

**Susannah Howard. “Systemic Discrimination and Women’s Human Rights:
*Formulating Effective Remedies for States’ Responsibility to Protect Women from
Domestic*”**

Abstract

A central difficulty in the project of enhancing the international protection of women’s human rights is the continued widespread and systemic discrimination women face at the hands of private, non-state actors. While states may be found responsible for failing to protect individuals and failing to provide redress for such harms, the remedies available are extremely limited in their ability to address the systemic inequality that infringes women’s enjoyment of their internationally protected human rights. Whereas many human rights violations may be systemic in the sense that they are widespread within a particular state, or can be seen to result from the structure of particular institutions, they do not frequently have to contend with claims that they result from practices and beliefs embedded within a particular culture. Violations of women’s human rights are often systemic not only for the foregoing reasons, but are also systemic in the sense that they are reinforced by cultural beliefs and practices that legitimize women’s inequality. The author attempts to provide a starting point for how to think about creative remedies for violations of women’s human rights, arguing that where cultural norms implicitly or explicitly endorse women’s inequality, remedies for violations of women’s human rights that stem from this inequality but that do not address the basis for it, will remain shallow at best. States’ failure to provide adequate recourse for women who experience domestic violence is used as an example to anchor the discussion on developing remedies that can effectively address and unravel cultural norms that reinforce the prevalence of violence against women.