Chapter 6

Entangled Human and Nonhuman Relations in Sport, Gender and Development

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In recent years, a number of sport for development and peace scholars have started to depart from "humanist scholarly traditions" by engaging with approaches that explore the human and nonhuman actors involved in producing and shaping the sport for development and peace (SDP) phenomenon and the broader environment in which it operates (Darnell, 2020; Darnell, Giulianotti, Howe, & Collison, 2018; Henne, 2017; McSweeney, Oxford, Spaaij, & Hayhurst, 2020). For example, Darnell (2020) explores the potential of Actor Network Theory (ANT) for "reassembling" the field of SDP. Drawing upon their research with SDP NGOs operating in Kingston, Jamaica, Darnell, Giulianotti, Howe, and Collison (2018) have also suggested that SDP scholars must "begin to move towards a fuller and richer analysis of SDP that would help to show the array of forces and actors (human and non) that influence the organization and deployment of SDP" (p. 97). In a similar vein, Henne (2017) considers the utility of ANT for exploring how actants (both human and nonhuman) contribute to indicator culture in SDP. Her work is helpful for demonstrating that the assemblage of SDP is not merely socially constructed, but is also influenced in a variety of ways by nonhuman actants (e.g., money, technical support and expertise, environmental degradation). Such work elucidates the need for more SDP studies to "de-cente[r], although not de-contextualiz[e], the human body [...] namely by 'flattening' physical cultural contexts so as to consider the associations between active human bodies […] and active non-humans" (Millington & Wilson, 2017, p. 912).

In this chapter, we build on and extend such work by engaging with the generative theoretical contributions of decolonial and postcolonial feminist political ecology (FPE) (Faria & Mollet, 2016; Mollett, 2011, 2017, 2018; Mollett & Faria, 2013, 2018). As we explain in greater detail in the latter half of this

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chapter, ANT approaches – and theoretical work on posthumanisms and new materialisms more broadly – inform scholarship on gender and the environment scholarship in a number of ways. For example, all of these approaches, in one way or another "emphasize the materiality of all the relations between nature and society, while at the same time taking into account their embedding in symbolic orders, interpretive contents, and social constructions," (Hummel & Stieß, 2017, p. 188). Such traditions thus usefully inform a postcolonial feminist and decolonial political ecology, which we contend to be applicable for thinking about how colonialism, racism and patriarchy are "mutually imbued in shaping *human-environmental* relationships" (Mollett & Faria, 2013, p. 117) in the context of SGD.[1] Decolonial feminist approaches might extend such lines of inquiry, for instance, by engaging with aspects of colonial relationships and dismantling the legacy of formal colonialism through ongoing struggles by "intellectuals, artists, activists, academics, and ordinary people to be involved in...sav[ing] their homes, their land, their children, and their own bodies" (Collins, 2019, p. 109). Thus, a decolonial feminist political ecology approach might actively call for the creation of strategies to imagine novel alternatives for "resistance to coloniality, by reverting to or invoking indigenous, emancipatory, restorative or precolonial modes of knowing and being," (Purewal & Loh, 2021, p. 6).

In short – and as we argue throughout this chapter – taking up a decolonial and postcolonial feminist political ecology (FPE) approach helps to better understand how exploring the human-environmental interface in SGD might offer novel ways of (re)considering and (re)conceptualizing the entanglements among SDP, gender-based violence (GBV), sexual and reproductive health rights (SRHR), environmental sustainability and climate change. In turn, we explore these intersections through participatory action research to better understand the role of the human-environment and the ways human and nonhuman coexist in SGD in the Nicaraguan context. Specifically, we examine how young Nicaraguan women participated in an SGD program used to promote environmental stewardship and "improve" their sexual and reproductive health rights while also striving to prevent gender-based violence. Rather than neatly parsing out different parts of this complex entanglement, we view this chapter as a starting point for investigating different theoretical and conceptual approaches in SGD for understanding the complex human and nonhuman relations that are impacting the lives of girls and women involved in SGD programs across the globe.

We conclude our chapter by suggesting that we must critically account for the broader physical environment, racialized power, new imaginings and formulations embedded in colonial past-presents as human and nonhuman forces continue to shape the experiences of SGD interventions. Indeed, the effects of nonhuman forces on gender relations in the SDP landscape are crucial to consider. This is especially essential to examine in light of the discursive inclusion of gender dimensions and the increased promotion of the participation of young

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[1]See Chapter 1 for a more thorough discussion of tensions, challenges and opportunities involved in using *both* decolonial and postcolonial feminist approaches in SGD.

women and girls in broader SDP programming alongside the politics of environmental sustainability, climate change, GBV and SRHR promotion (Women Win, 2019). Such body-land-classed power geometries and politics (see Faria, Katushabe, Kyotowaddle, & Whiteshell, 2020) seem to continue to (re)produce patriarchy by pigeonholing young women and girls as responsible for environmental sustainability efforts; and risk reinforcing traditional hegemonic, "machismo" masculinities (in the case of Nicaragua), gender roles and gendered divisions of labor.

The goal of this chapter is to improve understandings of – and address issues related to – a series of themes, and "trends," that have been touched on in Chapters 1 and 2. The first trend pertains to the increasing "girling of development," whereby girls are being targeted by a suite of development interventions in the interest of achieving positive social change (Hayhurst, 2013). In one sense, this "girling of development" reflects ongoing concerns over health and well-being (e.g., around SRHR) as well as safety and security (e.g., prevention of GBV). According to the UN Women (as cited in Holst, 2013), "one in three women is beaten or sexually abused in her lifetime. The math is simple: One billion women have or will experience gender-based violence" (para. 3). And yet, this "girling of development" also positions girls and women as agents of change, as previously discussed earlier in this book in relation to the Girl Effect campaign.

In turn, the second theme to discuss in this chapter – which has been outlined extensively in Chapter 1 – relates to the role of sport in development, and specifically to the widespread adoption of sport as a tool to support the promotion and pursuit of key gender and development goals through SGD interventions (Saavedra, 2009). For example, according to the UN (2018), "sport can raise awareness and be a platform to share information on sexual and gender-based violence, including in conflict situations" (p. 4).

A third theme we identify pertains to how development work is increasingly reckoning with the climate emergency, especially as the impacts of climate change are particularly severe in Global South contexts. Thus, there has arguably been a *feminization* of environmental responsibility across the globe, such that women and girls in particular, "bear the brunt of environmental, economic and social shocks […] they face greater health and safety risks as water and sanitation systems become compromised; and take on increased domestic and care work as resources dwindle" (UN Women, 2019, para. 2; see also; Kwauk & Braga, 2017). As a result, various organizations have recently developed sport-based programs that attempt to address GBV and SRHR, *and* target women and girls as key agents for fighting environmental degradation. For example, Women Win, one of the largest SGD international NGOs, supports programs in 25 Global South countries using sports such as martial arts as tools to educate girls about: (1) their SRHR; (2) preventing GBV through self-defense focused martial arts activities; and (3) environmental conservation (Women Win, 2019).

While scholars have started to critically examine the intersections of sport, SRHR,GBV (Hayhurst, MacNeill, Kidd, & Knoppers, 2014; van Ingen, 2011), and some SDP researchers are exploring the relationship between sport and environmental sustainability (e.g., Wilson & Millington, 2020), these issues have

largely been siloed off from one another in the literature. That is to say, the relationships between sport/physical activity, development, SRHR and GBV, and environmental change remain unexplored and understudied. This is a crucial elision and not just because these issues and their relationships are being dealt with "on the ground" by organizations such as Nicaraguan Non-Governmental Organization (NNGO) (which will be further contextualized throughout this chapter). They are connected in other ways too. For example, a growing body of literature demonstrates increasing incidences of GBV and SRHR violations associated with environmental degradation (Whittenbury, 2012). Thus, the prevention of violence to the physical environment is deeply enmeshed with preventing violence against bodies. In addition, little remains known as to how various stakeholders understand the ways that the gendered dimensions and politics of environmental degradation might impact how sport is used to promote these same issues (Hayhurst & del Socorro Cruz Centeno, 2019). Based on previous studies that directly link environmental violence to GBV (Delisio & Fusco, 2020), it seems clear that ignoring the role of sport, gender and development in addressing/ perpetuating violence against humans and nonhumans bespeaks an opportunity for the field: a limitation this chapter aims to shed further light on.

Gender-Based Violence and Sport for Development and Peace

Gender-based violence is defined as violence against people based on their gender expression, gender identity or perceived gender (Women of Gender Equality Canada, 2020). The term gender-based voilence expands "narrow definitions of rape and intimate partner violence to broad conceptions that include sexual slavery during wartime, female genital cutting, sex trafficking, child marriage, and violence while in police custody" (Merry, 2016, p. 44). However, we recognize that using the term "gender-based violence" is fraught with challenges; indeed, vernacularization shapes such conceptual understandings. As discussed in Chapter 1, vernacularization is the process through which concepts that are considered to be homogeneously understood globally end up being reformed in local contexts (Merry, 2016). Certainly, scholars have demonstrated how such reworkings are evident in the SDP realm, where conflations between sport for development/sport development/sport in development and other iterations result in much malleability and conflation when it comes to policy, practice and scholarship (Hayhurst, 2009).

Using SDP to promote gender equality and women's rights seems all-the-more pressing to consider in the context of the emergence of a "syndemic" – the combination of COVID-19 with two other pandemics – racism and GBV, as the GBV pandemic disproportionately impacts racialized women and girls (Khanlou et al., 2020). Previous studies of physical activity for marginalized women and girls who have experienced increased inequity, profound disruption, barriers to participation and vulnerabilities of trauma, suggest that a trauma- and violence-informed practice is beneficial for successful programming (Darroch, Roett, Varcoe, Oliffe, & Montaner, 2020) – an approach that remains to be fully

unpacked and understood in the SDP context, with some exceptions (see Ammann & Matuska, 2014).

In turn, a growing number of SGD programs address health, well-being and safety in order to "empower" young women and girls through curriculum anchored in SRHR promotion in relation and connection to GBV prevention (e.g., Women Win, 2019). While SRHR broadly encompasses issues such as violence against women, it mostly hinges on health issues related to maternal health, mortality, violations of rights and offering accessible physical, sexual, and mental health services for women and girls (Galati, 2015).

SGD programs that use or take up GBV and SRHR continue to proliferate on local, national and global scales by international NGOs. Meanwhile, few scholars have critically examined how such concepts are implemented and understood by participants, practitioners, and policy-makers. Further, researchers have tended to overlook the multiple ways that environmental degradation shapes such understandings. In the Global North context, GBV, sexual and physical abuse have mostly been studied in relation to elite sport programming, but not SGD. For example, a number of studies have focused on physical abuse (Brackenridge, Bringer, & Bishopp, 2005); sexual abuse and harassment of women by athletes and coaches (Fasting Brackenridge, & Sundgot-Borgen, 2003); as well as emotional and psychological abuse (Stirling & Kerr, 2008). Other works based in the Global North context examine how sport participation may expose female athletes to increased instances of sexual violence and harassment (Cense & Brackenridge, 2001). Alternatively, the "protection hypothesis" supports the positive use of sport for women to build their capacity to protect and defend themselves against sexual harassment and abuse by developing self-esteem and physical strength (Fasting, 2005). More recent studies, such as those by Kerr, Barker-Ruchti, Stewart, and Kerr (2020), explore how highly competitive sporting cultures such as gymnastics have produced oppressive and abusive sporting experiences for many girls and women. And yet, few studies have considered these arguments in relation to SGD programs in the Global South context, particularly in relation to the environment.

SDP and the Environment: A Call for Postcolonial and Decolonial Feminist Analyses

For the purposes of our chapter, we define environmental sustainability in terms of mitigating global warming, sustaining resources and protecting ecosystems (Hanson, 2010). In 2005, the UN Inter-Agency Task Force on Sport for Development and Peace highlighted the promising use of sport to achieve environmental sustainability (UN, 2018). Indeed, a number of scholars in the realms of sport and physical cultural studies have examined intersections of sport, bodies and the environment in great detail (Bunds & Casper, 2018; Karamichas, 2013; Lenskyj, 1998; McCullough & Kellison, 2017; Rolando Caprio, Rinaldi, & Ellena, 2006; Schaffner, 2009; Wheeler & Nauright, 2006; Wilson & Millington, 2020).

More recently, some sociology of sport and physical cultural scholars are increasingly engaging with more-than-human, posthuman, feminist materialist, and multispecies approaches to explore the complex and vital relationships between human and nonhuman agents with the environment (see Thorpe, Brice, & Clark, 2021; Chapter 7, for an excellent overview of "feminist ethics, the environment and vital respondings"). For example, King and Weedon (2020a, 2020b) have explored the complex relationship between protein power, the environment and human and nonhuman bodies. Evers (2019) has explored human-environment relations among surfers and the ocean. Taking a different approach, Brice and Thorpe (2021) engage with Karen Barad's theory of agential realism to pursue nonanthropocentric understandings of sport-environment and new feminist ethics of everyday fitness lifestyles and objects (Brice & Thorpe, 2021; Thorpe et al., 2021). In so doing, such approaches take up (sometimes duly acknowledged but other times misappropriating) Indigenous ways of knowing the environment as always lively and agentic (see TallBear, 2018; Thomas, 2015; Thorpe et al., 2021). While some of the language and concepts taken up in this chapter touch on the work of feminist materialisms and feminist science studies, we are more focused here on engaging with postcolonial and decolonial feminist ecology approaches that similarly use a "radical approach" to ontology and epistemology that questions "human exceptionalist understandings of being and knowing" (MacGregor, 2017, p. 34).

SDP and the Environment: Beyond Women as Victims of Environmental Destruction

Over recent years, thousands of NGOs and initiatives have emerged across the globe based on the (problematic) premise that sport, recreation and leisure are "positive" tools to address environmental degradation and its impacts (Giu-liannotti, 2021; Giuliannotti et al., 2018). And yet, SDP scholarship to date (mirroring, in many ways, environmental scholarship more broadly) largely overlooks the racialized and gendered dimensions of environmental degradation and the potential for sport to address the specific challenges experienced by women and girls. What's more, there remain taken-for-granted heteronormative assumptions and processes threaded throughout (sport) gender and environment work that does not explicitly recognize how both gender justice and climate justice involve, "women and men always in unequal positions that tend to reinforce existing gendered processes" (Arora Jonsson, 2014, p. 301). A key concern here is the ways that women and girls from the Global South are portrayed as victims of climate change impacts:

> Although attention to the gendered impacts of climate change is growing, much of this work focuses on the effects of climate change on impoverished women living in the developing world. Some feminist scholars have been critical of this particular kind of gendered framing because it depicts women, especially nonwhite

> women living in less-developed nations, as primarily victims. Framing women as the impoverished victims of climate change plays into problematic portrayals of those vulnerable to climate change as passive and without agency.
>
> (Moosa & Tuana, 2014, p. 683)

In recent years, more work on gender and the environment has emerged using postcolonial and decolonial lenses that challenge the narrative around women and girls as "victims" of climate change and environmental destruction. Such work elucidates how women are able to resist and negotiate environmental, economic and epistemic dispossession and devastation as well as other forms of "disaster colonialism" and violence (Bonilla, 2020; Mollett, 2017, 2018; Mollett & Faria, 2013).

For example, Rodriguez Castro (2021) brings a notable critique of the coloniality of power and of gender that adopts different conjectural commitments, highlighting the importance of women in the Global South (in her work, rural women in Abya Yala, Columbia). Her work underlines the importance of foregrounding a deep "political commitment to the epistemic forces and relationality of rural places in the Global South, which in Abya Yala are deeply related to territorial struggles that have plural herstories of decolonial body-land resistances to coloniality, extractivism and dispossession" (Rodriguez Castro, 2021, p. 57). Rodriguez Castro's emphasis on the "decolonial body-land resistances" is a critical departure point for the issues we attempt to draw attention to herein.

Ultimately, this chapter is driven by evidence that there are complex and messy relationships between sport and development, colonialism, gender equality, and environmental sustainability that require: (1) attention for their links to inequity and body–land violences and the body as a material and political locus; (2) further and more in-depth exploration in other socio-political contexts; and (3) now, in light of COVID and postpandemic life, attention to variety of (un)anticipated impacts of this global challenge. Too often research separates such topics, artificially pulling apart entangled phenomena. In this chapter, however, we seek to demonstrate the importance of feminist approaches that do not overlook complex relationships, but rather work to follow the overlapping networks, connections and diverse range of human and nonhuman actors, involved in the production of SGD as sociomaterial phenomena.

Gender-Based Violence Prevention, Sexual and Reproductive Health, and the Environment and Sport: An Entangled Relationship

The Beijing Declaration and Platform for UN (1995) defines sexual and reproductive health as, "a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity, in all matters relating to the reproductive system and to its functions and processes" (p. 35). In turn, SRHR may often include issues such as violence against women, but for the most part

hones in on health issues pertaining to addressing sexually transmitted infections, maternal health and mortality, offering safe and widely available health services for women and girls, HIV testing, sexuality education, how to "say no" to risky sex, and mental health support (Galati, 2015).

Current research in gender and development suggests that notions of population control woven into development projects are often framed as "sexual stewardship" (Sasser, 2017, p. 346). Sexual stewardship tenets are evident in programs and policies put forth in various education and development initiatives that bring together SRHR, GBV, and sustainability practices in an effort to animate women as responsible environmental agents who are expected to successfully control their fertility and reproduction (Sasser, 2017). Increasingly, young women in the Global South are often asked to lower their fertility in the name of "planetary environmental damage" (Murphy, 2017, p. 139). In turn, a number of global SGD NGOs, such as Women Win, actively connect these issues through curriculum and pedagogies used by Global South-based NGOs they partner with, including NNGO (as we further discuss in this chapter). Indeed, Sasser (2017) explains how such connections (among SRHR, GBV, and sustainability) are made through the work of NGOs that end up:

> Discursively link[ing] population growth, environmental problems, and family planning to women's empowerment, they construct a model of an ideal sustainable development subject: a moral agent who manages her fertility and the environment responsibly through contraceptive use for the greater good.
>
> (Sasser, 2017, p. 346)

Put differently, when development interventions that focus on girls and young women prioritize reproduction, fertility, and population control in order to address climate change, more pressing issues rooted in material and structural inequalities end up being overlooked. It stands to reason, though, that young women's agency is still imperative here and they need not be positioned as "eternally vulnerable" and meek victims of climate change. It is thus necessary to recognize that responses to climate change and natural disasters are highly subjective, framed by cultural and gender norms (Bradshaw, 2010); as well as by other forces such as neoliberalism and "disaster colonialism" (Bonilla, 2020; Bonilla & Klein, 2019). Building on Klein's (2007) work on disaster capitalism which shows how natural disasters are not simply "agentless" but deeply embedded in capitalist rationales, "disaster colonialism" explains how "disasters should not be understood as sudden events, but rather the outcome of long histories of slow, structural violence. That 'vulnerability,' both social and environmental, is thus not a natural state but the product of racio-colonial governance" (Bonilla, 2020, p. 1). We would be remiss, then, to paint women and girls as agentless victims of climate change: doing so conceals their agency, voices and resilience, but it also overlooks the broader structural violences of disaster capitalism and colonialism.

Other important postcolonial feminist political ecologists (explained further below) similarly speak to the role of violence in environmental issues by elucidating the ways that public environmental issues are entangled with domestic violence. Examples here explore the interconnections between prescribed gender roles, gendered divisions of labor, social conditioning, and social inequalities as they connect to issues related to public spaces, such as forests (Arora Jonsson, 2014). For example, during Arora Jonsson's (2014) fieldwork with a woman's group in a village in Odisha, India, one woman she interviewed remarked that there was "little point in protecting the forests if [she] could not protect [her]sel[f]" (p. 299).

Postcolonial feminist environmental scholars have similarly suggested that the promotion of SRHR is directly connected to safe and sustainable communities (e.g., SisterSong, 2019). Indeed, some note the concept of reproductive justice as one formed in 1994 by 12 women of color – part of the SisterSong Women of Color Reproductive Justice Collective – which they define as "the human right to maintain personal bodily autonomy, have children, not have children and parent the children we have in *safe and sustainable communities*" [(SisterSong, 2019) as cited by Bobel, 2019, p. 287, italics added for emphasis]. We emphasize here the essential connection to safe and sustainable communities, which implores a need to better understand the ways SRHR might hinge on environmental justice through SGD programming. What's more, young women from the Global South are increasingly being targeted by menstrual hygiene and SRHR programs to ensure their bodies are respectable and dignified before they are deemed "capable" of contributing to the development of their communities and countries, particularly economically or environmentally (Bobel, 2019). Still, little is known about how SGD programs are sutured to notions of population control and sexual stewardship, particularly in relation to SRHR, GBV and environmental sustainability curriculum, which is disconcerting as such SGD programs continue to proliferate at a rapid rate to tackle these very issues.

Overall, then, this chapter seeks to hone in on the unequal power relations, structural inequalities, and the complex gendered, institutional, and intersectional contexts in which environmental degradation, GBV, SRHR, and SGD occur – especially in the current (post-)pandemic moment. Indeed, these are the very entangled matters and knowledge gaps that the study explained herein examines through our empirical work with NNGO. Before doing this, we outline the theoretical underpinnings of this chapter: postcolonial feminist political ecology.

Postcolonial Feminist Political Ecology

For the purposes of this chapter, we draw from postcolonial feminist political ecology and feminist conceptualizations of violence. Taken together, these conceptual lenses help magnify the ways that young Nicaraguan women experience(d) SDP programming, environmental sustainability, GBV, and SRHR in relation to the politics of natural resource control.

The connections among women, gender, and the physical environment have run deep throughout the last four decades. In the early 1970s, ecofeminism emerged alongside broader studies on women, the environment, and development (WED) that were dominant in the late 1980s and early 1990s. WED approaches were mostly informed by practitioner perspectives, initially utilized for better understanding how women are positioned as victims or caretakers of their environments (Resurrección, 2017). The assumed inherent connections between women and development/planning efforts have resulted in them being positioned as being victims, key targets, and caretakers – layered onto their already overtaxed caring roles. Indeed, many have critiqued WED for its homogenizing approach, for essentializing of women's positions by overlooking broader gender roles, gender relations and gender identities (Agarwal, 1992).

Thereafter, the ecofeminism era emerged. Founded by French writer Françoise d'Eaubonne and grounded in the aspirations of women bringing about an ecological revolution (MacGregor, 2017), ecofeminism focuses on teasing apart the relations among environmental sustainability, social justice and gender. In doing so, ecofeminists offer up a knowledge platform that explores the enmeshment between "human and nonhuman, life and nonlife" (Cannella & Manuelito, 2008, p. 53).

Feminist political ecology (FPE) extends ecofeminist perspectives, places gender and power relations at the very center of inequality and the environment, ensuring that we consider the active nature of such relations as they are largely shaped by cultural and societal factors (Resurreccion, 2017). From this standpoint, unequal power relations, especially those engrained in gendered divisions of labor and broader gender inequalities, mitigate and influence the varying access individuals have to control resources at multiple levels (Resurrección, 2017). At its core, then, feminist political ecology is useful for unraveling women's access to resources and strives to uncover why they might have different access than men.

Postcolonial approaches to FPE rework and establish a more complex and nuanced account of the ways that colonialism intersects with racialized and gendered relations of power, acknowledging and yielding more critical analyses of issues related to environmental sustainability, violence to the land and natural resource access (Mollett, 2017). In essence, such approaches have the potential to heighten understandings of how colonialism, race, ethnicity, class, and sexuality shape the multifaceted oppressions that – in this case – young Nicaraguan women experience, and are able to, adapt and/or resist climate change and its effects (Gonda, 2017).

In advancing this theorization, using a postcolonial feminist FPE approach highlights how, "using the land for the best interests of industry, profit, settlers, or colonial governments is a central part of colonialism," (Liboiron, 2017, p. 1). Along these lines, as Mollett (2018, p. 178) writes, postcolonial feminist political ecologists might help to:

> Posit postcolonial intersectionality as a way to "trouble gender" or to "mess with gender" – to re-theorize it in such a way that refuses to silence, elide or side-step race but instead to accommodate a

> more complex understanding of the entanglement of racialized and gendered power. This approach demands an acknowledgment of the postcolonial moment of development's interventions in the Global South.

Ecofeminists and feminist political ecologists also see the connections between humans, nonhumans, and the environment – contentions that have been put forth by Indigenous scholars for quite some time (Cannella & Manuelito, 2008). Particularly instructive, here, are the ways that ecofeminist approaches emphasize *relationality*.

Decolonial and Postcolonial Feminist Political Ecology Studies and SDP

We contend that a *decolonial and postcolonial feminist* orientation to political ecology studies (see work by Faria et al., 2020; Mollett, 2017; Resurrección, 2017; Rodriguez Castro, 2021) possibly extends such conceptual orientations by sharpening our theoretical lens to examine the human and nonhuman actants involved in the workings of colonialism, capitalist expansion, consumption and exploitation that continue to shape SGD programs and the SDP phenomena more broadly (see Hayhurst & del Socorro Cruz Centeno). This approach also conjures attention to the (neo-)colonial effects of such interventions. In short, taking up a postcolonial feminist orientation to political ecology underlines the intricate intersections of colonialism, sexism, and racism in relation to the environment (Mollett, 2017). A decolonial approach emphasizes the coloniality of gender – or the ways that (Western) gender concepts have become normalized and have historically siloed gender (Lugones, 2008, 2010) – upholding the local over the global, engaging with the history of settler colonialism and global gendered racial capitalism (Collins, 2019). Decolonial feminist approaches, as discussed in Chapter 1, tend to go beyond the more abstract theorizing of postcolonial feminist to more action-oriented "resistance knowledge projects" that embrace a more decolonized environmental politics.

SDP, has, for the most part, lacked engagement postcolonial and decolonial feminist political ecology studies to account for the agentic capacities of nonhuman actors as they shape the behaviors and attitudes of those participating in SDP on the ground in diverse contexts and the larger ways that human rights are deployed and taken up (or resisted) by local actors, or targeted beneficiaries. In advancing this theorization, postcolonial feminist political ecology studies may aid understandings of how the environment – including weather, road materials and other nonhuman objects in the rural communities of Nicaragua – ultimately end up shaping the experiences of SGD. A decolonial feminist approach extends this even further, by explicating how we can work more collaboratively and "walking with differently situated others in intersecting, yet distinct and unequally constituted struggles," (Sundberg, 2014, p. 123).

Indeed, decolonial and postcolonial feminist political ecology orientations are highly relevant in order to make the somewhat distant and abstract concepts of

environmental sustainability, GBV and social entrepreneurship more tangible, material, everyday issues. In the next section, we explore the issues outlined above through a case study grounded in the experiences of young women participants involved in an SGD program focused on gender-based violence prevention, sexual and reproductive rights promotion, and environmental stewardship operating in Southern Nicaragua.

Nicaragua: The Women's Movement, Political Foundations, Sport and Climate Change

There is not enough space to outline and properly contextualize the rich history and political foundations of the women's movement, development, sport and the environment in Nicaragua. In this brief section, we therefore provide information on the social, economic, political and cultural landscape of the country in order to contextualize the current state of affairs in the country.

After close to eight centuries of civil war, Spanish colonization commenced – vis-à-vis the Spanish church and state – taking place over a 300-year period mostly characterized by military violence, corruption and Christianization (Disney, 2008). The conquistador was a military industrialist who played an active role in the annihilation of the Indigenous population and the highly oppressive and racialized approach to colonization through a system referred to as *encomienda*. Indeed, this system drove a racial hierarchy whereby the indios – Indigenous peoples of the Americas – were forced to toil on the lands divided by the Spanish colonizers (Lancaster, 1991).

Nicaragua is the second poorest country in the Western Hemisphere, with 43 percent of the population living in poverty (USAID, 2013). Nicaraguans residing in rural areas (like the area where this research took place) are particularly vulnerable, where the rate of poverty is 63% compared to 43% in urban areas (USAID, 2013). Such challenges pertaining to poverty and inequality are heightened due to a large number of those living in poverty experiencing "climate variability and extreme, often large-scale, weather events," (Radel, Schmook, Carte, & Mardero, 2018, p. 1). Nicaragua's vulnerability to hurricanes, flooding, droughts and other climate change related impacts only exacerbate preexisting inequalities, particularly along lines of gender, race and class.

According to the World Economic Forum (2016), Nicaragua is ranked 10th in the Global Gender Gap Index and fourth in terms of the political participation of women out of 142 countries. And yet, according to Gonda (2017), "the prestigious ranking of Nicaragua in terms of gender equality hides a context in which women's participation in decision-making spaces is not always the result of their empowerment, nor does it contribute to empowerment in the majority of cases" (p. 174). Indeed, a "machismo culture" exists that supports aggressive paternalism and institutionalized male entitlement across Nicaragua. This machismo culture was driven by legislation that has been in place since the 1970s, positioning the authority of men over families and in society (Cobo del Arco, 2000).

The gender order has been sustained and largely driven by the Sandinista Party (or the FSLN) in 2007. Indeed, a number of policies driven by FSLN also position women as the beacons of environmental education anchored by the belief that "women have a natural connection to nature, and therefore that they are especially apt to fight environmental degradation and climate change," (Gonda, 2017, p. 173). In a similar vein to the Girl Effect discourse – which places responsibility on young women in the Global South for development efforts – Nicaraguan women and girls are similarly situated as especially suitable for participating in "productive environmental activities" (Gonda, 2017, p. 177).

These issues are all the more pressing to consider, because the "feminization of nature" discourse that produces Nicaraguan women and girls as agents of environmental responsibility stands in stark contrast to the relative *dis*empowerment they experience in terms of their sexual and reproductive health rights. The FSLN continues to support the criminalization of abortion, which is subject to imprisonment for up to two years, regardless of circumstances. Along these lines, Law 779 (which NNGO has vehemently promoted), opposes and criminalizes violence against women in both private and public spheres, refuses patriarchal values and directly rejects machismo culture (Jubb, 2014). Taken together, the political, environmental, social, and economic experiences of Nicaraguan women outlined above reveal some of the challenges involved in locating safe spaces through which to participate in SGD programming, especially in remote, rural communities mostly predominantly impacted by climate change (Hayhurst & del Socorro Cruz Centeno, 2019).

Exploring SGD through Climate Change, Gender-Based Violence Prevention and Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights

Our research with NNGO (the background of this organization explained further in Chapter 2) took place in January 2015. NNGO uses fútbol (soccer) to promote sexual and reproductive health rights, address gender-based violence and navigate the effects of environmental degradation in their community (see Chapter 2 and Hayhurst, 2017 for further details on NNGO's background and our methodological approach). We worked closely with a translator who was well-versed in the local Spanish dialect in this community (further details about the translation process detailed in Hayhurst, 2017). A total of three organizational staff members from NNGO (Staff Member 1, 2, 3) and 11 young women program participants were interviewed, with 18 young women participants participating in photovoice and poster collaging activities (Hayhurst, 2017). Over a three-day period, the young women were asked to capture their experiences of the NNGO's SGD program.

The young women then gathered for a period of two days to create photo-collages – based on their photovoice activities – on bristol boards using text captions, art supplies, and any other materials (e.g., leaves, dirt, and small pebbles) they felt were useful for conveying their experiences in the SGD program. Each poster was created in a pair, with a total of nine posters that were developed.

Hereafter, participants had the option of sharing their posters with the broader group. The final step involved discussing the key themes that emerged from the posters. Key findings were organized into two key categories that were developed: barriers (“barreras,” e.g., “violencia” – violence) and enablers (“alientos,” e.g., “informacion” – information) (Fig. 1). Lyndsay then used these themes to inform a secondary analysis of the individual photos and collages.

Here, it is important to highlight Lyndsay’s positionality as a white, middle-class, able-bodied, heterosexual, cisgender Canadian woman who was able to access connections through her past research relationships with a larger international SGD NGO to form a relationship with del Socorro Cruz Centeno when this study was conducted in 2015. Although Lyndsay has written about this collaboration in more depth in other work (Hayhurst, 2017; also see Chapter 2), she

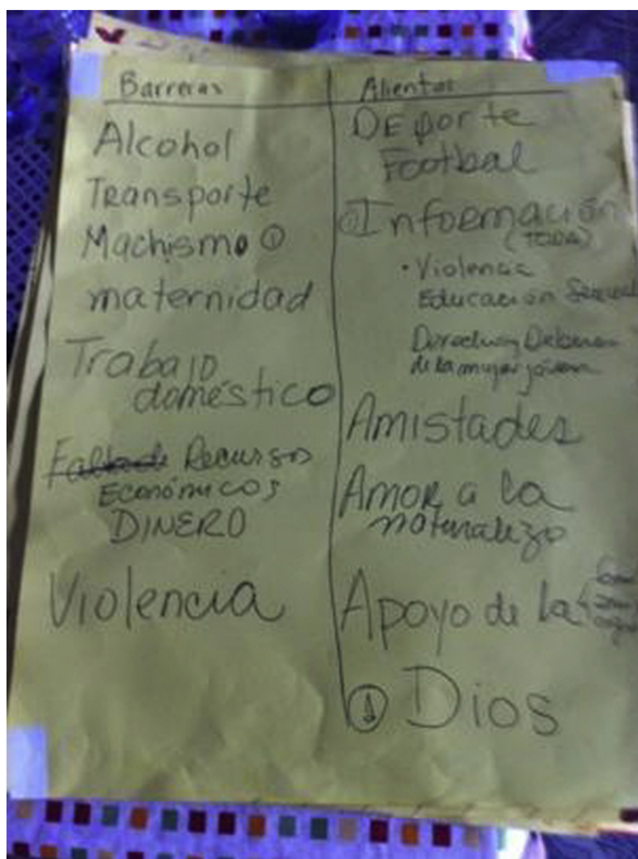

Fig. 1. A Poster describing the Key Themes that Emerged Following Photocollaging Analysis with Young Women Participants (Hayhurst, 2017; Hayhurst et al., 2018; Hayhurst & del Socorro Cruz Centeno, 2019).

continues to critically and actively question her positionality and privileges – despite her strong commitment to being a partner in projects of decolonization. Thus, she openly acknowledges the limitations of her own worldviews. Lidieth identifies as a Nicaraguan woman who leads a sport, education and health program for young women and girls and was the lead community-based researcher for fieldwork in Nicaragua discussed herein. Importantly, Lidieth is a long-term partner in this research as it continues into the future.

In the remainder of this chapter, we draw on this empirical work to make three interrelated arguments: 1) SDP researchers must better account for the broader physical environment in social and political life as it shapes the lives of those on the receiving ends of SDP interventions (see Giulianotti, Darnell, Collison, & Howe, 2018); 2) we must go beyond a sole focus on the broader physical environment to also consider the gendered dimensions of environmental issues; and 3) SGD programs may inadvertently contribute to upholding patriarchy, essentialize women's and girls' traditional gender roles, exacerbate gendered divisions of labor, and potentially reinforce assumptions about "women's natural connection to nature" (Gonda, 2017, p. 173).

The Feminization of Environmental Responsibility In/Through SGD

> Through football, we can ensure that we have good practices in relation to the environment, to raise awareness within the community. That we should keep safe and clean the environment […] I'm talking about the environment when the girls are going to play, if they bring in any plastic bag, if they have a water bottle, not to throw it to the floor, but to dispose of their garbage as it should be. And to ensure that the football field is maintained clean, so we have a healthy environment.
> [(Staff Member 2, NNGO) Hayhurst & del Socorro Cruz Centeno, 2019, p. 14)]

Throughout the photovoice and photocollaging sessions and interviews, the young women and NNGO staff members (such as Staff Member 2, above) explained how the various spokes of environmental responsibility were threaded throughout the program curriculum. This curriculum employed by NNGO was mostly directed by one of its funders – an international women's rights SGD NGO located in Western Europe that we refer to here as International Non-Governmental Organization (INGO). INGO uses a number of environmental "clean-up games" used to encourage girls to understand "the importance of properly disposing of trash" (Staff Member 2, NNGO). Indeed, games promoted by INGO included one where young women were blindfolded and then taught to place a piece of garbage in the trash can. Following this, they were encouraged to make an environmental commitment.

We are not objecting here to the idea of keeping the environment clean. However, it is clear that these young women are impelled through these activities to be "good global girl citizens" by helping to "save the environment"

without – as Leach (2007, p. 72) contends – "addressing whether they actually had the resources or capacity to do so." Indeed, one cannot help but begin to see that there is an inherent assumption in this curriculum – and in the quote from Staff Member 2 – that girls (and women) are more efficient in executing environmental tasks. Here, the young women were, "given core responsibilities" for maintaining the clean football field and being taught how to properly dispose of trash, based on an assumption about their virtuousness in taking care of nature. The challenge, then, is that the curriculum runs the risk of being grounded in gendered assumptions pertaining to the morality of these young women in taking care of nature, all while potentially overlooking gender relations. These new environmental chores seemed to be added to their already long list of caring roles – as explained further in the next section.

Lauding Women's Environmental Knowledge and Driving Hegemonic Gender Identities

There were a number of cleaning groups that were created as part of NNGO's SGD program. These groups were used to encourage young women to tend to garbage scattered across their community, including empty alcohol bottles that NNGO staff and young women explained were mostly discarded by the men and boys who consumed alcohol while participating and/or watching community football matches. As Julissa stated, when referring to her photo (Fig. 2):

Fig. 2. Photograph by Julissa. Untitled. (See also Hayhurst & del Socorro Cruz Centeno, 2019).

> This is a bottle of liquor. And this is sold at the sports field. It is consumed by the [men] and then they just leave the bottles out there. They leave this out there, so oftentimes you have children, small children that will just pick them up and play with these bottles. In my opinion, I think that you should control these issues. If you're going to sell it, if you're going to sell liquor, then you've got to ensure that the bottles are not left out in the field.
> (Hayhurst & del Socorro Cruz Centeno, 2019, p. 15)

Similarly, and as Hazell noted, while reflecting on her photo of garbage (Fig. 3):

> This photo was taken in front of my house, as you can see. We have cleaning groups. We have four cleaning groups, and if you can see, there is a lot of garbage out there. But what we do is we organize groups to clean, and we collect that garbage, to clean.
> (Hayhurst & del Socorro Cruz Centeno, 2019, p. 15)

Indeed, a number of the young women also described the information provided by NNGO's workshops which were hosted as part of its fútbol festivals and broad curriculum. While topics outlined in such workshops included a focus on environmental issues such as recycling, picking up trash and creating garbage dumps; the workshops also touched on condom use, pregnancy prevention and support for Law 779. The key takeaway point, here, is that information and

Fig. 3. Photograph by Hazell. Untitled. (Hayhurst & del Socorro Cruz Centeno, 2019, p. 15).

pedagogical practices were being disseminated that were meant to "teach" women about how they might access a variety of opportunities for self-improvement, metamorphic potential and to be the agents capable of, and responsible for, transforming their communities. The young women we spoke to took these tasks seriously and continued to participate in NNGO's workshops despite being criticized by community members. As Maria explained, "community members usually criticize me. They say that we're just looking for men. That we should be at home with our parents. And they just say that we're looking to become pregnant," (Hayhurst & del Socorro Cruz Centeno, 2019, p. 15).

Similarly, Julissa explained how she navigated such resistance by simply continuing to attend the NNGO's workshops to see how she could learn more about GBV, SRHR, and sustainability practices:

> One of the examples that the information [NNGO] gave us through the workshops and at the different festivals is how to use the condom to prevent pregnancy, and also the sexually transmitted diseases, how to prevent that. Something else is what we can do with the plastic, with garbage. How can we reuse that? We can work, or we can build a garbage dump, or you can sweep it up
> (Hayhurst & del Socorro Cruz Centeno, 2019, p. 15)

Following our discussion, Julissa highlighted to a photo of the t-shirt she had won for coming in first place in a fútbol tournament. The t-shirt featured the slogan "I use condom always" – and she explained that she was consistently mocked for wearing this item, especially by local boys and men. And yet, Julissa continued to wear the shirt, and committed to cleaning up the alcohol bottles – bolstered by the knowledge NNGO had provided about how such activities may ultimately contribute to incite social change and help to challenge gender norms in the community.

Staff member two further commented on the importance of the young women taking responsibility for the environment for the sake of their health and the health of others:

> For us—we as [NNGO], it is important to create the link, to relate those issues. As a criteria that we had set up in the activities, we don't use disposable dishes or disposable plates or cups because that creates garbage. And oftentimes this is garbage that is not easily recyclable or perhaps is not. So these are issues that are—have a relationship with health, with taking care of us. But also taking care of the environment in which we live. It's part of the living together, the harmonious relationship in which we need to live. It's like a triangle. We, men, environment, it's creating an equal footing. It is the nation among men and women, but also with the environment.

> Creating a balance, an equal footing among those three. We always just try to do that, to preserve the environment.
> (Hayhurst & del Socorro Cruz Centeno, 2019, p. 16)

This equilibrium was indeed perceived as crucial for the success of NNGO and its related initiatives. Despite this, it was clear – based on the photos and photocollages developed by the young women – that the cleaning groups seemed to negate the very objectives of the SGD program. That is, the goals of the SGD program were to use fútbol (which is masculine dominated sport in Nicaragua) to challenge and disrupt gender norms. NNGO aspired to use fútbol to entice girls to leave their homes. This was because the majority of domestic and sexual violence took place there, in the homes of these young women.

In stark contrast, the single-sex cleaning groups seemed to only reinforce the traditional gender roles by "constructing [cleaning] as an exclusively female chore" and subsequently "reinforce[ing] 'traditional' gender roles that are 'traditional' only in the view of the project" (Gonda, 2017, pp. 181–182). That is, the formation of the cleaning groups potentially perilously reinforces women's fixed roles, where "women's labor and knowledge needs to be used for purposes of sustainability" (Arora Jonsson, 2014, p. 304).

Disrupting the traditional gender roles, prying open safe spaces free of violence and domestic duties – these were many of the aspirations described by the young women who participated in SGD's programs. These issues were explained in great detail by Petrilla in Fig. 4, displaying photos of a tied-up pig

Fig. 4. Photographs by Petrilla. Untitled. (Hayhurst et al., 2018, p. 284).

and a woman as she remains in the home, caring for children, cleaning and cooking (see Hayhurst et al., 2018; Hayhurst & del Socorro Cruz Centeno, 2019):

> You see in our pictures that women have dedicated themselves to domestic activities, you see a woman cooking, and a man simply sitting there waiting for the food to be taken to him. And we as [young women] are taught that we need to be mothers. So usually in our communities we see young women who are 14 or 15 years old already pregnant […] Another obstacle, if you see this pig. We know this is a domestic animal, so we are doing domestic chores. But if you can see, the pig is with a rope, tied up. It is as when our parents do not allow us to leave the house, and we are sort of prisoners in our own homes.
>
> (Hayhurst et al., 2018, p. 284)

NNGO was committed to persuading the young women that it was safe to get outside their homes. Certainly, the organization aspired to fight social isolation, deter GBV, and to provide helpful information about how young women could promote and strengthen their SRHR throughout their community. Eight interviewees described how increasingly challenging the lengthening rainy season was, noting that the heavy rains kept them inside their homes for longer periods – making them more susceptible to domestic violence. These heavy rains also moored them to domestic labor obligations. Indeed, ten of the eleven young women explained how they felt overwhelmed and strained by their domestic responsibilities. This was not simply in response to cleaning their homes, communities and care duties for family and friends alike. It was also in response to navigating the challenges of climate change and deforestation, as described in the next section.

Deforestation and Devastation: Navigating the Gendered Implications of Climate Change

Most residents who live in the community where NNGO operated – and in the broader region – are small-scale farmers producing maize, beans, and some vegetables on small plots of land. However, due to the increasing use of herbicides and commercial-led deforestation, the soil and land continues to be severely degraded. A related concern was a lengthening rainy season that tended to contribute to an increased occurrence of natural disasters, including landslides. Thus, a key component of NNGO's SGD program was to use the young women's participation in fútbol activities in order to educate them about the importance of forest preservation. For example – and as seen in Fig. 5 below – the program taught the young women to plant trees and use barriers/blocks made of cement to secure their roads and homes from landslides (see also Figure 1, Chapter 2). These

Fig. 5. Photograph by Maria. Untitled. (Hayhurst & del Socorro Cruz Centeno, 2019, p. 17).

important features of NNGO's SGD program are explained by Maria in the excerpt below:

Maria: In this picture it reflects the environment. It shows dirt, and then it requires some cleaning. So that's what I'm trying to reflect there.

LH: What do you mean cleaning?

Maria: If you see, when I took the picture I was thinking that we need to clean this area here. You see right here in this area, it has dirt and leaves and no trees here and that there's some cleaning that needs to be done.

LH: Okay, where was this taken?

Maria: This was taken on the street. And this is a cement barrier so water won't go down, it detains leaves. So it's just a stop, and it's a barrier to protect—so there you see the tree is being protected by the stones, by the rocks. And this, you can see them on the roads, so you are not able to walk through those areas. You are not able to go through those areas. So we want to prevent that.

But were these cement barriers enough? It seemed clear that the young women felt their efforts to use such barriers to replace the trees in fighting an increasing rainy season seemed frustratingly pointless, for the landslides continued. Such natural disasters consistently destroyed any roads the young women hoped to use to attend the NNGO's SGD program and run away from the domestic violence they often experienced in their homes.

Navigating the Nonhuman: Gendered Climate Change and Social Isolation in SGD

Photos taken by the young women consistently pointed to the challenges involved in navigating a prolonged rainy season which caused increasing landslides and exposure to other natural disasters. Landslides, for example, often resulted in roads throughout their communities being entirely blocked, preventing the young women from attending the SGD program and fútbol tournaments. A related challenge was that, subsequently, the young women were unable to leave their homes: spaces and places many discussed as violent and risky. And yet, it was unfeasible for NNGO to have to account for the ways that roads, trees, bushes, rocks and cement barriers impacted their ability to (in many ways, ironically), educate participants about gender-based violence prevention, SRHR, and the participants' roles in protecting and sustaining their environments. For example, as Gabriella explained in reference to the challenge of traveling throughout her community (Fig. 6):

Fig. 6. Untitled. Photograph by Gabriella (See also Hayhurst, 2017; Hayhurst et al., 2018; Hayhurst & del Socorro Cruz Centeno, 2019).

> I took this picture in my community. One of the difficulties that we face on this road, there is a gorge which is very bad, very deep. And there are difficulties, many of them, because we transport ourselves in a vehicle and the lane is very narrow, so just passing through it is very difficult. And we have to pass through there if we want to play when we go far away.
>
> (Hayhurst et al., 2018, p. 284)

Camilia agreed as she shared her photo of a toy helicopter and teddy bear (Fig. 7):

> This is something that we would never, ever be able to achieve. To fly to some workshop in a helicopter…it would be very difficult. And this is a little bear. I took this picture at my house. That was the way we used to feel, you know, prior to NNGO, it was just like a little bear that was prisoner and it wouldn't go out – couldn't go out. Nobody would visit us and we couldn't get out of the house.
>
> (Hayhurst & del Socorro Cruz Centeno, 2019, p. 20)

Particularly instructive were Omara's concerns, highlighted by a photo she captured of white tourists driving freely as they explored her community (Fig. 8). Omara juxtaposed the privilege of these tourists, especially due to their ability to travel, in stark contrast with her entrapment and inability to obtain the same opulence:

Omara: Perhaps I might not be able to buy this car; however, if some time in the future I was able to buy it, it would mean a whole lot for me. It would mean happiness. That's the reason why I liked it, because perhaps I might not be able to buy it, but I can have it in a picture. It's my car (Hayhurst, 2017, p. 13).

Many of the young women interviewed demonstrated an intelligible recognition that their race, gender, and socioeconomic status factored into the disadvantages they navigated on a daily basis. That is, it seemed clear that they were aware of the social (and material constraints) that prevented them from fully "choosing" to achieve gender equality, prevent climate change and realize their SRHR. And yet, participants underscored that they still needed to have a keen understanding of their rights and how their knowledge would be used to prevent GBV and uphold sustainability through their continued participation in NNGO's workshops. For example, as Andrea explained:

> I like to learn about my health and the health of the body. How we as girls take care of your own body. They [NNGO] really give us good training workshops. We do a lot of games. NNGO talks to us about sexuality. They teach us how to prevent diseases, how to ensure that our body's kept clean, what are some of the things that

Fig. 7. Photographs by Camilia. Untitled.

Fig. 8. Photograph by Omara. Untitled. (See also Hayhurst, 2017).

> we need to do, how to prevent diseases. And if we're talking about sexual topics, how to prevent pregnancy, unwanted pregnancies.

However, these young women continued to be the moral bearers of reliability: they were responsible for mitigating climate change and pollution, while simultaneously attending the workshops that were ushering them to clean these same environments, build cement barriers and plant trees to prevent landslides. And still, they strained to attend these workshops as they struggled to steer through a slew of nonhuman factors: deflated bicycle tires punctured by rocky terrain, muddy washed away roads, and defeated tree stumps that once helped to avert devastating landslides.

At the same time, we would be remiss to suggest that these young women did not share "positive" images of their surrounding community during photovoice and photocollaging activities. Indeed, participants shared stunning photos of blooming flowers, tall trees, massive waves crashing on shore on the nearby lake, well-used soccer balls and footprints on a dusty fútbol pitch. Clearly, though, the photos of washed away roads, confined pigs, friendless teddy bears and toy helicopters conveyed a powerful message: that climate change and unsafe home life seemed to contribute to feelings of seclusion and increased exposure to violence.

Final Thoughts, Reflections and Future Directions

> When addressing climate change, women are called on to participate both in decision-making and climate change adaptation because they are seen as the ones who have the best understanding of what should be done. This relates to a typically problematic assumption of the post-feminist discourse: that women, because they are given the possibilities to participate, only need to try hard enough to achieve in this case, both climate change and gender equality.
>
> (Gonda, 2017, p. 179)

The words of Gonda neatly encapsulate one of the central arguments of this chapter: that even with the most well-intentioned policies, programming and laws that are meant to protect women and girls in the realms of GBV, SRHR and climate change, it remains paramount to be attentive and sensitive to context and the infrastructure that upholds these rights (Arora Jonsson, 2014). This contention relates to four other key contributions this chapter has made to decolonial and postcolonial feminist political ecology studies of SDP.

First, we have highlighted how complex racialized, gendered and economic relations intertwine to impel both human and nonhuman elements in shaping SGD programming in unintended ways. We have, secondly, exposed how gendered hierarchies, roles and relations take place and are exacerbated through SGD, especially through the pursuit of neoliberal and colonial development under the semblance of "sustainability." Third, we have demonstrated how the prevention of violence to the physical environment is deeply entangled with the prevention of violence against women's bodies. In some ways, this connects to Rodriguez Castro's (2021, p. 58) recent work on the body-land to draw attention to the importance of using visual participatory action research approaches to "disrupt victim narratives associated with rural women in the global South" by showing how they "resist, negotiate and survive" while also "dismantling the multiple patriarchies embedded in their lives." Fourth and finally, this study pointed to the dangerous ways that "women's knowledge can be harnessed to protect and sustain environments" (Arora Jonsson 2014, p. 304). That is, the young women participating in SGD interventions are all-too-often "tapped on the shoulder" to do the curative labor, while those who are mostly responsible for environmental damages and violence (such as the government, corporations, etc.) are failing to prevent such destruction from taking place to begin with (De Lisio, 2019; Faria et al., 2020; Rodriguez Castro, 2021). For instance, as landslides and flooding continue to heighten the precarity experienced by the young women participants of NNGO, a disaster colonialism lens would ask how "through racial, colonial, and neoliberal regimes of power, Black, Brown, and indigenous bodies are rendered precarious, and are thus more easily exploitable. But crucially, it roots that precarity in centuries long and enduring colonial, global-hemispheric projects," (Faria et al., 2020, p. 89).

In turn, the care work (i.e., women's labor) is used to "save the environment" – with the thought that women are "close to nature," adding to their already (over) extended lists of caring roles. The same rationale is used to justify women's onus for learning about their rights, and for their responsibility to "try harder" to prevent violence and natural disasters like landslides from happening in the first place. And yet, unequal gender relations remain unchallenged. And so, despite the Sandinista government's assertion that *all Nicaraguans* must live in "harmony with Mother Earth" (Gonda, 2017, p. 173), the burden seems to mostly fall on (young) women to locate and maintain such harmony.

Thus, future studies might further explore the multiple ways that SGD/SDP potentially reinforce gendered polarities. In particular, it would be fruitful to critically consider what transpires in terms of gender equality objectives when SGD programs exclusively focus on girls and young women in a given community to achieve environmental sustainability, without failing to account for broader gender relations (for example).

This research has built on, and extended, previous studies that exposed how young women are hailed as responsible for violence prevention and gaining SRHR knowledge. Indeed, the assumption is that their agency and knowledge on GBV prevention and SRHR promotion will be exerted in productive and socially transformative ways. As Ahmed (2017) powerfully cautions:

> Being a girl is a way of being taught what it is to have a body; you are being told; you will receive my advances; you are an object; thing, nothing. To become a girl is to learn to expect such advances; to modify your behaviour in accordance […] Indeed, if you do not modify your behaviour in accordance, if you are not careful and cautious, you can be made responsible for the violence directed toward you.
>
> (p. 26)

Ahmed's warnings need to be considered more deeply in SGD and SDP research. Indeed, it seems crucial to rethink rationales that focus on teaching young women to "modify their behaviors" without addressing the material and structural inequalities that they face. However, it should not be up to NGOs to address such massive inequalities: these issues often fall outside the realm of their mandates.

Finally, our findings contribute to other feminist development studies that explore menstrual hygiene management (Bobel, 2019), feminist reproductive politics (Murphy, 2017) and the logic of vulnerability that permeates the discourses of gender and development programs more broadly (Shepherd, 2017). Overall, what this literature helps explain is that in dominant development discourse, women (young women in particular) are typically first positioned as "vulnerable victims" before they may be empowered – especially economically (Arora Jonsson 2014). Indeed, decolonial and postcolonial feminist political

ecology perspectives present a useful starting point to challenge such approaches and "get at" the complex material-discursive, human and nonhuman entanglements affecting SGD, and the experiences of girls and women involved in such programs. Such an approach thus "offer[s] possibilities for change through critical, disruptive and decentering engagements with the mutual constitution of race, gender, sexuality and space," (Mollett, 2017, p. 13). Taken together, we must strive to better understand the material violence of climate change and the gender-based violence so often created in its fallout.