Roundtable ABSTRACT

Roundtable 13: "Reproductive justice": are we doing justice to the term?

Organizer: Kim Sigmund, Shahana Siddiqui

Abstract: In 1994, the SisterSong Black Feminist Collective coined the term "reproductive justice" to reflect on the systemic limitations to reproductive health rights faced by women of color, specifically Black women, in the United States. This concept has driven critical conversations, pushed discourse around the intersection of race, sexuality, and reproduction, and allowed for a vast range of research to emerge in the social sciences. This roundtable brings together an array of anthropologists working on issues of reproductive justice, allowing us a moment to reflect on how various disciplines and fields attempt to "do justice" to the aims of the reproductive justice movement in different settings and contexts. How are we effectively applying this concept that is rooted in activism and systemic change in our academic work, especially beyond the United States? What are some of the challenges in doing medical anthropological research through the lenses of intersectionality and reproductive justice? What moments of opportunity and collaboration have been made possible by this approach? In a world moving more towards anti-gender, anti-queer, anti-female global policies, with the backdrop of extreme reproductive injustice in genocidal situations, what lies ahead for those of us working towards reproductive justice and retribution? This roundtable invites anthropologists working on reproductive justice (or interested in) to share their findings, challenges, and possible ways forward.

SESSION SCHEDULE

17.09.2025 | Slot 2| 4-0-6

Md Asaduzzaman: Wombs Under Watch: Reproductive Struggles in the Shadow of Care of Rohingya Refugees in Bangladesh

Sreeparna Chattopadhyay: Just for whom? Problematising Reproductive Justice in India

Andrea Del Pilar Trujillo Rodríguez, Guilherme Lamperti Thomazi, Cristiane da Silva Cabral: Reproductive Justice for All? Challenges Faced by Trans Men and

Transmasculine People in Brazil

Simon Fem: Reflections on care from work with immigrant mothers in Spain

Christlord Foreste: From Slavery to Biocapitalism: Race, Gender, and Power in Contemporary Reproductive Technologies

SESSION PAPERS

Wombs Under Watch: Reproductive Struggles in the Shadow of Care of Rohingya Refugees in Bangladesh

Md Asaduzzaman

This study engages with the concept of reproductive justice to examine how family planning interventions unfold within the Rohingya refugee camps in Bangladesh—spaces shaped by displacement, surveillance, and limited autonomy. While NGOs and state actors promote long-acting contraceptives such as implants and IUDs under the banner of humanitarian care, these efforts are often embedded in broader strategies of biopolitical control. Community Health Workers (CHWs), responsible for door-to-door counseling, operate at the intersection of care and coercion, negotiating complex expectations from above while engaging with cultural and religious resistance from within their communities. Grounded in ethnographic research—including semi-structured interviews, surveys, and observations—this work interrogates how reproductive health policies in the camps reinforce systemic hierarchies that prioritize population control over refugee agency. It asks: What does reproductive justice look like in a context where economic dependency, limited healthcare options, and the politics of containment constrain consent? How can we rethink care in humanitarian settings where access to reproductive services is conditional and often securitized? By framing reproductive health in the Rohingya camps as a site of struggle instead of passive compliance, this study contributes to broader discussions on how reproductive justice frameworks—grounded in Black feminist thought and grassroots activism—can be effectively applied beyond the Global North. It promotes community-centered, rights-based approaches that emphasize equity, self-determination, and the lived experiences of those confronting reproductive injustice in contexts of extreme precarity and displacement.

Just for whom? Problematising Reproductive Justice in India

Sreeparna Chattopadhyay

African American feminists developed reproductive justice as an analytical framework to draw attention to structural factors that impacted Black Americans' rights to have children under conditions of their choice, rights to not have children using methods they choose, and their abilities to parent children under conditions which were safe and healthy and free from state sponsored violence. The framework went beyond choice-based liberal

feminist models, centering the enduring impacts of slavery, poverty, homelessness, and the disproportionate effects of carcerality on Black communities, in contrast to the conditions of the majority white population.

In theory, all Indians have reproductive rights because of progressive laws. In practice, most Indians do not live under conditions that are conducive to either biological or social reproduction. Drawing on Amartya Sen's work on justice [realisation focused approach, public reasoning, development of capabilities, scrutiny and struggle against injustice], I ask whether reproductive justice can be a rallying cry in the Indian context where most of the population is facing polycrises - neoliberal policies that result in wages and work that often do not meet the conditions of a decent life; ravages of climate change; lack of social protection mechanisms; poor public health infrastructure and expensive private health care; nearly absent labour protection since the majority work in the informal sector where rights are neither guaranteed or upheld; normalisation of violence against women and children; often violent and undignified care during childbirth; increasing censorship, fear of reprisals, hollowing of progressive institutions; and stripping of minority rights.

Reproductive Justice for All? Challenges Faced by Trans Men and Transmasculine People in Brazil

Andrea Del Pilar Trujillo Rodríguez, Guilherme Lamperti Thomazi, Cristiane da Silva Cabral

The recent period of setbacks and attacks on human rights, along with the accusatory use of the term "gender ideology," has exacerbated the dire scenario of exclusion and violence that trans people face daily. In this vein, this work aims to analyze Brazilian national health regulations and discuss how trans men and other transmasculine people are perceived and included in public policies on sexual and reproductive health in Brazil. Overall, the free exercise of sexual and reproductive rights is still not a reality for these individuals. The predominance of binary notions of sex and gender sustains and reinforces a cisheteronormative hegemony in health discourses and practices, legitimizing the invisibilization of trans people's sexual and reproductive health needs in healthcare services. Official documents that regulate and guide the Brazilian Unified Health System (SUS) remain insufficient in addressing the health needs of this population. In policies that touch on sexual and reproductive health there is a notable absence of discussion about the importance of cervical cancer prevention. for trans men and transmasculine people. Historically, they face barriers and discrimination when attempting to access gynecologists, family doctors, or nurses who perform such procedures. Furthermore, these policies assume that all trans men are heterosexual and will be in relationships with cis women, disregarding the possibility or desire of pregnancy. Expanding discussions on transmasculinities within the field of public health is essential, with particular attention to sexual and reproductive health, but through an integral approach to care that aligns with the depathologization of trans identities.

Reflections on care from work with immigrant mothers in Spain

Simon Fem

I am hoping to contribute to the discussion by reflecting on ongoing work I've been conducting concerning the reproductive experiences of immigrants in Spain. My recently published work looks at immigrant experiences of the perpetration of harm in sexual/reproductive healthcare in Spain, and the importance of institutional critique. Forthcoming work looks at immigrant women's experiences of perinatal care (social and medical), and processes of bordering, denial, and solidarity. I've been working through my own thinking through how to better integrate the activist ethic into my work, and the broader need for work about reproductive justice to build connections to work which names and resists borders and bordering. I can also share a bit about the spaces where I've felt welcomed, encouraged, and supported doing my work vs. the kinds of processes, norms, and figures that have made pursuing this area discouraging and frustrating as an early career scholar/PhD student.

From Slavery to Biocapitalism: Race, Gender, and Power in Contemporary Reproductive Technologies

Christlord Foreste

The development of new reproductive technologies (NRTs) has reignited debates around the intersection of reproduction, technology, and the oppression of women—an issue deeply embedded in feminist thought and discourse. A number of narratives promote NRTs as a means of transcending bodily limits and traditional gender relations. Yet, within these very dispositifs, power and gender relations are actively reproduced and reconfigured. While these technologies do not replicate historical power structures and gender hierarchies identically, they nonetheless displace and reshape them.

The autonomy and liberation promised by NRTs has sparked tensions within feminist circles, revealing significant contrasts—if not outright contradictions—in the conceptualization of women's emancipation, which historically emphasized the deconstruction of reproductive constraints. The aspiration to free women from reproductive imperatives so they are no longer defined by them is today received ambivalently: hailed as emancipatory and suited to new, non-traditional family models (Stuvøy, 2018), or denounced as a rearticulation of colonial legacies (Vora, 2022).

This presentation explores the relationship between slavery and racial biocapitalism by drawing on historical perspectives on reproduction, particularly those articulated by feminist historians of slavery (Combahee River Collective, 1979; Davis, 2020). Inspired by Eva Weinbaum's analysis of the role of reproduction in slavery (Weinbaum, 2022a, 2022b), I will argue, first, that remnants of racialized dehumanizing practices persist in contemporary NRTs, and second, that these practices call for a critical re-engagement with the framework of reproductive justice.