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Thirty years on: A conversation with Xingjuan Wang, a pioneer of the Beijing declaration and platform for action

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Abstract

This article is an interview between the guest editors of this monograph issue and Xingjuan Wang, a Chinese feminist activist and a co-founder of the Maple Women's Psychological Counseling Hotline, one of the earliest grassroots initiatives supporting women facing domestic violence in China. Xingjuan Wang was present at the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995. In this exchange, she reflects on her work as well as the impact of the conference and its outcome documents, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

Keywords

domestic violence, China, fourth world conference on women, Beijing declaration, Beijing platform for action, gender equality

As a preview to this special issue devoted to the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, we sought out leading scholar-activists who had participated in the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women. We felt it was important to place this special issue in

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historical context and to hear first hand reflections about the significance of that event, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, and the legacy of both to current developments both in China and internationally. We chose to interview XingJuan Wang, a feminist pioneer from China who was present at the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995. *Current Sociology* Monographs Editor Joy Y. Zhang knew of her work and invited her first to a webinar sponsored by the International Sociological Association in November 2024, and then to participate in one of the NGO Committee on the Status of Women (CSW) parallel events sponsored by the International Sociological Association on the occasion of the 30th Anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in March 2025. Given that the Fourth World Conference on Women occurred in China, we found it particularly insightful to interview XingJuan Wang, whose long-standing work in the anti-violence against women movement in her country has been pioneering and impactful. We reproduce here our conversation with XingJuan in which we (Barberet, Beichner-Thomas, and Ranjan) developed focused questions for her and then translated and edited her responses (Zhang).

Guest Editors: XingJuan, we are happy to host you in this conversation, and we thank you for joining us. We'd like to start by asking you what was the significance of the Fourth World Conference on Women to Chinese women?

XingJuan: The "Beijing Declaration" and "Platform for Action" adopted by the Fourth Women's Conference have become the Chinese government's blueprint for improving the status of women and empowering women, and the Chinese women's movement entered a fast lane. Equality between men and women has become China's basic national policy. The State Council established the Working Committee on Women and Children. So far, it has issued four "Women's Development Programs," each of which proposes new indicators for women's development and conducts evaluations (State Council of the People's Republic of China, 1995, 2001, 2011, 2021). China has established a legal system that comprehensively protects women's rights and interests, including more than 100 laws and regulations, and it is listed by the World Health Organization as one of the 10 countries with high performance in maternal and child health (Xinhua News Press, 2020b). It has basically eliminated the gender gap in compulsory education. Women account for over 40% of the total employed population in the country (Xinhua News Press, 2020b). But the work toward gender equality is far from complete.

Guest Editors: How do you think it changed the lives of Chinese women and girls?

XingJuan: The Fourth World Conference on Women has had a profound impact on Chinese women. The World Women's Conference meant "seeing the world through women's eyes," "telling the world with women's voices," and "changing the world with women's actions," stimulating Chinese women's subjective consciousness and collective consciousness in participating in the cause of gender equality (Jiang, 2025). The

result is that women's social organizations, voluntarily organized by ordinary women, bottom-up, and independent of the dominant system, have risen from the ground. From being just one to a collective appearance, they have entered the historical stage of the women's movement and become the driving force for gender equality, a new force.

To give you some examples with which I am familiar. One is the Women's Legal Research and Service Center at Peking University, founded by Guo Jianmei in December 1995, established after she was deeply moved by her experience at the 1995 World Conference on Women. She subsequently resigned from her public post and embarked on a path of public-interest work, using the law to defend women's rights. Another example is the Xishuangbanna Women and Children's Psychological and Legal Counseling Service Center, founded in March 1997. Its director, Long Sihai, has provided both psychological counseling and legal rights-protection services for women and children. There is also the Henan Community Education Research Center, established in 1998 and led by Liang Jun. It has focused primarily on gender-equality education and rural development for women in rural areas. One of its landmark initiatives was the three-time revision of village rules and regulations in Zhoushanzhuang Village, Dengfeng City, Henan Province, spearheaded by Liang and her team. Over 20 years, this effort empowered women and advanced gender equality in the village, and it remains a model studied by researchers and practitioners across the country.

Thirty years have passed, but the influence of the World Women's Congress has not faded away. The spirit of the World Women's Congress has influenced the thoughts and lives of generations of women. They spread and practice the spirit of the World Women's Congress in different ways. Twenty years after the World Women's Conference, a professor from Central China Normal University shared her reflections (Liu et al., 2015: 352–355). She said, “the 1995 Women's Conference has influenced my value judgment, professional choice, and direction of life. I went from being gender-blind to a feminist who is a devoted defender of gender equality. I edited two gender studies textbooks, took the lead in offering courses on women's studies and women's social work, and carried out social work practice for disadvantaged groups. In the busy spring and autumn of 20 years, I changed from a young teacher to a middle-aged woman. These 20 years have been the 20 years of rapid development of gender in Chinese society. They have been 20 years of personal reflection, deconstruction, reconstruction, and growth for me. I am proud of my efforts and achievements.”

The collection also recorded a woman born in the 1980s (Liu et al., 2015: 311–314). She said, “I was 12 years old when the World Conference on Women was held in 1995. Although I knew this was happening, it was far away from me. My mom was a feminist, but I never thought about making a career out of it. It wasn't until I went to college that I came into contact with many incidents of discrimination against women, and I deeply realized that my mother's generation had done a lot of work in challenging traditional ideas and improving social systems and laws, so that our younger generation can enjoy more equal rights. The generation of the World Women's Association is starting to grow old, and we should continue their work. I majored in women's history and social history in college. After completing my Ph.D., I worked at Nanjing Jinling Women's College of

Nanjing Normal University, where I was responsible for teaching gender courses. I became a ‘second generation of power’ and felt the joy of passing on the fire from generation to generation.”

This corresponds with our experience at the Red Maple Center too. Over the years, the Red Maple Center has always had female college students born in or after 2000 as volunteers. This year, Red Maple recruited its 26th cohort of volunteers, and I taught the first session of the volunteer training. One of the applicants was a woman who had just completed a master’s degree in women’s studies abroad. She said that a few years ago, she heard me share Red Maple’s story on the podcast “Listening to Voices from the Wall,” hosted by Professor Zhang Zheng in the U.S., and it left a deep impression on her. After completing her studies and returning to China this year, she came to Red Maple to apply to become a volunteer.

Guest Editors: These are important consequences, thank you. Now, we wonder if you can tell us about your experience of the conference?

Xingjuan: In view of the emergence of disadvantaged groups of women after the reform and opening up, I and some intellectual women built this women’s self-education platform in order to help them find their position as social subjects again. I first founded the Women’s Research Institute of the Chinese Academy of Management Sciences in 1988. In February 1992, I had the opportunity to visit the United States. During the trip, I toured the United Nations Headquarters and learned about the *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)* and its core concept of opposing all forms of discrimination against women. I also visited domestic violence shelters for women in the U.S. and gained insights into how women’s organizations support victims of domestic violence.

Returning from that trip, I founded China’s first women’s hotline in September 1992, which is the predecessor of the Red Maple Women’s Psychological Counseling Service Center. We have psychological counseling profession provide psychological assistance to disadvantaged women, alleviate their emotional distress, arouse their subjective consciousness, and realize women’s self-worth.

Shortly after the women’s hotline was launched, we began receiving calls from women experiencing abuse. This made us realize that domestic violence also exists in Chinese society. As a result, we initiated research and social assistance activities related to domestic violence, and during the NGO Forum held alongside the World Conference on Women, we gave voice to survivors of domestic violence and called on society to pay greater attention to their rights and interests.

We knew that the 1995 World Conference on Women was to be held in Beijing, and the United Nations entrusted the All-China Women’s Federation (ACWF) with organizing the NGO Forum on Women, to be held concurrently with the official intergovernmental conference. In order to participate in the World Conference on Women, we submitted an application on 30 September 1993 to the ACWF’s NGO Forum Organizing Committee to host a forum as part of the NGO events.

On 21 March 1994, we also submitted an application to the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) to participate in organizing an NGO forum at the conference, and once again submitted our application to the ACWF.

On 20 May 1994, we received a notification from ECOSOC that six women's organizations in China, including the ACWF, were officially recognized as Chinese women's NGOs. Among them was the Women's Research Institute of the Chinese Academy of Management Sciences, which later became the predecessor of the Red Maple Women's Psychological Counseling Service Center.

After receiving this notification, we submitted a third application to the ACWF on 30 May 1994, requesting to host a forum. On 3 June 1994, we received official approval from the NGO Forum Organizing Committee to hold the forum. On 21 June 1995, we received an invitation from the United Nations confirming our consultative status, inviting us to attend the intergovernmental conference as observers, with the right to submit recommendations to the plenary. Our six women's organizations in China were officially recognized by the United Nations as women's non-governmental organizations.

Our forum was called "Women's Groups and Social Assistance." It focused on vulnerable women who used the women's hotline, including domestic violence victims, sexual harassment victims, single mothers, and prostituted women, and studied how to provide them with social assistance. The forum was held on 3 September 1995, in the classroom of Huairou No. 1 Middle School. The classroom only had 50 seats, but more than 100 people came that day. Not only were the back and aisles of the conference room full of people, but the lecture area in front was also full of people. This was an international forum. Women workers from the United States, Japan, Brazil, Finland, and other countries participated in the forum and had lively exchanges. The forum was a success, and the Xinhua News Agency issued a press release titled "Give Weak Women a Love." The forum received awards from the Non-Governmental Forum Organizing Committee. We also attended government meetings as observers and submitted the first proposal to the General Assembly, suggesting that the government should strengthen social assistance for vulnerable women groups.

When the *Beijing Declaration* was adopted at the 1995 World Conference on Women, it called for global action to end gender-based violence and empower women. Our work directly aligned with these goals and became a concrete example of how civil society in China responded to and carried forward the Declaration's principles. Through services like its anti-domestic violence hotline and legal support, we helped translate the Declaration's vision into sustained, on-the-ground action.

Guest Editors: Your work was a clear continuation of the spirit and content of the Beijing Declaration. We would like to ask you now, what did you and your colleagues gain from participating in the conference?

Xingjuan: The biggest gain from the World Women's Association is that it has given us gender theory. This is the key that we have been searching for many years to open women's hearts and arouse women's subjective consciousness. When the Women's Hotline was launched in 1988, it was guided by Carl Rogers' humanistic psychology. It advocates being people-centered, paying unconditional positive attention to the caller,

being understanding, and showing empathy. Applying this consultation theory had yielded good results. Many callers cried when they called and hung up the phone with a smile. However, there are also dissatisfied callers, mainly desperate women who hope to get guidance from the women's hotline to help them get out of their predicament. The counselor followed the non-guidance principle of psychological counseling and did not give constructive suggestions. The caller felt disappointed. In particular, some domestic disputes that seem to occur in women's daily lives, such as domestic violence, are generally understood by mainstream society as couples fighting, and there is no right or wrong. In fact, they reflect the oppression and control of gender in family relationships. If a counselor adopts the principle of value-neutrality, it is equivalent to endorsing or acquiescing to the values of mainstream society, maintaining and practicing social norms and codes of conduct based on male dominance, and failing to provide understanding and support to victims of domestic violence. In particular, the factors of the social environment are ignored in the consultation, domestic violence is regarded as a personal problem, and the wrong judgment of blaming the victim is made, which further causes the victim to be harmed twice and continue to endure pain and oppression. Such counseling cannot serve women. At that time, we had no access to feminist counseling theory, and we were the first organization to use psychological counseling to provide psychological rescue solutions to women. There was no domestic experience to follow. So I coined a new term "women's awareness" and required counselors to handle calls about women's rights. They must stand in women's shoes, support women, put forward constructive suggestions, inspire their consciousness, and help them get out of their predicaments. Later, I learned about "women-centered" approach from Hong Kong (<https://womenscentre.org.hk/Zh/Services/>) and advocated that volunteers embrace a "women-centered" mindset. It was not until the World Conference on Women that we found social gender theory and found theories and methods to help disadvantaged women get rid of traditional ideas and establish a sense of social subjectivity. Gender theory gives us a new perspective and helps people solve a long-standing problem: how do women become oppressed? It is not due to biological reasons but the social system and the social culture that serves this system. Using this theory can help counselors identify the root causes of women's oppression, identify the target, and fundamentally leverage the client's traditional concepts. So we modified the theoretical basis of the women's hotline to gender and humanism. We provide all counselors gender theory training so that hotline consultation can better serve women. Today, gender theory has become the theoretical basis for Red Maple Center's services. It runs like a red thread through all projects that serve women.

Guest Editors: Indeed, gender theory is key to research and action, and the particular connection to social structure and our social system, as you say. We'd like to ask you now what you think the wider impact of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action has been?

Xingjuan: The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action adopted by the 1995 World Conference on Women has provided strategic goals and policy frameworks for countries around the world to promote gender equality and protect women's rights, accelerating the development of the global women's movement. One hundred and forty-three countries around the world have passed legislation that clearly stipulates the implementation of equality between men and women. There are no legal barriers to women's participation in the political economy. Women's access to education, freedom of marriage, and freedom of occupation have become social consensus. Judging from the situation in our country, the World Conference on Women not only prompted the government to increase its efforts to promote gender equality but also allowed Chinese women to understand the world, go abroad, communicate with international women, and step onto the stage of the international women's movement. With the help of the World Women's Conference, the Red Maple Center has visited 25 countries and regions for 90 people and has exchanged and cooperated with women scholars and non-governmental organizations from various countries. During the commemorative events of Beijing + 5, Beijing + 10, and Beijing + 15, Red Maple organized three delegations to enter the United Nations to tell the story of Red Maple to the world. The development of Red Maple has also attracted the attention of women around the world. More than 700 people from 24 countries and regions have visited Red Maple, discussed the characteristics of Red Maple, and held lectures for volunteers to introduce new theories and technologies in psychological counseling and social work to achieve common development and improvement. International exchange activities have given us an international perspective, and we have absorbed some advanced concepts and methods of the world women's movement and localized them for my own use. Some of the charity brands designed by Red Maple are at the forefront of the world and are innovative and forward-looking.

Guest Editors: Action indeed! It is clear that it played a role in connecting Red Maple to the world, and the world to Red Maple. Now focusing on the documents themselves, in your view, what is the most important aspect of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action?

Xingjuan: I think the most important thing is to clearly declare that women's rights are human rights, and that achieving gender equality and comprehensive development is women's right. The two platforms put forward strategic goals and action frameworks for the attention and protection of women's rights and interests on a global scale.

Implementing these two documents will greatly enhance women's dominant status and secure more rights and opportunities.

Guest Editors: If the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action were drafted today, how would it be different or remain the same? What additional research is needed to better facilitate its implementation?

Xingjuan: On the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the World Conference on Women in 2020, the head of UN Women said that the importance of the Beijing Declaration has only increased. She believes that the power and influence of the Beijing Declaration on collective action is growing day by day, and 25 years later, no country is close to fully fulfilling its commitments (United Nations, 2020). The continued importance of a reform agenda covering 12 key areas aimed at realizing the human rights of women and girls cannot be overstated today (United Nations, 2020). President Xi Jinping (Xinhua News Press, 2020a) pointed out in a speech that, as Secretary-General Guterres said, the results achieved in the field of gender equality in the past few decades are at risk of regression. In China, many fields have made great progress in gender equality and even attracted world attention. However, we must also be clearly aware that China has not fully achieved the goals of the 1995 Women's Conference. Which areas of progress need to be consolidated and improved, which areas are still progressing slowly, and which areas are also at risk of regression? These all require our vigilance and in-depth research and analysis. In the process of fighting the epidemic and promoting economic and social recovery, we must pay special attention to the special needs of women and implement the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (Xinhua News Press, 2020a). This means that the realization of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action still has guiding significance for promoting gender equality today. The issue now is not to draft a new declaration, but to accelerate the implementation of these two programs. Achieving gender equality and the all-round development of women is a long historical process and requires continued and tremendous efforts.

One particular area in which I'd like to see more progress is mental health support. According to official information released in China (Institute of Depression Research et al., 2022), in 2022, there were 95 million people nationwide suffering from depression. Half of them were students, and of the other half, two-thirds were women. The primary causes of depression among women were emotional distress and interpersonal relationship issues, highlighting the severity of mental health problems faced by women.

Although the Anti-Domestic Violence Law was enacted in 2016, the proportion of women experiencing domestic violence remains high, at around 30% (Supreme People's Procuratorate. P.R China, 2022). Legal aid provided by women's NGOs typically comes only after violence has occurred and is severely limited—like a drop in the ocean—and falls far short of meeting societal needs. Even rarer is the provision of psychological

support after legal aid or proactive guidance and resistance training for women experiencing violence. Red Maple has been consistently working in this space.

In my view, the core issue lies in the lack of governmental and societal attention to women's mental health and inadequate support systems. China has already become a country with widespread mental health challenges, and a vast market for psychological counseling has emerged—with annual revenues reaching 70–90 billion yuan (Touzhongwang, 2024; Xin, 2024). However, this market has been co-opted by capital interests and primarily serves those who can afford to pay, leaving little room for public-interest psychological services.

It wasn't until May 2025 that the National Health Commission of the People's Republic of China (2024) launched a nationwide public psychological counseling hotline—but it only includes government-run services, excluding grassroots hotlines like Red Maple's. These non-governmental public hotlines receive no government attention or support, and the psychological needs of vulnerable women go largely unmet.

My recommendation is to unite public-interest psychological counseling organizations and submit proposals to the National People's Congress and the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, urging the government to pay greater attention to women's mental health, expand public-interest psychological services for women, and support more non-profit organizations engaged in this work.

I also hope to see a growing force of public-interest psychological counselors, with more professionals—especially female counselors from the academic and clinical fields—joining efforts to serve the mental health needs of vulnerable women.

Guest Editors: Yes, we agree that more attention needs to be paid to women's mental health. To further your reflection in that area, in your field of expertise, how has China's handling of victims of domestic violence and sexual assault changed since 1995? What progress has been made?

Xingjuan: In 2023, an online media outlet released an audio episode as part of its "Chronicle of Women" series titled "From a hotline to a law, they spent half their lives fighting against domestic violence" (Story FM, 2023), which tells the story of the women's hotline and its allies in the women's community and their long struggle to combat domestic violence and promote the enactment of the Anti-Domestic Violence Law. Domestic violence is an imported term. In China, this phenomenon was long referred to simply as "a quarrel between husband and wife," with no sense of right or wrong attached. Before the Women's Hotline was launched in 1992, I visited shelters in the United States, learned the words for domestic violence, and witnessed the horrors of battered women. The day after the hotline was opened, we received a call from an abused woman, and we immediately determined that the woman had suffered domestic violence. That day was 3 April 1992, the day when China's first "Women's Rights and Interests Law" was promulgated and came into effect. After reading the law, I realized it did not address the issue of domestic violence. This led us to begin research on domestic violence, providing social assistance to abused women.

Together with the Women's Federation and other women's groups, we worked continuously for 24 years to help develop and improve legislation against domestic violence. Starting with revisions to the *Marriage Law* and the *Law on the Protection of Women's Rights and Interests*, we advocated for the inclusion of provisions on domestic violence and sexual harassment. We then pushed for the enactment of the *Anti-Domestic Violence Law*. Over the years, Red Maple submitted seven proposals, suggestions, and policy recommendations to the National People's Congress, the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, and the State Council. In 2016, the *Anti-Domestic Violence Law* was finally passed, and the long-awaited protection order system was put into effect.

The "Chronicle of Women" report mentioned earlier (Story FM, 2023) interviewed six women, including researchers, social workers, lawyers, and women's activists. Including three generations, I am the oldest, 94 years old, and the average age is 75. These people have devoted half their lives to anti-domestic violence activities. I feel that it has taken more than 20 years to move from society's awareness of domestic violence to the enactment of laws, and it has undergone earth-shaking changes. It is worth it, and I am proud of it.

Guest Editors: These are certainly laudable accomplishments. What work still needs to be completed, in your opinion?

Xingjuan: The enactment of the Anti-Domestic Violence Law is a phased achievement. Mental violence, economic control, and marital rape have not yet been defined as domestic violence, and continued efforts are needed to further improve them.

Guest Editors: We hope others continue your legacy in this regard. Now we would like to talk about successive generations of activists. In your opinion, what is the importance of promoting young people in China and around the world—especially students—to know and pay attention to the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action? What advice do you have for young feminists in China?

Xingjuan: Over the past 30 years, the two programmatic documents of the World Conference on Women have promoted the rapid development of women's movements in various countries around the world, but the goals set by the World Conference on Women have not yet been completed. The level of development of women is unbalanced; the distribution of rights, opportunities, and resources between men and women is still unequal; and discrimination and abuse of women still exist. There is still a long way to go to achieve gender equality, and it requires successive generations of women to work hard. It is very important to promote two programmatic documents among the younger generation of women. Fortunately, in colleges and universities and in the public welfare sector, there are groups of active young women. The cause of

gender equality is being passed down from generation to generation, promoting the development of women's causes.

Editors: This is encouraging to hear. What suggestions do you have for developing sustainable and effective work for women's cause?

Xingjuan: I hope that Chinese women's theorists and women workers will adopt a more inclusive and open attitude towards Western feminist theories and experiences. Western feminism involves Western women striving for equal rights for men and women, exploring the root causes of inequality between men and women in the unremitting struggle, and creating a theoretical system with gender theory as the core. Two programmatic documents of the World Conference on Women have established gender mainstreaming as a global strategy to promote gender equality. Our study of Western feminist theory and experience will help broaden our horizons, absorb the essence, and promote the development of women's theoretical research and women's activities.

At this point, I have a deep understanding. I later learned the theory of feminist psychological counseling and discovered the theories and methods that Women's Hotline had been exploring for so many years. In fact, in the West, feminist psychological counseling already has mature and complete disciplinary theories and clinical experience. Had I learned it earlier, we could have avoided many detours. It is based on this understanding that on the 30th anniversary of the establishment of the Red Maple Center, with the support of the board of directors, in 2018, some experts and I edited and published the book *Feminism and Psychological Counseling* (Wang, 2018), which provides an introduction to Western feminist psychological counseling. A brief summary of the ins and outs was given; their techniques and experiences in providing psychological assistance based on gender as a theoretical basis during the consultation process were introduced. In this book, I have also sorted out and summarized the path and experience of the Women's Hotline over the past 30 years. I leave this book as the treasure of Red Maple Center to future generations so that it can be passed on and carried forward.

Guest Editors: We would like to ask you now, what are your expectations for the future development of feminism or work for women's cause in China?

Xingjuan: Building a world where women are free from discrimination, realizing gender equality and empowering women are the common goals of women around the world. Although countries have different social systems and nationalities, and the trajectories of women's movements in each country are different, strengthening cooperation and exchanges between countries will help promote the development of women's causes globally and in China. I hope that Chinese women will further integrate with women around the world, strengthen global cooperation, build bridges for different civilizations to learn from each other, and form a diverse and interactive pattern of people-to-people exchanges.

Guest Editors: Are there any fields or activities that you think need special attention, can continue to be explored, or have potential? What role can

international women's movements or joint activities play in terms of women's rights in China?

Xingjuan: The Women's Forum of the 95th Women's Conference allowed Chinese women to see the power of women's non-governmental organizations, promoted the birth of a number of women's social organizations in China, and played a very good role in arousing women's subjectivity consciousness and safeguarding women's rights and interests. Social organizations are an important force in serving society and serving women. I hope that more women's social organizations will be established in China, especially in communities, to play a greater role in combating discrimination against women and empowering women. International cooperation and exchanges between Chinese and foreign women are conducive to common development and improvement.

Guest Editors: We are strong proponents of international cooperation and exchanges. As our final question to you, would you please summarize what do you think is the continued role and relevance of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in today's world?

Xingjuan: The two programmatic documents adopted by the World Conference on Women set clear goals for the global women's cause. These goals have not yet been fully realized, but they still have important guiding significance for the future development of the global women's movement. Building a world of equality, development, and peace is still the common ideal and pursuit of women around the world. Chinese women must strengthen cooperation with women around the world, accelerate the realization of the two programs, and promote greater development of global women's causes and Chinese women's causes.

Here ends our interview with Xingjuan Wang. We want to highlight the main takeaways from this conversation. First, the importance of the local and the global. The Fourth World Conference on Women and its outcome documents have had a global impact but also an important local impact on the work of Chinese feminist activists and scholars. This impact was both in terms of the impulse given to grassroots movements in China and to government efforts to respond to domestic violence. Our readership will also appreciate what Xingjuan notes in terms of the discovery or gender theory: a new paradigm within which to understand domestic violence and try to prevent it and reduce it. We appreciate Xingjuan's long-standing contribution to domestic violence intervention and research in China and her realistic view of how far China has come and what remains to be done. Hers is a lesson in perseverance, and she does not sugarcoat the present or what she sees as the future. Her reflections on the Fourth World Conference and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action are valuable in showing us how multilateral events, and globally agreed documents on paper, can transform the lives of individuals and propel societies toward a better future.

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Author biographies

Xingjuan Wang is a Chinese feminist activist and a co-founder of the Maple Women's Psychological Counseling Hotline, one of the earliest grassroots initiatives supporting women facing domestic violence. She has played an important role in advancing gender equality and anti-domestic violence advocacy in China. Her work centres on building care-oriented support networks and practical interventions for women.

Dr. Rosemary Barberet is Professor in the Sociology Department of John Jay College of Criminal Justice, City University of New York, USA and affiliated with the College's international criminal justice programs of study. She is an internationally recognized multilingual feminist criminologist whose scholarship focuses on gender, victimization, and comparative/international criminal justice. Through an extensive body of publications and international collaborations, she has helped shape critical conversations on crime prevention and justice reform worldwide. She is a senior representative to the United Nations for the International Sociological Association.

Dr. Dawn Beichner-Thomas, Ph.D., is Professor in the Criminal Justice Sciences Department and the Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Program at Illinois State University, USA. Her work spans global victimology, feminist approaches to justice, and the impacts of incarceration on individuals and families. She serves on the Executive Committee of the World Society of Victimology and represents the organization at the United Nations. Dr. Beichner-Thomas co-directs an international, post-graduate victimology course in Croatia and collaborates widely on research and policy initiatives addressing gender-based violence, restorative justice, and international criminological scholarship.

Dr. Sheetal Ranjan is Professor of Justice Studies & Sociology at Montclair State University, New Jersey, USA, and an internationally recognized expert in violence prevention, healthcare approaches to justice, and feminist criminology. She leads applied and translational research, has secured over \$7.5 million in funding for community-based interventions, and is the founder of the Healthcare Approaches to Justice Collaborative. A Distinguished Scholar Award recipient from the Division of Feminist Criminology of the American Society of Criminology, she also serves on the global expert roster for UN Women's End Violence Against Women initiative and holds leadership roles in higher education and public policy in New Jersey.

Dr. Joy Y. Zhang is Professor of Sociology and Founding Director of the Centre for Global Science and Epistemic Justice (GSEJ) at the University of Kent. She serves as an editor within the International Sociological Association's publication portfolio, leading the *Current Sociology Monographs* series and the *Sage Studies in International Sociology* (SSIS) series. Her editorial work advances a commitment to plural, dialogic, and internationally grounded sociological inquiry.

Résumé

Cet article est un entretien entre les rédactrices invitées de ce numéro monographique et Xingjuan Wang, activiste féministe chinoise et cofondatrice de la « Maple Women's Psychological Counseling Hotline », l'une des premières initiatives citoyennes d'aide aux femmes victimes de violences domestiques en Chine. Xingjuan Wang était présente à la quatrième Conférence mondiale sur les femmes organisée à Beijing en 1995. Dans cet entretien, elle revient sur son travail ainsi que sur l'impact de la conférence et des documents produits à l'issue de celle-ci : la Déclaration et le Programme d'action de Beijing.

Mots-clés

Chine, Déclaration de Beijing, égalité de genre, Programme d'action de Beijing, quatrième Conférence mondiale sur les femmes, violences domestiques

Resumen

Este artículo es una entrevista entre las editoras invitadas de este monográfico y Xingjuan Wang, una activista feminista china y cofundadora de la Línea Directa Arce de Asistencia Psicológica para Mujeres, que es una de las primeras iniciativas de base que apoyan a las mujeres víctimas de violencia doméstica en China. Xingjuan Wang estuvo presente en la Cuarta Conferencia Mundial sobre la Mujer celebrada en Beijing en 1995. En esta entrevista, reflexiona sobre su trabajo, así como sobre el impacto de la conferencia y sus documentos finales: la Declaración y Plataforma de Acción de Beijing.

Palabras clave

China, Cuarta Conferencia Mundial sobre la Mujer, Declaración de Beijing, igualdad de género, Plataforma de Acción de Beijing, violencia doméstica