

# OFRGC

Organization for Feminist Research on Gender and Communication

*Summer | Fall 2023*

## NEWSLETTER

***“Sometimes when things fall apart,  
we get the chance to activate  
something new.”***

**– Jenna Hanchey, OFRGC President**

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Photo credit: Nate Hovee. Image description: A faded image of the Sonoran Desert under reddish clouds.

## Message from the President

Dear OFRGC Members,

If your life these past few months is anything like mine has been, you may be feeling like you're running unconscionably behind. Perhaps the service obligations have piled up. Or maybe you're trying to meet a flood of expectations, whether externally or internally imposed, that leave you feeling like no matter how you structure your time, you're missing something or letting someone down. Or perhaps things are moving so quickly that as you're running to keep up, you might not immediately notice when something's gone awry. When the neoliberal-colonial academy conditions us to be in a mode of constant *doing*, there is little space and time for reflection over *why* unless we take it—or are forced to take it, because things come to a clattering halt.

Sometimes when things fall apart, we get the chance to activate something new.

You may remember that the newsletter you're currently reading usually arrives in the summer. But here we are nearing the end of September! We in the leadership were so busy doing doing doing that it wasn't until after something had quietly gone wrong that our Vice President Lore/tta LeMaster noticed the organization's website was no longer working.

Something had gone awry.

I responded, as conditioned, in a panicked mode of *doing*. Emails, phone calls, text messages, with one primary goal: to get it back up as quickly as possible. But no matter what I or multiple other members of the leadership team tried, we were unsuccessful.

Things had fallen apart.

We were forced to pause. To stop doing. And in the space left in the wake, we were able to reframe the goal. Perhaps our goal actually wasn't to restore the website exactly as it had been. Thanks to the foresight of our Treasurer, Alyssa Samek, we'd already secured the domain name for our new organizational name. Our Past President, Diane Keeling, made a simple suggestion: Why try to get the old site back up when we could activate the new one? What seemed like a falling apart, a failure, offered us a moment of transition instead.

We activated something new.

Once we shifted the goal, hindrances fell out of our way. But first we had to break out of the mindset of constant *doing* that keeps neoliberal-colonial structures in place. I've written about how sometimes colonial structures must fall apart for decolonial potential to emerge, but it's always a challenge to enact this as praxis, and not let it simply sit to the side as theory. I am proud to be surrounded by comrades who remind me that it is okay to sometimes stop the motion in order to let things transform.

As such, it is with joy and honor that I sign the first President's letter from the Organization for Feminist Research on Gender and Communication, and invite you to redirect your bookmarks and search engines toward our website: [www.ofrgc.org](http://www.ofrgc.org)

In imagination,  
Jenna N. Hanchey



Photo credit: Akil Mazumder. Image description: A green plant sprouts from a mound of dirt held in the palm of a Brown hand. Faded green trees color the background of the image.

## 2023 OFRGC Grant Recipients



**Jacqueline N. Gunning** (\$2,500)

University of Connecticut

*Exploring (Dis)Enfranchising Healthcare Experiences of African American, Latina/o/x, and American Indian/Alaskan Native Women with Autoimmune Disease*



**Taylor Mack** (\$1,237.50)

Columbus State University

*Does This Look Okay? Examining Self-Presentation Expectations for Corporate Women using Communication Theory of Identity*





**Satarupa Dasgupta (\$2,475)**

Ramapo College of New Jersey

*The impact of mobility and visibility on stigmatization and support services access and utilization among non-brothel-based transient sex workers in India*



**Jaclyn H. Nolan (\$2,475)**

University of Georgia

*Willie McGee and the Legacy of Legal Lynching*



# 2023 Research Development Grant Committee

We are grateful to the grant reviewers for their service. We could not do this work without their service and support of OFRGC.

Carolyn Cunningham  
Amanda Hill  
Ashley Garcia  
Danielle Biss  
Liz Desnoyers-Colas  
Laura Wackwitz  
T. Jake Dionne  
Sarah Evans

Meredith Neville-Shepard  
Iruoma Ezumba  
Kim Hong Nguyen  
Alex Rister  
Jennifer Zenovich  
Paromita Pain  
Allison Weidhaas  
Loretta LeMaster

Our next call for grant applications will go out in January 2024

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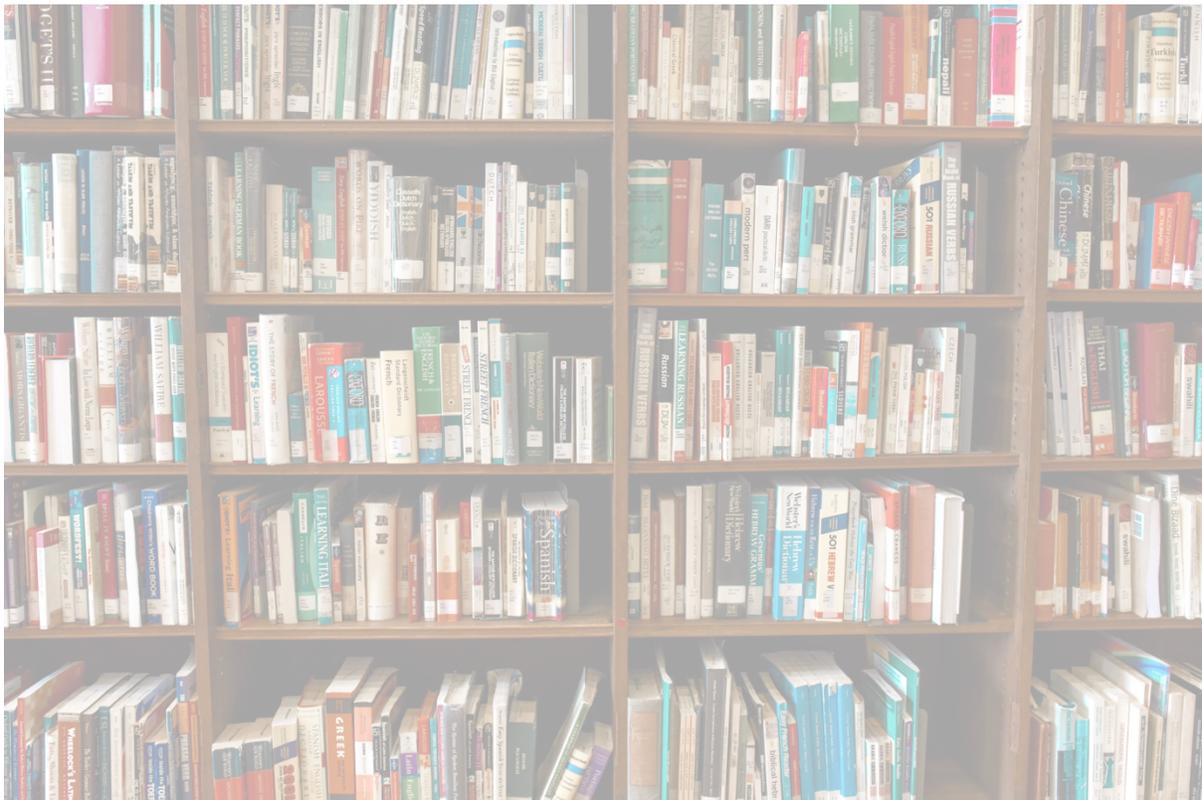


Photo credit: Element Digital. Image description: multicolored book spines line a series of book shelves.

# 2021 OFRGC Research Development Grant Recipient Reports

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**Kirara Nagatsuka**

*“Half-Breed” Women: Intersectionality of Hafu and Biracial females in Japan and the U.S.*

To date, I have interviewed 17 Japanese Hafu individuals, and 10 Black-white mixed individuals from the U.S. The grant has been used to pay the participants their compensation for taking time to talk about their experiences. It has also been used to travel to Japan so that I could conduct interviews with the Japanese participants.

Interviews were mainly conducted via Zoom where the participants and I spoke to them about their experiences of being a mixed individual in Japan/the U.S. The experiences spoke to me, as me being a mixed individual myself.

Once the interview was collected the data was transcribed, and then for the Japanese interviews they were translated into English. The translation was checked by a native Japanese speaker. For now, I have concluded my research on the Japanese mixed individuals, Hafu, through my Master’s thesis, and would like to sum up this portion of the research on this report.

The thesis contributed to extending social identity theory through a non-western lens, seeing how Japanese blood-line principal (Japanese individuals call non-fully Japanese individuals a Hafu, or Gaijin), dived deeper into how social identity theory could be extended into people who exist on the borders of ingroup/outgroup. What is interesting is that some who is mainly in the ingroup status wants to be an outgroup, admiring to be a Hafu.

The research also extended Socialization theory in which the participants being from Japan extended the theory from a Black-white mixed individual to a more complex view on how mixed individuals in non-US cultures learn about who they are within a society.

The interview also consisted of participants to let the researcher know about what experience helped them, and what advice they have for Hafu individuals/parents who are raising a Hafu child. The hope is with these practical application, future Hafu individuals, parents, and school education could make safe and comfortable spaces for Hafu individuals.

Moving forward, I am currently summing up the research on Black-white individuals in the U.S. and connecting the dots with the Hafu participants from Japan. I am thankful to ORWAC for allowing me to do this research and fund me to have a crucial experience in my career.

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## Meredith Neville-Shepard

### *Sporting Sexism: An Analysis of Arguments About Regulating Women's Athletic Attire*

Mirroring patterns in popular media coverage, sports scholarship tends to feature the activism of men athletes. Deviating from this trend, I sought to build on the work of researchers like Cheryl Cooky by analyzing sportswomen's advocacy. Thus, I conducted a critical-rhetorical analysis of discourse surrounding women's uniform activism, a topic that achieved media salience during the 2020 Olympic Games (held in 2021 due to COVID-19). First, leading into the games, the Norwegian women's handball team was fined €1,500 Euros during the European Beach Handball Championship for wearing spandex shorts instead of the required bikini bottoms. Second, although not technically breaking any regulations, the German women's gymnastics team vaulted into the public eye after bucking uniform tradition by donning full body unitards as opposed to leotards. I collected and examined a wide range of mediated rhetorical objects that covered these uniform controversies, including corporate news coverage, articles from non-profit news outlets, blogs, and social media posts.

Contributing to scholarship regarding the interrelationship of popular feminism and post-feminism, my analysis of sportswomen's uniform activism highlights how resistance that attempts to be both "popular" and "feminist" often buttresses post-feminism. Specifically, I argue that while sportswomen's critiques of bodily objectification and gender inequality gained media traction, a simultaneous foregrounding of the principle of personal choice functioned to subvert critical feminist politics. I propose the term "elastic feminism" as a metaphorical framework for understanding both the persuasive power and political hazards of wielding the rhetorically flexible logics of choice.

Elastic feminism is characterized by its comfort and pliability; because it permits nearly all choices to be feminist, it is seemingly accommodating and easy to throw on when it suits the mood. Accordingly, elastic feminism is so amorphous that it fails to uphold serious structural critiques (and instead places personal responsibility onto the neoliberal subject). In the case of women's athletic uniforms, for instance, both revealing and modest outfit choices were deemed valid, yet media coverage also insinuated that, if individual women were permitted to make more modest uniform choices, then they themselves could help stem the tide of objectification and sexual abuse in their sports. Paradoxical to its flexible nature, elastic feminism is simultaneously restrictive in that it only recognizes and benefits certain women (primarily those who fit normative Western beauty ideals). For instance, although the Norwegian women's beach handball team and the German women's gymnastics team gained visibility and social capital by advocating for more modest attire options, Muslim sportswomen's efforts to change uniform regulations have been routinely belittled or ignored. Ultimately then, elastic feminism offers a synthetic that can feel like inclusive feminism but instead reprioritizes those who already hold considerable currency within popular feminist economies of visibility.

I would like to sincerely thank OFRGC for supporting my research as well as the 2022 Research Grant Committee for their service in reviewing my grant application. The manuscript containing the research summarized above is currently under review for journal publication. In

the meantime, if any OFRGC members are interested in hearing more about this essay (which is now entitled, "Uniform Choices: Elastic Feminism and the Rhetoric of the 2020 Olympic 'Pantywar'") it has been accepted for presentation at the 2023 National Communication Association Conference and will appear during the panel, "Top Papers in Feminist and Gender Studies Division."

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### Yin Yang

#### *Postpositivist Approach to Gender Inequality in Feminist Media and Communication Studies: A 10-Year Review*

Since June 2022, I have recruited and trained two coders (graduate students in communication), with whom I have completed the first stage of the project. That is, we have coded all research articles published in two journals *Feminist Media Studies* and *Women's Studies in Communication* during 2011 and 2020, as to (a) whether each of the articles reported quantitative, qualitative, or mixed-methods research and (b) what specific methods were used in those quantitative and mixed-methods studies. To calculate the intercoder reliability, each article was coded by two of the three coders (the two coders and myself). The intercoder reliability was high (95.87%). For the research articles that two coders had coded differently, we resolved the disagreement by thorough discussion.

After this stage, we obtained a sample of research articles employing quantitative methods, including quantitative and mixed-methods studies (N = 71). Among these 71 papers, the majority used mixed methods (n = 57), with others (n = 14) using quantitative methods only. For the mixed-methods studies, quantitative methods were used to (a) identify broad patterns of interactions/texts/visuals and provide a fundamental overview for subsequent qualitative analyses; (b) provide contextual information for qualitative content analyses; (c) confirm the tendencies from field observations. When quantitative methods were used alone, the most frequent method was quantitative content analysis, often with a focus on over-time trends (n = 9), with others using survey (n = 2), network analysis (n = 1), or secondary data (n = 2).

Currently, we are at the second stage – close reading, guided by the framework of quantitative criticalism (Stage, 2007) and critical media effects (Scharer & Ramasubramanian, 2021). We are looking at whether and how the studies in our sample (a) attended to intersectionality, power, context, and agency; (b) illustrated any explicit or hidden "justice consciousness," making space for social justice and alternative knowledge structures; (c) revealed inequalities and identified factors that led to systematic issues; (d) questioned the existing models, measures, and analytic practices to better describe experiences of those who have not been adequately represented.

We have presented some preliminary findings (mostly from the first stage) at the annual meeting of the National Communication Association in November 2022. We are looking forward to completing this research project soon. We sincerely thank you for providing this research grant, which has helped my project move forward.

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## Raka Shome

*Cleansing the Nation: Hindu Nationalism and the Gender Politics of the Clean India Campaign*

I used the funds in summer 2022 to travel to India for my research. I was able to consult many newspapers and media items in India that are not available here in the US. Being able to travel to India was very helpful.

I now have a contract from Duke University Press and the full manuscript is due to publisher at the end of this year.

The funds from ORWAC were very helpful in enabling me to access materials that were crucial for this book.

I will acknowledge ORWAC in my book when it is published hopefully next year 2024

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Newsletter produced by Lore/tta LeMaster, OFRCG Vice President  
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