jong, K. Cibelli Hibben, L. Lyberg, Z. Mneimneh, P. Mohler, & T. W. Smith (Eds.), *Guidelines for best practice in cross-cultural surveys* (pp. 512–541). Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan, Survey Research Center, Institute for Social Research. Retrieved from [https://ccsg.isr.umich.edu/images/PDFs/CCSG\\_Full\\_Guidelines\\_2016\\_Version.pdf](https://ccsg.isr.umich.edu/images/PDFs/CCSG_Full_Guidelines_2016_Version.pdf)
- Dolan, S. L., Bejarano, A., & Tzafirir, S. (2011). Exploring the moderating effect of gender in the relationship between individuals' aspirations and career success among engineers in Peru. *The international Journal of Human Resource Management, 22*(15), 3146–3167. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09585192.2011.560883>
- Doswell, W. M., Millor, G. K., & Thompson, H. (1998). Self-image and self-esteem in African-American preteen girls: Implications for mental health. *Issues in Mental Health Nursing, 19*(1), 71–94. <https://doi.org/10.1080/016128498249222>
- Dutt, A. (2016). *Empowerment, mobilization, and transformation: Assessing social psychological processes of feminist social change in rural Nicaragua* (Doctoral dissertation, UC Santa Cruz). <https://cloudfront.escholarship.org/dist/prd/content/qt914372d7/qt914372d7.pdf>
- Dutt, A. (2018). Feminist organizing in rural Nicaragua: Assessing a psychosocial process to promote empowered solidarity. *American Journal of Community Psychology, 61*(3–4), 500–511. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ajcp.12247>
- Dutt, A., & Grabe, S. (2019). Understanding processes of transformative change: A qualitative inquiry into empowering sources and outcomes identified by women in rural Nicaragua. *Sex Roles, 1*–18. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-019-1005-1>
- Eaton, A. & Stephens, D. (2020). "Reproductive justice: Moving the margins to the center in social issues research." *Journal of Social Issues, 76*, 208–218.
- Eccles, J. (2011). Gendered educational and occupational choices: Applying the Eccles et al. model of achievement-related choices. *International Journal of Behavioral Development, 35*(3), 195–201. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0165025411398185>

- Ellsberg, M., & Heise, L. (2005). *Researching violence against women: A practical guide for researchers and activists*. Washington, DC: World Health Organization.
- Farmer, T. W., Dadisman, K., Latendresse, S. J., Thompson, J., Irvin, M. J., & Zhang, L. (2006). Educating out and giving back: Adults' conceptions of successful outcomes of African American high school students from impoverished rural communities. *Journal of Research in Rural Education*, 21(10), 1–12. <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.546.2914&rep=rep1&type=pdf>
- Fals Borda, O. (1985). *Knowledge and people's power: Lessons with peasants in Nicaragua, Mexico and Colombia*. New Delhi: Indian Social Institute.
- Fisher, M., Schneider, M., Pegler, C., & Napolitano, B. (1991). Eating attitudes, health-risk behaviors, self-esteem, and anxiety among adolescent females in a suburban high school. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 12(5), 377–384. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0197-0070\(91\)90051-M](https://doi.org/10.1016/0197-0070(91)90051-M)
- Flores, L. Y., Navarro, R. L., & DeWitz, S. J. (2008). Mexican American high school students' postsecondary educational goals: Applying social cognitive career theory. *Journal of Career Assessment*, 16(4), 489–501. <http://doi.org/10.1177/1069072708318905>
- Freire, P. (1972). *Cultural action for freedom*. Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin.
- Gardner, L. H., Frank, D., & Amankwaa, L. I. (1998). A comparison of sexual behavior and self-esteem in young adult females with positive and negative tests for sexually transmitted diseases. *The ABNF Journal: Official Journal of the Association of Black Nursing Faculty in Higher Education, Inc.*, 9(4), 89–94.
- Garnezy, N. (1991). Resiliency and vulnerability to adverse developmental outcomes associated with poverty. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 34(4), 416–430. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0002764291034004003>
- Ghobadzadeh, M. (2014). Positive youth development and contraceptive use consistency. *Journal of Pediatric Health Care*, 30(4), 308–316. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pedhc.2015.08.006>
- Givaudan, M., Van de Vijver, F. J., & Poortinga, Y. H. (2005). Identifying precursors of safer-sex practices in Mexican adolescents with and without sexual experience: An exploratory model 1. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 35(5), 1089–1109. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1559-1816.2005.tb02161.x>
- Gómez, A., Racionero, S., & Sordé, T. (2010). Ten years of critical communicative methodology. *International Review of Qualitative Research*, 3(1), 17–43. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/irqr.2010.3.1.17>
- Gonzalez, L. M., Stein, G. L., & Huq, N. (2013). The influence of cultural identity and perceived barriers on college-going beliefs and aspirations of Latino youth in emerging immigrant communities. *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences*, 35(1), 103–120. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0739986312463002>
- Goodson, P., Buhí, E. R., & Dunsmore, S. C. (2006). Self-esteem and adolescent sexual behaviors, attitudes, and intentions: A systematic review. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 38(3), 310–319. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jadohealth.2005.05.026>
- Grabe, S. (2010). Promoting gender equality: The role of ideology, power, and control in the link between land ownership and violence in Nicaragua. *Analyses of Social Issues and Public Policy*, 10(1), 146–170. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1530-2415.2010.01221.x>
- Grabe, S. (2016a). *Narrating a psychology of resistance: Voices from the compañeras in Nicaragua*. Oxford, England, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Grabe, S. (2016b). Transnational feminism in psychology: Moving beyond difference to investigate processes of power at the intersection of the global and local. In T.A. Roberts, N. Curtin, L. Cortina, & L. Duncan (Eds.), *Feminist perspectives on building a better psychological science of gender* (pp. 295–318). New York: Springer.
- Grabe, S. (2016c). Transnational feminism in psychology: Women's human rights, liberation, and social justice. In P. Hammack (Ed.), *The Oxford handbook of social psychology and social justice* (pp. 193–204). New York: Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199938735.013.20>
- Grewal, I., & Kaplan, C. (Eds.). (1994). *Scattered hegemonies: Postmodernity and transnational feminist practices*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.

- Grewal, I., & Kaplan, C. (2000). Postcolonial studies and transnational feminist practices. *Jouvert: A Journal of Postcolonial Studies*, 5(1), 1. <https://legacy.chass.ncsu.edu/jouvert/v5i1/grewal.htm>
- Gullette, D. L., & Lyons, M. A. (2006). Sensation seeking, self-esteem, and unprotected sex in college students. *Journal of the Association of Nurses in AIDS Care*, 17(5), 23–31. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jana.2006.07.001>
- Henrich, J., Heine, S. J., & Norenzayan, A. (2010). Beyond WEIRD: Towards a broad-based behavioral science. *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, 33(2–3), 111–135. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0140525X0999152X>
- Hertlein, K. M., Emmers-sommer, T. M., Walker, N., Hertlein, K. M., Emmers-sommer, T. M., & High-, N. W. (2017). High-risk sexual behavior in postmenopausal women. *Marriage & Family Review*, 53(5), 417–428. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01494929.2016.1247765>
- Hesse-Biber, S. N. (2007). The practice of feminist in-depth interviewing. In S. N. Hesse-Biber & P. L. Leavy (Eds.), *Feminist research practice: A primer* (pp. 111–148). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
- Holms, V. L., & Esses, L. M. (1988). Factors influencing Canadian high school girls' career motivation. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 12(3), 313–328. <http://doi.org/10.1111/j.1471-6402.1988.tb00946.x>
- Hu, L. T., & Bentler, P. M. (1999). Cutoff criteria for fit indexes in covariance structure analysis: Conventional criteria versus new alternatives. *Structural Equation modeling: A Multidisciplinary Journal*, 6(1), 1–55. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10705519909540118>
- International Center for Research on Women [ICRW] (2006). *Property ownership and inheritance rights of women for social protection: The South Asia experience*. Washington, D.C.: ICRW
- Irvin, M. J., Byun, S. Y., Meece, J. L., Farmer, T. W., & Hutchins, B. C. (2012). Educational barriers of rural youth: Relation of individual and contextual difference variables. *Journal of Career Assessment*, 20(1), 71–87. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1069072711420105>
- Jackson, M. A., Kacanski, J. M., Rust, J. P., & Beck, S. E. (2006). Constructively challenging diverse inner-city youth's beliefs about educational and career barriers and supports. *Journal of Career Development*, 32(3), 203–218. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0894845305279161>
- Jacobs, R. J., & Kane, M. N. (2011). Psychosocial predictors of self-esteem in a multiethnic sample of women over 50 at risk for HIV. *Journal of Women & Aging*, 23(1), 23–39. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08952841.2011.540484>
- Kampwirth, K. (1996). Confronting adversity with experience: The emergence of feminism in Nicaragua. *Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State & Society*, 3(2–3), 136–158. <https://doi.org/10.1093/sp/3.2-3.136>
- Kowaleski-Jones, L., & Mott, F. L. (1998). Sex, contraception and childbearing among high-risk youth: do different factors influence males and females? *Family Planning Perspectives*, 30(4), 163–169. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2991677>
- Kampwirth, K. (2008). Abortion, antifeminism, and the return of Daniel Ortega: In Nicaragua, leftist politics? *Latin American Perspectives*, 35(6), 122–136. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0094582X08326020>
- Kagitcibasi, C. (2002). Psychology and human competence development. *Applied Psychology*, 51(1), 5–22.
- Katz, J., Joiner, T. E., & Kwon, P. (2002). Membership in a devalued social group and emotional well-being: Developing a model of personal self-esteem, collective self-esteem, and group socialization. *Sex Roles*, 47(9–10), 419–431. Retrieved from <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1023/A:1021644225878>
- Kenny, M. E., Blustein, D. L., Chaves, A., Grossman, J. M., & Gallagher, L. A. (2003). The role of perceived barriers and relational support in the educational and vocational lives of urban high school students. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 50(2), 142–155. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-0167.50.2.142>
- Kismödi, E., de Mesquita, J. B., Ibañez, X. A., Khosla, R., & Sepúlveda, L. (2012). Human rights accountability for maternal death and failure to provide safe, legal abortion: the significance of two ground-breaking CEDAW decisions. *Reproductive Health Matters*, 20(39), 31–39. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0968-8080\(12\)39610-9](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0968-8080(12)39610-9)

- Kurtis, T. & Adams, G. (2015). Decolonizing liberation: Toward a transnational feminist psychology. *Journal of Social and Political Psychology: Decolonizing Psychological Science*, 3, 388–413.
- Lauder, H., Brown, P., Dillabough, J. A. & Halsey, A. H. (Eds.). (2006). *Education, globalization, and social change*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Luna, Z., & Luker, K. (2013). Reproductive justice. *Annual Review of Law and Social Science*, 9, 327–352. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-lawsocsci-102612-134037>
- Lykes, M. B. (1997). Activist participatory research among the Maya of Guatemala: Constructing meanings from situated knowledge. *Journal of Social Issues*, 53(4), 725–746. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4560.1997.tb02458.x>
- Macalister, H. E. (1999). Women's studies classes and their influence on student development. *Adolescence*, 34, 283–292. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/10494977>
- MacDonald, T. K., & Martineau, A. M. (2002). Self-esteem, mood, and intentions to use condoms: When does low self-esteem lead to risky health behaviors? *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 38(3), 299–306. <https://doi.org/10.1006/jesp.2001.1505>
- Mahaffy, K. A. (2004). Girls' low self-esteem: How is it related to later socioeconomic achievements? *Gender & Society*, 18(3), 309–327. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0891243204263988>
- Marín, B. V., & Gómez, C. A. (1997). Latino culture and sex: Implications for HIV prevention. In J. G. García & M. C. Zea (Eds.), *Psychological interventions and research with Latino populations* (pp. 73–93). Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon.
- Martín-Baró, I. (1994). *Writings for a liberation psychology*. In A. Aaron & S. Corne (Eds.). Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- McCree, D. H. (1997). *The effect of social interdependence on condom use self-efficacy in a college population of African American females*. Baltimore, MD: Unpublished doctoral dissertation, School of Public Health, The Johns Hopkins University.
- McLaren, A. T. (1982). Ambition and accounts: A study of working-class women in adult education. *Psychiatry: Journal for the Study of Interpersonal Processes*, 45(3), 235–246. Retrieved from <https://search.proquest.com/docview/616716066?accountid=14523>
- McNair, L. D., Carter, J. A., & Williams, M. K. (1998). Self-esteem, gender, and alcohol use: Relationships with HIV risk perception and behaviors in college students. *Journal of Sex & Marital Therapy*, 24(1), 29–36. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00926239808414666>
- McWhirter, E. H. (1997). Perceived barriers to education and career: Ethnic and gender differences. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 50(1), 124–140. <https://doi.org/10.1006/jvbe.1995.1536>
- McWhirter, E. H., Valdez, M., & Caban, A. R. (2013). Latina adolescents' plans, barriers, and supports: A focus group study. *Journal of Latina/o Psychology*, 1(1), 35–52. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0031304>
- Means, D. R., Clayton, A. B., Conzelmann, J. G., Baynes, P., & Umbach, P. D. (2016). Bounded aspirations: Rural, African American high school students and college access. *Review of Higher Education: Journal of the Association for the Study of Higher Education*, 39(4), 543–569. <http://doi.org/10.1353/rhe.2016.0035>
- Meinster, M. O., & Rose, K. C. (2001). Longitudinal influences of educational aspirations and romantic relationships on adolescent women's vocational interests. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 58(3), 313–327. <http://doi.org/10.1006/jvbe.2000.1772>
- Moane, G. (1999). *Gender and colonialism: A psychological analysis of oppression and liberation*. London: Macmillan.
- Mohanty, C. T. (2003). *Feminism without borders: Decolonizing theory, practicing solidarity*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Molyneux, M. (1985). Mobilization without emancipation? Women's interests, the state, and revolution in Nicaragua. *Feminist Studies*, 11 (2), 227–254. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3177922>
- Molyneux, M. (2001). Mobilisation without emancipation? Women's interests, the state and revolution in Nicaragua. In M. Molyneux (Ed.), *Women's movements in international perspective* (pp. 38–59). London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Montenegro, S., & Cuadra, E. (2004). *The keys to empowerment: Ten years of experiences at the Xochilt-Acalt Women's Center in Malpaisillo, Nicaragua*. Madison, WI: Wisconsin Coordinating Council on Nicaragua (WCCN).

- Neal, A. G., & Groat, H. T. (1974). Social class correlates of stability and change in levels of alienation. *Sociological Quarterly, 15*, 548–558. Retrieved from <https://www.jstor.org/stable/4105857>
- Neundorfer, M. M., Harris, P. B., Britton, P. J., & Lynch, D. A. (2005). HIV-risk factors for midlife and older women. *The Gerontologist, 45*(5), 617–625. <https://doi.org/10.1093/geront/45.5.617>
- Ojeda, L., & Flores, L. Y. (2008). The influence of gender, generation level, parents' education level, and perceived barriers on the educational aspirations of Mexican American high school students. *The Career Development Quarterly, 57*(1), 84–95. <https://doi.org/10.1002/j.2161-0045.2008.tb00168.x>
- Perkins, D. D. (1995). Speaking truth to power: Empowerment ideology as social intervention and policy. *American Journal of Community Psychology, 23*(5), 765–794. <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF02506991>
- Piña-Watson, B., Lorenzo-Blanco, E. I., Dornhecker, M., Martinez, A. J., & Nagoshi, J. L. (2016). Moving away from a cultural deficit to a holistic perspective: Traditional gender role values, academic attitudes, and educational goals for Mexican descent adolescents. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 63*(3), 307–318. <https://doi.org/10.1037/cou0000133>
- Preacher, K. J., & Hayes, A. F. (2004). SPSS and SAS procedures for estimating indirect effects in simple mediation models. *Behavior Research Methods, Instruments, & Computers, 36*(4), 717–731. <https://doi.org/10.3758/BF03206553>
- Preacher, K. J., & Hayes, A. F. (2008). Asymptotic and resampling strategies for assessing and comparing indirect effects in multiple mediator models. *Behavior Research Methods, 40*(3), 879–891. <https://doi.org/10.3758/BRM.40.3.879>
- Prilleltensky, I. (2008). The role of power in wellness, oppression, and liberation: The promise of psychopolitical validity. *Journal of Community Psychology, 36*(2), 116–136. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jcop.20225>
- Riessman, C. K. (2005). Exporting ethics: A narrative about narrative research in South India. *Health, 9*(4), 473–490. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1363459305056414>
- Rosenberg, M. (1965). *Society and the adolescent self-image*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Ross, S. D. (2009). *Women's human rights: The international and comparative law casebook*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Rothon, C., Arephin, M., Klineberg, E., Cattell, V., & Stansfeld, S. (2011). Structural and socio-psychological influences on adolescents' educational aspirations and subsequent academic achievement. *Social Psychology of Education: An International Journal, 14*(2), 209–231. <http://doi.org/10.1007/s11218-010-9140-0>
- Salazar, L. F., Crosby, R. A., Diclemente, R. J., Wingood, G. M., Lescano, C. M., Brown, L. K., Harrington, K., & Davies, S. (2005). Self-esteem and theoretical mediators of safer sex among African American female adolescents: Implications for sexual risk reduction interventions. *Health Education & Behavior, 32*(June), 413–427. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1090198104272335>
- Saleh-onoya, D., Reddy, P. S., Ruiter, R. A. C., Wingood, G., Borne, B., Van Den, Reddy, P. S., & Ruiter, R. A. C. (2009). Condom use promotion among isiXhosa speaking women living with HIV in the Western Cape Province, South Africa: A pilot study. *AIDS Care, 21*, 817–825. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09540120802537823>
- Sanchez, D.T., Crocker, J., & Boike, K.R. (2005). Doing gender in the bedroom: Investing in gender norms and the sexual experience. *Personality Social Psychology Bulletin, 31*, 1445–1455. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167205277333>
- Sandberg, D. E., Ehrhardt, A. A., Ince, S. E., & Meyer-Bahlburg, H. F. (1991). Gender differences in children's and adolescents' career aspirations: A follow-up study. *Journal of Adolescent Research, 6*(3), 371–386. <http://doi.org/10.1177/074355489163007>
- Sandoval, C. (2000). *Methodology of the oppressed*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.
- Silliman, J., Fried, M. G., Ross, L., & Gutiérrez, E. R. (2016). *Undivided rights: Women of color organizing for reproductive justice*. Chicago, IL: Haymarket Books.
- Somlai, A. M., Kelly, J. A., Heckman, T. G., Hackl, K., Runge, L., & Wright, C. (2000). Life optimism, substance use, and AIDS-specific attitudes associated with HIV risk behavior among disadvantaged innercity women. *Journal of Women's Health & Gender-Based Medicine, 9*(10), 1101–1111. <https://doi.org/10.1089/152460900446018>

- Spencer, J. M., Zimet, G. D., Aalsma, M. C., & Orr, D. P. (2002). Self-esteem as a predictor of initiation of coitus in early adolescents. *Pediatrics*, *109*(4), 581–584. <https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.109.4.581>
- Steiger, J. H. (1990). Structural model evaluation and modification: An interval estimation approach. *Multivariate Behavioral Research*, *25*(2), 173–180.
- The World Bank (2017). *Gender data portal: Nicaragua*. <http://datatopics.worldbank.org/gender/country/nicaragua>
- Toyokawa, N., & Toyokawa, T. (2019). Interaction effect of familism and socioeconomic status on academic outcomes of adolescent children of Latino immigrant families. *Journal of Adolescence*, *71*, 138–149. <http://doi.org/10.1016/j.adolescence.2018.10.005>
- World Economic Forum (2017). *Why reproductive rights are the first step to a freer, fairer world*. <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2017/10/reproductive-health-rights-inequality/>
- Smith, E., Sundstrom, B., & Delay, C. (2020). Listening to women: Understanding and challenging systems of power to achieve reproductive justice in South Carolina. *Journal of Social Issues*, *76*, 363–390.
- Sternberg, P. (2000). Challenging machismo: Promoting sexual and reproductive health with Nicaraguan men. *Gender & Development*, *8*, 89–99. <https://doi.org/10.1080/741923418>
- Swarr, A. L., & Nagar, R. (Eds.). (2012). *Critical transnational feminist praxis*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press
- Sterk, C. E., Klein, H., & Elifson, K. W. (2004). Predictors of condom-related attitudes among at-risk women. *Journal of Women's Health*, *13*, 676–688. <https://doi.org/10.1089/jwh.2004.13.676>
- Tigges, B. B. (2001). Affiliative preferences, self-change, and adolescent condom use. *Journal of Nursing Scholarship*, *33*(3), 231–237. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1547-5069.2001.00231.x>
- UN Women (2015). *Progress of the world's women 2015–2016: Transforming economies, realizing rights*. (Report id:7688). [http://progress.unwomen.org/en/2015/pdf/UNW\\_progressreport.pdf](http://progress.unwomen.org/en/2015/pdf/UNW_progressreport.pdf)
- UN Treaty Collections (2019). *Convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women. Declarations and reservations*. [https://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=IND&mdsg\\_no=IV-8&chapter=4&lang=en](https://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=IND&mdsg_no=IV-8&chapter=4&lang=en)
- Warner, L. R., Settles, I. H., & Shields, S. A. (2016). Invited reflection: Intersectionality as an epistemological challenge to psychology. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, *40*(2), 171–176. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0361684316641384>
- Wild, L. G., Flisher, A. J., Bhana, A., & Lombard, C. (2004). Associations among adolescent risk behaviours and self-esteem in six domains. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, *45*(8), 1454–1467. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1469-7610.2004.00330.x>
- World Bank (2017). *Gender data portal: Nicaragua*. <http://datatopics.worldbank.org/gender/country/nicaragua>
- Zimmer-Gembeck, M. J., & Helfand, M. (2008). Ten years of longitudinal research on US adolescent sexual behavior: Developmental correlates of sexual intercourse, and the importance of age, gender and ethnic background. *Developmental Review*, *28*(2), 153–224. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.dr.2007.06.001>
- Zucker, A. N. (2014). Reproductive justice: More than choice. *Analyses of Social Issues and Public Policy*, *14*(1), 210–213. <https://doi.org/10.1111/asap.12059>
- Martin, T. C., & Juarez, F. (1995). The impact of women's education on fertility in Latin America: searching for explanations. *International Family Planning Perspectives*, *21*, 52–80. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2133523>

SHELLY GRABE is a professor of psychology at the University of California, Santa Cruz. Her research focuses on women's rights and social justice in the context of globalization. Together with grassroots organizations in Nicaragua and Tanzania, her work centers the activism and voices of women in the areas of violence and political participation. She's used multiple methods to demonstrate links between transnational feminism, human rights, and the attention given to



women's "empowerment" to help contribute to social change. Grabe has been awarded the Denmark-Reuder Award for Outstanding International Contributions and the Georgia Babladelis Award from *Psychology of Women Quarterly* for her transnational contributions. She has two recent book publications with Oxford Press that underscore the role of women's resistance to sociocultural norms that violate women's human rights.

DANIEL RODRÍGUEZ RAMÍREZ is a Peruvian PhD student in social psychology with a designated emphasis in Latin American and Latino Studies. He holds a MEd in counseling psychology, and he has conducted quantitative and qualitative research on relationship styles, health risk behaviors, and intercultural relationships. Currently, he is being mentored in transnational feminist psychology research by social psychologist Shelly Grabe, focusing on intersectional feminist activism in women's movements in Latin America using decolonial feminist and psychology of liberation theoretical frameworks. As a volunteer in the UC Santa Cruz Women's Center MINT program in 2016, he mentored women-identified students in the process of applying to graduate schools. He also coordinated and redesigned the curriculum of UC Santa Cruz Graduate Division's Graduate Student Leadership Certification Program in 2017–2018, by incorporating feminist, inclusive, collaborative, and counter-hegemonic leadership styles. As a 2018 Graduate Pedagogy Fellow for UCSC's Center for Innovation in Teaching and Learning, he focused on ways to critically engage students in active learning and inclusive teaching, and as a 2018 Summer Graduate Pedagogy Mentor, he mentored instructors in creating learning communities to keep seeking ways to better serve undergraduate students in the social sciences. Currently, Daniel is volunteering as a graduate research assistant in a youth Participatory Action Research project with 9-year Latinx youth around issues of migration.

ANJALI DUTT is an assistant professor of psychology at the University of Cincinnati. Her research focuses on psychological processes associated with resistance to oppression and increasing the realization of human rights in different contexts. She collaborates with grassroots community organizations to conduct mixed-methods research, exploring how structural change and community opportunities impact well-being and the realization of human rights. Her current projects involve participatory research on refugee rights and integration in the United States, documenting the lives and actions of women of color working to uphold human rights, and exploring the impact of neoliberal ideology on various attitudes, beliefs, and (in)actions related to human rights.