The traditional feminist concept of patriarchy, as a term for naming gender inequality or gendered power relationships between women and men, has been critiqued from a number of fronts. For instance, the concept has been charged with tautology, ahistoricism, and the construction of a homogenizing, totalizing gender oppression (Kandiyoti 1988; Pilcher and Whelehan 2004). Beyond just the concept of patriarchy, such critiques have been an indispensable part of an emerging problematization of simplistic, monolithic accounts of gender oppression in general. In this article, I use the term “patriarchy” as a convenient designation of not only the particular concept of patriarchy but homogenous, monolithic accounts of gender oppression more broadly. I am interested in one consequence of critical conversations regarding patriarchy: its wide-ranging, albeit uneven displacement within women’s and gender studies by a number of other terms to frame gender-related oppression, the most important being “intersectionality” (Crenshaw 1991). I argue here that while these critiques of patriarchy and its eventual eclipse by intersectionality theory are clearly important and necessary, both have been incomplete. Despite the far-reaching reappraisals of patriarchy and the turn to more nuanced, intersectional approaches, unrecognized issues with the former continue to haunt how we conceptualize and talk about gendered dynamics and power relations within the latter. For example, a growing body of transnational feminist theorizing takes to task the uncritical acceptance of the nation as a necessarily meaningful unit of analysis for feminists. Arguing against binaries of global versus local, for example, Inderpal Grewal and Caren Kaplan propose a transnational approach that focuses on the “lines cutting across them . . . [as] transnational linkages influence every level of social existence” (1994, 13). This is not just another call to globalize our perspectives. Transnational feminisms, as delineated by authors like Grewal and Kaplan, critique global and international feminisms as in fact relying on and reifying the notion of discrete nations that can be simply compared to one another (Kaplan, Alarcôn, and Moallem 1999, 14). Rather, they encourage an examination of how
categories of race, ethnicity, sexuality, culture, nation, and gender not only intersect but are mutually constituted, formed, and transformed within transnational power-laden processes such as European imperialism and colonialism, neoliberal globalization, and so on. In this vein, I argue here that critical work on patriarchy has neglected a key central dimension: the potential and actual interrelationships of historically and geographically specific patriarchies to such transterritorial and transnational processes. For example, from a long-historical perspective, patriarchal domestic relations at multiple levels within absolutist European polities—from the household to the monarchy or absolutist state—were important symbolic and rhetorical resources for constructing racialized, sexualized imperial and colonial hierarchies outside the borders of those polities. The absolutist notion that a husband had natural authority over his wife and children, for instance, was often used to argue that a colonial power had natural authority over dependent peoples. Additionally, such imperial/colonial hierarchies and their contentions in turn shaped domestic patriarchies in the metropole and the colony. For example, the notion that a colonial power had natural authority over dependent peoples legitimated colonial attempts to create patriarchal households where none had previously existed, as I shall discuss below.

Given the overrepresentation of the global North within feminist theorizing about gender dynamics, it is somewhat surprising that this transterritorial dimension has remained largely unrecognized. Such neglect points to the ongoing myopia of hegemonic concepts of gender when it comes to the cross-border dimensions of gender dynamics, and the continued power of the geographies of colonial modernity (Lugones 2007). That is, the notion of borders, whether of nation, sex, gender, or race, that emerged during the colonial period and shaped the nascent disciplines continues to discipline these disciplines, and even interdisciplines. Its power feeds the methodological nationalism that continues to associate particular sets of gender relations with particular nations, polities, societies, and cultures, wherein international work merely examines gender in polities outside of the United States or engages in comparative work of gender dynamics across different polities. In this article, by focusing on one example of the transterritorial dynamics of even this relatively simple gender concept, I point to the way that patriarchy—and thereby gender—is always already imbricated within multiple axes of power that are advanced by, complicit in, and often the vehicle for various border crossings.

For example, the discipline of sociology has long been shaped by an elision of the cross-border, colonial processes within which it emerged (see Bhambra 2007).
In what follows, I first briefly relate central dimensions of recent feminist critiques of patriarchy. I review a key term that has emerged as a replacement, the concept of “intersectionality,” highlighting its contributions as well as its limits given its inattention to cross-border dynamics. My purpose here is not to resurrect patriarchy as a concept, nor is it to denounce intersectionality. Rather, it is because intersectionality does such important work and because it currently enjoys dominant status within women’s and gender studies (Davis 2008; Nash 2008) that I believe a critical assessment is necessary. I then offer an illustration of one time- and space-specific patriarchy that, although well recognized in the feminist literature, has yet to be explored as a transterritorial phenomenon. That is, I show the role of patriarchal thought in constructing imperial and colonial hierarchies, beginning with absolutist political theory and absolutist imperial ideology and then moving through what Anthony Pagden (1995) calls the first and second phases of colonialism. Such a focus demonstrates the intersections of gender (and age) politics with transborder constructions of racial and cultural hierarchy—pointing to the need for domestically oriented intersectional approaches to pay attention to transnational processes as well. Next, I discuss the UN General Assembly debates on decolonization, which occurred between Euro-American apologists for colonialism and newly independent Asian and African anticolonialists. These debates ended with the passage of the Declaration of Independence of Colonial Countries and Peoples (hereafter, “the declaration”) in 1960, a key moment in the waves of decolonization that transformed the global political map during the twentieth century (Patil 2008). I make the case that the debates around the declaration, and around whether decolonization should proceed or not, fundamentally turned on contending patriarchal metaphors. On each side, differentially racialized men advanced an alternative patriarchy, each of which envisioned progress, freedom, gender, race, majority/maturity, and international relations in distinct ways. Ultimately, the debates on the declaration themselves constitute an incomplete revolution—an incomplete challenge to racialized, sexualized colonial hierarchy. I demonstrate how the discourse of contending patriarchies itself impeded a more radical challenge—and actually signaled the formation of new, nationalist patriarchies in the anticolonial and postcolonial world. These latter patriarchies should and have been of particular concern to feminists. But a lack of attention to the historic and cross-border dimensions of their emergence means that most feminist approaches are less able to temporally and spatially situate the dynamics that have shaped these patriarchies, leading to analyses that too often attribute what is named as patriarchy to static and atomistic, what might be...
called colonialist (Narayan 1997), and certainly nationalist notions of culture or tradition or religion. I argue, thus, that feminist approaches to patriarchies need to resituate their critique within the historical and spatial dimensions elaborated above. And I contend that we need to start paying more attention to how gender relations that we talk about as bound within the nation are actually embedded within, enabled by, and contribute to cross-border dynamics.

Critiques of patriarchy and the shift to domestic intersectionality
Recent critiques of the use of the term “patriarchy” have focused on a number of interrelated dimensions. Perhaps the central critique concerns patriarchy’s unidimensional conceptualization of gender, its dichotomization of gendered individuals into women and men, and its neglect of differences and power relations within each category. Rather, critics argue, categories such as gender, race, and sexuality, while operating according to distinct logics, are interdependent and interrelated. As women of color have long pointed out, even gender was never just about gender, or a relation only between men and women (Dill 1988; Glenn 1992). Critical race scholars in particular have pointed to the neglect of issues such as race, class, nation, culture, and sexuality (Anthias and Yuval-Davis 1993; Hurtado 1996; Oyewumi 1997). Moreover, scholars who take account of colonial histories have also pointed out the critical role of power relationships between different masculinities in perpetuating hierarchies that are at once gendered and racialized (Connell 2000; Patil 2009).

A second major critique concerns patriarchy’s universalization of this dichotomization of gender and its attendant assumptions across time and space. For example, discussing the approach to third-world women in a now-canonical essay, Chandra Talpade Mohanty (1988) points out that this universalization relies on a problematic construction of women across time and space as sexual-political subjects—before their entrance into social relationships. While Mohanty’s essay has been tremendously influential and has led to more care in the characterization of third-world women, I would argue that the presumption of women as sexual-political subjects prior to and external to social relationships is an ongoing problem that distorts extant gender realities. According to Oyèrònke Oyewùmi (1997), for instance, the notion of patriarchy (as understood in its dominant usage) is a Western construct. That is, it assumes the a priori existence of women and of gender asymmetry. Using the Yoruba as an example, she argues that this notion of patriarchy actually distorts Yoruba gender ideologies and neglects the role of European colonization in inculcating what she calls Western-

Finally, the use of the term “patriarchy” has also been critiqued as tautological. That is, patriarchy itself becomes an explanation for gendered power relations (Pollert 1996). Indeed, scholars who use the concept today seem to position patriarchy as the a priori cause of women’s experiences of gender inequality, while often neglecting to examine the conditions of possibility for the constitution or reconstitution of patriarchal arrangements. I argue that this is especially the case for the global South. For example, many feminists have used the notion of the “patriarchal belt” (see, e.g., Offenhauer 2005; Moghadam 2007), a term attributed to John Caldwell’s “A Theory of Fertility” (1978), in which the author treats a large region from North Africa to South and Southwest Asia as constituting a patriarchal “high-fertility belt” where the economics of family production contribute to what he calls the “traditional, rural, extended family” (Caldwell 1978, 554). While Caldwell’s intent is to discuss the familial and economic conditions of high fertility versus low fertility, feminists’ uncritical acceptance of this delineation in their discussions of patriarchy in this region replicates Eurocentric, modernist binaries of unfree tradition versus free modernity and their associated assumptions about women’s oppression (Ong 1988). The politics of such distinctions notwithstanding (Bhabha 1994), these distinctions are often inaccurate. For example, contemporary Islamic fundamentalist dictates do not necessarily represent traditional Islamic culture. Islamic laws that prevent the prosecution of husbands who murder adulterous wives, for instance, are borrowed from the nineteenth-century French penal code (Grewal and Kaplan 1994, 24). Similarly, growing instances of such cultural practices as dowry deaths in India and honor killings in rural Turkey also point to the tensions inherent within forces of contemporary globalization, and these cannot be reduced to timeless tradition or its frequent stand-ins, religion or culture (Narayan 1997; Sev’er and Yurdakul 2001). These examples make clear precisely why this focus on patriarchies within transnational forces matters.

Some feminists assume not only that patriarchies are indigenous but that processes of globalization (which are often code for modernization or Westernization) will enable empowerment (see, e.g., Gray, Kittilson, and Sandholtz 2006; Moghadam 2007). In doing so, they ignore the vast amount of feminist work now being done that demonstrates the complex, multiple, contradictory, and often less than empowering impacts of globalization on women and on gender relations around the world (see, e.g., Chow 2003; Kempadoo 2004; Hawkesworth 2006). Often, global processes unfold through the collusion of indigenous and extra-indigenous patriarchies to
affect women in particular kinds of ways (Lugones 2007). For example, Oyéwùmí (1997) emphasizes the collaboration between Western and indigenous masculinities in the transformation of Yoruba gender relations from the precontact era to the imposition of Western-style patriarchies within the colonial encounter. All of these examples demonstrate why a simplistic focus on patriarchy as associated with indigenous religion or culture or tradition is insufficient, and in fact deeply problematic, and why patriarchy as explanation is really no explanation at all.

The interventions of domestic intersectionality

One common term that has to a large extent displaced “patriarchy” is “intersectionality.” As delineated by Kimberlé Crenshaw (1991) and elaborated by subsequent authors (i.e., Hurtado 1996; Collins 2008), intersectionality focuses not on the concept of patriarchy per se but on monolithic accounts of gender in general. Its starting point is the problematization of such approaches and the centering of difference and complexity. In doing so, intersectionality does very important work and theoretically has the potential to address all three of the aforementioned problems with the concept of patriarchy. However, a cross-disciplinary review of applications of the concept in the past ten years reveals the following problems regarding contemporary intersectional analysis in practice.

To start, most of these applications focus on the global North in general (over 85 percent) and the United States in particular (about 60 percent). There are a number of reasons for this. Most importantly, we can attribute this imbalance, and especially the disproportionate focus on the
United States, to intersectionality’s status as a US theory that has traveled to other places. Additionally, this imbalance is a function of the transnational power structures that shape academic knowledge production and distribution. The latter affects not only conversations occurring around the theory generally but also my own ability to research and write about the theory as a US academic situated within a US university. Relatedly, a number of applications have neglected to situate the object of their research in geopolitical space. While those focused on the global South, for example, consistently situated their analyses spatially, this was not always the case for those focused on the United States and a few other Northern countries. This gap points to an ongoing Eurocentricity in intersectional productions of knowledge—although as Gudrun-Axeli Knapp (2005) has pointed out, the popular triad of race-class-gender does not travel seamlessly, even from the United States to European contexts.

Second, wherever the analysis is located, there is far greater focus (about 75 percent) on domestic dynamics as opposed to cross-border dynamics. While the domestic versus cross-border distinction is of course problematic, my point here is that while analyses have often been keen to deconstruct borders of race, gender, sexuality, culture and so on, nation-state borders are disproportionately reified. Thus, the cultural, economic, and political border-crossing forces that have historically transfigured and continue to transfigure the so-called domestic, as well as the experiences of those who are living “transnational lives” across multiple states (Purkayastha 2010, 29), remain largely invisible.

Third, regarding scale, there is a disproportionate focus on the local, intranational (i.e., neighborhood/community/region/state) level (over 80 percent), with far less focus on international, regional, or global levels of analysis. Even more, few of any of these analyses deliberately examine phenomena across scales—at the intersection of the local and global, or “the lines cutting across them” (Grewal and Kaplan 1994, 13). Thus, complications in how intersectionality shapes international, regional, and global forces, processes, institutions, and organizations, as well as connections between these scales and more local scales, remain largely unexamined.

In sum, I found that while the concept of intersectionality has indeed been feminism’s “success story” (Davis 2008, 67), much like the concept of patriarchy, applications of intersectionality also continue to be shaped by the geographies of colonial modernity. That is, the focus of intersectional analyses in general continues to be on the putative West, domestic and local, leaving unexamined cross-border dynamics, processes beyond the local level of analysis that nevertheless are integral to the unfolding of local processes, especially processes over there. The paradigm of intersectionality, then—in ap-
plication if not conceptualization—falls short of its potential. Thus, I term such applications “domestic intersectionality.” I argue that the limits of domestic intersectionality point to the ongoing relevance of patriarchy’s failure to recognize cross-border dynamics. The continued significance of this failure has implications for our ability to address problems of unidimensionality, universality, and tautology—some of the major issues identified with patriarchy in the first place.

Thus, in what follows I will highlight the cross-border dynamics of some of the earliest uses of the concept of patriarchy in the global North. I will show that even “classic patriarchy,” to use Carole Pateman’s term (see Pateman 1988), was never concerned only with women versus men, was never monolithic, was concerned from the start with race and racial hierarchy, and that all of this complexity was transterritorial. I will also show that more recent negotiations of patriarchy are similarly complex and transterritorial, as well as informed by these earlier border crossings. In this discussion, I will further show how extralocal processes were especially key, and I will examine one dimension of how these processes were negotiated by peoples of the global South.

Re-mappings
Susan S. Friedman (1998) argues that in our efforts to complicate notions of gender and feminism, we must not only historicize but also spatialize our understanding—that indeed, we must do both. Examining the times and spaces of various patriarchies becomes especially important in the context of excavating the histories of transnational power relationships. While the term “patriarchy” has a complex etymology and multiple meanings, in early modern Europe patriarchal political theorists made explicit connections between familial rule and political rule, arguing that the family is the source of all authority relationships in society. For example, the prominent English patriarchal theorist Sir Robert Filmer argued that beyond power over Eve, as the first father, Adam also had absolute monarchial power by virtue of his procreative powers and that this power passed to his male heirs. He maintained that all political authority is in fact absolute and monarchial and that the power of kings is identical to that of fathers (see Brennan and Pateman 1998, 94). Similarly, theorists of French absolutism likened kingdoms to families and kings to fathers (Merrick 1993). Indeed, Julia Adams (2005)

4 This distinction between contemporary research applications and theoretical potential is important. In Glória Anzaldúa’s work, for example, we see the rich possibilities of intersectional analysis that problematizes state and nation borders.
argues that in early modern Europe, the continuity and legitimacy of the royal family formed the bedrock of power relations and underwrote the stability of rule itself. For a monarch, sustaining these images and relations of rule entailed being seen as subsuming and controlling the royal family household and, by metaphorical extension, the entire kingdom or empire.

Although patriarchal political theory was eventually challenged by liberal theorists like John Locke, feminists have argued that this challenge was incomplete in many ways. Teresa Brennan and Carole Pateman claim that the gender dimension of patriarchal political theory was especially left untouched (1998, 93–103). In fact, while many authors see the shift from patriarchal political theory to liberal political theory as the displacement of patriarchy by contract, Pateman argues that it is better seen as a transition from what she called classic patriarchy (or rule of the father) to modern patriarchy (or the emergence of the public/private divide, and the relegation of family and women to the private). Jean Bethke Elshtain points out, moreover, that patriarchal imagery continues to be important in envisioning and legitimating power relations (1981, 131).

While sometimes acknowledging that the patriarchalism elaborated above was also used to solidify imperial relations, feminist work has remained curiously silent on the transborder implications of such thought. In fact, to use Pateman’s terms, both “classic” and “modern patriarchies” played a key role in the history of European colonialism and in solidifying the theories of racial hierarchy that informed colonial discourses. In the classic form, colonialists legitimated colonial rule with notions of absolute authority and absolute right to rule derived from traditional patriarchal models of family (Pagden 1995). For example, colonizers routinely asserted that natives were like children, incapable of self-control and rational thought, responding best to firm paternal control and beatings (Miller 1998, 113). Thus, the patriarchal model in its absolutist form enabled interrelated discourses of the irrationalization, feminization, and infantilization of conquered peoples and constitutes a key moment in the construction of transterritorial racial and cultural hierarchy (Patil 2008). Premised on assumptions of natural, unchangeable human inequality (Merrick 1993, 283), this articulation of patriarchal right and power accords well with David Goldberg’s (2002) account of naturalist notions of racial difference. According to Goldberg, two broad approaches to racial difference informed theories of colonialism: prior to the 1800s, naturalist approaches assumed that racial differences were inherent and fixed, while from the 1800s, these were gradually overtaken by historicist notions of the capacity for change (or maturation/development/civilization) via colonial tute-lage. While Goldberg says little about patriarchy or gender, it is important
to note that absolutist notions of patriarchal authority, as they informed assumptions of natural inequalities and absolutist imperial power, are an important backdrop against which naturalist notions of racial difference emerged historically.

With the challenge introduced by liberal political theorists and the shift to modern patriarchy, the colonialist use of patriarchal language also changed. The emphasis moved from patriarchal absolutism to paternal caretaking within Europe (Merrick 1993, 284–303), and colonialism too was now to be undertaken for the civilization and progress of the colonies (Pagden 1995). This shift accords well with Goldberg’s notion of emerging historicist notions of racial difference, which argued that savages and barbarians could and should be civilized. For example, focusing particularly on North Africa, where the French exercised different levels of control over Algeria, Tunisia, and Morocco over the course of the nineteenth century (Sluglett 2005, 248), Valerie Orlando (2001) points out that French colonial discourse infantilized and emasculated Arab men, constructing them at once as sexual deviants who possessed a “masculine weakness and childlike behavior” (Orlando 2001, 181) and as barbaric in their excessive domination of the Arab woman. Such discourse authorized “a carte blanche for Europeans’ tutelage. . . . It was [the French man’s] duty to show ‘these Arab despots’ the way to civilization” (Orlando 2001, 181). Regarding the British, Ashis Nandy (1987) points to the colonialist writing of James Mill: “The nineteenth-century liberal and Utilitarian thinker’s view of this private responsibility as a father meshed with his view of Britain’s responsibility to the societies under its Patriarchal suzerainty. Mill chose to provide, almost single-handed, an intellectual framework for civilized India under British rule. . . . He saw Britain as the elder society guiding the young, the immature, and hence, primitive Indian society towards adulthood or maturity” (57–58). This shift from absolutist patriarchy to paternalist patriarchy did not of course disturb the imagery of the colonies as effeminate, childlike, and so on, but merely softened absolutist language with claims of tutelage, civilization, development, and progress.

Thus, the patriarchies of colonial Europe were a racialized, gendered, transterritorial phenomenon. Even more, they affected so-called domestic gender relations on both sides of the colonial divide. For example, when we consider Europe’s dependencies, there is ample evidence of attempts by agents of colonial tutelage and missionary “civilizing” to more directly inculcate patriarchies in colonial subjects. According to Elizabeth Colwill

5 None of these shifts were of course linear. Colonial powers often moved back and forth between logics of absolutism and paternalism, though there was a gradual displacement of absolutism by paternalism from the 1800s.
French territories were regarded as insufficiently civilized until the men took up their proper place as heads of households. Barbarism was equated with so-called deviant gender relations and sexuality. Similarly, as mentioned above, much feminist work has also demonstrated how colonialist attempts to impart civilization actually introduced Eurocentric gender ideologies (Oyewumi 1997; Lockwood 2009). According to Paula Gunn Allen (1992), the colonial experience completely destroyed the gender symmetry and balance that existed in precontact indigenous societies in the Americas. But these processes did not just affect conquered peoples—they affected domestic relations within metropoles as well. For example, feminist scholars have shown how perceptions of gender and sexuality in “savage” and “barbaric” societies served as an imagined other against which civilized ladies and gentlemen within the metropole comported themselves (Burton 1994; McClintock 1995).

None of this is intended to preclude the existence of indigenous, precontact patriarchies, perhaps themselves the products of even older processes of globalization. Indeed, some claim that globalization dates back much earlier than the sixteenth-century originating point often cited by critical approaches (Desai 2009), indicating that these even older border crossings could have helped to create what we today might understand as precontact indigenous patriarchies. Such a possibility simply makes the point that deeper historical and transnational analyses are needed. There are numerous gaps in the present state of feminist knowledge. Yet we do know that this colonial-era world-historical moment was just that: it involved the world. Thus, focusing on the gender implications of these colonial-era patriarchies for only European women is a partial narrative at best. Even more, focusing on “patriarchal culture” or “patriarchal religion” as the a priori cause of gender oppression in the former colonial world is similarly deeply problematic. Of course, those scholars who have examined patriarchal political theory have little to nothing to say about gender and race themselves (see, e.g., Schochet 1988). I do not mean to single out feminist scholars. The basic problem is that we do not have an intersectional analysis of gender relations in the modern world that is sufficiently historical and transnational. Well beyond examining how different categories such as race, gender, and culture intersect across borders, such an analysis would at the very least entail, first, attending to new categories that make sense based on context and, second, attending to how the content, meaning, and relevance of older categories might shift based on context.

Oftentimes, subsequent development projects merely continued this pattern (Lockwood 2009).
Renegotiating colonial hierarchy, renegotiating colonial patriarchy: The General Assembly debates

Although the edifice of Europe’s colonial empires had already started to crumble, the passage of the 1960 Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples can be seen as a crucial moment in the discursive delegitimation of colonialism on a global scale (Strang 1990, 851; Ziring, Riggs, and Plano 1999, 312; Crawford 2002). For fifteen years, since the birth of the United Nations after World War II, Euro-American colonialist sympathizers and newly independent Asian and African anticolonialist states—all represented by their overwhelmingly male diplomats—debated the need for decolonization, racial and cultural hierarchy, and theories of progress and development. How was colonialism defended and challenged in these debates? What was the role of the colonial patriarchies explored above?

An examination of these debates shows that discussions of decolonization and the renegotiations of racial and cultural hierarchy that they entailed turned crucially on questions of colonial patriarchy. Elsewhere (Patil 2008) I have discussed how a fundamental premise of colonialist discourse was the notion that dependent territories were irrational, effeminate, and childlike and that colonialism was necessary in order to provide the tutelage and guidance required for maturation, progress, development, and eventual political independence. In the General Assembly debates, this premise once again became an important component of colonialist argument against decolonization, with speakers arguing that the dependencies were simply not ready yet and that ongoing tutelage was for their own benefit:

The struggle over backwards populations has passed from London to Washington, from Lisbon to Rio, Rome to Addis Ababa; but the

The main source of materials for this analysis is the General Assembly Official Records for the years 1946–60. These records are public documents and are available at the UN Information Centre of Washington, DC. The General Assembly is the main deliberative organ of the United Nations, and its sessions are organized as a general debate in which member states, represented by their diplomatic delegations, express their views on matters of international concern. All questions are also voted on in plenary meetings. The records of specific interest to me are the Verbatim Records, or the meeting records of the statements and speeches made and actions taken during General Assembly meetings. These include discussion of any submitted committee reports and draft resolutions, as well as votes on draft resolutions and explanations of particular votes. The Verbatim Records provide a full, first-person account of the proceedings of a meeting, and they are particularly useful for discourse analysis. For this analysis, I examined debates on dependent territories and colonialism spanning one hundred meetings over a fifteen-year period.
situation always remains the same: a population of higher civilization, responsible for the well-being and advancement of peoples of another race. (Mr. Ryckmans, Belgium, Sess. 2, 1947, 672)

Those under the Trusteeship System are . . . wards of the international community. (Mr. Soward, Canada, Sess. 11, 1956, 667)

Embedded within this logic, once again, was the paternalist colonial patriarchy elaborated above. For example, one colonialist speaker offered this:

We in the United Kingdom are proud of what we are doing in the colonial field. It is with great pride that we have been able to bring various members of the British Commonwealth and Empire along the road to full self-government. We feel the same pride that a parent feels when he sees his children going out into the world and making their own way. . . . We have seen growing affection between ourselves and our children and we look forward to an extension of that process. We shall feel increasing pride as we see ourselves able to bring more and more of the dependent peoples who look up to us, along this road to self-government and independence. (Mr. Thomas, United Kingdom, Sess. 1, 1946, 1271)

While assumptions about native underdevelopment, backwardness, and lack of progress were not always challenged (see Patil 2008, 2009), the largely male anticolonialist speakers in the General Assembly advanced the argument for decolonization in another way—on the gendered terrain of nature, violation, and masculinity. First, colonialism was challenged as against the “rules of creation”: “[At the eve of World War II, colonialism was so extensive that] contrary to the rules of creation, the child was manifoldly bigger than its parents, indeed all the parents put together” (Mr. Shukairy, Saudi Arabia, Sess. 15, 1960, 1013–14).

As an unnatural circumstance, it was understood as a violation, or a “moral prostitution” and a “rape” (Mr. Perera, Ceylon, Sess. 15, 1960, 1001)—one that served, moreover, to emasculate already grown men:

[Colonialism] is a system that takes the manhood out of those exposed to it. (Mr. Dosumu-Johnson, Liberia, Sess. 15, 1960, 1069)

[The colonized] man, in whom all dignity has been blunted, is thus morally diminished. (Mr. Kaka, Niger, Sess. 15, 1960, 1125)

Decolonization, from this perspective, was necessary to redress this emasculation. One speaker described having freedom returned after being colonized as once again being “master” in one’s “own house” (Mr. Thors, Ice-
land, Sess. 15, 1960, 1147). Speaking of the decolonization process already underway, another argued that “nearly a thousand million men have recovered their outraged dignity and freedom” (Mr. Champassak, Laos, Sess. 15, 1960, 1108).

Moreover, as the paternalistic relations of colonialism violated the rules of nature, anticolonialists now sought to replace them with the more “natural” masculinist (international) relations of brotherhood:

[This moment is the] universal moment of truth. It is a moment between a past of inequality and a glorious future, in which all peoples of the world seem resolved to re-establish human brotherhood, now won back at last, and to work together for their common happiness, on a footing of equality and the solidarity of free men. (Mr. Vakil, Iran, Sess. 15, 1960, 990)

Our age is one of co-operation among free and equal peoples and men. More still, it is an age of human brotherhood, association and mutual assistance. (Mr. Ammoun, Lebanon, Sess. 15, 1960, 1162)

[With this new declaration, a new chapter is opened,] one based on equality and the brotherhood of man (Mr. Rossides, Cyprus, Sess. 15, 1960, 1281).

Thus, in these debates we see a glimpse of how the racialized, sexualized hierarchies of Euro-American colonialism were renegotiated. If colonial paternalism denied infantilized and feminized dependent peoples’ political subjectivity, in this local-global space, these anticolonial men attempted to reclaim that subjectivity by reclaiming adulthood and masculinity. It is important to note that these speakers for the most part did not challenge ideas about the lack of progress, underdevelopment, or backwardness of dependent peoples, seeking only to replace notions of political tutelage with notions of economic development assistance. In this, they accepted some of the key premises of their historic oppression. They also did not challenge the emerging geopolitical order of freedom via the nation-state form. Rather, decolonization was now envisioned as formal inclusion into the nation-state system and the development project (see Patil 2008, 2009). And an anticolonial, nationalist patriarchy now defined both the experience of being colonized and the freedom being fought for, transforming the struggles of still-dependent peoples into the adult, masculine battles

8 On this topic, anticolonialists adopted two central approaches. While neither challenged these assertions, one attributed this “condition” to the exogenous factor of colonial exploitation while the other believed it to be an endogenous feature of dependent peoples.
of “our brethren in Africa” (Mr. N’Goua, Gabon, Sess. 15, 1960, 1181), “our brethren who are still in bondage” (Mr. Shukairy, Saudia Arabia, Sess. 15, 1960, 1016), and “warriors of Algeria, our brothers in courage” (Mr. Roa, Cuba, Sess. 15, 1960, 1171).

We can see the debates on decolonization in the General Assembly as contentions between differentially racialized masculinities and patriarchies. That the largely male anticolonial speakers challenged little of the edifice of colonial thought, focusing only on issues of masculinity and national sovereignty, points to a fairly conservative challenge to the colonial order conditioned by contemporary geopolitical realities (Patil 2009). From the perspective of patriarchies, however, it signals the emergence of new, nationalist patriarchies across the anticolonial and postcolonial world. Such patriarchies have been remarked upon before, both for specific spaces (Chatterjee 1993; MacPherson 2009) and more generally across the postcolonial world (Heng 1997; Duara 2004). Such nationalist patriarchies have important implications for nationalist narratives of culture, tradition, and history. In India, for example, the recent decriminalization of sodomy was opposed by some fundamentalist groups as violating Indian culture, an argument that relied on a collective forgetting of the historical context of this law—it was in fact an implant of British colonialism (Human Rights Watch 2008). The General Assembly debates offer yet another window onto the transnational dimension of colonial and anticolonial patriarchies, disclosing a space within which these patriarchies were in dialogue with each other.

Moreover, the challenge represented by anticolonial argument to colonialist paternalism remains relevant today. Its relevance is evident in how states and peoples in the global South continue to be seen (i.e., as young; as irrational; as deviating from elite Eurocentric models of masculinity, gender, and sexuality; as requiring training and assistance in a variety of ways). Such a discourse reaffirms notions of Northern paternalist beneficence and makes invisible ongoing relations of power. For example, as Esther Wangari (2002) points out, it is in this context that environmentalism becomes about teaching third-world women how to use birth control as opposed to focusing on how the North consumes. It is also in this context that discussions on the continued occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan become self-congratulatory conversations about training locals about self-sufficiency, which conveniently neglect issues of Northern complicity.

Ultimately, there is an incomplete revolution in the concept of patriarchy—for not only have there been important gaps in how patriarchy has been articulated, but there have been gaps in its critique as well. These
gaps matter today for a number of reasons. First, the neglect of the cross-border dimension and the continued association of patriarchy with the putative local distorts the transnational forces that have been significant for gender dynamics at least since the sixteenth century. Refocusing our lenses on these processes will enable analyses that are more multidimensional, more contextually situated, and more attendant to the numerous formations at multiple scales that may contribute to gender identities and practices. As the decolonization politics in the United Nations examined above demonstrates, thinking about the cross-border dimensions of historical and contemporary patriarchies offers insight into the masculinity politics of many Northern and Southern spaces. That is, it historicizes and contextualizes this politics, thereby enabling a better explanation of gender dynamics in both the global North and South.

**Concluding thoughts**

If “woman” and “man” are not merely descriptive terms but rather by-products in the interstices of other discourses, the meanings of which have changed historically and discursively with the shifting meanings and alignments of other categories such as the social and the body (Riley 1988), it is important to note that all of these emerged in tandem with the nation-state, industrial capitalism, and the burgeoning social and biological sciences—in the time and space of colonial modernity. For example, it was in the colonial context that colonial Englishwomen constructed ideas about enlightened, advanced English womanhood—in opposition to so-called superstitious and subordinated Indian womanhood—and built a progressive teleology within which Englishwomen were further along than their Indian counterparts. Such a distinction relied on an exclusive focus on the enclosed women of the zenana and a deliberate denial of the much more visible women of other parts of the subcontinent (Nair 2000). In the contemporary period, development agencies and programs, neoliberal capitalism and cultures, global media, and Northern-dominated feminist activism and scholarship function to internationalize similar Eurocentric, nationalist meanings of man and woman with little adjustment. In this, they are often joined by elite feminists from the global South. For example today, countless international publications of the “global feminism apparatus” (Chowdhury 2009, 60) measure women’s status around the world and render the women of the global South “behind” those of the global North (see, e.g., UNDP 1995, 2000, 2010). Such publications do incredibly valuable work in gathering and publishing data on the gendered implications of various social, political, and economic processes. Yet the general
framing of this data in comparative or case study terms, rather than in terms of cross-border connections and relationships, renders the role of transnational histories in the constitution of contemporary gendered and other hierarchies entirely invisible.

If we continue to neglect cross-border dynamics and fail to problematize the nation and its emergence via transnational processes, our analyses will remain tethered to the spatialities and temporalities of colonial modernity. We will continue to confuse our categories of practice with our categories of analysis (Brubaker and Cooper 2000). Thus, we need to think of the multiple processes, at different scales, that contribute to the emergence of particular local dynamics having to do with gender. From the perspective of intersectionality, merely reframing these dynamics through the lens of domestic intersectionality will only perpetuate the reification of the local. Rather, we need to critically explore how presumptively domestic intersectionalities are bound in a given instance. We need to recenter the notion that there are no locals and globals, only locals in relation to various global processes. We need to approach the production of various patriarchies as intersectionalities emergent from multiple histories of local-global processes, or as emergent from layers of multiple locals and globals that exist relative to and in relation to each other (King 2002). Only then can we begin to advance analyses that are appropriate for our complex, globalized world.

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References


