



International Perspectives on Education and Society **Emerald Book Chapter: Women's studies as a global innovation**

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Article information:

To cite this document:

Christine Min Wotipka, Francisco O. Ramirez, (2008), "Women's studies as a global innovation", David P. Baker, Alexander W. Wiseman, in (ed.) The Worldwide Transformation of Higher Education (International Perspectives on Education and Society, Volume 9), Emerald Group Publishing Limited, pp. 89 - 110

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[http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S1479-3679\(08\)00004-2](http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S1479-3679(08)00004-2)

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(2008), "Preface", David P. Baker, Alexander W. Wiseman, in (ed.) The Worldwide Transformation of Higher Education (International Perspectives on Education and Society, Volume 9), Emerald Group Publishing Limited, pp. ix - xii

[http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S1479-3679\(08\)00012-1](http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S1479-3679(08)00012-1)

S. Karin Amos, (2010), "Preface", S. Karin Amos, in (ed.) International Educational Governance (International Perspectives on Education and Society, Volume 12), Emerald Group Publishing Limited, pp. xi - xvii

[http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/S1479-3679\(2010\)0000012001](http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/S1479-3679(2010)0000012001)

(2008), "Edited by", David P. Baker, Alexander W. Wiseman, in (ed.) The Worldwide Transformation of Higher Education (International Perspectives on Education and Society, Volume 9), Emerald Group Publishing Limited,



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WOMEN'S STUDIES AS A GLOBAL INNOVATION

Christine Min Wotipka and Francisco O. Ramirez

Between 1970 and 2000 women's studies curriculum in universities emerged in a wide range of countries and regions throughout the world. This project offers a comparative and longitudinal analysis of the adoption of women's studies curricula, defined as the offering of the first women's studies department, program, or degree at a university from 1970 to 2000. Using event history models of estimation, we test a number of different explanations at the national- and international-levels. We find that the initial adoption of women's studies curriculum is positively influenced by global dynamics such as the diffusion of women's studies activities and the timing of international women's conferences. These global dynamics operate net of the positive influence of national factors such as the level of economic development and the degree of democracy. These global dynamics suggests the further development of a global logic of inclusiveness, transforming what counts as knowledge in higher education and leading to women's studies as a global innovation.

THE EMERGENCE OF THE ACADEMIC ARM OF THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT

Starting in the 1960s, university systems around the world began to undergo a variety of drastic changes that would forever alter higher education.

The Worldwide Transformation of Higher Education
International Perspectives on Education and Society, Volume 9, 89–110
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ISSN: 1479-3679/doi:10.1016/S1479-3679(08)00004-2

The spread of social movements were fueled by anti-war protests, demands for civil rights, and new forms of economic and political organization (Lipset, 1993). In terms of changes in universities, students demanded greater educational access and equal opportunities. A worldwide logic of inclusiveness increasingly affected national political and educational outcomes, including transformations in multiple dimensions of the status of women in the polity and in the educational system. This chapter focuses on the emergence and expansion of women's studies curricula in universities throughout the world, treating this unexpected development as a further manifestation of the globalization of a logic of inclusiveness.

With the International Women's Year in 1975 and subsequent United Nations Decade for Women, the "second wave" of the women's movement took on a truly global character (Chen, 1996). This movement, combined with greater numbers of female faculty and students, brought intense demands for an expanded place for women in the academy, not simply in terms of their numbers but in their representation in the curricula across the disciplines. The result of such demands was a new field of studies known generally as women's studies,¹ in which "new faces, alternative perspectives, and innovative approaches to scholarship as well as teaching" (Boxer, 1998, p. 2) were introduced into academia. By the beginning of the 21st century, women's studies have come to exist in many countries, albeit the degree of institutionalization varies widely from one country to the other.²

Numerous case studies have documented the institutionalization of women's studies in individual countries in Europe. Far less work has examined women's studies elsewhere, but even fewer offer a comparative analysis chronicling changes over time.³

This project provides a comparative and longitudinal quantitative analysis of the expansion of women's studies activities throughout several countries. Our goal is to elucidate those global- and national-level factors that give rise to the establishment of women's studies using event history models of estimation. We start by reviewing the literature on the emergence and institutionalization of women's studies and comment on the difficulty inherent in such a project including how to define "women's studies." We then present the theoretical perspective that guides this project, emphasizing the role of global dynamics in shaping national curricular innovations. We focus on the worldwide women's movement and on worldwide pressures on higher education to become less elitist. These developments are both influenced and influence a changing world cultural order within which women and women's issues increasingly count. We expect these dynamics to influence the adoption of women's studies curriculum, net of the effects of

economic development and political democracy. After describing our methods of analysis and data, we present our findings and a discussion of them. We close with some suggested directions for future work on the topic.

WOMEN'S STUDIES IN COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE

Although the literature on women's studies consists primarily of case studies focused on individual countries,⁴ a few comparative studies attest to the influence of regional and global trends on its emergence and reveal some interesting patterns (Wotipka, Ramirez, & Martinez, 2007). In the case of several Western European countries and the United States, women's studies courses got a boost from the women's movement (both national and international) and women's activism.⁵ Also important were feminist scholars and students within the academy (Gumport, 2002; Boxer, 1998) as well as female activists from outside the academy such as those involved in the workers' education movement, adult classes, and other non-university teaching in the U.K. (Silius, 2002). Having scholars in the social science and humanities disciplines who were willing to incorporate women's studies topics into their courses was also critical, as establishing women's studies as a unique discipline met with much resistance throughout Europe, which continues to this day. Particularly in its early stages, some of the main supporters of women's studies were also the most vocal opponents of institutionalization of women's studies due to fears that institutionalization in male-dominated universities would co-opt the activist nature of women's studies. Proponents of a more nurturing and differentiated child care system also fear the costs of institutionalizing child care in male dominated schools (O'Connor, 1990). In France and in other Western European countries, the university system was resistant to innovative changes in course or degree offerings by opening up to women's studies despite a range of other reforms that had started taking place in the system in the 1960s.

Eastern European women, on the other hand, had to wait until after the fall of Communism to introduce women's studies into the university curricula. When the time came in the early 1990s to begin the process of institutionalization, they had two decades' worth of experience from surrounding countries on which to draw upon (Kupryashkina, 1996). For the most part, there was little delay in offering women's studies courses despite the "second-class status" experienced now more than ever by women

in Central and Southeastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union (Silova & Magno, 2004), their fledgling national women's movements (Oleksy, 1994; Posadskaya, 1994), and conflicts between traditional and new feminists (Koncz, 1996).

In their assessment of women's studies in Asia, Chamberlain and Howe (1995) suggest several factors to explain the development of women's studies in that region. The fact that women's studies began as early as the 1970s in India, they argue, may be attributed to several factors such as the advanced status of social science research in India and the number of Indian women in the social sciences and their ties with Western feminist scholars. Korean women's studies (Pilwha, 1996) got a boost from female scholars working at a number of influential women's universities⁶ as well as from the Korean Women's Development Institute, the national machinery for women which was founded in 1983.

Japan also got an early start to women's studies thanks to the influence of women's studies in the U.S. and Europe, the women's liberation movement in the 1970s, a large number of unemployed married women with university degrees and the sharp rise of women in the paid labor force in Japan (Watanabe, 1994). In lesser developed Asian countries, attention given to women in development issues helped spread women's studies in the 1980s. The spread of an urban-based Chinese women's movement helped advance women's studies starting in the 1980s. However, as Beijing prepared to host the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995, influences from the international women's movement and organizations helped spur tremendous growth in the number of women's studies centers and to widen the scope of topics addressed by Chinese scholars (Chow, Zhang, & Wang, 2004).

Led by Nigeria and South Africa, women's studies in Africa developed in the late 1980s and 1990s. Emerging from a devastating decade of structural adjustments programs that coincided with a strengthening international women's movement, which included the UN Decade for Women Conference held in Nairobi, Kenya in 1985, African women's studies received its impetus from its attachment to women in development activities. To this day, women and gender studies typically falls within development studies (Boswell, 2003; Prah, 1996). An overall women in development perspective was fostered by international development donors who were mainly interested in promoting better education and better health for women to better harness their human capital potential in the service of economic development (Boswell, 2003). This approach was less conducive to feminist scholarship and women's studies programs rooted in a critique of

male dominated hierarchies. Reacting to the narrower women in development perspective, networks of feminist scholars have emerged, the first of which was the Association for African Women for Research and Development (AAWORD) established in 1977 (Mama, 1996; Pereira, 2002). However, women in development studies continues to dominate the higher education landscape in much of Africa.

Indeed, efforts at the global level underway in the 1970s were key to developing women's studies in many parts of the world. In particular, the United Nations Decade for Women (1976–1985) and the World Conferences on Women facilitated the spread of ideas and actions to address women's rights issues (Chamberlain & Howe, 1995; Neale, 1992). Particularly beneficial to the emergence of women's studies in developing countries was the special forum on women's studies offered at the Forum of Non-Governmental Organizations held at the Second World Conference on Women in Copenhagen in 1985. Meetings, seminars, roundtables, and workshops on research and teaching about women offered over the course of 10 days provided some women, especially from developing countries, with their first glimpse into this burgeoning field (Chamberlain & Howe, 1995, p. 54). These activities continued at the subsequent international conferences as well as the Interdisciplinary Congresses on Women held every few years in various locales around the world.

Governments participating in the Fourth World Conference on Women held in 1995, agreed to the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, which includes references to women's studies in relation to three specific strategic objectives (United Nations, 1995). In order to strengthen women's economic capacity and commercial networks (F.4), governments were encouraged to “promote gender equality through the promotion of women's studies” With the aim of integrating gender perspectives in legislation, public policies, programs and projects (H.2), national machinery were called upon to do the following:

“promote and establish cooperative relationships with relevant branches of government, centers for women's studies and research, academic and educational institutions, the private sector, the media, non-governmental organizations, especially women's organizations, and all other actors of civil society.”

Finally, it was agreed that women's studies centers and research organizations should be involved in “developing and testing appropriate indicators and research methodologies to strengthen gender analysis, as well as in monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the goals of the Platform for Action” to fulfill the objective (H.3) of generating and disseminating

gender-disaggregated data and information. The organization mandated to carry out the development of women and gender studies on a global scale was the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW).

DEFINING AND CONTEXTUALIZING WOMEN'S STUDIES

The dearth of comparative studies on women's studies stems in part from the difficulty in defining "women's studies," which is known as *women's*, *feminist*, *gender* studies or a combination of terms. This shift to broaden the scope of women's studies has resulted from a movement beyond a focus on women's concerns and sexism to include other marginalized groups and characteristics as well as to address the construction of gender (Stake, 2006). Given its unpleasant history with "isms," *feminism* is a term avoided in Eastern Europe, where the more "neutral" *gender* is preferred (Kupryashkina, 1996; Shymchyshyn, 2005). In many parts of the world, "women's studies" does not translate well into other languages. In the Ukraine, the difficulty was not with "women" but with "studies," which is confused with "an artist's studio" (Kupryashkina, 1996).

Beyond just finding an appropriate name, the process of institutionalization of women's studies has varied widely across countries in both university and non-university contexts (Silius, 2002). Furthermore, just within the higher education system, university and degree structures diverge across countries and over time, making comparisons of women's studies activities all the more challenging. In the United States, the debate continues as to the most appropriate location for women's studies, whether it be as programs or as a unique department (Boxer, 1998).

Examining women's studies across countries reveals the variety of contexts and activities that it may entail. Unlike descriptions of the founding of women's studies in the U.S. that focus on its institutionalization within the higher education system, women's studies activities in non-university contexts played a large role in other countries, namely in the form of non-university research centers and networks. We argue that curricular innovations in higher education are more likely to take place within universities where the latter are more permeable and less elitist.

Within both university and non-university contexts, women's studies activities are comprised of three types of activities. The first, women's

studies in curricular form is comprised of courses, minor or major undergraduate degrees or certificates or graduate degrees, and departments or programs organized to offer these courses and degrees. Scholarly activities such as research centers, institutes, and libraries make up the second type of activity, while networks (national level collaboration including associations) comprise the third. Both contexts and each type of activity have played important roles in institutionalizing women's studies curricula in higher education and need to be considered when describing the range of women's studies activities taking place throughout the world.

Given the scope of women's studies activities in both university and non-university contexts, for the sake of this project, we define the commencement of women's studies as the first degree or department or program in women's studies within a university in a country. As seen in [Table 1](#), few countries had established women's studies programs or degrees in the 1970s. Those countries that created women's studies courses in the 1970s were primarily the most industrialized countries (e.g., France and the U.S.), but also include the Republic of Korea, Japan, and Lebanon. Those establishing a formal curriculum in the 1980s consist of other European countries and industrializing countries in Asia, Latin America, and Africa. Formally Communist countries and a number of African countries joined the international movement in the 1990s and beyond.

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE

From a world society perspective crucial developments in higher education after World War II reflect fundamental changes in world culture. These changes involve major shifts in who counts and what counts. People increasingly count, both as human capital engines and as bearers of human rights. The idea and the ideal of the empowered person as crucial to societal progress are increasingly celebrated. Moreover, the empowered person is not viewed solely as a national resource that should be efficiently allocated, but more importantly as a human right that should be freely exercised. The women's movement appropriates, refines, and extends the category of the empowered person to include all women. The net effect of this movement is that throughout the world women increasingly count. To be sure some of the earlier "counting" simply involves extending the rights of men to women. In some parts of the world battles over inclusion persist but for the most part an inclusionary logic has triumphed. Cross-national studies show women's increasing participation in higher education

Table 1. Founding Year of the First Women's Studies Department/
Program or Degree, by Country, 1970–2000.

Country	Year	Country	Year
Argentina	1987	Lesotho	None by 2000
Austria	1994	Liberia	None by 2000
Bangladesh	2001	Lithuania	1992
Barbados	1993	Madagascar	None by 2000
Belgium	1994	Malawi	1999
Benin	None by 2000	Mali	None by 2000
Botswana	None by 2000	Mauritius	None by 2000
Brazil	1980	Mexico	1983
Burkina Faso	None by 2000	Mozambique	None by 2000
Burundi	None by 2000	Namibia	2000
Cameroon	1993	Netherlands	1979
Canada	1975	New Zealand	1986
Central African Republic	None by 2000	Niger	None by 2000
Chad	None by 2000	Nigeria	1995
Chile	1991	Norway	1985
China	1987	Palestine (not in dataset)	1994
Colombia	1985	Peru	1990
Congo	None by 2000	Poland	1992
Costa Rica	1987	Puerto Rico	1986
Cote d'Ivoire	None by 2000	Russia	1993
Czech Republic	1998	Senegal	None by 2000
Denmark	1981	Sierra Leone	1995
Dominican Republic	1987	Somalia	None by 2000
Equatorial Guinea	None by 2000	South Africa	1984
Eritrea	None by 2000	Spain	1979
Ethiopia	None by 2000	Sudan	1989
Finland	1986	Swaziland	None by 2000
France	1975	Sweden	1984
Gabon	None by 2000	Switzerland	1995
Gambia	None by 2000	Taiwan	1985
Georgia	2005	Thailand	1986
Germany	1981	Togo	None by 2000
Ghana	1989	Trinidad and Tobago	1993
Hungary	1992	Turkey	1989
Iceland	1996	Uganda	1991
India	1984	U.K.	1980
Ireland	1990	Ukraine	1995
Israel	1982	U.S.A.	1970
Jamaica	1986	Venezuela	1982
Japan	1975	Yemen	1993
Kenya	1987	Zambia	1995
Korea	1975	Zimbabwe	1991
Lebanon	1973		

(Bradley & Ramirez, 1996) and even in the fields of science and engineering (Ramirez & Wotipka, 2001). Broader changes are evident in a world where more and more countries ratify international conventions to ban all forms of discrimination against women (Wotipka & Ramirez, 2008). The inequalities between women and men that persist are apt to be coded as inequities in serious need of rectification. International conferences identify the inequalities that need to be rectified and generate national gender equity report cards that make cross-national comparisons evident to all countries. National policy makers and social movement activists increasingly know where their countries stand on a number of gender equity dimensions relative to other countries. Prior studies show that these international conferences are important sites of socialization and mobilization and their timing influences national outcomes (Wotipka & Ramirez, 2008). What other countries adopt by way of policy or activity is also an important influence, as theories of normative cascades emphasize (Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998).

From a world society perspective, the global dynamics at work involve classical diffusion processes (the cumulative impact of what other countries adopt) and international occasions that foster innovation (international women's conferences that highlight women's issues and the need for change). But world cultural change involves not only who counts but what counts. There are basic changes with respect to the socially dominant theories of both personnel and knowledge (Meyer, 1977). With respect to higher education, the earlier challenge to its dominant male composition (its personnel) increasingly involves the additional challenge to its male-centric curriculum (its knowledge base). Both challenges, of course, are broader than the gender issue that preoccupies this paper. The ideal university is expected to be more inclusive with respect to admissions and as regards curricula; this is a novel but intensive theme in European higher education circles and increasingly worldwide (Meyer, Ramirez, Frank, & Schofer, 2007; Ramirez, 2006). So, while universities and systems of higher education have historically varied as regards inclusiveness or eliteness with respect to admissions and curricula, in the post World War II era a transnational ethos favoring inclusiveness has evolved. This transnational ethos suggests a third global dynamic and that is the expansion of higher education itself (Schofer & Meyer, 2005). Greater inclusiveness with respect to composition should increase the likelihood of greater inclusiveness with respect to what counts as knowledge, that is, the curriculum. The triumph of an inclusionary logic should raise questions about the terms of inclusion. In higher education these questions opened the door to a set of curricular innovations that included women's studies curricular initiatives (Gumport, 2002).

From a world society perspective, the initial adoption of a women's studies curriculum will be positively influenced by the adopting practices of other countries (global diffusion), by the timing of international women's conferences (socialization opportunities), and by the inclusiveness of the system of higher education (its relative size). Throughout these analyses we control for the effects of economic development and political democracy. The literature suggests that wealthier countries are both more able and more likely to undertake curricular experiments. Expanded resources facilitate risk taking and limit potential costs of curricular experiments. The literature also suggests that democratic regimes are also more likely to engage in innovations in higher education, especially those innovations more in line with democratic ideas and practices. More inclusive polities may have more inclusive systems of higher education that in turn may find it easier to incorporate educational innovations such as the establishment of women's studies curricula.

METHODS OF ANALYSIS

Methods and Models of Estimation

For our analysis, we use event history models of estimation. Event history analysis is an appropriate tool to explain events occurring to individuals (or in this case, countries) over a specified period of time (Allison, 1984; Strang, 1994; Tuma & Hannan, 1984). It provides a more dynamic method in that it provides coefficients demonstrating the influence of explanatory variables on the rate of first establishment of a women's studies course – a single, non-repeatable event. Event history analysis also allows for the possibility that some cases (countries) will not experience an event, as in the case of countries that have yet to have a women's studies department/program or degree within a university.

The event studied is the year in which a country opens its first women's department, program, or degree at a university during the time period (1970–2000). When it does, it receives a value of 1 for that year. For those years in which none of these exist in a country or if a country has already offered such a course, the country receives a score of 0. The set of states at risk of offerings its first women's studies department/program or degree (the risk-set) is made up of all countries in the world for which data was obtainable for the dependent variable (for details see below). The exponential model has been used in prior cross-national studies and is

employed in this analysis. The results we present are very similar to those obtained when we use Wiebul models instead.

Variables

The task of collecting dates (years) for the first women's studies degree/program or degree in each country involved consulting written reports and country-specific articles. When written works lacked information on the first women's studies department/program or degree, we contacted informed academics involved in women's studies activities in each country. For Europe, names and electronic mail addresses were gathered from the *European Women's Studies Guide II* (Krops, 1997) and the web sites of the Advanced Thematic Network in Activities in Women's Studies in Europe (ATHENA)⁷ and the Women's Studies Euro Map.⁸ Information for several Latin American and African cases came from directories of women and gender studies programs in those regions (GWS Africa, 2002; Programa Interdisciplinario de Estudios de la Mujer, 1993). Country reports from various issues of *Women's Studies Quarterly* helped us obtain data for several other cases. When dates could not be obtained from written sources, we contacted authors of relevant papers on women's studies or directors of existing programs or departments via email. In the end, we were able to obtain dates for 83 countries out of which 59 had constructed a women's studies curriculum by 2000 (see Table 1 for a list of those countries).

We use the following independent variables to capture the ideas expressed in the world society perspective.⁹ First, we test the diffusion argument using the cumulative number of women's studies programs/departments or degrees at the world level in the year prior. This is a standard way of gauging the influence of global density on national adoption likelihood. Next we measure the influence of the timing of international women's conferences by focusing on the three conferences that predict the ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). At issue is whether the adoption of a women's curriculum is more likely during the year immediately before and during the conferences instead of during non-conference years. Lastly, we use tertiary enrollments as a percent of the appropriate age cohort (20–24) to measure the inclusiveness of the system of higher education (World Bank, 2001). Systems with smaller proportions of the age cohort enrolled in higher education are considered more elite.

To determine the influence of national economic development on the commencement of women's studies courses, we use gross domestic product

per capita (constant US\$ for 1995), which comes from the [World Bank \(2001\)](#). Democracy is measured as a dummy variable for democratic regimes (coded 1) versus autocratic ones ([Cheibub & Gandhi, 2004](#)). Our findings are described in the next section.

Results

Table 2 reports the results from the event history analyses of the rate of offering a first women's department/program or degree between 1970 and 2000. In the final analysis, 83 countries having a total of 59 events (instances of offering a women's studies department/program or degree) are included. We present five different models.

Model 1 is the base model with measures of national economic development, political democracy, and the cumulative number of women's studies programs/departments or degrees in the world. In this model, all three variables show statistically significant positive effects. The adoption rate is clearly and strongly influenced by the cumulative adoptions in the prior year. This global density effect holds, net of the also strong positive effects of economic development and political democracy. If the latter effects suggest that country differences matter, the global density effect indicates that what other countries do is consequential as well.

In the second model, we add the international women's conference variable to the base model. The results show that the timing of international women's conferences is indeed an important influence on the timing of the adoption of a women's studies curriculum. Note that none of these conferences were especially focused on the issue of women's studies. But it appears that international conferences that highlight women's issues increase the likelihood of curricular innovations that also highlight women's issues. The inclusion of this variable does not alter the effects of the variables in the base model. All these variables continue to show positive and significant effects.

In models 3a and 3b, we add measures of the degree to which the system of higher education is inclusive or elitist, in 3a we use a gender-specific measure, that is, the number of women in higher education as a percent of the age cohort. In 3b, we look at the relative size of the tertiary system, that is, the proportion of the age cohort enrolled in higher education. In neither model do we obtain the expected finding: system inclusiveness in these models is unrelated to the timing of the adoption of a women's studies curriculum. These models are estimated without the international women's

Table 2. Coefficients of Exponential Models Predicting Hazard Rate of the Founding of First Gender or Women's Studies Department or Program, 1970–2000.

Variables	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3a – Women in Cohort	Model 3b – Overall Elitism	Model 4a	Model 4b – with African Dummy	Model 5
<i>Economic development</i>							
GDP/capita (logged)	0.41183 (0.08213)***	0.41097 (0.08197)***	0.47998 (0.09869)***	0.43603 (0.10021)***	0.47249 (0.09791)***	0.59009 (0.10721)***	0.49142 (0.09852)***
<i>Rights</i>							
Regime dummy	1.03072 (0.34636)**	1.01501 (0.34618)**	1.05456 (0.35359)**	1.07335 (0.35855)**	1.03101 (0.35377)**	1.26398 (0.37796)**	0.49810 (0.47515)
<i>Tertiary system</i>							
Women in higher education, as % of age cohort			-0.01804 (0.01159)		-0.01708 (0.01161)	-0.00941 (0.01223)	-0.07477 (0.04374)+
Percent of 20–24-year-old cohort in higher education				-0.00950 (0.01317)			
<i>International linkages</i>							
Yearly total of GWS programs, worldwide	0.01738 (0.00728)*	0.02119 (0.00756)**	0.02316 (0.00845)**	0.02006 (0.00825)**	0.02670 (0.00865)**	0.02384 (0.00893)**	0.02764 (0.00879)**
2-year window around international women's conferences		0.69346 (0.22646)**			0.71265 (0.22698)**	0.70154 (0.22721)**	0.71455 (0.22717)**
<i>Regional effects</i>							
Africa						1.49428 (0.49342)**	
<i>Interaction effects</i>							
Women in higher education (%) and regime dummy							0.06173 (0.04344)

Table 2. (Continued)

Variables	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3a – Women in Cohort	Model 3b – Overall Elitism	Model 4a	Model 4b –with African Dummy	Model 5
<i>Constant</i>	-15.00863 (2.02211)***	-15.33701 (2.02504)***	-16.50653 (2.41738)***	-15.49601 (2.42211)***	-16.68806 (2.39896)***	-20.10866 (2.71723)***	-16.75435 (2.38130)***
Number of observations (failures)	3102 (50)	3102 (50)	2920 (48)	2923 (49)	2920 (48)	2920 (48)	2920 (48)
LR χ^2 (d.f.), compared to constant-only model	60.88 (3)	69.16 (4)	55.46 (4)	56.47 (4)	64.16 (5)	73.29 (6)	66.90 (6)
Log likelihood	-87.797	-83.657	-85.855	-86.320	-81.502	-76.938	-80.133

Note: Exponential models.

*** $p < .001$,

** $p < .01$,

* $p < .05$,

+ $p < .10$; Standard errors are in parentheses.

conferences variable; this variable is included in models 4a and 4b. Note that the results are very similar across models 3a, 3b, and 4a. The independent variables that influence the dependent variable do so across these three models.

We attempt some exploratory analyses in models 4b and 5. In model 4b, we include a dummy variable for Africa, coded 1 with all other countries coded 0. A positive value would indicate that African countries were more likely to earlier adopt than other countries. We undertake this analysis in an experimental vein: the lower level of economic development in Africa should result in a negative effect but the extent to which Africa is subjected to globalizing influences via the international donor community could lead to earlier adoption. While we find that economic development continues to be positive and significant in this model, the African dummy variable is positive and significant. This suggests that for African countries the pressures of the external environment in favor of a curricular innovation may offset the negative influence of limited resources. Here again all the other variables behave as they did in the earlier models, suggesting a degree of robustness to these cross-national findings.

Lastly, in model 5 we estimate an interaction effect, net of the effects of the other independent variables we have examined. Here the idea is to see whether more gender-specific inclusionary systems of higher education lead to earlier adoption in democratic regimes. A positive interaction value would show that this was the case. We indeed find a positive albeit modest interaction effect, significant at the 0.10 level. What this suggests is that the impact of system inclusiveness is greater in a political system within which universities may have an easier time to experiment with new curricula. Once more the effects of the other independent variables remained the same as in prior models.

In additional analyses not reported in this paper, we estimated the influence of several indicators of the status of women. These include the length of time women have been enfranchised, the labor force participation rates of women, the strength of the national women's movement, etc. None of these measures significantly influenced the dependent variable. Nor did their inclusion alter the results presented in [Table 2](#).

DISCUSSION

In this study, two core findings are consistent with the world society perspective and with the results of prior cross-national studies that examined

other changes in the status of women. The adoption of a women's studies curriculum is positively influenced by the adopting practices of other countries. In a more integrated world environment it is easier to know what other countries do by way of curricular innovation in higher education. Moreover, the universalistic assumption that what counts as knowledge in universities in some country should also count in universities in other countries facilitates emulation and diffusion. Educational plans and their rationales are more rapidly transmitted through professional discourse often articulated in international organizations and conferences. International agencies are often engaged in the early stages of the planning itself, offering templates and assisting in the refining of national initiatives. As more countries move in the direction of establishing women's studies curricula in a university, the legitimacy of this innovation increases, thereby increasing the likelihood of being further adopted. This dynamic is discussed at great length within the world society perspective but more broadly within both neo-institutional and population ecology theories.

Furthermore, in addition to the classical diffusion or normative cascades process, we find the timing of international women's conferences is indeed consequential. These conferences, of course, are driven by an ongoing women's movement and their influence reflects the global reach of this movement. The agenda setting authority of these conferences is often underestimated because these conferences – and indeed the women's movement itself – lack official sanctioning power. But in a world in which international non-governmental organizations increasingly exercise influence over a broad range of issues, it is perhaps not surprising that these conferences facilitate curricular innovations in line with gender equity concerns. This facilitation may take the form of within site socialization, but anticipatory socialization processes may also take place. The timing of these conferences provides national actors with international opportunities for displaying gender equity sensitivity or awareness in one form or another.

However, contrary to what we expected, more inclusive national educational systems are not clearly more hospitable environments for this further exercise in curricular inclusiveness. The worldwide trend in the direction of the formation of more women's studies curricula directly reflects an overall world inclusionary logic applied to women and women's issues. This overall inclusionary logic may be especially influential in the contemporary era of expanded women's rights consciousness, reflected in a growing number of treaties, conferences, and organizations upholding and elaborating these rights. We had thought that this "world press" would nevertheless vary in its impact depending on the degree of inclusiveness of

the system of higher education. The positive effects of both economic development and political democracy indicate that some cross-national variation continues to be important. But in this study, cross-national variation in the inclusiveness of the system of higher education is unrelated to the timing of the adoption of a women's studies program or degree, except in more democratic regimes. The relevant variation in large part appears to be temporal and global in character.

CONCLUSION

Before 1970 no country in the world had a university with a women's studies curriculum. Over a 30 year period, we find that at least one university in nearly 60 countries offers a program or degree in women's studies. We say at least because our data is restricted to the countries for which we have information on the timing of the adoption of the first women's studies program. We know in fact that this curricular innovation has taken place in some countries for which we as yet do not know the date of adoption. We further know that adoptions continue beyond 2000, in Georgia in 2005 for instance.¹⁰

This chapter reviews the literature on the development of women's studies curricula in different countries and regions throughout the world. We then demonstrate that net of the effects of societal factors such as development and democracy, the timing of the adoption of women's studies curricula is strongly influenced by both the adopting practices of other countries (global density) and by the timing of international women's conferences (international opportunities for national displays of gender equity commitments). Global dynamics reflecting the influence of a growing "world press" are clearly at work. In what follows we briefly sketch some further research directions.

First, prior studies of the diffusion of an innovation suggest that earlier in the process local or endogenous factors are more likely to be influential while the behavior of other adopters and the external environment in general becomes more consequential later on. This finding is reported for within country diffusion of innovation studies (Tolbert & Zucker, 1983) but also for cross-national studies, such as the analysis of the spread of the franchise for women (Ramirez, Soysal, & Shanahan, 1997). Perhaps the character of the national political regime carries greater weight between 1970 and 1985, while the impact of cumulative adoptions in the prior year may be stronger in the later 1985–2000 periods. To answer this and related

questions about the relative importance of internal and external factors that foster adoption, different event history models need to be estimated that allow for varying effects contingent on different time periods.

A second research direction focuses on how international conferences work to influence the formation of the first women's studies curriculum. In our discussion, we recognize that this may not be a simple one-way process; international conferences are unlikely to simply awaken national actors in a state of slumber. Some national actors were deeply involved in the formation of these conferences and their agendas. Some international agencies may provide advice to both international and national actors at varying stages of the planning and decision-making. In countries where national ministries of education exercise much authority over university curricular plans ministries may nudge universities to move in a given direction in anticipation of national participation in the appropriate international conferences. Or, alternatively university actors may have taken the lead earlier on but found a welcoming ministry more so during times when women's issues were highlighted in international conferences. To get a better handle on these varying dynamics may require different research designs. These may take the form of comparative case studies or, in some instances, of an analysis of the networks that support the establishment of an international conference and its agenda (Chabbott, 2003).

Lastly, it is important to figure out how much global factors interact with local features in influencing outcomes such as the formation of a women's studies curriculum. By local features we have in mind not only national attributes but also characteristics of universities. To illustrate, consider the issue of inclusiveness. Obviously one can think in terms of interaction effects in which a changing world measured by global density of adoptions for example, increases the likelihood of national adoption but especially so for countries with higher levels of system inclusiveness. The exploratory analysis in which we show a positive interaction effect between regime and gender-specific inclusiveness suggests that we should give further thought to other possible interaction effects that may influence this curricular innovation.

But there is clearly within nation variation in how inclusive universities are. By 2000 there may not be striking differences across universities in some countries as far women's share of higher education is concerned, but earlier on, sharper differences may co-vary with the timing of curricular innovations. Moreover, the concept of inclusiveness should not be limited to the dimension of admissions access. An older literature in the sociology of education suggests that some systems are more open to innovation and expansion because they are less controlled by centralized authorities

(Collins, 1979) and because the curricula is less controlled by a canon protecting faculty and more open to external influences (Ben-David & Zloczower, 1962). Studies at the university level of analysis are much needed to evaluate these explanatory ideas. Here again we may find that university differences matter more so in an earlier era, but that these differences prove to be soft barriers to the worldwide logic of inclusiveness. This has certainly been the case with respect to the composition of higher education; higher educational growth is much driven by women's accelerated rise in higher education. The emergence of feminist studies at Oxford University suggests that even deep historical legacies affirming faculty authority and canonical knowledge are unlikely to shield university curricula from the influence of a worldwide logic of inclusiveness. By comparing different universities in different national contexts one can ascertain the relative weight of societal and organizational factors in shaping educational innovations such as the formation of a women's studies curricula. More qualitative studies may lead to more refined portraits of adoption processes in concrete cases, while the use of hierarchical linear methods may help gauge the relative weight of organizational, societal, and global factors in influencing curricular developments in universities.

NOTES

1. We use the widely used term of "women's studies" recognizing that other terms such as feminist studies, woman studies, and gender studies have been used in countries and institutions around the world.

2. The web site run by Joan Korenman out of the University of Maryland-Baltimore County Women's Studies Program organizes the most comprehensive listing of Women's Studies Programs, Departments, and Research Centers in the United States and in other countries. See <http://research.umbc.edu/~korenman/wmst/programs.html>

3. See for an exception Silius (2002).

4. See *Women's Studies Quarterly* (20: 3/4, 1992 and 24: 1/2, 1996).

5. For an analysis of the growth of women's studies programs within the United States see Olzak and Kangas (2006). For an analysis of the influence of the black power movement on the establishment of black studies in American universities see Rojas (2007).

6. Ewha Women's University offered the country's first women's studies courses in 1977.

7. Available at http://www.let.uu.nl/womens_studies/athena/index.html

8. Available at <http://women-www.uia.ac.be/women/index.html>

9. We also employed other indicators of women's status (women's share of higher education enrollment; proportion of women in the age cohort enrolled in higher

education; women's share of the labor force; date of female suffrage; and state ratification of international women's rights treaties) for which insignificant results were found and therefore not reported here.

10. Marine Chitashvili (Director, Center for Social Sciences, Tbilisi State University, Republic of Georgia), private communication, September 29, 2007.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

A version of this chapter was presented at the annual meetings of the American Sociological Association, Association for the Study of Higher Education, and the National Women's Studies Association. We thank Moreica Allana-Kim Ortega for her assistance with data collection and Elise Paradis for data collection and analysis. This project benefited from the advice of John W. Meyer, Karen Bradley, John Boli, David John Frank, Susan Christopher, Gero Lenhardt, the members of the Stanford Comparative Workshop, and the Global Fellows Program at the University of California, Los Angeles, the volume editors, and several anonymous reviewers.

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