

01



# FGM

## AN ANTHROPOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

**Course**

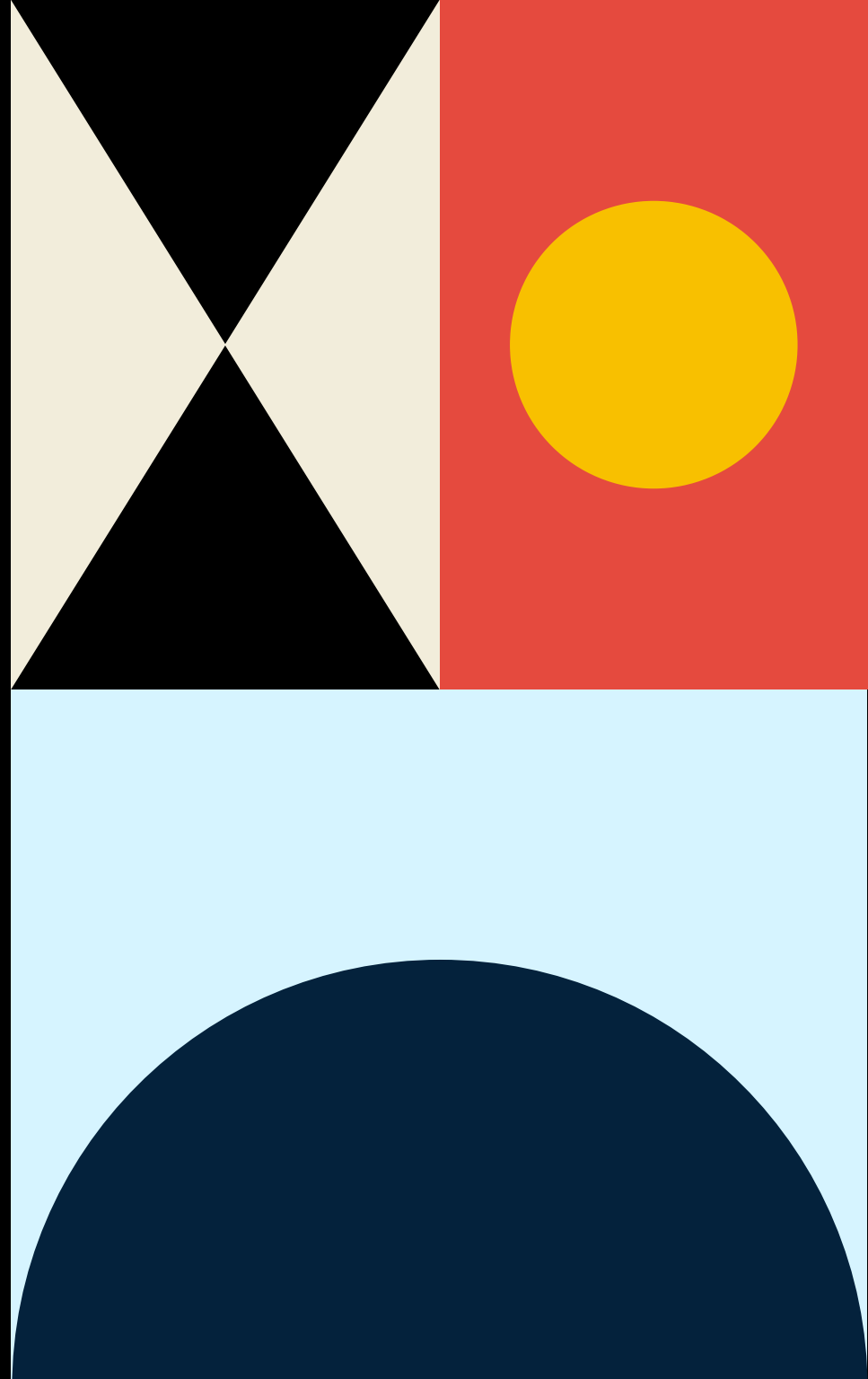
Development  
Anthropology

**Professor**

Carolina  
Boldoni

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MA in Diplomacy and International  
Cooperation, 2020-2021



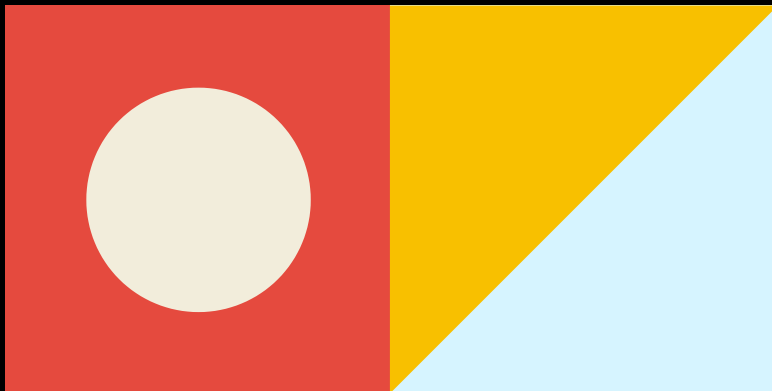
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# WELCOME TO TODAY'S CLASS!

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Today's Agenda



- 01 FGM and WHO
- 02 MUTILATIONS VS MODIFICATIONS
- 03 GENITALS' CULTURAL CONSTRUCTION
- 04 A CASE STUDY FROM NORWAY
- 05 AGAINST CULTURAL DETERMINISM
- 06 CONCLUSION

**03**



# **UNDERSTANDING THE LESSON**

**Questioning the FGM definition**

**Understanding how anthropology can be  
helpful in the understanding of local  
meanings**

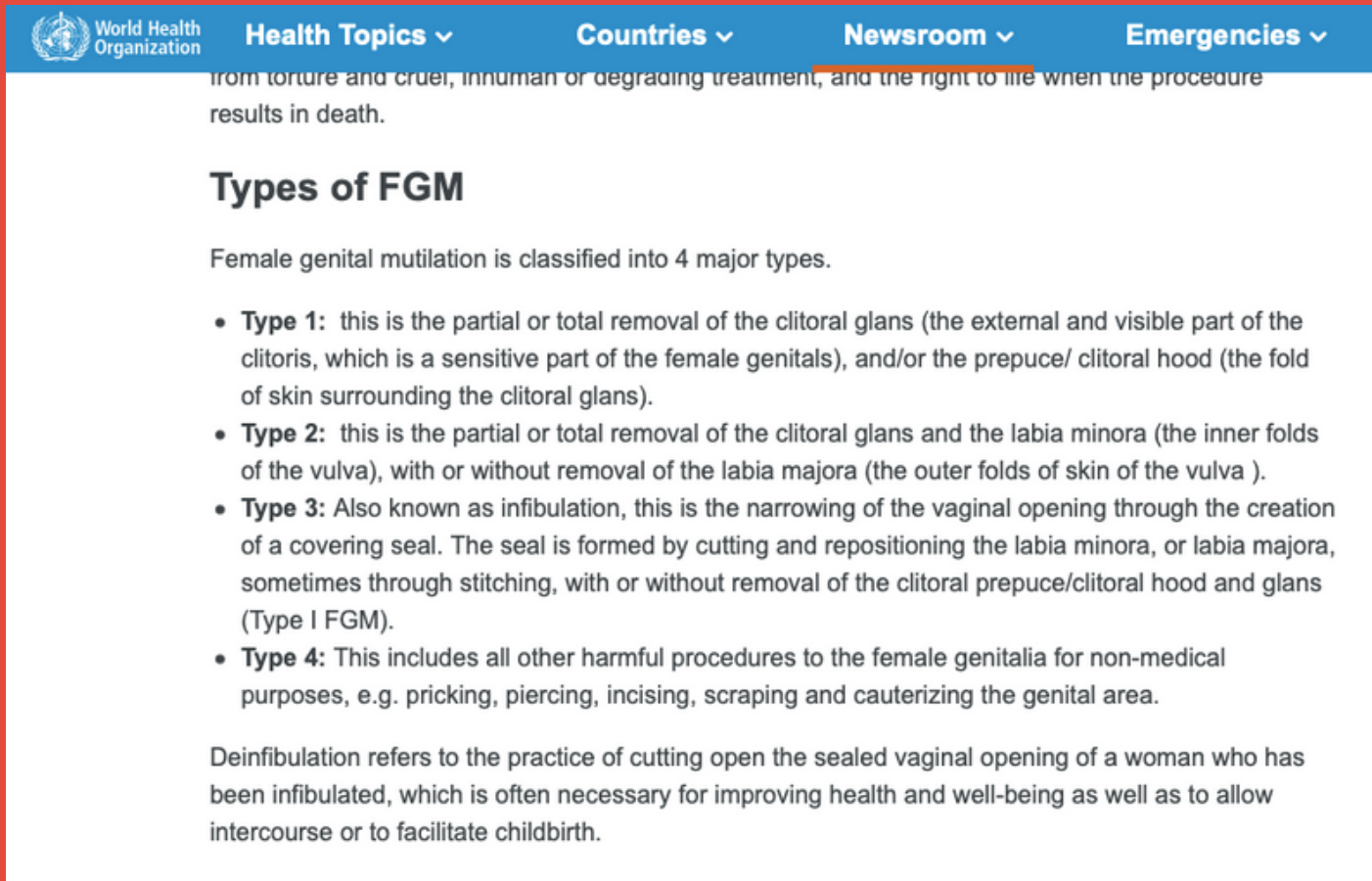
**Going beyond the  
WHO/humanitarian/Human Rights'  
definition of the FGM**



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# WHO'S FMG TYPOLOGICAL CLASSIFICATIONS



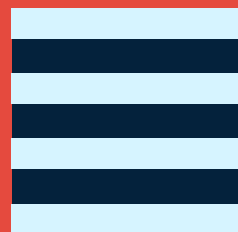
from torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment, and the right to life when the procedure results in death.

## Types of FGM

Female genital mutilation is classified into 4 major types.

- **Type 1:** this is the partial or total removal of the clitoral glans (the external and visible part of the clitoris, which is a sensitive part of the female genitals), and/or the prepuce/ clitoral hood (the fold of skin surrounding the clitoral glans).
- **Type 2:** this is the partial or total removal of the clitoral glans and the labia minora (the inner folds of the vulva), with or without removal of the labia majora (the outer folds of skin of the vulva ).
- **Type 3:** Also known as infibulation, this is the narrowing of the vaginal opening through the creation of a covering seal. The seal is formed by cutting and repositioning the labia minora, or labia majora, sometimes through stitching, with or without removal of the clitoral prepuce/clitoral hood and glans (Type I FGM).
- **Type 4:** This includes all other harmful procedures to the female genitalia for non-medical purposes, e.g. pricking, piercing, incising, scraping and cauterizing the genital area.

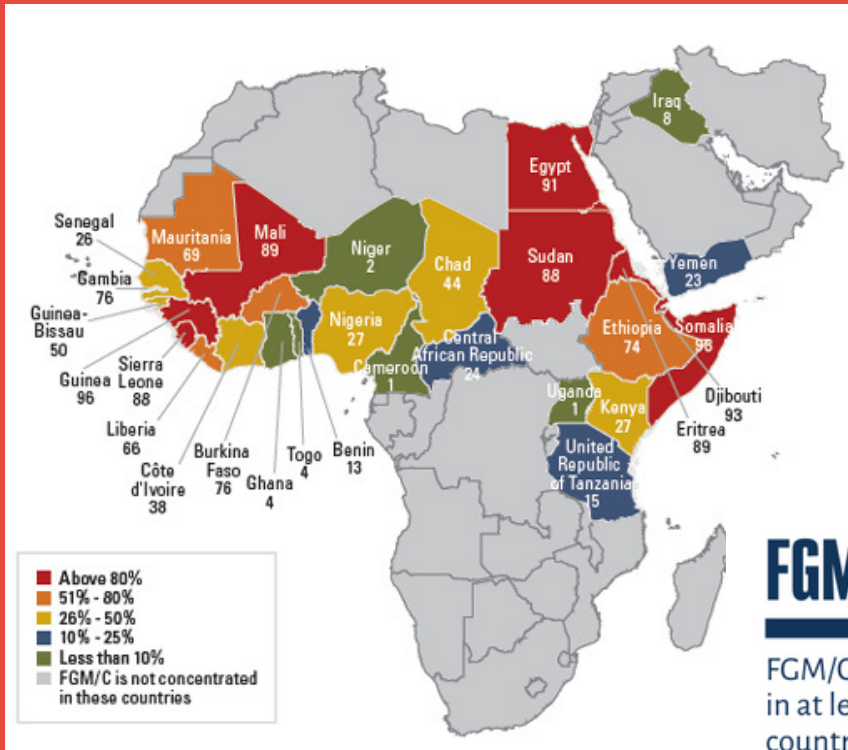
Deinfibulation refers to the practice of cutting open the sealed vaginal opening of a woman who has been infibulated, which is often necessary for improving health and well-being as well as to allow intercourse or to facilitate childbirth.



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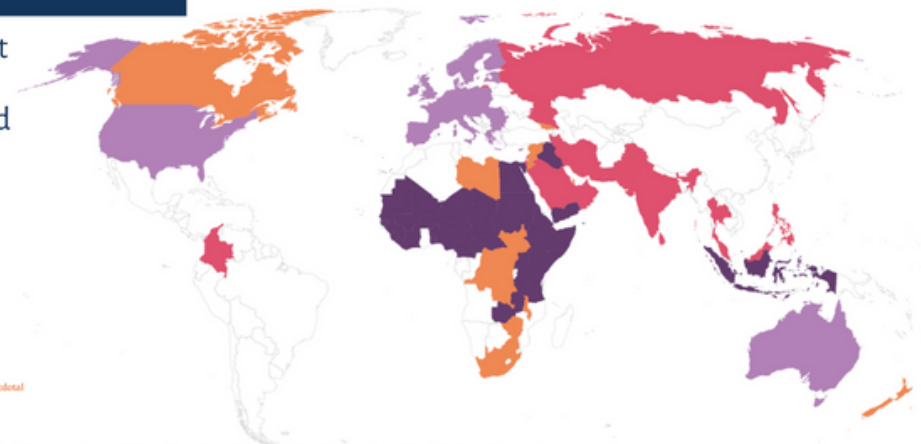
# FMG'S INFOGRAPHICS



## FGM/C IS GLOBAL

FGM/C is present in at least 92 countries around the world.

- CATEGORY 1** Countries with nationally representative surveys on FGM/C
- CATEGORY 2** Countries with indirect estimates on FGM/C
- CATEGORY 3** Countries with small-scale studies on FGM/C
- CATEGORY 4** Countries where media reports and anecdotal evidence refer to occurrence of FGM/C

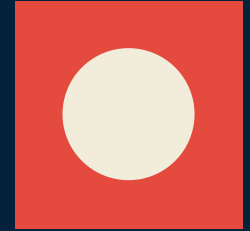


Source: FGM/C: A Call For A Global Response (2020) Equality Now, End FGM EU Network, US End FGM/C Network

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# QUESTIONING



## Question 01

Why mutilations?

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## Question 02

Why reductive modifications/alterations together with expansive modifications/alterations?

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## Question 03

Why only Africa/the Southern emishpere?

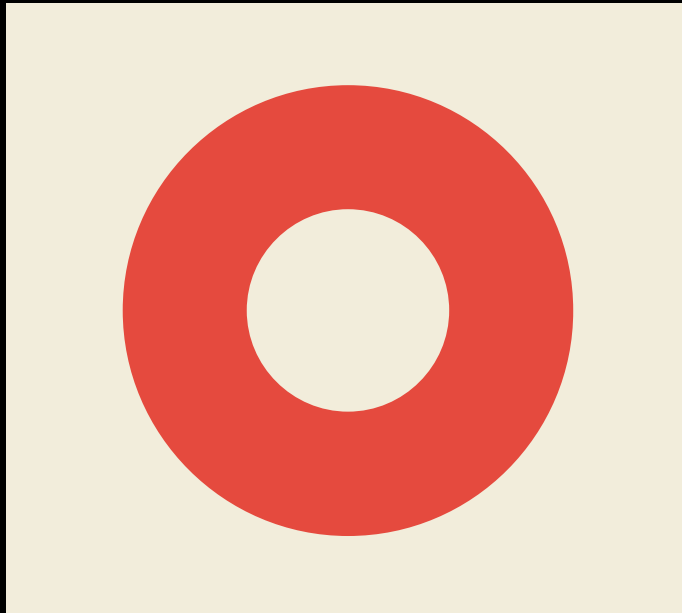
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# LET'S DISCUSS AND ANALYZE



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## Question

- Mutilations VS modifications
- Judgmental and punishing attitude
- Ethnocentric gaze

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## Question

- Reductive VS expansive modifications
- Beauty standards
- Body modifications

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## Question

Double standards implied

- Men circumcisions VS feminine mutilations?
- Vaginoplasty and Vaginal Rejuvenation VS Mutilations

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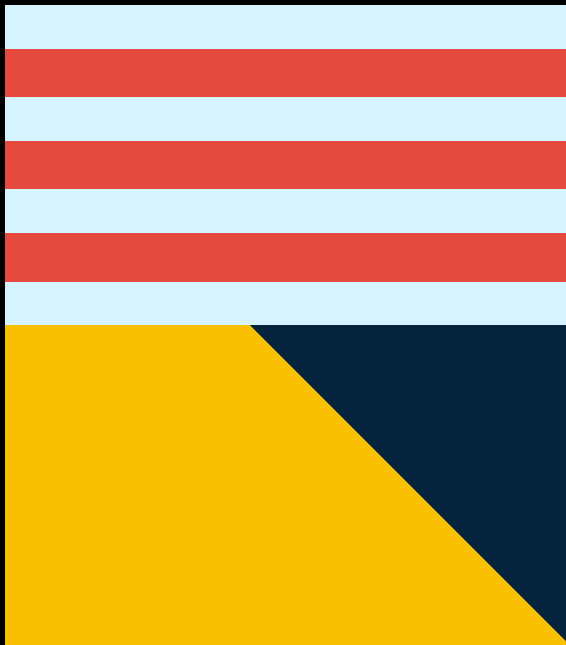
# CULTURAL CONSTRUCTION OF THE GENITALS



- Beauty standards
- Cultural values
- Local cosmologies



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## A CASE STUDY FROM NORWAY

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R. Elise B. Johansen 2006. "Care for infibulated women giving birth in Norway: an anthropological analysis on health workers' management of a medically and culturally unfamiliar issue". *Medical Anthropology Quarterly*, 20(4): 516-544.

- Health care personnel's (mis)communication with infibulated women
- Naturalization of the body and taken for granted values
- De-infibulation and re-infibulation

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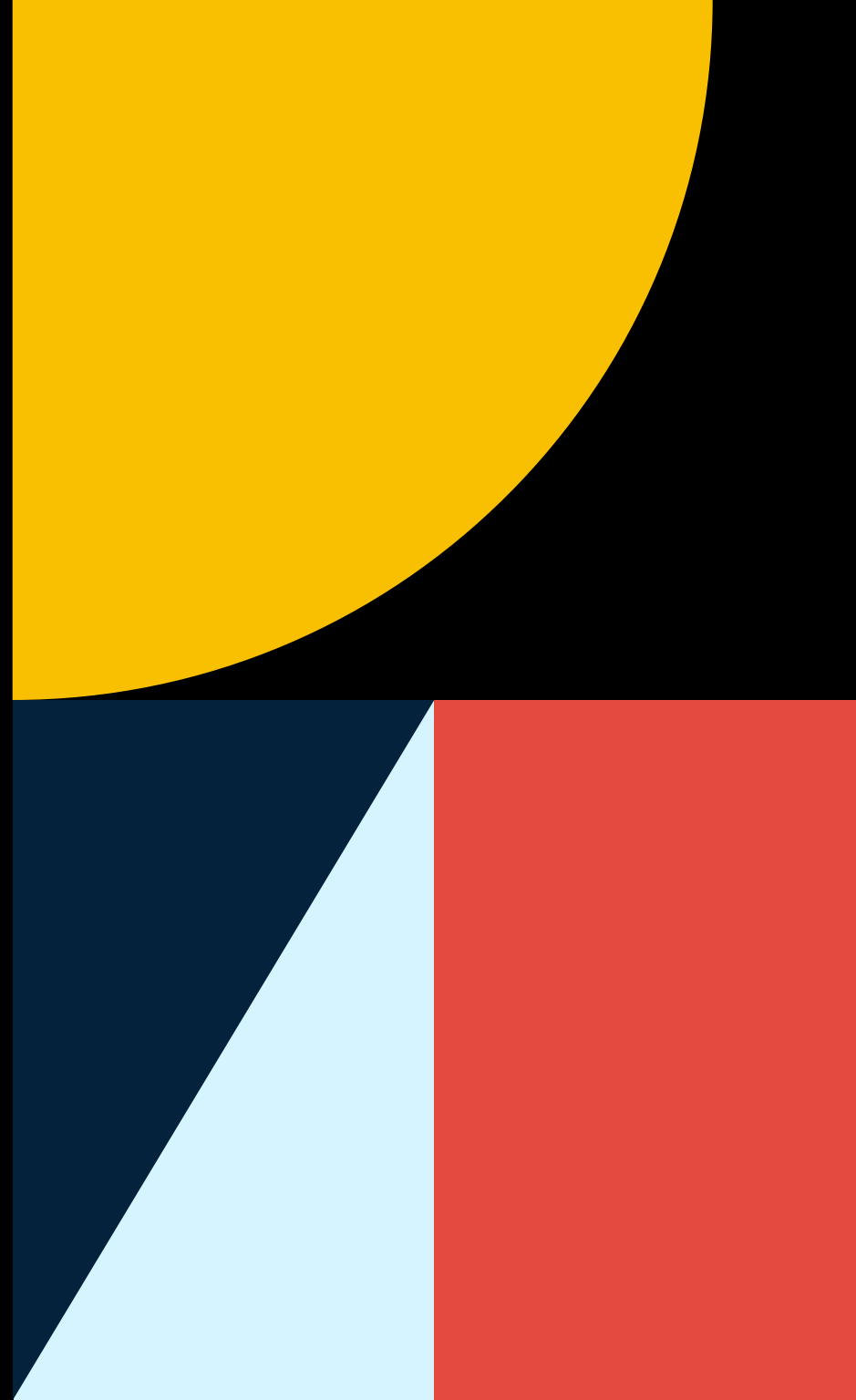
# **CULTURE**

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CULTURAL COMPREHENSION AND  
APPRECIATION

VS

CULTURAL DETERMINISM



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## REFERENCES



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Hilde Atalanta, *The Vulva Gallery*, progetto teso alla celebrazione della diversità delle vulve <https://www.thevulgagallery.com/webshop/the-book>.

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Michela Fusaschi 2012. *I segni sul corpo. Per un'antropologia delle modificazioni dei genitali femminili*, Torino: Bollati Boringhieri. trailer, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VGJecGxmVxg>.

Carla Pasquinelli 2000 (ed.) *Per un'antropologia delle mutilazioni genitali femminili. Una ricerca in Italia*. Roma: AIDOS (Associazione Italiana Donne per lo Sviluppo).