

Raewyn Connell

Nordic feminist thought in a changing world gender order

In this address I discuss the significance of modern feminist thought and practice in the Nordic countries, via recent attempts to understand gender on a world scale. Feminist thought and action has arisen in many different forms and at many times in history. In the last 500 years, however, gender orders across most of the world have been re-shaped by imperialism and the global economy it created. Empire further created a highly unequal global economy of knowledge, in which contemporary gender studies is now embedded. Nordic feminism created one of the most effective women's movements in any region, gained remarkable political influence locally, pioneered important strategies internationally, and developed valuable concepts. However the world in which Nordic feminism emerged has been changing. The transnational revival of corporate power, the dismantling of subsistence economies and welfare states, the growth of stark economic inequalities, the resurgence of authoritarian nationalism, and the new anti-feminist and anti-gender campaigns, together amount to a re-structuring and renewal of patriarchy on a global scale. Yet as these changes produce deepening environmental crisis and unending violence, there has never been greater need for transition to a sustainable, gender-equal world. It becomes necessary to re-think the forms of political action, the shape of feminist theory, the social bases for a politics of liberation, and the future workforce for gender research. These issues need to be thought on a world scale as well as locally, and in this work, some of the distinctive strengths of Nordic feminism and gender research may be valuable far beyond this region.



Bio

Raewyn Connell is Professor Emerita, University of Sydney, and Life Member of the National Tertiary Education Union. She has taught in several countries and is a widely-cited sociological researcher, the author of *Ruling Class Ruling Culture*, *Gender & Power*, *Masculinities*, and *Southern Theory*, and co-author of *Class Structure in Australian History* and *Making the Difference*. Her recent books include *The Good University* and the co-authored *Knowledge & Global Power*. Her work has been translated into twenty-two languages. Raewyn has been active in the labour movement, and in work for gender equality and peace. Details at www.raewynconnell.net and Twitter @raewynconnell.