Fifth International Conference on Women & Gender Studies 2018

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Gender and Militarization

Prof. Kana Takamatsu,

International Christian University, Japan

Abstract

This study explores the influence and causal relationship of the situation of gender equality and "militarization." "Militarization" is determined in here is the process how far states/societies support military and aggressive security and foreign policy. This study will use various indicators for grasping the situation of gender equality and "militarization." Logistic regression test is conducted over the period of 1993–2007 in order to see if past quantitative analysis indications—such as the feminist argument that patriarchal societies propagate war and that gender equality suppresses militarization—were still applicable if approached through different indices. I used the term "militarization" to mean either the presence or absence of military actions during the study period. As a result of this analysis, it appears that the national degree of gender equality does influence national militarization. In countries with high female participation in labor and higher education, there is a stronger likelihood that militarization will be suppressed. Within the scope of the indices used in this study, has the "gender equality peace effect" been confirmed. It must be noted that women are not bringing about a "peace effect", gender equal society, non-exclusionary societies, suppress militaristic behavior of the nations.

1. Introduction

This study intends to examine the effect of national gender equality on the militarization of the nation. In the past, various findings have been accumulated about the role a played by a nation’s economic environment in its military actions. For example, it has been highlighted that armed conflict between nations can be suppressed through the intensification of a democratic system of government and mutually beneficial economic ties with foreign countries along with participation in the international system (Oneal & Russet, 1997 pp. 34-37). Alternatively, it has been asserted that economically vital trade relations limit conflict between two countries (Oneal, Russet & Berbaum, 2003, pp. 387-389). It has been concluded from observations of the relation of international and internal armed conflict with the socioeconomic environment that both economic development and democracy are essential for the realization of peace (Herge, 2014).

In addition, discussions have been conducted about the effects of fairness within a nation on its military activity. As an illustration, countries accepting unfair treatment of ethnic minorities within their own borders show a higher likelihood of taking action, including the use of the military force or initially resorting to military action (Caprioli & Trumbore, 2003, pp. 16-17). Similarly, countries experiencing internal disputes and uprisings either tend to take action that includes the use of the military or initially resort to using the military in the first instance (Trumbore, 2003, pp. 196-197).

These studies highlight the importance of developing a democratic social environment and amicable, economically interdependent relations with foreign countries to deter armed conflict, taking military action and relying on military means or other forms of “militarization.” A social environment that respects individuals and groups such as ethnic minorities, namely, a society in which social fairness is upheld, has a notably different effect and not merely as a democratic social environment as defined in an institutional sense. This brings us to the questions that this study will address: Does the degree of actualization of gender equality play a role in the militarization of a nation? Furthermore, what effect does move toward gender equality have on the realization of peace?

2. Analytical Framework and Establishment of a Working Hypothesis

1) Research Design

In this study, the meaning of “militarization” will not be limited to only conducting wars and will include threats of military action and a broad range of conduct where the military is used. Wide-ranging factors could lend either a restrictive or an acceleratory influence on a nation’s military action, including the social environment of gender. As noted in the introduction, democratization and experiences of internal wars and social fairness are all examples of this. Accordingly, in this study, I will include a study of other factors as control variables. Multiple factors can be presumed to affect militarization;
however, this study will primarily focus on the Caprioli analytical model (Caprioli, 2000) and will compile other indices used in earlier studies to select other variables. I will also add variables on the basis of indices that could be important but have been neglected in the past. In addition, I will explain the indices used as variables and the data entry method in the next section.

2) Variables and Data

(Table 1 Variables and Data)

Dependent Variables
The dependent variable of this study, “militarization,” carries the meaning of a broad range of interventions where the military is used; however, it is difficult to assess a level of “militarization,” and this assessment could be approached from various perspectives. For example, military expenses, the use of the military as a method of problem solving, and military decisions and discussions have been proposed as assessment criteria for “militarization” (Reardon, 1996 & 1985, p.14). Other possibilities are the presence of a military draft as a clue for understanding the degree of perceived familiarity and type of military structure, the extent of the nation’s military alliances, or export of weapons, all of which provide clues for gauging “militarization.” Caprioli’s studies (1) perceive militarization as the use of violence on the international stage and the actions taken in conflicts between nations and (2) set the “Correlates of War (COW) Project’s” MID (Militarized Interstate Dispute) data as its dependent variable. These data classify into five sections related to the actions of a nation dealing with a dispute with a foreign country: 1. no military action; 2. threats of use of force; 3. deployment of force; 4. use of force; and 5. a state of war. Prior research has studied the level of militarization and its relationship with gender equality.

In this study, I will also use COW’s MID data (v.4.1) (Sarkees & Wayman, 2010). Among levels 1–5, levels 2–5 are applicable when any degree of military action is taken, and Level 1 is applicable to cases where no military-related actions are taken. Nevertheless, it must be noted that the “no military action” in this data signifies a situation where tension exists between two countries—one takes military action and the other does not. In other words, these data do not reflect cases where tensions occur but both parties come to a non-military solution. The most important point of this study is finding whether the “military” is used as means for conflict resolution, regardless of the level. Issues where both parties are not militarized are not inconsequential (Jones, Bremer & Singer, 1996); however, for this study, I consider it necessary to also study countries for which data are not included during the study period. The dependent variable of “militarization” is simply required in order to determine the presence of actions related to the military during the timespan of the study. Accordingly, in addition to the MID 1–5 index, I added countries for which the MID would not be applicable as a 0 index. I coded the cases in which 0 and 1 are applicable as “0. Non-militarization.” And those in which 2–5 were applicable were coded as “1. Militarization.”

Explanatory Variable
Gender Equality
There are various indices for measuring situations related to gender. Caprioli’s research uses the total fertility rate as an index of gender equality, the proportion of women who occupy a parliament/national assembly and have voting rights as an index of political gender equality, and the proportion of the workforce occupied by women as an index of economic gender equality. In other studies, the proportions of women in the labor market and the total fertility rate have been scored and the number of female leaders has been made into indices (Caprioli, 2003). To assess gender parity, Melander uses national-level leadership, the percentage of women in a parliament, and the percentage of women who have received higher education (compared to men and aged 25 years or older) (Melander, 2005). Each of these indices have been adopted because the proportion of women in the labor market indicates the economic equality of women, and the fertility rate shows the societal, political, and economic aspect of women’s conditions (Caprioli, 2003, p. 201). Indices measuring leadership by women show the extent of understanding that the parliament/national assembly (members) have for the importance of gender equality (Melander, 2005, p. 699). Additionally, the rate of women receiving higher education reflects the society’s traditional gender prototypes and gender roles (Melander, 2005, p. 699). Referencing these previous studies, in this study, I will employ the total fertility ratio, the proportion of female
parliament/national assembly members, the gender parity of higher education, and the proportion of women who occupy the labor market as means to measure gender equality.\textsuperscript{ii}

Total Fertility Ratio
The total fertility rate is the average number of children born from one woman (ages: 15–49 years); it is considered an index associated with female empowerment (Sen, 1993).

Proportion of Parliament Occupied by Women
The proportion of parliament occupied by women is important for understanding to what extent are women’s opinions reflected in the policymaking process of a nation. In recent years, many countries have introduced initiatives such as quota systems; however, these initiatives show the importance of having an open parliament (Dahlerup, 2006). The data used here shows the proportion of seats in lower houses or in single-house parliamentary systems occupied by women.

Higher Education (Gender Parity)
The higher education gender parity index presents the gender differential in higher education. If the value is lower than 1, women’s opportunities for higher education are disadvantageous; if the value is higher than 1, men’s opportunities for higher education are disadvantageous. Women’s acquisition of higher education has been shown to have economic effects (Goldin, Katz & Kuziemko, 2006, p. 153) as well as to have an influence on factors such as life choices. Alongside the total fertility rate, women’s higher education acquisition is often used as an index to measure the extent of female empowerment.

Proportion of the Labor Market Occupied by Women
The proportion of the labor market occupied by women presents the percentage of working women (in productive activities or service activities) aged 15 years or older. Certainly, the involvement of women in the labor market provides insight into women’s participation in society; however, when thinking about gender equality, differences in income and treatment must be considered. However, due to data limitations, the proportion of the labor market occupied by women is used as an index to understand the extent of women’s participation in economic activities.

Gender Inequality Index
Throughout this study, I would like to consider additional index numbers calculated from a number of indicators. The Gender Inequality Index (GII) is an index presented by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), which rates countries on all aspects of gender inequality with a 0–1 range. This index is calculated from the standpoints of reproductive health (maternal mortality rate and birthrate per 1,000 women aged 15–19 years), empowerment (percentage of legislative body seats by gender and attainment of secondary/higher education [by gender]), and participation in the labor market (ratio of women who work). The GII is named the “Gender Inequality Index” but it shows the extent to which human development is hampered by gender inequality. I have used this index because it permits a comprehensive understanding of the socioeconomic environment surrounding gender and as it is an internationally-recognized index, the arbitrariness of selecting indices to use as variables can be avoided. In addition to the GII, there are other sources such as the Global Gender Gap Index, published by the World Economic Forum, which inclusively offers insight into the state of gender inequality but has no data prior to 2011 and thus cannot be used in this study. I have obtained data from the UNDP’s website.\textsuperscript{iii} Throughout this study, I was able to obtain data from 1995, 2000, and 2005, and I will use the averages from these three years as the baseline data.

In this study, I have excluded female leadership and voting rights that have been examined in previous research. In some countries, there are instances of daughters and wives of charismatic leaders taking over the roles of their male predecessors through a familial network (Giskin, 2002); this should not be perceived as the active elevation of women. There have also been cases, in predominately male parliaments, where female leaders act in an even more authoritarian manner than their male counterparts in order to achieve success (Rhodes & Hart, 2014, pp. 321–322). Female leadership is extremely diverse, which makes it difficult to assess.
Previous research has assumed that the longer the period for which women have voting rights, the stronger their influence; thus, I have added indices of female voting rights. We must, however, be cautious when considering the relation between female voting rights and national policies, such as, in this study, militarization. Further qualitative research is required for data on which candidates’ women vote for and the frequency of these candidates being elected; this study’s use of such data is therefore limited.

Control Variables
Besides the explanatory variables, I have added as control variables those indices that could affect national militarization.

Democratization
As previously stated, there is a relation between democratization and militarization and thus the state of democratization must be added as an explanatory variable. I use the Integrated Network for Societal Conflict Research’s Polity IV Project Index, Polity2, to measure democratization status. This index is scored on the basis of a democracy index and a despotism index. The score is assessed on a scale ranging from −10, expressing undemocratization, to 10, expressing democratization. From the standpoint of those engaged in gender studies, “democratization” is understood to include gender equality and social equality. However, the Polity2 score focuses on institutional openness and therefore it must be considered separately from indices representing gender equality.

Weapons Exports
Regulatory initiatives for the realization of peace are being conducted in the field of arms trading. Countries of all economic scales and political systems export weapons, including not only countries selling used weapons to foreign countries and organizations but also countries with prominent munitions industries. In cases of countries with munitions industries, or in cases of countries engaged in arms exports, do these factors influence their military actions? These data have been obtained from the Arms Transfers Database of the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI). Influence was calculated with the trend indicator values (TIV; in units of millions), which are compiled by SIPRI. Values of 0.5 (million) or less are listed as 0 but to distinguish these from countries with no weapons exports, I have integrated all these countries with such exports as 0.5. Previous studies have not considered weapons exports but there are many cases where military alliances are included in the control variables. The number of military alliances has a meaningful significance to a country’s foreign military actions (Caprioli, 2000). I have used the COW Formal Interstate Alliance Dataset, 1816-2012 (Version 4; Gibler, 2009) to research this. I suspected possible multicollinearity between military alliances and weapons exports and therefore decided to not use military alliances as a variable for this study.

Internal Conflicts
Scholars have suggested that internal conflicts, such as ethnic disputes, are related to external military use (Trumbore, 2003, pp. 196–197). In this study, I add a control variable for internal conflicts, using COW’s War Data, 1816–2007 (v. 4.0; Sarkees & Wayman, 2010).

Economic Scale
Previous research has also taken economic development into consideration (Caprioli, 2000; Caprioli, 2003; Melander, 2005). A relation between a nation’s economic status and conflicts—such as nations with smaller economies experiencing more conflicts—has been given as the basis for adding an index of the degree of economic development (Maoz & Russet, 1993, pp. 636-637). In this study, I use the Penn World Trade (6.3) per capita GDP (constant 2005, chain index; Houston, Summers, & Aten, 2009).

3. Analysis
1) Theory and Logistic Regression
This study examines the impact of the degree of national gender equality actualization on militarization. I have developed the tentative hypotheses below.
Hypothesis 1: Countries where women are highly involved in national decision-making tend to avoid taking external military actions (Model 1).

Hypothesis 2: Countries with high female participation in economic activities tend to avoid taking external military actions (Model 2).

Hypothesis 3: Countries where the total fertility rate is low (i.e., countries where women are empowered) tend to avoid taking external military actions (Model 3).

Hypothesis 4: Countries where the male/female higher education participation differential is low (i.e., countries where women are empowered) tend to avoid taking external military actions (Model 4).

Hypothesis 5: Countries where human development is not hampered by gender inequality tend to avoid taking external military actions (Model 5).

2) Logistic Regression Results

In this study, I conducted a logistic regression using the stepwise model. I set the level of significance at p < 0.05 in testing the statistical hypothesis. The results are shown in Table 2 (Table 2 Logistic Regression Results).

According to the regression analysis, Models 2, 3, 4, and 5 showed significant results. The proportion of the workforce occupied by women, gender empowerment as measured by the total fertility rate, gender parity in higher education, and gender inequality influence national behavior by prompting the avoidance of external military actions. Countries with the active involvement of women in labor and higher education, where empowerment is facilitated, and inequality has been corrected, tend to be cautious about foreign action involving the military.

Previous research, while using different dependent variables, showed the proportion of parliamentary seats occupied by women—namely, the involvement of women in the national policymaking process—as having a significant effect. However, that did not appear in this analysis. There was no effect from the involvement of women in the setting where one would most likely expect an influence on external military actions. How can we come to terms with this?

First, regardless of the gender makeup of the parliament, we cannot exclude the possibility that it does not influence national military action or that it plays a limited role in foreign affairs to begin with. However, the parliament’s composition should be examined more closely. As shown in the descriptive statistics, the country with the largest proportion of women in parliament is also the closest to parity, with around 49% females, but the average percentage of women in parliaments is very low at around 13.7%. It has been said that the “critical mass” needed to influence policymaking is 30% (Kanter, 1977; Dahlerup, 2006). The percentage of women generally falls short of this mark. In predominately male parliaments, it is difficult to express opposing views, and female members follow the lead of the main actors in the existing political environment (Childs & Krook, 2006, pp. 23–25). It might be necessary to consider the scale of women’s effect on political policy; in other words, there is a low probability that female members of parliaments or groups with other attributes that account for less than 30% of the whole exert an influence in policymaking. Because these conditions have not been met during the period of study, the effect of gender equality in parliament has been unable to analyze, which therefore requires further qualitative analysis.

I have obtained the results described below by studying the following control variables: weapons exports, economic scale, democratization, and internal conflicts. First, weapons exports were significant in every model, demonstrating that the export of weapons has an influence on a country taking external military action. This includes various cases of weapons exports, including countries with largescale exports and prominent domestic munitions industries. Regarding the military actions of countries with prominent munitions industries, further consideration is needed for issues such as the industry’s political influence and people’s feeling of closeness to the military through the munitions industry.

Democratization was significant in all models, which suggested that it has an influence on a nation’s avoidance of taking external military action. With the development of a nation’s democratization, the suppression of external military action can be observed, which accords with the conclusions of previous research. Similarly, internal conflicts also demonstrated a significant effect, matching the indications of previous research; countries with internal conflicts show a higher likelihood of taking external military action. The economic scale, however, had a significant relation in only four of the models. In other words, the economic scale does not always influence a country’s external military actions. When
considered against the fact that other factors influence military action more, the view that poverty and national economic stagnation provide a hotbed for violence and arms is not completely accurate.

4. Conclusions and Future Issues
This study examined the effect of the degree of national gender equality actualization on militarization. I conducted a study using logistic regression over the period of 1993–2007 in order to see if past quantitative analysis indications—such as the feminist argument that patriarchal societies propagate war and that gender equality suppresses militarization—were still applicable if approached through different indices. I used the term “militarization” to mean either the presence or absence of military actions during the study period (not only the state of conflict but also threats of military use).

As a result of this analysis, it appears that the national degree of gender equality actualization does influence national militarization. In countries with high female participation in labor and higher education (i.e., in societies tending to have total participation and societies where human development-hampering gender inequality has been corrected), there is a stronger likelihood that militarization will be suppressed. Within the scope of the indices used in this study, has the “gender equality peace effect” been confirmed? It must be noted that women are not bringing about a “peace effect.” Based on the findings of a series of studies on national socioeconomic conditions and military action, the development of non-exclusionary societies that value diversity may be the most secure process for the realization of peace.

This study reaches its conclusion while excluding gender equality in the parliament. As noted above, further study needs to be done on reaching the “critical mass” state in parliaments. Nonetheless, selecting the data to be used as an alternative for these indices is extremely difficult, as I noted regarding the issues inherent in the female leadership and voting rights indices, which were excluded from this study. Additionally, the number of observable countries markedly decreases if one only takes into consideration countries with parliaments with 30% or more female members, which limits the applicability of the study. Future topics to address include the selection and analysis methods necessary to overcome these issues. One final issue is the definition of “militarization”; Here, I set the dependent variable as the presence of external military actions occurring during the period of the study, but an index of a country’s militarization could be set in various ways. As a result, it is necessary to study the gender equality peace effect from different aspects, using a broad range of indices.

### Table 1 Variables and Data

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<td>Militarization</td>
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Upper Row : Coef. Lower Row : Std. Err

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

**Table 2 Logistic Regression Results**

**Reference**


• Heston, A., Summers, R., and Bettina, A. [2009], *Penn World Table Version 6.3*, Center for International Comparisons of Production, Income and Prices at the University of Pennsylvania.


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Women’s Decision Making for Accessing Eye Health Care in Bangladesh: Are Men Involved?

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Abstract:
This qualitative study explores the eye health sector of Bangladesh using the lens of ‘gender’. The study aimed to identify the factors which influence women’s decision making in accessing eye health care and if men had any direct or indirect contribution to it. This was achieved through a qualitative study (based on purposive and snowball sampling) and participants included professionals working in the eye health sector of Bangladesh. Five main factors were identified using “thematic analyses” of which “Patriarchal Influence” was found to be the strongest factor. Whether it was freedom to spend money or going to service centers to seek health care, patriarchy was found to have a major influence on women’s decision-making power and hence their health. This study has attempted to achieve a greater understanding about the concepts of gender equality and its link with eye health. The findings can add extensive perception on current gender inequality observed in a developing nation’s health care system. Though a gender focused study, the findings related to patriarchy and reluctance to seek health care can be used for enriching psychological theories examining women’s health seeking behavior. The findings could also be useful for developing contemporary feminist theories explaining women’s decision making about their health. This study offers interesting insights to power relation theories and their impact on women via traditional health systems.

Key words: gender, patriarchy, access to health care, decision-making

Introduction

“We have common social attitude that women should always get less priority not only in getting eye care but also in all social services. Male people of the family hold the decision-making power and they are reluctant to bring women and girls under eye care services as they are not earning members of the families.”

-Dr M A Muhit, Clinical Research Fellow of International Centre of Eye Health, London.
(The Daily Star, October 10, 2009)

Men and women have visible differences physically, mainly due to their reproductive systems. The concept of gender specific approaches in healthcare emerged not only to understand the biological differences, but also to understand the influence of socially constructed roles and norms. Bangladesh has shown commendable performance in their overall health sector growth in the recent decades. But when it comes to the prevention and treatment of avoidable blindness, Bangladesh lags behind. According to the National Eye Care Plan (NEC), in Bangladesh the age standardized blindness prevalence rate is 1.53%, affecting women more than men. Almost 67% of world’s blind population is women and cataract surgical coverage (CSC) in Bangladesh is as low as 32.5%, which the NEC plan suggests is even lower for women. There is a need of urgent interventions to address gender issues to overcome the increasing numbers of cases of avoidable blindness. But unfortunately, Bangladesh still did not address women’s experiences, as indicated by the absence of gender analysis in its NEC Plan (Hussain, 2010). With limited resources allocated to the eye health sector, gender related barriers add up to the existing burden of diseases affecting lives of many people. This study explores the factors

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influencing women’s decision regarding uptake of services and if/how men have a direct or indirect influence on their behavior (influence of patriarchy).

**Literature Review**

Clayton and Davis (2015) suggest that eye health disparities for women are very common across the world and the disparities are caused by a variety of factors such as “biological, behavioral/perceptual, cultural and societal” (2015: 102). For developing suitable health policies, it is very important to find out what is it that makes women more disadvantaged when it comes to eye health? Is it their biological composition or the external factors that makes them more vulnerable to ocular diseases? They believe it is quite hard to separate factors influencing eye health disparities (2015: 108), “Disease risk, disease prevalence, health care and access, and cultural views and behaviors all intersect to paint a complicated picture of eye health. Layered onto that complexity is the inevitable variability according to gender, ethnicity and race, socioeconomic status, and other contributing factors.”

In a meta-analysis of cataract surveys, Lewallen and Courtright suggested adoption of a gendered strategy for eye health programs, focusing on female patients to reduce the global burden of blindness. They believed “if they received surgery at the same rate as males, the prevalence of cataract blindness would be reduced by a median of 12.5 %” (Lewallen and Courtright, 2002: 300).

Moreno and Vlassoff (2002) discusses the significance of gender analysis for health program planning. According them, gender roles can have significant influences on health status of a person, especially when women are given the secondary role in numerous societies across the world. Because of society’s pre-conceived assumptions about men and women’s roles, power relationship has been established for hundreds of years. Mainly because of this, gender, as a concept, can influence health scenarios extensively (Moreno and Vlassoff, 2002). Moreno and Vlassoff believed gender (2002: 1713): “affects access to health care, health seeking behavior, health status and the way health policies and programs are developed and implemented.”

For a long time, gender roles of women were overlooked and at times limited to pre-conceived notions. The reason why a large number of health programs still do not consider gender issues is that the relationship between gender and overall health outcome is understudied and unexplored. When it came to women’s health, public health managers always considered ‘sex’ differences based on the reproduction capabilities, and hardly paid any attention to ‘gender’ differences based on the role of women in society. But with time, public health managers are realizing that to prevent and tackle a disease such as avoidable blindness, a holistic approach is needed based on society, norms, beliefs, power relations, resources, over all of which ‘gender’ has a significant influence (Moreno and Vlassoff, 2002).

According to Ullah and Parvin (2015), about half of the population in Bangladesh is women, whereas women’s labor participation rate is only 35.98%. Out of the women who earn money, only 24% have control over their income. Ullah and Parvin (2015: 149) comment on the status of women in Bangladesh, “Their status is seen as below than men in patriarchal social structure like Bangladesh.” Balk (1997) in her article suggested Bangladeshi society has a ‘highly specialized gender role’ (1997:153). Whether it is agricultural activities, or going out for work, or buying assets, public activities are assumed to be the responsibility of the male members of the family. These assumptions are now followed by entire society as traditional norms, especially in rural regions (Balk, 1997). Having a lack of (or no) income, and almost no role allowed to play in decision making in the family, puts women’s overall status, especially health status in a marginalized position in Bangladesh. Understanding the role/status of women in their society is crucial as Chakraborty et al. (2003: 328) talk about the diverse factors which determine utilization of health services by women, “the use of health services is related
Bangladesh society is highly patriarchal, and the majority of women are socio-culturally dependent on the men of their family which adds an additional barrier to women’s access to health services. The traditional norms of society affect women in Bangladesh, especially the older generation. Cataract is responsible for the highest proportion of the burden of avoidable blindness in Bangladesh, affecting mostly elderly people. Ahmed et al. (2005) talks about how the ongoing socio economic and demographic transitions are pushing the older population towards a vulnerable life in Bangladesh. They believed ‘poverty and social exclusion’ (2005:110) are the biggest problems for senior citizens and “elderly women are especially disadvantaged due to their marginal position in the society.” (2005:110).

An international NGO working in Bangladesh conducted a KAP study (Knowledge, attitude and practice) in Barisal division (FHF, 2013). The study suggested that because Bangladeshi society is patriarchal in nature, women are judged by their ability to manage household chores and their physical appearance. According to the KAP study, “Eye related problems are considered as defect/ flaw in feminine perfection” (2013:45). Viewing eye health issues as similar to defect in a woman can strongly bar women from asking for medical help.

In 2002, the World Health Organization (WHO) - a leader in global health governance identified gender as an issue affecting the health of millions of women worldwide. According to Ravindran and Kambete (2008), the main goal of the gender policy of WHO was to improve the health situation of both genders, through proper research, policy planning and program. Gender mainstreaming in healthcare is targeted to establish wider coverage by implementing more effective and efficient actions. Piang et al. (2010) suggests ‘gender mainstreaming’ as not only an added component in health programs. It goes beyond the concept of feminism and often is related to patriarchy in order to interpret how gender influences status of women, constructs and assigns them a particular type of role and then leads to discrimination based on sex. Sen and Ostlin (2008) believes, ‘gender relations of power’ to be the most important cause behind existing gender inequality in health systems. They believe power relations determine if women’s needs would be addressed, if they have a say over their health issues, and if at all the health system would work on the gaps and help them realize their rights. They also suggest that gender relations are controlled by ‘how power is embedded in social hierarchy (Sen and Ostlin, 2008:2).

Methodology

The study primarily dealt with two research questions: (1) What are the common barriers women face in accessing eye health services in Bangladesh? (2) How significant is ‘Patriarchal Influence’ as a barrier behind women’s uptake of eye care services? This was a purely qualitative research and the sampling techniques utilized were a mixture of purposive and snowball sampling. The source of information were direct stakeholders working in the eye health sector in Bangladesh (doctors, field level health workers, medical professors, gender expert and project managers working in international public health organizations, individuals working public and private health organizations). Semi structured in depth interviews were conducted with 30 participants. The interview lasted on average 30-50 minutes. The interviews were conducted using telephone and Skype (audio calls using this software). All the interviews underwent transcription and then were translated to English. Final data analysis technique utilized was Interpretative Approach (which included both open coding and axial coding). The goal was to classify a set of emerging themes and pinpoint any common links between all the barriers identified in this study.

Findings

The theme which was mentioned by every participant in this study and the only theme which was interlinked with other emerging themes was “Patriarchal Influence”. Different participants shared their point of views as how patriarchy directly or indirectly influenced women’s health seeking attitude.
Participant 11 said, “Bangladesh is a patriarchal society and it certainly has an influence on women’s health! Most women spend their life indoors and are not independent to take decisions regarding her health. It is same for both rural and urban areas.”

Participant 28 believed patriarchy mainly affects women’s decision-making ability. She said, “About decision making power, women in Bangladesh still lag behind. It is not only visible in poor households but also in middle class families. Only about 3-4% women come to the hospital, taking the decision by themselves.”

She shared an example, which indicated how males often get priority in accessing health services, “In one of my camp visits, I remember meeting an old couple, both screened with cataract. That man did come to our base hospital for the surgery, but did not bring his wife along. When I asked, ‘Why?’ he replied, ‘Let me first take the service, I will think about her later.’ Our society is male dominated, as a result man avail the facilities first, and women are always given less priority.”

Patriarchal influence was seen to not only shape husband or father’s behavior towards women, but their children were also affected. Participant 10 said, “In the cases of older retired patients, I have seen how kids bring their father more easily and show much less interest to their mother’s health needs.”

Participant 5 shared a different perception on this influence when he suggested that because of long history of patriarchy, women treat their husbands with deference as if they are more important than themselves, and this is visible in their health seeking attitudes. The relatively higher importance that is given to the male family members is also due to the ascribed ‘public’ role they hold in societies like Bangladesh. He suggested, “If both husband wife in a family need cataract surgery, the females are not themselves interested to undergo the surgery before their husband. Many have beliefs related to gaining ‘Sawab’ (reward for a good deed in Islam), they say, ‘If I selfishly go for the surgery before him, I won’t go to heaven.’”

From discussions with each participant, it was clearly evident how patriarchy and financial limitations were interconnected barriers affecting women’s access to health services. Participant 9 suggested, “Our society is highly patriarchal; women do not have decision making power. She has to rely on male members of her family for money and taking decision. Relevant to this statement, participant 5 explained the reason why women are dependent on men:

“When asked to get a surgery, I have heard many patients say, ‘I need to take my husband’s permission’ or ‘I have not informed my kids. The reason behind why women still look up to the male member of her family for decision making is related to both financial issues and patriarchy. For women, financial status and patriarchy are interlinked barriers.”

Participant 17 also tried to link patriarchy and financial constraint and said,

“The reason behind why women still look up to the male member of her family for decision making is about both financial issues and patriarchy. Let’s say 10 women come to our hospital and we offer them free services, you will see 90% of the patients’ up taking the services. But when they have to pay a certain amount, such as Bangladeshi taka 2000, the service uptake percentage will drop to 30%. These women are dependent on their son/husband and know that if she goes without permission, she might not be able to manage the necessary amount of money. They first take permission, arrange the money and then visit the hospital. So I would say financial constraint and patriarchy are interlinked barriers.”

Participant 9 believes patriarchy does have indirect influence on women’s confidence level and their attitude towards health,
“When a woman has eye problems, she might not visit the health center for many reasons. She is often scared and ignorant about where to go for services, or maybe she has little amount of money, or she thinks what if somebody cons her on the way to the hospital. Because of their dependence on men and lack of access to the public side of life, they often lack the confidence regarding uptake of services.”

Another participant indicated an interesting take on how patriarchy confines women only to household, which later affects almost every aspect of her life.

“Most women in our rural areas spend their time inside the house. So when a woman like this gets partially blind or affected by eye diseases, the family does not get her out of the house. When our hospital organizes outreach camps nearby, our team finds it really hard to identify woman like them. We can never know if there is such a woman in the community, makes it very hard for us to bring her under our radar.”

Analysis

Because the majority of this study’s participants were men, there was a bit of hesitation whether participants would understand the essence of ‘patriarchy’ and its impact on women’s health. Surprisingly, the participants shared their honest thoughts on patriarchy and helped this study understand its role as a barrier. It was found that all participants had knowledge regarding influences of gender on women’s access to eye care. One major finding from this study was the current absence of gender focused research in the eye health sector of Bangladesh, confirmed by all the participants. Each participant, irrespective of their gender believed patriarchy to have a strong influence on women’s utilization of eye care services. Participants’ views helped this study to explore the relationship between patriarchy and women’s access to services, but also its strong correlation with women’s economic freedom, and their independence to take decisions. Apart from identifying the key barriers (lack of money, lack of awareness and knowledge, reluctance to seek health care, mobility issues) to uptake of services, another equally significant finding of this study was the interrelationship between the identified barriers and the common thread linking them all was ‘patriarchy’. Whether it is lack of money, access to information, mobility issues, or depending on men for taking decisions, the root cause behind all the identified barriers appeared to be patriarchy. Individually as a theme, and also as an influence on other factors, patriarchy affects women’s eye health status and shapes their health seeking practices.

One reason mentioned by Lewallen and Courtright (2002: 301) in their meta-analysis about lower uptake of services by women was ‘The perceived “value” of cataract surgery is often gender dependent’. Their analysis along with this study findings both indicate that both the female patient as well as the male members of the family assign less value to the female’s need for service/surgery. For elderly patients, their children often get to decide whose medical need will they fund first, and often the father gets the priority. Also in a study conducted in Tanzania, the finding suggests children to put more value on father’s health compared to their mother which could be an indirect sign of patriarchal culture. All these were consistent with the findings of this study.

Each participant in this study believed they were gender aware, yet only two organizations had taken necessary actions. Discussion with participants and observing the absence of gender policies in many established organizations, it was important to find out if there is an underlying reason behind the failure to adopt gender sensitive approach in eye health sector of Bangladesh. To better understand why gender awareness did not necessarily lead to developing relevant policies, Moreno and Vlassoff’s (2002) work could be much relevant. They talked about obstacles to develop gender sensitive health policies and viewed ‘structural change in health institutions’ and ‘lack of gender sensitivity’ of health sector officials as important obstacles. Similar suggestions were also made by Sen and Ostlin (2008), when they...
reported existing ‘biases in health systems’ hampering gender mainstreaming process. They indicated traditional health systems focusing more on the technical side of service delivery and overlook the social aspect (such as role of gender).

**Conclusion**

Relationships are gendered in many societies and so are the decision-making processes. There is a chance that in countries like Bangladesh, the inability to adopt gender sensitive approaches for delivering eye health care is due to the overall health system being influenced by gendered relationships. Health systems like these have worked for decades and are based on traditional (gendered) values and beliefs. While prioritizing service delivery, these systems almost always ignore social facets of health care, including impact of gender/influences of patriarchy. These societies/institutions cannot turn into gender sensitive entities overnight as social arrangement of power and hierarchy dominate them. Given the scope, this study has generated findings which can be used as the basis of future research regarding gender analysis of the eye health care system. Substantial amount of literature is available regarding gender and reproductive health in Bangladesh, but none for eye health. Based on this study, the scope for future research is extensive and widespread to explore the relationship between gender and women’s eye health, particularly in developing countries. This study could be an important step, offering rich theoretical insights about women’s utilization of eye health care. The study findings are substantial enough to assist policy makers and program planners to recognize the significance of ‘gender’ as a concept in eye health care and realize how women’s health seeking behavior is strongly influenced by their gendered roles.
References

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Neoliberalism and its impact on women’s higher education and labour market in Russia

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Abstract

In Soviet Russia, gender equality was enshrined in the constitution and state’s ideology. The Soviet policies did not discriminate women based on gender particularly in the higher education and labour market sector. The disintegration, however, resulted in the significant transformation of Russia that changed its socio-economic structure. The neoliberal transformation presented contemporary Russia with a new set of gender issues. It resulted in the abrupt churning of social classes and groups wherein those respected in Soviet times were devalued and downshifted. Poverty, stress, social tension, lack of quality employment and insecurity became the key issues principally associated with Russian women in the ongoing neoliberal transformation. Patriarchy and gender discrimination have come to the fore in the process of transition. Higher education and labour market are the areas where gender discrimination and inequality are reflected in various ways. There is a significant increase in highly educated women having to face discrimination in the labour market. Often women’s educational qualification does not necessarily guarantee them a success in the labour market. Further, gender asymmetry in state policies has impacted the Russian women in their occupational mobility. It is in this context; the study will explore the intersection between higher education and the labour market and its impact on women as Russia transitioned to neoliberalism.

Keywords: Neoliberalism, gender, higher education, labour market, inequality, transition economy

Introduction

Neoliberalism is a contemporary ‘politico-economic theory’ favouring free trade, privatisation, commercialisation and nominal state interference in the market economy. It is considered as ‘the new face of globalisation’. In the neoliberal era, the role of higher education has become more significant than ever to produce quality and skilled professionals to meet the demands of dynamic globalising economies (Agarwal, 2007). Higher education, therefore, has become “the new starship in the policy fleet for governments around the world” (Olssena and Peters, 2005). In contemplation of the economic value of higher education and its inevitability for economic development, higher education has been encouraged to develop links with industries and businesses. In this context, as Russia embarked on neoliberalism in 1991, reforms in higher education and labour market were implemented.

According to the ‘market transition theory’, “market institutions intrinsically reward human capital more than state socialist institutions do” (Nee and Mathews, 1996). Neoliberal transition, therefore, was considered an opportunity for women to enhance their employment opportunities, attain economic independence, and self-empowerment. Yet, in the event of market transition in Russia, the human capital potential generated by highly educated women is not fully utilised. The neoliberal reforms in higher education instead is producing a gendered culture in higher education and labour market.

As per the academic enrollment statistics 2015-16, female enrollment in higher education is higher than male. The total number of females is 2548.6 thousand while male is 2217.9 thousand (Higher School of Economics, Moscow, 2017). The phenomenon of increasing women’s enrollment in higher education is due to the skewed demographic ratio in Russia. A case in point is that the total female population in Russia is 78.6 thousand million while the male is 67.9 thousand million (Federal State Statistics Service aka Rosstat, 2017). Consequently, the higher proportion of the female population has translated to increasing participation in higher education. This phenomenon is also reflected in the labour market.
On the surface level, women’s high participation in higher education and labour market may look impressive. However, a closer study indicates gender gap in these two spheres.

Neoliberal Reforms in Higher Education and Labour Market

In response to globalisation and market forces, radical reforms in higher education were introduced focusing on privatisation, commercialisation, commodification and internationalisation. “The state allowed greater autonomy and encouraged the public and private universities to become more entrepreneurial and competitive” (Zajda, 2016). It has led to the growth of private universities and fee-paying students. As a result, the state has moved away from its role as a ‘provider of education’.

‘No-fee’ and ‘for-free’ educational programs are developing as the key determinants of the Russian higher education system. In this system, fees are introduced for ‘female’ professions, while ‘male’ professions are exempted from fees (Mezentseva, 2006). Such system reflects the state’s biases in its investments. In other words, Russia is spending more resources on educating its male population than female population. It also indicates that the expenditure of federal budget money allocated for education is becoming more and more gendered. It impedes equal access in all disciplines of higher education. Between 1992-2000, women’s share in the paid study was 11.5% and the free study was 88.5% while men’s percentage in the paid study was 10% and the free study was 90% (Gerber and Schaefer, 2004). Higher education has drifted away from being a ‘public good’ and has evolved into a ‘private good’.

In the sphere of the labour market, the transformation of economic regime brought about drastic changes in the labour market structures. The state has withdrawn centralised system of full employment, wages and social benefits. The occupations have moved away from industrial production to professions related to knowledge and information. The move of Russia’s modern industries towards the high-technology sector, technical and science education resulted in women’s labour market disadvantages as women are perceived to be less conversant with technical knowledge. Russian women being at disadvantaged in their professional life also lies in the fact that they are regarded as the ‘second-sort’ labour force by private employers. The privatisation of market made men ‘own and rule’ various enterprises. With bigger authority and possessions in their hands, they have become ‘rulers of privatisation’ and the ‘key employers’ (Rimashevskaja, 2013). The earlier labour force protection provisions of the erstwhile Soviet era have receded while discriminatory practices have increased resulting in discrimination against women.

Emerging trends in higher education and labour market

Paradoxically, in the event of a neoliberal transition, Russia is experiencing feminisation of higher education. According to Mezentseva (2006), between “1992-2000, the number of female students in higher education rose by 763,000 or 50% while that of male students rose by 327,000 or 25%”. She indicated that Russia is experiencing “a feminisation of higher education” with 57% of women and only 43% of men in the higher education. This increase in the enrollment of women is further supported by the data of National Research University, Higher School of Economics, Moscow (HSE).

Table1: Higher education enrolment and entrants: bachelor's, specialist's and master's degree programmes (thousand persons), 2000/01 -2015/16

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2000/01</th>
<th>2005/06</th>
<th>2010/11</th>
<th>2014/15</th>
<th>2015/16</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>4741.4</td>
<td>7064.6</td>
<td>7049.8</td>
<td>5209.0</td>
<td>4766.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>2055.1</td>
<td>43.3%</td>
<td>2950</td>
<td>41.8%</td>
<td>3019.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>2686.3</td>
<td>56.7%</td>
<td>4113.8</td>
<td>58.2%</td>
<td>4030.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Data source: Higher School of Economics, Moscow 2017)

As per the table (1), from the academic year 2000/01 to 2015/16, the enrollment of women in higher education is comparatively higher than men. The total number of female enrolled in bachelor's, specialist's and master's degree programmes was 56.7% in 2000/01, while the male enrollment rate was
at 43.3%. In the subsequent years, the enrollment of female students has been above 53% as compared to male enrollment. It indicates that women in Russia have not only equalled but surpassed men in higher education.

Appallingly, despite women’s high enrollment in higher education, they are unable to gain quality employment. The neoliberal market demands for science, information technology and engineering has increased. On the other hand, women mostly pursue arts, humanities and social science disciplines. “Despite, the share of female students in universities is 56%, however, their share is only 24% in information technology and 37% in physical and mathematical sciences; 46% of all postgraduates are females but only 29% in physics and math and 25% in technical sciences”(Didenko et al. 2015).

According to Barabanova et al. (2013), the share of women researchers in engineering sciences is only 36.8%, 41.6% in natural sciences while in social sciences and humanities it is 59.2% and 64% respectively. The total number of women researchers have also declined from 187792 to 153318 from 2002 to 2011.

Data (table 2) indicates that in between the year 2002 to 2011, women researchers in natural science, engineering and agriculture science have decreased by 6482, 31445, 540 respectively while increased in social sciences, humanities, and medical sciences by 1825, 3025, and 1143 respectively.

Table 2: The number of female practitioners in the various field, 2002 and 2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Natural Sciences</th>
<th>Engineering sciences</th>
<th>Agricultural Sciences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>187792</td>
<td>43785</td>
<td>114843</td>
<td>83398</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>153318</td>
<td>37303</td>
<td>325</td>
<td>7621</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Therefore, due to the nature of women’s education, their qualifications and skills are underutilised. Many of them are rendered unemployable as their educational qualification and skills does not match the market requirements.

The discriminatory neoliberal reforms in higher education along with the Soviet’s history of gender segregation in the discipline (of study) and occupation has percolated to modern Russia. During the Soviet period, gender discriminatory practices were limited due to centralised norms of education, employment and wages. However, in the current scenario, the withdrawal of state’s support and control of the economy has given private employers greater advantage to exploit the labour market.

The private employers increasingly consider age and sex over qualifications and skills. They mainly employ women as part-time and contract workers to avoid the cost associated with social and maternity benefits. Furthermore, women are stereotyped as less efficient and less career-oriented as they have to juggle between professional and domestic work. Due to women’s ‘double burden’, they are considered as ‘second sort’ of the labour force (Rimashevskaia, 2013). A number of studies have revealed that managers justified the hiring of male over female candidates by indicating that female are less ambitious and more expensive. A number of private enterprises have violated women’s labour and social rights. Despite women having equal competence, managers prefer hiring male (CEDAW, 1999; Clarke and Kabaline, 2000; Barabanova et al. 2013).

Since the Soviet period, state policies have encouraged women to participate in the economy actively. The women’s labour force participation in Russia is high as compared to other countries.
However, women are mainly employed in the feminised sector such as health, education and services. Even within the feminised sector, they are employed at the lower paid professions. For seven consecutive years between 2008-2015, the share of women employment in various sectors of the economy has remained at 49% (Federal State Statistics Service data, 2017).

As per the Federal State Statistics Service data (table 3) of the year 2008-2015, the share of women in leadership positions consistently remained below 40%. In ‘specialists of the highest level of qualification in the field of natural and technical sciences’, the share of women has been decreasing from 32% to 29% from the year 2008 to 2015. While women’s share in ‘specialists of the highest level of qualification in the field of education’ has increased from 78% to 80% in the year 2008 to 2015.

Table 3. The percentage share of women in different sectors of the economy 2008-2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2015</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employed in the economy (in %)</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leaders (representatives) of government and management at all levels, including heads of organizations</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specialists of the highest level of qualification in the field of natural and technical sciences</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specialists of the highest level of qualification in the field of biological, agricultural sciences and health</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specialists of the highest level of qualification in the field of education</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specialists of intermediate level qualification of physical and engineering activities</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-level professionals and support staff in the natural sciences and health</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specialists of the intermediate level of qualification in the field of education</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average staff in the field of financial, economic, administrative and social activities</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employees engaged in the preparation of information, documentation and accounting</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>89</td>
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<td>87</td>
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<tr>
<td>Service personnel</td>
<td>90</td>
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<td>89</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workers in the sphere of individual services and protection of citizens and property</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sellers, demonstrators of goods, models and demonstrators of clothes</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workers engaged in mining, mining and capital construction and assembly and repair and construction works</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other skilled workers employed in industry, transport, communications, geology and mineral exploration</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unskilled workers, common to all sectors of the economy</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Data source: Federal State Statistics Services/ROSTAT 2017; Ayemi 2018. The data has been converted into percentage for this study)

The share of women as ‘sellers, demonstrators of goods, models and demonstrators of clothes’ has continued to remain above 80%. Their share in the ‘preparation of information, documentation and accounting segment’, as well as ‘service personnel’ has also remained above 85%. Whereas, women’s share as ‘specialists of intermediate level qualification of physical and engineering activities’ has remained below 30%.

From the data, it can be concluded that women are mainly confined to lower ranking professions despite their high participation in the labour market. Women’s high level of educational qualification
has not resulted in securing a better position in the market economy. The percentage of women in feminised sectors has remained stagnant during the period 2008-2015. It indicates the low mobility of genders from one sector to another sector of the economy. Despite the high participation of women in the labour market, the gender pay gap in the Russian Federation is twice as high as in OECD countries, i.e. the average earnings of men is about 30% higher than women in Russia (OECD Employment Outlook edition, 2016).

Though the labour code of Russia prohibits discrimination in terms of education and employment. Women have become victims of discriminatory state policy and neoliberal economic reform. Therefore, factors such as the nature of women’s education, history of gender segregation of sector and occupation, increasing stereotyping and discriminatory practices have resulted in a new phenomenon which can be called as ‘feminisation of lower paid occupations’.

**Conclusion**

In the neoliberal era, women have surpassed men in higher education. Nonetheless, women’s educational qualification has not resulted in quality employment opportunities. The withdrawal of state’s support in higher education and employment and the introduction of market forces resulted in women disadvantages. The expansion of higher education is instead producing an ever-increasing number of female graduates lacking technical knowledge and skills essential in the market economy.

The practice of gender segregation in educational disciplines as well as the prevalence of indiscernible mechanisms of discrimination in the labour market devaluates the high level of education of women rendering their skills and education inapplicable. Furthermore, employers take into consideration gender and age rather than education and merit. Therefore, the human capital potential of women is not fully utilised. No progressive steps have been taken to eradicate the patriarchal norms and culture prevailing in the society which continuously undermines women’s ability to attain education in engineering, technical, and natural science subjects.

Merely increasing women’s access to higher education and labour market participation will not eliminate gender inequality. Gender segregation of discipline of study, as well as occupations, should be eliminated. Therefore, a systemic change in higher education policies and ‘informed choice’ of career opportunities is necessary during the early years of education. In addition, proper implementation of ‘anti-discriminatory’ practices in both higher education and the labour market is crucial. In this way, the human-capital potential of women can be properly utilised which in turn will lead to socio-economic equity. Additionally, a change in cultural norms about gender roles is necessary for the society.
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From Women’s Archive to [my] Queer Archive: Challenging Archival and Gender Norms Through Re-reading My Elementary School Notebooks

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Abstract

As a Kathoey¹, I would never have thought that some materials that are relevant to my life were a source of knowledge until I learned about women’s archive² that have altered the landscape of archival collecting and definition, therefore inspiring me to do archival research. I returned home with a renewed desire for discovery. I retrieved my elementary school notebooks (evaluation reports) that document a variety of memories and attitudes, for example, regarding my gender identity and my childhood. Then, the elementary school notebooks became my archives which I put queer subject together with personal experiences.

This study aims to (a) demonstrate the development of Archive from women’s archive to queer archive and illustrate how a Feminist and Queer archive contrasts with the traditional archival notions; (b) examine the formation of my Kathoey identity by re-reading my personal archives (my elementary school notebooks). In doing so, I will address how my gender identity at a young age was shaped by the Thai state through the education system and various social discourses.

The knowledge of women’s and queer archives provides a significant contribution to challenge society to use the past to transform the future. Expanding this knowledge will broaden awareness of sexual diversity to support gender equality.

Keywords: Women’s archive, Queer archive, Elementary school notebooks, Kathoey identity

Challenging the Archival Norms: The Development of Archival Notions from Women’s Archive to Queer Archive

Archive positions between recording and forgetting representing human experience and memory. The archival collections are apparently established by individual, group and collective memories: there are personal, organizational, and public archives. Boundaries between these preservations are inevitably blurred, for instance, a girl diary as a personal archive reflects the details of her life, while illustrating a significant event of humanity. However, notions of archive have been seized, borrowed and developed by a wide range of disciplines. In this essay, I will demonstrate how feminists and queers have transformed archival theory by criticizing, deconstructing and finding ways to create their historical knowledge. They altered the landscape of archival notions through materiality, archival practice, appraisal and narratives.

‘Who is missing from the historical record’ is the significant starting point to re-conceptualize and challenge the traditional archival term and also initiate the preservation of archival materials of marginal lives. Both women and queer are always neglected in conventional archives and historical writing.

Women’s archives are both physical and symbolic spaces where women’s experience are valued and preserved (Mason and Zanish-Belcher, 2007, p.356). Researching in women’s archives will broaden understanding of archival expansion, for instance, in Working in Women’s archives: Researching Women’s Private Literature and archival documents (2001) illustrate how feminist build up their knowledge from materials that are relevant to daily lives of women; and feminists have their approaches to re-reading their archives, for instance, reading from above or reading in silence.

Women’s archives were founded on the premise that women’s lives and activities were not adequately documented in traditional repositories and that women’s archives turned collection development on its head in the 1970s (Mason and Zanish-Belcher, 2007, p.344). The roots of feminist archives and archiving are found within such information and documentation effort, as well as the
genealogies of explicit feminist movements to which they are more frequently attributed. Pioneering of women’s archives which has initiated the idea of women’s collection is the Arthur and Elizabeth Schlesinger Library on the History of Women in America established by Jordan Schlesinger. Various friends embarking on acquisitions program that rapidly increased the holdings of suffrage, reform, medicine, politics and government service, and volunteer organizations (Moseley, 1973, p.216).

Since the 1950s, or before theorizing Queer theory, LGBT movements had a crucial role to advocate for equal rights regardless of sexuality or gender identity and provide the knowledge to community. Censorship and obscenity laws forced these movements to become information generators and providers, and organizations routinely developed regular publication schedules disseminating literature on housing discrimination, workplace harassment, medicine and legal information, as well as general support for people who felt isolated (Cifor and Wood, 2017, p.5). Gay and lesbian have initiated to establish their own archival house or building to keep their archives and it became a model of space information resources of LGBTQ such as The Lesbian History Archive in Brooklyn and One National Gay and Lesbian Archives at USC.

The emergence of queer theory in the 1990s, according to the significant works of Teresa de Lauretis (1991), Judith Butler (1990) and Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick (1990), has challenged Heteronormativity and Gay and Lesbian identity, and it has been adapted to study in a variety of fields: Anthropology, Cultural Studies and etc. In queering the archive, queer theoretical functions as questions of power have also been central to the discussion of archive and archiving with a special focus on the heteronormative framework that structures the mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion in official history (Danbolt, 2010, p.93)

Challenging traditional archive through queer’s feelings and trauma as Ann Cvetkovich (2003) has proposed the Archive of Feelings inspiring an approach to reconstruct archive which is constituted emotions and engage to queer individually. She insists on the significant inclusion of queer experiences and feelings into the archival texts: lesbian and gay history demands archive of emotion in order to document intimacy, sexuality, love and activism – all areas of experience that are difficult to chronicle through the materials of traditional archive.” (Cvetkovich, 2003, p.241) The theory reflects feminist and queer intervention and the gender identity becomes an element of archival discourse.

Archives of queer and women have become a primary source of historical knowledge. Some archives were donated by some grassroots or individuals who insisted that materials are relevant to their lives and worthy to preserve, while the public did not want to collect it. Posters, periodicals, pamphlets, flyers, clippings, stickers and other documents positioned in queer and women’s archives demonstrate the history of their lives and also the long-period political movement. The archival collections come along with the need to preserve history of queer and feminist activism.

Feminists and queers have tried to build up the limitless boundaries of historical notions. The archival histories of such groups are often conceived as fully separable, but are inseparable from their actions as well as the parallel and overlapping histories of disparate movements (Cifor and Wood, 2017, p.5). Hence, collecting archives means the archival exertion to create historical awareness and to be visible in history.

Applying a ‘Queer Archive’ to the Study a Thai Kathoey’s Life

Knowledge of feminist and queer archive has challenged my perception about the meaning of ‘archive’. My previous and uninformed perception of archive(s) or (Hor)Jodmaihaede³ was of officially dusty old documents stamped with the Thai official emblem or garuda. Since having visited the National Archives of Thailand⁴, it became clear that archivization in the Thai context is a convention reserved primarily for the Thai elites with a variety of materials related to ‘official’ collective/constructed memory and people considered of relative importance. However, what is missing from the archive collection are the documents and other source materials pertaining to the lives and individual experiences of ordinary Thai LGBTQ. This was particularly true regarding the life and experience of
people self-identifying as LGBTQ, where there were no personal archives either in the National Archives or as their own archival home. I apply the queer archival concept to research methodology in order to extend the new frontier of knowledge as an approach to study Thai queer lives and initiate to create awareness of preserving archival materials of Thai queer lives.

As a Katheoy, I would never have thought that some materials relevant to my life are the source of knowledge. Since having enrolled in the course Research Methodologies in Women’s Studies at Thammasat University, where I learned of the diaries (and other material sources) and life history of Pornpet Meuansri, I began to redefine my understanding of the term of ‘archive’ to include personal source materials pertaining to my own interests on gender identity. We can include these distinctive narratives and source materials which challenge the conventional archive because, as Sinith (2017) argued, the archive, or Jod-mai-hade, is a material which informs an event while not being limited by its materiality. The archive or Jod-mai-hade of my perception has now shifted from being a material source to record and/or document collective events and the personal lives of elites to record and/or document the individual experience of ordinary people.

After having completed the course, I returned home with a renewed desire for discovery. I retrieved my elementary school notebooks (evaluation reports) that document a variety of memories and attitudes, such as my gender identity regarding of my childhood. These reports record the attitudes and experiences of the people represented in these archives (i.e., teachers and parents); therefore, they have opened the possibility of critically creating something different, something new and something valuable.

As Derrida and Prenovitz (1996) observed, there is no archive without a place of consignation. As the elementary school notebooks are archival materials that do not fit into the traditional collection, I decided to initiate research into my own personal archives, i.e., my notebooks, as its unique narrative. I insist that my archives deserved to re-examine and criticize because even though there is no censorship or obscenity laws relating to Thai LGBT, I want to illustrate how gender identity of a young Kathoey was controlled or recorded by the Thai education system through these notebooks.

In addition, researching on Kathoey history is generally relevant to anthropology, sociology and discourse analysis such as the studies by Terdsak Romjumpa (2002), Peter A. Jackson (1995) and Richard Totman (2003). These works indicate that the existence of Kathoeys can be traced back historically over a long period in Thai society. However, researching my personal archives aims to contribute a new method to Thai academic studies on the history of Kathoey.

Re-reading My Elementary School Notebooks

Researching on Transgender children issues in Western countries, such as USA, Canada and also in Australia, has accessed information about experiences of Transgender children by quantitative and qualitative methods. For example, in Natacha Kennedy and Mark Hellen (2011), Moshooda Capous-Desyllas and Cecillia Barron (2017) and Clare Bartholomaeus and Damien Wayne Riggs (2016), The methodology of these researches constitutes a survey, a participant observation or an ethnographic research. While there are ethical issues which are likely to make it difficult to collect data directly from transgendered children, the data of these studies was obtained by interviewing with their family or teacher, examining school environment or policies and investigating memories of adult transgendered people.

However, the methodology for this study can be characterized as archival research, applying my elementary school notebooks aims to raise awareness about Transgender children which was missing from Thai academia and these materials are able to function as evidence of my experiences of having been a transgendered child, and as retrieval of my childhood memories.

The elementary school notebooks are an official document that many Thai elementary school students receive every semester. My notebooks cover the years from 1999 to 2007 when we [Kathoey] are beginning to be acknowledged in Thai society. While many gender categories from the West, such
as Gay and Lesbian, have been accepted in Thai society and the differences distinguished in terms of their representational use in any particular social context, other Thai sexual definitions, such as third sex or Kathoey, have challenged Western knowledge and categories. Re-reading my school notebooks, I found it is very interesting. It illustrated in detail my school performance; whereas each child is written about (first by the teacher and then in response, by the parent) regarding their overall behaviors, while there is no behavior report in secondary school notebooks. For an effeminate boy, it was written in a remarkable way, in that certain gender biases are revealed.

The section in the notebook containing the behavior report where my kathoey identity emerged demonstrates the life of a young Kathoey in Thai elementary school, while also illustrating how the Thai educational system governed my gender identity. I discovered that the report itself depends on establish patriarchal and heterosexist social constructs regarding its description of how girls and boys are supposed to behave. School children are written according to variously constructed characteristics: e.g. curiosity, courage, creativity and empathy. However, one of my habits, according to what was written by my advisory teachers (and repeated in every semester from grades 1 to grade 6), is Riab-roi, or เรียบร้อย in Thai, which means polite or courteous person, thus implying effeminate behaviors and considered a female characteristic in the Thai context.

As it is evident in the school behavior report, one advisory teacher wrote in my grade 4, first semester notebook, it was suggested to my parents that they “should support [me] to play sports in order to look stronger.” The teacher, in implying that I have feminine habits at school, suggested to my parents that they should help me to become a normative boy rather than encourage me to be myself.

What is the problem with being a polite or courteous boy in Thai society? Being an effeminate boy in the Thai context is seen as being opposite to the normative boy who should be manly and/ or likes to play sports. Patriarchal culture has reduced the value of the feminine (Irigaray, 1993, p.20). While being a Kathoey or Toot means being non-masculine in the Thai context. The constructed opposite of the Thai male is not the female but the Kathoey, that is, not femininity but unmasculinity. The Kathoey represents all that a masculine Thai is not (Jackson, 1995, p.225). Being different impacts negatively on my relations with my family and my friends, as I am afraid of being unaccepted, unsupported and unloved.

My earliest memory of sensing that I might be different from other children was during elementary school when I became aware of my sexual difference from both other boys and girls, as highlighted by school policies regarding school uniforms and appropriate appearance, e.g. girls were to wear skirts and boys were to wear pants and have their hair cut short. In the Thai school context, trans kids could not express themselves in terms opposite to their sex assigned at birth.
There were many reasons for remaining in the closet during my youth because expressing myself as a Kathoey in elementary school tended to have negative consequences for a young Kathoey as LGBT youth were often bullied and teased by their peers in school. One-third of Thai students who identify as LGBT have experienced physical abuse in school, according to study conducted by Plan International (UNESCO and Mahidol University, 2014), and LGBTQ support was practically nonexistent. In large part, this was due to a lack of knowledge on sexual diversity and sex education being taught at school and therefore of sexual pedagogies emphasizing sexual diversity, sexual health and bullying of LGBT. Moreover, the content of school textbooks in high school continued to label homosexuals as sexual deviants (UNESCO, 2016).

Most Kathoeys in the Thai education system can completely change their gender identity at age 18 or 19 years of age, or 15 to 16 years at the earliest. They can never, of course, become complete girls in the physical sense at that young age. However, Kathoey youth can be released from some school rules regarding certain mandatory school or creative activities, that is, activities that express the opposite of their gender such as Thai dancing.

Conclusion

Feminist and queer archival perspectives offer me a new way of thinking about the idea of archive or Jod-Mai-Hade. Women’s archives enhance the materials relevant to the narratives of ordinary people in daily life and Queer archive has interrogated on conventional archive. These new archival perspectives have urged me to do archival research. As a kathoey in Thai society, the official documents always indicated the gender description to my gender identity. One of my unique archives is my elementary school notebooks as my personal archives which illustrates the narratives of ‘me’ a young kathoey lived in Thai primary school.

When reconsidering my archival texts, I found my memory and experience in Thai educational system and I realized that the subjectivity of kathoey youth in elementary school is often overshadowed by social normalization through school rules and expectations which in turn rely on certain social structures, for example, legal, family and social norms. However, the Thai school environment should be a place that enables and provides a more comfortable space of acceptance and understanding of the sexual diversity of youth.

Note

1Kathoey or กะเทย, in Thai, generally implies a Transgender woman. I use the term ‘Kathoey’ because I actually identify myself as a Kathoey. My attitude towards using this term has the purpose to transform negative meaning to positive meaning. I therefore would like to represent this term to foreigner reader in positive way to recognize cultural diversity.

2In the course Research Methodologies in Women’s Studies at Thammasat University

3(Hor) Jod-mai-Hade or จดหมายเหตุ in Thai refers to the archive, where ‘Jod-mai’ translates as ‘letter’ and ‘Hade’ as ‘event’.

4The National Archives Thailand (NAT) was founded in 1916 as a section of the Vijirayan National Library. Later, in 1952, the organization became a division under Fine Arts Department.

5A Thai farmer woman who had fought against the government for her land and justice for almost four decades.
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How Women Refugees Face Double Marginalization: A gendered perspective on Refugee Issue

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Abstract

The various problems faced by refugees such as scarcity of basic means of living, identity crisis, discriminations leading to violence and violations of human rights are common worldwide. However, in South Asian context the constantly changing cartography has added specific problems to the lives of South Asian refugees. Further, though both men and women suffer from having to migrate from their original homelands and forced to live a life of refugee, it is women who experience greater violence and discrimination due to their gender. Unfortunately, it is a common practice to analyze refugee problems thinking of them as a homogenous entity. This paper argues that women refugees suffer more than their male counterparts due to their inability to influence decision-making processes; vulnerability towards sex trade and trafficking; financial insecurities leading to poor health; patriarchal society; and negligence of refugee protection agencies. How can we identify and understand the issues that are specific to women refugees? What actions do we need to take in order to find effective solutions to this problem? How can different stakeholders and organizations collaborate to work effectively? It is clear that, in order to help the refugees, a number of steps need to be taken keeping the gender needs in mind. Unless sufficient attention is given to the specific problems and needs of women refugee, they will continue to suffer double marginalization.

Introduction

The various problems faced by refugees such as scarcity of basic means of living, identity crisis, discrimination leading to violence and violations of human rights are common worldwide. However, in South Asian context the constantly changing cartography has added specific problems to the lives of South Asian refugees. What is even more problematic is that the term ‘refugee’ is not clearly defined and therefore many refugees fail to benefit from states’ and international organizations’ schemes of refugee aid. Further, though both men and women suffer from having to migrate from their original homelands and forced to live a life of refugee, it is women who experience greater violence and discrimination due to their gender. Usually, women are not consulted in migration related decisions. Those decisions are usually made or dominated by men’s preferences and comforts, ignoring women’s special needs. Unfortunately, it is a common practice to analyze refugee problems thinking of them as a homogenous entity, disregarding the complexities inherent in the term. Heaven Crawly points out the problems of 1951 Convention relating to the status of refugees and states that, “Proper interpretation of the Refugee Convention means taking account of the ways in which gender may shape the applicant’s experiences when assessing whether or not an individual is in need of international protection” (Crawly 5). Similarly, Shyam Benegal’s film Mammo (1994) depicts the plight of a widowed and childless
refugee woman who is left at the mercy of her sister. Being a woman is an added problem for refugees seeking asylum elsewhere.

This paper explores how and why women refugees suffer more than their male counterparts. It analyzes the most compelling reasons behind the vulnerabilities of women refugees in order to develop a gendered understanding of this problem which is crucial in developing effective solutions. Relying on the above hypothesis, this paper argues that women refugees suffer more than their male counterparts due to their inability to influence decision making processes; vulnerability towards sex trade and trafficking; financial insecurities leading to poor health; patriarchal society; and negligence of refugee protection agencies. This research is based on secondary resources and data such as United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) reports on refugees; scholarly articles discussing this topic; and media sources comprising of movies and documentaries. At the same time, I have used the concepts learned in the course titled “Writing Seminar on Refugee Studies” to understand the theoretical debates around this topic. While the paper focuses exclusively on Indo-Pakistan partition refugees, it also cites other examples of similar experiences of refugees elsewhere in order to develop strong and compelling evidences for the arguments.

Cultural Factors Affecting Women’s Decision Making

“Despite the overwhelming presence of women in migration flows, until recently the role of women in migration has been totally neglected” states Silvia Pedraza (Pedraza 303). Inability to influence decisions on whether to leave the current place of residence or to stay harms women the most as it tears them away from familiar environments such as from those supporting women in the neighborhood. Children are carried along with their parents while the women have no choice but to accompany their husbands to create families in the new lands (Pedraza 306). In Shyam Benegal’s film Mammo, depicts this helplessness through the protagonist where she explains how she silently and dutifully followed her husband’s decision to migrate to Pakistan leaving behind her homeland in Panipat, ancestral Haveli, and her sisters; everything that meant home to her and provided emotional support. Later when her husband passes away in the new land, she being childless possesses no property and is abandoned by her in-laws. She becomes a refugee, unable to continue in the cruel situation of Pakistan and incapable to stay with her sister in India. Torn in this dilemma she says, "Apni sagi bahan ke ghar me mai mehman hoon. Jinka apna ghar nahi hota, unka to koi ghar hi nahi hota. (I am a guest in my own sister’s home. The ones who do not have their own homes, are homeless everywhere)” (Mammo 1994). Thus women refugees experience greater marginalization than their male counterparts. “It is not generally disputed that, just as being a refugee makes refugee women more vulnerable than other women, so discrimination on grounds of sex makes them more vulnerable than men, including refugee men” (Johnsson 229). First due to fleeing their homeland one becomes a refugee and experiences one form of marginalization and insecurity ranging from emotional, physical and financial.
In case the refugee is a women, she faces second form of discrimination and violence such as sexual, reproductive, and denied citizenship or work visa on grounds of being single woman or separated from their male family members (Johnsson 230). In most patriarchal societies such as India, women live under the protection and name of men folk, therefore when such familial ties are broken, women’s lives fall apart.

Unlike men, women face certain forms of violence and harm that are gender specific which add to their already miserable refuge life. They are “Marriage-related harm; Violence within the family or community; Domestic slavery; Forced abortion; Forced sterilization; Trafficking; Female genital mutilation; Sexual violence and abuse and rape” (Crawly 2). While the women mostly face sexual and physical violence, sometimes their misery go much beyond. Sometimes after being subjected to sexual assaults these women are outcasted, looked down upon by the society and often they do not have a place to return to. Such social discrimination happens only to women and not men. Rebecca, a Somalian refugee, shares, “I was raped twice in the camp. When I complained about it, I was made to leave the camp instead of the victims” (Crawly 227). Similarly, without adequate healthcare women cannot work. Inadequate reproductive and menstrual health care services forced marriages and pregnancies make women refugees more vulnerable, especially during camp stays. Furthermore, when it comes to managing the camp affairs, “neither refugee women nor national female administrators are allowed to assume any responsibility, even in the running of camps established for the exclusive use of women refugees” (Johnsson 230). The refugee protection regulations need to be refined and reshaped on these grounds for the betterment of women refugees and the society as a whole.

**Institutional and Systematic Discriminations**

Financial insecurities hamper the decision-making abilities of women refugees. Due to the gender roles assigned to them, women refugees are discriminated against in legal systems; access to work permits; health centers; in schools and leadership roles. Usually when a job is given to the refugees living in the camps, it is more likely that the men would get the jobs instead of women. Women also face problems in asylum seeking applications and experience restrictions in seeking work permits. “The fact that women refugees often do not have an alternative means of income, which in itself may result from their generally lower education and training, and from difficulties in obtaining work permits, or in finding someone to take care of children while they work” (229). The social norms which discriminate women in general in education and employment become a greater hindrance for refugee women.

Although unintentional, international refugee protection agencies obviously discriminate between genders and tend to favor male refugees which is evident from their biased policies and absence of gender sensitivity during interviews. Johnson comments on these points as follows:
"The concept of political persecution is much more relevant to the fact of a man in a male-oriented society (as all societies basically are, in the twentieth century), than to that of a woman. Even if the linguistic evidence does not always translate from one language to another, it is no surprise that not a single woman was among the plenipotentiaries who met in Geneva in 1951 to draw up the Convention” (Johnson 2).

Women make up half of the world’s refugee population; however, little has been done in last 60 years since the Geneva Convention to address them as women with special needs. Especially, in cases of sexual assaults against women, sometimes it is difficult to talk about or prove for a woman victim to a male interviewer for refugee determination processes. And since only a few women staff are involved in such processes, women often find it more challenging to establish her refugee claims than a man. Moreover, “Family reunification is not a right conferred upon refugees by the 1951 Convention, but constitutes instead a recommended practice which was included in the Final Act of the 1951 Conference” (Johnsson 225). Hence, many women who later join their husbands after lengthy separations in their countries of asylum are granted lesser protection and lower refugee status than the full refugee status. This often leads to family break ups and wives being deported back. The women then find themselves in double marginalized situations- one due to being refugee and other for being abandoned wives. This example reveals the inadequacy of women refugee protection mechanisms (Johnsson 225).

Conclusion

It is a huge failure of humankind that despite women constituting half the population of refugees, very little has been done to cater to their special needs. Some of the daunting questions arise- How can we identify and understand better the issues that are specific to women refugees? What actions do we need to take in order to find effective solutions to this problem? How can different stakeholders and organizations collaborate to work effectively? It is clear that, in order to help the refugees, a number of steps need to be taken keeping the gender needs in mind. Some of those steps could be installing security patrols in camps especially during nights and improving the lighting inside as well as outside the camps. Having separate accommodations for men and women could also solve some of the issues. Moreover, a mechanism “for urgently resettling refugee women particularly exposed to physical violence and abuse” needs to be in place (Johnsson 227). At the same time, women refugee and women members of refugee protection team need to be active players in analyzing the problems, identifying the solutions and implanting and monitoring the programs established for that purpose. Unless sufficient attention is given to the specific problems and needs of refugee women, they will keep on suffering double marginalization.
Working Citation

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Changing Landscapes in Domestic Violence Research: A Case Study of (and by) a Thai Family

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Abstract

Feminist methodologies treat “experience-based narratives” of women as “acts of storytelling” rather than to search for ‘truth’ in the stories. It also allows stories of non-mainstream women to emerge in a broader and more diverse ways. In response, my study places emphasis on domestic violence which I experienced and directly and indirectly affected by. It reveals “my mother’s stories” (who was affected by violence from my father, the man she loved the most.).

First, she wished to preserve my family and to require my respect to my father, who instigated violence. I resisted, refused and returned my father’s violence with my violence. I even became violent to my mother who I perceived as too weak to resist. Then I developed my conception to an understanding of my father—a “perpetrators” and my mother, who was not just a passive victim. Auto ethnography methodology open a space to see how my mother can manage violence through ‘telling’ her stories and how injustice and inequalities in male-female relationship in Thai society operated through family ideology. Being a good father/mother/child oppressed men and women in Thailand alike. It also reflected learning processes and self-understanding from my being ‘outsider’ and ‘insider’ in the study.

Keywords: Mother Experience, Traumatic Life Event, Domestic Violence

This article originated from my personal interest induced by living in the violence in my family for over 20 years. Even though “I” was not the direct victim of domestic violence, as a “daughter” of a “mother” who was physically and mentally abused, I could not avoid the “impact” of the violence occurring in the life of the woman whom I love the most at all. The traces of the physical injury and mental agony suffered by my mother are still vivid in my memory.

Applying feminist lens to study on domestic violence with a unique methodology, the auto ethnography methodology, is questioned by the mainstream academic circle but one single unit studies in a great detail benefit for opening a new deep and rich perspective in the study of violence in Thai society. It inspired me to think radically and work differently on an academic writing about domestic violence.

To create knowledge from personal experience changes my knowledge and perception of domestic violence forever, as it opened the broader space where I could approach my mother as “subject” of the study as one who chose to stay in the relationship, I also approached my father, who carried out the violence against my mother, through a gender lens rather than from the perspective of a mental disorder or condition of individual psychosis. Moreover, how I approached myself in reflexivity process that allowed me to deal actively with the domestic violence and free myself from pain and hate.

The Human Development Index (H.D.I) and Gender Inequality ranking of Thailand is 83. As a consequence, Thailand is in Medium Human Development Ranking Countries. Meanwhile, the Gender Inequality Index Rank of Thailand is 79 and the Global Gender Gap Index Rank is 71. This research intends to elaborate on the micro dimension which substantial exists in every day’s life which most of the time blank from those national records.

Rereading the experience of violence in my family that I experienced through my mother and reflected to myself. The main points that I will talk about are a mother-daughter relationship, domestic
violence and narrative to cope with a traumatic situation. I obtained interesting observations on violence as follows.

**Mother-Daughter Relationship in Domestic Violence**

My mother was so-called a victim of the domestic violence, I grew up and experienced a domestic violence half of my life. As the eldest daughter, who not only has a close relationship with my mother but was a witness to the domestic violence, I absorbed all the emotions she was undergoing. I put myself in her shoes, trying to figure out how I would feel and what I would do if I were in her situation. I reckoned, I would have responded very differently from her and would have decisively walked away from the relationship.

On the one hand, it seemed I was on her side and supported her. On the other hand, I was very disappointed and disagreed with her “choice” to stay as divorce was not her answer. Despite having loved each other so much. There is a black hole between us that we never approached nor understood. As Luce Irigaray mentioned (Why different, 2000, p.30) “They remain strangers, they’ve accomplices on some level, blind to each other on another.”

Facing with an agonizing dilemma in a close relationship with my mother as a daughter in a domestic violence, according to Irigaray (2000, p.18) “I see the mother-daughter relationship as the dark continents. The darkest point of our social order….this suffering is expressed through tears and screams. I translated into a “silence” between mother and daughter. Certainly, I hated my father who was an abuser and I reacted against him in many ways which made my mother even more saddened and distressed.

I, in turn, was increasingly more confused and upset by her responses. I believed I was helping her, but instead she encouraged me to try to understand my father. I could not accept that. This also led me to react against my mother as I thought she was too weak, helpless, and passive. I hated my mother’s “womanliness” and her weakness and powerless surrendering in the family, and this led to my bad, improper and antagonistic reactions to my mother. Our relation was in crisis no matter how much love we had. It is beyond my understanding.


In the circle of study and research on the issue of domestic violence in Thai society, a large number of academic works both quantitative and qualitative researches have been produced. The recently research by Pananakornsap (Domestic Violence in Couples: Women’s Voices, 2002) which most contributes to woman is move forward to hear the “voice” and the “agent” of women in the domestic violence. Their active role showed by stepping out of the violent relationship or choosing to stay and fighting back which finally ended with murder, otherwise they surrendered and kept silence. This is so far how women in domestic violence have been projected and stereotyped by expert or researcher in Thailand.

Nevertheless, there is no study was done on the negotiating power of women while in the relationship. Studies and researches in the past failed to question and study women who remain in relationships in which men and women have unequal power in the family institution. This issue being overlooked and neglected in Thai academic works. One is blind to women’s active role in negotiating with power and surviving in the domestic violence, especially a middle-class women’s experience. Their higher class and status become a two-edged sword to oppress and silence their voices, discouraged them from losing their social status. Not only they became a blank record on research, but also regrettably overlooked their active “agent” in every day’s life.

Besides, no research on domestic violence has done or written by “the insider”, “the victim” or “the daughter” who once lived in or still live in the relationship. Personally, I, as “a daughter”, have been disappeared by the “adult business”. I closed my eyes, my ears and shut my mouth for 17 years,
until I got used to it as a normal phenomenon that I had to live with it. I lied to myself that the domestic violence was not my business. I was an “outsider” by locking up myself behind the door so as to avoid it.

Finally, the physically abused stopped since I decided and resisted standing beside my mother in the last battering situation, I buried everything in me but I still lived with a deep wound in my mind and live in a family wherein the domestic violent memory has haunted me.

Therefore, the main purpose of this research is to examine the life experience of my mother’s life experience, a so-called middle-class woman and the process of power struggle and negotiation between women, men and children under the context of Thai family. To voice out and write our own stories otherwise we will be written by the experts which academically have excluded us from a domestic violence circle and systematically, have disregard us in a macro legal process.

Way of Resistance: Narrative and Gossip

The relation and interaction in my family were monoplanar, uncomplicated as follow: father ← mother ← children. There was no domestic interaction, or communication between father and the children. Mother was the centre of everyone in the house, the mediator and the messenger in the family. Father communicate with the children or teach them through her, and likewise, children let her speak for them.

Mother could perform this role because she was sensitive, and she did not try to judge anyone. What she tried to do is to empathise, imagine, understand and relate the feelings of each person. She is the oasis amid the desert. The conversations between father and the children could get personal only with mother acting as an interpreter and provider of the language of emotion. According to Ursula K. LeGuin was interestingly explained that the “language of mother” is not only the language for communication but also one for relation, for relatedness, and answers are expected for it. Its essence is conversation, speech and the origin of what encompasses “turning together” (Brown 32).

Gossip was the interesting mode of negotiation that my mother always used against father’s power which she used it in a manner that was fun and casual. Patricia Spacks (Gossip, 2012) pointed out the difference between gossip and discourse by saying that gossip is a talk around the dining table with others while discourse is talking and giving a command from the highest position to a group of persons. Gossips…is like poetry and fiction that cut through the matters to the truth. The gossipers tell one another about themselves by showing how they interpret the information they are sharing, and the response to the news is more important than the message itself. (Belenky 116).

Mother’s everyday struggle is done through her narratives, it enabled my family to remain until today despite the painful past. It is also important to my subjectivity and my thoughts in respect of changing the self and some viewpoints about my parents. In her narratives about father, I saw her struggle. For instance, when she argued with father, she would tell us (her children) about it and added her point of view that opposed or disagreed with his idea, also inserting funny points of view in her own style so that the tone of the narratives would not be too tense. Narrative was the most important tactic she used to fight or show opposition to father without a disruptive confrontation or putting an end to the dispute with violence.

Mother’s narratives were not only used to negotiate or oppose to father’s power in the family, at the same time, her narratives kept ties between father-children and sustained the family. She told stories of us to father, or told us of his stories what he said or thought about us so that we could see that he always observed and cared us from a distance.
All about Love: Love Does Matter

According to mainstream feminists, family, love, marriage were considered as a site of women’s oppression wherein women were kept legally under the authority of men. The question that I had been in my mind was, “Why my mother didn’t break up with my dad?” She was economically and socially independent, she could end the relationship anytime. Instead, she chose not to break up and negotiate with the violence by using her own way.

I never received even single word from her. Nevertheless, she showed me from her actions that love makes sense. She has love for my father so as to understand that he was deprived of his parent’s love. She often told us that father loves us but he does not know how to express that love, she has love for herself so she wanted and chose to fight it in her ways, she has love for children and did not want to give them a stepfather. Love is the essence of her life to keep this family united, she is a person who acts in love and uses her power with love. Therefore, her love is not dominating or oppressing, rather, sustaining our family together.

When she decided to keep the family from disintegrating, she realised that in a patriarchal society it was useless to use the methods of the oppressor or one with the power to fight, to resist, such as fighting back with violence. It would only worsen the situation. Thus, she turned to the tactic of narration as a way to negotiate and contend with father for power.

As her attempt met with success, I could see that her use of power was different from that of father’s. It was using power with love. She used the power of love to transform the violent relationship in the family to giving chances, starting over and understanding, and she also used this power to bind the family members to hold the family together.

Likewise, Whitney (Feminism and Love, 1998) and hooks (All About Love, 2001), Love can express its positive power that can multiply good things for individuals and also maintains the existence of communities. When a mother does everything for her family members with love, it gives a great feedback effect. She is loved, respected and cared for by everyone in her family and in her circles in society. This is the power that my mother uses to negotiate and heal the wounds in the family bond, the power that transforms me from one who hates myself into one who loves and respects myself and my mother.

A mother’s love is a love that builds network, not just in a romantic relationship between individuals like husband and wife or mother and children, but a love that create understanding and respect between all. She did not use this power as a way to dominate the family or keep it for her own, but she used it to re-establish the bond between father and his children. It took her a long time to teach me and show me that love is not a result of victimization and it does not dominate or oppress her to be victimized by the violence in our family.

Conclusion: Self Emancipation and Reflection

In an attempt to recall and make sense of past events, I could see that myself, my feeling, and my knowledge had changed significantly. I realised my roles in this study as a researcher, a woman, a daughter, and an individual were inextricably mingled. The overlapping of these interconnected roles put me an in-between space, with no clear-cut boundaries.

By adopting a feminist perspective, I crystallised this important fact: even though my mother and I are of the same gender, shared the same bloodline, and encountered the same domestic violence,
we often did not always understand each other. Being her daughter did not mean that I could speak for, think for or decide for my mother.

Women’s Studies equipped me with a feminist outlook. It not only opened up my eyes, giving me an insight into the non-violent strategies my mother used in dealing with violence. Still, encouraged me to adopt both inside-out and outside-in perspectives, allowing me to value the power of my mother’s narratives in connecting me to her, my womanliness to hers, and my father to me and as a tactic of every day’s life to heal the wound, I began to recognise my mother’s way of using love and peace to deal with violence.

This knowledge allowed me to overcome the anger and hatred I had towards myself and my body. In the past, the domestic violence caused me a misunderstanding that my father were powerful than my mother in the family life, this kind of thought effected my identity. I hate my woman identity which put me in a passive and powerless position. I started to act and dress like a man which made me feel even more alienated from myself and neglected my mother’s agency.

The most important thing that I learned from my mother’s life according to Irigaray is the way of “approaching the other as other” (Key Writing, 2004, p.23). When I demanded my mother to conform what society or what I expected of her. I neglected her subjectivity, individuality and humanity. I ignored her right to have feelings, love, hate, passion and desires to the extent that I expected her to disregard her own being.

As I understood what she did, I came to have more respect on my mother, on her thoughts and decisions and my view on women changed. As a result, I became proud of being a woman who was born as her child, I came to love my mother and myself more.

Note

Belenky and his team (1986/p.54) explain that subjectivity is women’s realization of the existence of the source of knowledge and value within themselves. As they start to hear the little voice inside them, they will find the source of strength. The turning point of important developments that ensue will have indirect impact on their relationships, concept of selfhood, self-respect, merit and behavior. The growth of women in respect of trust in the instinctive process is an important step in self-defense, self-confidence and self-definition. Women will become individuals with power in themselves sand also a sense for negotiation and control.
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Domestic Violence against Women and Girls from Social Anthropology Analysis Perspective: Case study of Vietnam

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Abstract:

Domestic violence is one of the social problems that cause physical and mental harm to the victims, especially women and girls. An anthropological analysis of domestic violence against women and girls in Vietnam after 10 years of implementation of the Laws on Domestic Violence and Gender Equality has been conducted based on the results of fieldwork in five provinces of Vietnam with surveys in 2017. Processing survey quantitative data on the SPSS software and qualitative data, the article explained the causes of violence acts, in which significant cases of violence against women and girls by family members derive from the views, stereotypes and symbols of gender roles and gender relations in Vietnamese families. In addition, the effects of urbanization, modernization and other social factors also make domestic violence more complex and dangerous. There are differences in domestic violence against women and girls in some ethnic minority groups, and influenced by Confucianism and Patriarchalism.

Key words: Domestic violence, gender equality, exclusive

1. Introduction

Domestic violence is the issue of not only a country or territory but also a global issue, especially in the fight for equality of development opportunity for women. Violence against women means “any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life” [1]. Violence against women is a pandemic affecting all countries, even those that have made laudable progress in other areas. Worldwide, 35% of women have experienced either physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence or non-partner sexual violence [2].

Domestic violence does not only cause physical and mental damage to the victims, but also becomes a barrier to the development opportunities of its victims, particularly with women and girls. In Southeast Asia, the cultures of the countries in the region are quite diverse and in different colors, but violence against women is having a certainly similar impact to the development of women.

According to a national survey of Laos in 2009 about violence against women, it was reported that violence is common, psychological violence was prevalent (46%) and included public insults or humiliation, intimidation or direct threats. In terms of physical violence, approximately 20% of women experienced such abuse at least once in their lifetimes, such as being slapped, kicked, choked, hit or pushed and 76% had been injured as a result of physical violence, while 36% had sustained repeated injuries. The current (2014), overall lifetime prevalence of physical violence by a partner or husband among ever-partnered women in Lao PDR was 11.6%, with little difference between urban and rural areas (12.0% to 12.4%) [3].

The National Survey of Cambodia Study found that Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) is a common experience in many women’s lives. Fifteen percent of ever-partnered women aged 15-64 reported having experienced physical IPV and 10% reported having experienced sexual IPV. Overall, 21% of ever-partnered women, aged 15-64, reported having experienced at least one act of physical or sexual violence, or both, by an intimate partner at some point in their lives. Eight percent of ever-partnered women reported having experienced physical and/or sexual IPV in the past 12 months [4].

In Vietnam, the Law on Domestic Violence Prevention and Control passed by the National Assembly introduced in 2007 has made remarkable progress in the prevention of domestic violence and violence
against women and girls. However, according to the results of the national surveys, the types of domestic violence remain quite complex.

From an anthropology perspective, the causes of domestic violence can be traced to cultural and social factors, in which cultural icons and patterns appear to be the underlying factors that make domestic violence become persistent, even more serious, in the context of modernization and urbanization in Vietnam today. In the Vietnamese culture, women are only highly respected if they are the rulers, caretakers of the family, together with the husband in taking care of the household economy, men are the pillars of the households, carrying out the essential work of the family and external activities. This concept seems to be a burden on women’s shoulders as they simultaneously have to take care of their livelihoods, care for their children and take care of their families. This becomes one of the causes of domestic violence if a wife fails to fulfill her role with her family or does not satisfy her husband with the culture of the family and community.

In the context of Vietnamese family culture, men often have more decision-making power and force women in the family to submit to their decisions. Domestic violence originates from the gender perspective of patriarchal ideology, the husband’s patriarchal view appears to be the main cause of her husband's violent behavior towards his wife. The influence of Confucian ideology with the symbol of power belongs to men, fathers are the kings in the house, husbands are the kings to their wives, women only have the right to obey and accept every decision of the husband, which is commonly seen in the family culture of Vietnam [5]. This is one of the deepest causes of a husband's violent behavior towards his wife. In addition, the perception that women must be censure and tolerate when the husband and son have inadequate attitudes to preserve the warmth of the family with advice for women such as: "a soft answer turns away wrath" (Vietnamese: cơm sôi bớt lửa) or " a bad compromise is better than a lawsuit" (Vietnamese: một điều nhịn, chín điều lành) caused many domestic violence to occur and persisted with the victims who are mainly women and girls. Ill-treatment and violence against women and girls are not recognized by the community, so it is a private matter for every family, without timely intervention, it still has a strong influence on today. This is also the reason why the current situation of domestic violence is more and more complex.

The ideal model is that the man in the family has the right to decide and have a higher position, so they have the right to "teach their wives" when they are not satisfied [6]. In addition, in many cases, the wife is also at risk of being abused by other people's views or public opinion on gender positions and roles in which the dominant power is male gender [7]. Domestic violence is considered by many people in the community to be normal and acceptable when the fault is usually attributable to the woman.

2. Method and materials

The report uses the results of a field survey from a study by the Institute for Family and Gender Studies conducted in 2017. The questionnaire was designed into 3 parts: Part 1 contains personal information and living conditions of the elderly; part 2 is family relationships and the state of domestic violence; Part 3 is perceptions and attitudes towards domestic violence.

Qualitative data was collected from the results of in-depth interviews based on real life stories of domestic violence victims, using the method of presenting the course of violence through important milestones that mark the course of violence against women. This kind of interview also clarifies relationships among family members that may increase or mitigate domestic violence.

In particular, in this study, we have developed guidelines for gathering information according to the life-story method, selecting the important milestones of the victim or perpetrator to clarify the evolution of violence and the causes/factors that influence the rise or fall of domestic violence against women.

The survey was conducted in five provinces, including Ninh Binh, Lao Cai, Thua Thien-Hue, Dak Lak and An Giang of Vietnam. In the total number of questionnaires, there were 1603 from for the household representatives.
The selection of provinces to represent regions in Vietnam is due to its distinct cultural characteristics. This study also attempts to analyze and identify how cultural and social differences affect domestic violence against women and girls in different regions, ethnic groups and cultures.

3. Research results

3.1. Current status of domestic violence against women

According to UN Women, Viet Nam has achieved many achievements in promoting gender equality and eliminating gender-based violence [8]. However, in reality, Vietnamese women still face many risks, including acts of domestic violence. Domestic violence is becoming increasingly complex and dangerous, not only mental abstinences such as abandonment, isolation from children or relatives, hard labor, physical violence, and even life-danger (death). In Viet Nam, nearly 6 out of every 10 ever-married women have experienced some form of physical, sexual, or emotional violence at some time in their life.42 Domestic violence was estimated to cost 3.2 percent of Viet Nam’s GDP, by calculating the total productivity losses and potential opportunity costs. At the same time, women experiencing domestic violence earn on average 35 percent less than other women [9].

A national study on domestic violence against Vietnamese women in 2010 found that six out of 10 ever-partnered women had suffered at least one violent act in their lifetime. The proportion of women experiencing violence is significant, with 58% of women experiencing at least one type of violence in their lifetime and 27% of those experiencing violence in the past 12 months. 32% of ever-partnered women have experienced physical violence in their lives and 6% have experienced it in the 12 months prior to the survey; 10% of women have ever experienced sexual violence and 54% of women have ever experienced emotional violence. Up to 34.4% of married women have been physically or sexually abused by husbands and 9% of women have experienced violence in the last 12 months. Up to 53.6% of the women in the sample ever experienced mental violence in their lives and 25.4% of the women experienced emotional violence in the past 12 months. More often, violated women’ incomes35% lower than that of non-violated women, and women suffering from violence tend to fall into poverty or disease. Trafficking of women and girls is a common occurrence, especially in remote and isolated areas [10].

Domestic violence includes psychological and physical violence that causes the woman to be in a state of fatigue, resulting in significant household economic losses. Estimated economic loss to women experiencing domestic violence are significant when they are absent from work, wound treatment, income reduction, and medication costs. In addition, other damages due to property damage, disability or inability of taking care of children, or more time spent on mediation, grievance and other related service costs. Household income loss for each violence incurred to women account for up to 10.5% of their monthly income, not to mention health impairment and damage caused by opportunity costs. It directly affects the labor productivity that women suffer for a long time afterwards [11].

Results of the survey in 2017 in five provinces of Vietnam of the IFGS show that domestic violence is still high in the population. As many as 47% of respondents said they had experienced violence in their lives, and in the past 12 months, 31.9% had been treated with at least one violent behavior from their loved ones in the family. In particular, the acts of emotional violence are mainly behaviors such as scolding, cursing, prohibiting to contact, meet, visit friends and relatives; not allowed to involve in community activities and have jealousy and control over their daily activities. Physical violence also occurs with behaviors such as hair grasping, kicking, punching, slapping, fettering, destroying property.

Violent acts of a serious physical or mental nature often occur between husband and wife. The results of the 2017 study by the research team are quite similar to the results of previous national research studies in 2006 and 2012. For example, the behavior of hair pulling occurs to the wife more often (13.3%), 100% is caused by the husband. On the level of behavior, with the wife, hair pulling was quite frequent with a daily frequency (4.4%), several times a week (11.1%), several times a month (20.0%) and several times a year (48.9%) (P <0.001). Of the total of 49 victims who suffered violence...
by hair pulling, strangling, three were male, but only several times a year. One of the most despicable behaviors was the fettering, confinement of the victim and unwanted sexual intercourse. There were five cases where women in the sample survey were tied up and detained several times a year (representing 1.5% of the 508 women victims of domestic violence). Victims of unwanted sexual intercourse were 14 (4.1%).

Scolding and threatening behaviors occur more often, especially to women. Of the 514 victims, 27.4% were women and 12.6% were male. This clearly demonstrates the victims of psychological violence are women. Scolding is happening to both men and women, but women suffer more and the level of tolerance is greater than that of men.

Behavior of property damage is also common with the persons who perform the act are the husbands. The survey found that 9.7% of the respondents had been property-destroyed by the husbands. Financial control behaviors show that gender relations are different, as many as 13.7% of men think that they have been financially controlled to cause conflicts in their families, corresponding to that of women is 8.6%.

Domestic violence often results in the couple being forced to separate, even divorce. In the sample, 32.8% of women with domestic violence were separated, of which the causes of violence were from husbands in 9 cases and from the wife in 2 cases.

When asked about behavior that has the greatest impact on safety and life, 64.8% of women think they have had at least one behavior in the last 12 months that has affected their lives. Similarly, respondents said that the behaviors that have occurred in the past 12 months have also had an impact on their lives, including those who have committed acts of violence. Only 35.2% of women thought that the behaviors they had suffered had occurred and had not been repeated in the past 12 months. This shows that the current practice of domestic violence still occurs regularly and there are no signs of reduction.

3.2. Factors from social and cultural to domestic violence women

Through surveys in five provinces, demographic characteristics and some family cultural factors are closely related to domestic violence. At present, 30.8% of households have 3 generations living together, 0.8% have 4 generations living together. In particular, the number of generations in the family is relatively more related to domestic violence.

![Chart 1: Correlation between family generation and violence](image)

About the cause of violence, a significant proportion of those who have been victims of violence have witnessed violence by parents when they were young and live with their parents. A survey of 1603 household representatives found that 28% of men and 27.3% of women respondents had seen their parents quarreling or scolding at each other. 11.4% of women and 10.4% of men said that their spouses had also witnessed violence between their parents before they got married. 23% of women and 26% of men have ever witnessed their brothers and sisters quarreling and scolding each other. In particular, up to 42.4% of women and 50.2% of men have ever seen neighbors close to them quarreling and scolding. In view of the theory of the cycle of violence, witnessing previous violent acts is also one of the causes
of current violent acts by the perpetrator of violence and by victims of violence. Violence is said to be a normal phenomenon in everyday life.

The results of the real-life-story method show that violence occurrence is more common in families experiencing violence, especially with husbands experiencing violence from an early age. The vortex of violence increases as family relationships become more complex, leading to violent acts not only on one member but also affects all members of the family. The life story below is a proof.

Mr. H, Ms. L got married in 1999, first they lived with the mother-in-law, and then moved out after 1 year. Both of them are workers. Conflicts began when the relationship between the couple and his mother turned bad. The mother-in-law and the wife often quarreled because of different lifestyle, though the mother-in-law ate separately, she usually interfered with the couple. Mr. H has a habit of drinking. Since 2002, after his wife gave birth to two children (one boy, one girl), family stress increased due to the economic burden. Mr. H repeatedly cursed his mother, beating up his wife without a reason. Ms. L has been hit at least twice during pregnancy and raising children. In 2006, he suffered from 2 accidents and 2 treatment sessions at a hospital. After he came to hospital, he repeatedly insulted his mother and beat his wife. The burden of healing and the household economy burden of raising her husband made L complain and become irritated with her husband, she often loudly quarreled with her husband and scolded. Violence escalated with all family members. The son who often witnessed the parents arguing, mother being beaten, scolded became bored and played truant ... (Life story in Bich Dao commune; In-depth interview, female victim, 43 years old, husband of victim 45 years old, mother-in-law 65 years old).

The results of the study in 2017 also show that drunkenness and beer are common in the community. As many as 87.2% of the respondents think that domestic violence is caused by the phenomenon of drinking alcohol that the drinker is mainly the husband. For economic reasons, other causes such as gambling are also high (28%), debt financing leads to difficult household income (33.6%) or children play costly electronic games play is also the cause of domestic violence (5.3%).

Notably, property ownership has a significant relationship to domestic violence. Among those who have been treated for at least three violent acts, up to 40% of them are on temporary housing, 21.7% are living with their parents and 20% are renting. Of the 215 people who have been treated for at least three acts of domestic violence, 10.1% of the respondents said that their spouses were in conflict and 5.7% were scolded for abuse because they do not earn money for their families because of low-income jobs.

Domestic violence is more common in couples with few years of marriage. For example, 25.6% of respondents who have had at least 3 domestic violence married for 10 years or less; 34.4% have married from 11 to 20 years and 27.4% have married from 21 to 29 years. Meanwhile, the number of couples with more than 30 years of marriage has less violent behavior (12.6%).

Research investigates the violent behavior of all family members towards the husband and wife. The results show that both husbands and wives are victims of domestic violence. However, the proportion of wives experiencing violence is higher than husbands in both psychology and physical violence.

This study further confirms the relationship between home ownership and violence against women. Specifically, the proportion of wives experiencing psychological violence and physical violence in the couple who own private homes is 43.6% and 7.4%, respectively, compared with 56.1% and 13.4% of wives with violence who have no home ownership (p <0.05). In addition, the shortages in daily spending are also a risk factor for violence. The proportion of wives suffering from domestic violence with inadequate income is 51.9%, while the proportion in the adequate income family group is 32% (p <0.001). Similar ratio applied for physical violence, which was 10.9% and 5.4% (p <0.05).

Relating to family income in the last 12 months, the likelihood of women experiencing psychological violence is negatively correlated with income: the lower the income, the higher the incidence of mental violence (p <0.001) (Table 1).
Table 1: Impact of socio-economic factors of violence of husbands to wives
(Results of logistic regression analysis)

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<tr>
<th>Independent variables</th>
<th>Violence of husbands to wives</th>
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<td>Model 1</td>
<td>Final Model</td>
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<td>Difference ratio</td>
<td>Difference ratio</td>
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<td>Comparison of income contribution</td>
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<td>Husbands contribution is higher</td>
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<td>Equal contribution</td>
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<td>Wives contribution is higher</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>154</td>
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<td>Lack of spending in the last 12 months</td>
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<td>Regularly</td>
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<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>1.6**</td>
<td>1.6*</td>
<td>373</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td>1.7**</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>132</td>
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<td>Never</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>367</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Risk of damage in the last 12 months</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>No</td>
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<td>0.8</td>
<td>586</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
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<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>House ownership status</td>
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<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>247</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>Community relationship</td>
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<tr>
<td>Not friendly</td>
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<td>1.4*</td>
<td>391</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>831</td>
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<tr>
<td>Husband involved in social negativity</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.5***</td>
<td>758</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>464</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Husband involved in social negativity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>0.3***</td>
<td></td>
<td>1178</td>
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<tr>
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<td>1579</td>
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<td>k</td>
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Signification level: ***<0.01; **<0.05; *<0.1

To examine the relationship between the role of the wife in the family and the violent behavior of family members, the study used a family decision-maker indicator (specifically, in deciding expensive item purchase) with two values: 1- The wife has a saying in the decision; 2- The wife has no saying in the decision. If the wife has a voice in deciding, is there less violence? Analytical results support this assumption, but the difference is not significant. When the wife has a decisive role in the family, the incidence of violence is less than that of the non-speaking wife group: 33.2% versus 47.8% (p <0.05).

Wives’ perception of family duty is also a factor that affects violence. The wives who agree with the view that “a good wife must always listen to her husband even when she disagrees” have higher rate of psychological violence than the non-consenting group: 52.6% versus 43.9% (p <0.01). It is because of the notion that men have higher positions, the head of the family, have the right to express their status and have the right to bring their wives into "discipline", especially when the wife does something "wrong" to shame the husband, which was mentioned in the in-depth interviews not giving birth to a son, accepting violence, restricting to seeing her parents when her husband forbids her (because her husband is afraid she will tell stories of his violence), and even isolate herself, do not dare contact with neighbors for fear of people knowing she is being hit by her husband.

“My husband always wants to have a son, but I couldn’t give birth to one, so every time coming back home from a clan meeting or feast, he creates some troubles. One time he punched on my face, one side of my face was bruised, I didn’t dare to go back to my mom or neighbor as I am afraid, he thinks I talk ill behind his back, and I was embarrassed too. Female victim of domestic violence, job: small business
The results of the in-depth interviews also show that a cultural bias regarding the ability of a woman to experience violence is the woman's own thinking about the need to keep family issues private as "bad husband, embarrassed wife". Acceptance of living in violence has contributed to violence and the maintenance of violence.

For little girls, domestic violence becomes an obsession as they grow up. According to survey data in five provinces in Vietnam, 27.6% of respondents (675 respondents) reported having domestic violence against girls in their families. Of these, 152 girls between the ages of 10 and 16 years were subjected to psychological violence (53%); 78 girls were physically abused (27.6%). The violent behavior suffered by the girl from her mother is slapping her face (11.8%); hit the buttocks or legs, hand (87.6%). According to the girls, the main reason for the beatings is that the fathers are often drunk, have debt and often commit violent acts against their wives and children. Domestic violence against girls has resulted in serious physical and mental harm to the girls. 33.9% of the abused children were always in a state of fear, 83.9% of the children were in a state of sadness and anxiety, especially 7.6% of the abused girls were willing to run away from home. A rather surprising finding in this study was that, a significant proportion of girls with domestic violence did not know who to share with, they often quietly tolerated (42.9%), 32.5% abused girls have confided to their family members, often mothers and fathers. The causes of violence against girls are also often the result of family conflicts, most commonly in families with frequent conflicts between parents, 56.7% of domestic violence girl victims have seen their parents fight.

4. Discussion

After 10 years of implementation of relevant laws such as the Law on Domestic Violence Prevention and Control, the Law on Gender Equality, domestic violence has tended to decrease but still complicated. The results of the survey conducted by the research group in 2017 in five provinces show that 22.6% of women experienced violent acts in the 12 months prior to the survey, such as hair pulling, punching, kicking, undesired sexual intercourse, threatening, scolding.

The main cause of violence against women and girls are influence of cultural stereotypical about the role of women in the family is also the reason for the often-resigned woman who accepts violence. Violent experiences in life and cohabitation in a multi-layered family also have implications for domestic violence, particularly for husbands and fathers causing violence.

However, there are many other causes in the current social development context, such as the difficult household economy, lack of jobs, children's playing, etc. In particular, cultural causes also have considerable impact on domestic violence such as many generations living together in the same roof and the witness of domestic violence have led to a series of violence against couples today, especially young couples.

5. Conclusion

Although the Government of Vietnam has made great efforts in promulgating laws relating to the prevention of violence against women and girls, in fact there are still many women and girls who are abused by their family members. There are many factors that affect the violence against women and girls, notably cultural factors that seem to be a barrier to the prevention of violence against women and girls in Vietnam. Victims of violence are women and girls who are not properly supported and assisted by the community and the network of safeguards when violence occurs as the victims themselves do not want to denounce the person, family members often cover acts of domestic violence.
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Consumerism Among Emirati Female Students: A Socio-Cultural Perspective

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Abstract

This study examines how young consumers in UAE, with special emphasis on female university students, are actively employing consumer goods and services to forge and express their socio-cultural identities. It seeks to explore how consumer practices, especially those related to luxurious products and brands, function as markers of socio-cultural and economic uniqueness. Consumption is interpreted as a socio-cultural practice, rather than a pure economic one, where multiple imaginations and images meet and interact. Commodities do not barely serve to satisfy basic needs, but also to create and negotiate identity and distinction.

The study adopts an anthropological framework in terms of its methodology and analysis. Ethnographic data were collected primarily through conducting in-depth interviews with 350 students in UAE University in Al Ain city, UAE during the Fall and Spring semesters of the academic year 2016-2017.

Keywords: consumerism; luxury brands; social agency; identity; UAE

Introduction

Hyper-consumerism, a dominant feature of most current societies, has been associated with globalization as they are highly intertwined. Consumerism has become central to understanding the socio-cultural and economic dynamics of globalization. With the shift to a transnational regime of capital accumulation, the capitalist class has deployed several forms of influence to create better arrangements for the success of their project of wealth accumulation. The promotion of the culture-ideology of consumerism as well as channeling people’s desires and consumer practices have been vital strategies in this project. In other words, consumerism is viewed as a capitalistic ideology (Rouse 1995) which highlights and promotes the importance of conspicuous consumption, overspending, and “shop till you drop” attitudes (Benady 2008; Tugend 2008).

Traditionally, consumer practices have been approached as pure economic activities in which consumption is governed by the supply-demand model, and commodities are consumed mainly for their use-values. In contrast, the new theoretical trend, adopted and promoted by post-modernists in particular, highlights the socio-cultural politics of consumer practices as consumption entails the active manipulation of signs where sign and commodity have come together to produce the “commodity-sign”. Ultimately, signs are consumed, not objects (Baudrillard 1998). Therefore, the practice of consumption is no longer viewed as the end process of the economic cycle. It, rather, produces images, meanings, experiences and identities. According to Jameson (1991), the postmodern society is a consumer society which is saturated with signs, messages and images, and where the commodification of culture and the aestheticization of commodity are very intensive.

Many scholars (Beck 1992; Giddens 1991; Bauman 1988) maintain that people define themselves through the goods and consumer practices they possess and display. Thus, as the consumer defines the product, the product too defines the consumer. Products and services act as symbolic objects and represent what the consumer can be or cannot be without them (OdaBaĶı, 1999).

Young people, in particular, are immersed in the culture of consumption such that almost every aspect of their life is touched by it. Due to the fact that they have less financial responsibilities than adults and several sources of income, the teens’ buying power is huge because most of their money is spent directly on themselves (Akcay 2012; Carter 2011).
Purpose of the study

In light of the unprecedented rising level of materialism and consumerism in UAE, more young Emiratis, just like young people elsewhere, are turning into hyper-consumers. Given that the great majority of them come from rich families, their consumer practices, especially those related to luxurious products and affluence, have become an essential part of their daily practices, and thus of their personal identities.

This study seeks to investigate the socio-cultural dynamics of young Emiratis’ consumer practices, with special emphasis on university students. Among the main questions that the study is concerned with are: how do young Emiratis make decision to spend their available resources (time, money and effort)? How do they use products and brands to construct and promote their identities, on the personal and collective levels? How common is e-shopping among young consumers? How does students’ Arab-Islamic culture shape their consumer practices?

One could argue that the consumer practices of young Emiratis, females in particular, have not been systematically studied. Not enough attention by sociologists and anthropologists has been given to this significant issue. Through investigating the socio-cultural dynamics of female students’ consumer practices, using in-depth interviews, this study seeks to fill this gap in research and literature.

A case in point here is that female students of UAEU do not represent a homogenous group. There are some financial and cultural differences among them. Students who come from Al Ain, Abu Dhabi and Dubai are usually more liberal and wealthier than those who come from other Emirates. Such differences have significant implications for their consumer practices and product preferences.

It should be noted here that the study was funded by the United Arab Emirates University (UAEU) as part of a Start-Up grant from the college of Humanities and Social Sciences during the period of 2016-2018.

Methodology

This study is based on primary data collected from students of United Arab Emirates University (UAEU), Al Ain, UAE. All interviewed students were undergraduate female students, given that the campus is divided into two main sections- males’ section and females’ section- in accordance with the society’s cultural values and norms. The UAEU is the oldest university in the country as it was established in 1976, few years after the establishment of the union in 1971, by the late president and the founding father of the UAE, Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan.

About 350 in-depth interviews were conducted with students on campus with the help of three research assistants. The interviewees were selected randomly from the different colleges in the university. The general education course “Folkllore” that I was teaching in Fall and Spring 2016-2017 helped me tremendously in this regard as students from different majors were enrolled in it. Some interviews were arranged and planned with students ahead of time while others were unarranged. Most of the latter took place in students’ cafeteria and in public places where students tend to gather and socialize. The majority of interviewed students were locals who come from different Emirates in UAE. Non-locals were also included in the study for comparative purposes.

Studying male students’ consumer practices is currently undergoing. Several in-depth interviews have been conducted. Research is expected to reveal significant differences and similarities between male and female students’ consumer practices and preferences.

Materialism in UAE

Materialism is a complex, multi-faceted phenomenon (Larsen et al., 1999 which has been studied by scholars from many disciplines such as sociology, anthropology, advertising, marketing, psychology
and political sciences. Materialism is defined by scholars as a value where one assigns excessive importance to having and owning material goods; it implies people’s strong attachment to materialistic values and possessions (Belk 1984; Larsen et al. 1999). We treat materialism as a learned personal value capable of permeating an entire society (Arthur et al. 2017).

The UAE society has recently undergone major transformations in various realms. Unprecedented waves of globalization and modernization have changed many aspects of the Emirati culture and society, including, but not limited to, food, music, clothes, ideas. These transformations have reshaped people’s held dispositions and notions of space, community, identity and culture, among many others. One direct result of this has been the wide spread of the culture-ideology of consumerism which has in turn led to high rates of consumption. As Arthur et al. note “the dramatic transformation of the UAE over the past four decades, coupled with the relatively young population, increases the likelihood that materialistic values have been cultivated among the population (2017:1).

It should be noted here that the UAE is a diverse multicultural society. According to several administrative records, the total population of UAE for the year 2016 was 9,121,176. The great majority of the population (almost 85%) are expatriates. In consumerism, inter-cultural differences influence consumers’ buying behaviors. Thus, a shift in market trends due to a growing multicultural population has induced marketers to update their marketing strategies (Vadakepat 2013).

In the last few years, the Emirati market, just like many regional and international markets, has become saturated with global commodities as the national trade sector is growing rapidly. The UAE is considered one of the most globalized societies due to its unique and unparalleled ethnic diversity of inhabitants, the large existence of TNCs, and the advanced technology and infrastructure available in the country. The rate of importing services and consumable goods, in the Emirates of Dubai and Abu Dhabi in particular, has been rising remarkably since the 1970s due to the rapid development of infrastructure and the increasing revenues from oil export.

Despite the unprecedented growth of economy and infrastructure in the UAE, the country is still inexorably bound by deeply religious and traditional values that remain evident in all aspects of life (Al-Khazraji 2009). The UAE society strives to maintain its traditions in the face of rapid waves of globalization and modernization. Official discourse has always highlighted the successful experience of the country of employing traditional Emirati culture to safeguard the country as it is transformed by lightning economic growth.

One of the main reasons behind the rising levels of materialism and consumerism in UAE is the belief by the majority of people that “owning things is typically used as a measure of success. The woman who owns the Rolls-Royce is more successful than the man who owns the Toyota Corolla. The family with the big house is more successful than the family with the small apartment. The lady with the expensive handbag is more successful than the lady who carries around a plastic bag. We define success as happiness, when really it should be the other way around” (Al-Amri). In a survey conducted by the market-research company YouGov Siraj, 60 per cent of Emiratis questioned said they felt a sense of isolation as their cultural identity became increasingly diluted by large numbers of expatriates. In contrast, 71 per cent of the Western expatriates surveyed said that the biggest threat to Emirati culture and identity was the country’s "highly materialistic and consumerist society" (Richardson 2008).

Furthermore, as consumption enables people forge identities, one possible consequence of materialism at the societal level may be a representational shift in national identity. For example, in a rapidly developing wealthy nation such as the UAE, it is possible that Emirati national identity becomes intertwined with luxurious and unnecessary consumption. While the development of such a national identity would cement the UAE’s position in the modern world, it would also place many Emiratis in an unsustainable position when trying to align with their national identity (Arthur et al. 2017)
Social Media and E-Shopping

E-commerce has evolved drastically in the last few years. More and more people are turning to online shopping. They buy products and services over the internet. Price, confidence, security, convenience, time, after sale service and discounted deals have been identified among the important factors that motivate people to shop online (Nazir et al. 2012).

Consumer practices and choices are increasingly influenced by the use of social media. Cásaló et al. (2011) point out that this phenomenon is motivating deep changes in consumer behavior. Yang et al. indicate that “the development of online communities has reshaped consumers' information-seeking and sharing behavior.” (2012:371). Technology in general and internet in particular have made it easier for businesses to have information on their products and services available to their potential customers (Vesterby & Chabert, 2001). Smith and Rupp (2003) have identified the factors that affect the behavior of consumers, including the socio-cultural influence, emotional factor, the psychological factors and privacy factors, the purchase and post-purchase decisions. They also show that consumers are affected by various psychological factors, such as perception, motivation, personality, attitudes and emotions.

Ethnographic data of this study reveal that E-shopping has become a very common practice among young consumers in general and students in particular, in light of the very advanced technology as well as the ever-expanding culture-ideology of consumerism. The great majority of interviewed students shop online on a regular basis. The top sites followed and used for this purpose are: Namshi, Souq, Amazon, Sivvi, Youmah, Lets Tando (among many others). As for what they shop online, students’ answers were as follows: clothes, shoes, and bags (first place); cosmetics and personal care (second place); perfumes and sunglasses (third place); electronic devices (fourth Place); and miscellaneous things (fifth place). In regard to the technology used for online shopping, the great majority of students use their mobile phones and I-Pads; very few of them use laptops.

In an interview with Shaikha, she narrates: “I do not shop at malls or stores, I just buy things online. I have been doing this for the last 5 years. Online shopping gives you more options and saves time and energy. It also gives you the latest models and brands.” Noura too indicates that “sometimes you get excellent deals online. I know people who always look for copy products and they get them for cheap prices. Most of these products are bought via Instagram.”

Another issue that most interviewees stressed is that they follow bloggers or “fashionistas” on Instagram and other social media. Bloggers are locals, Arabs, or international famous figures such as: Noha Nabil (a TV presenter and social media star from Kuwait), Lojain Omran (TV presenter from Saudi Arabia), Taim Alfalasy (an Emirati radio host), and Huda Kattan (an Iraqi-American fashion model). Most of these bloggers live in UAE, particularly in Dubai. Their degree of influence is usually rooted in how many followers they have and who their followers are. The names of these bloggers are very common among most students. They also recommend them to each other.

This rising phenomenon clearly demonstrates the significant role of advertising in shaping people’s consumer practices and attitudes. Consumers’ choices are highly influenced by what they see on social media. “The advertisements not only change the way of product is consumed by user but alter the attitude with which they look at the product” (Rai 2013).

Non-local students practice online shopping to a lesser degree than locals. Financial incapability is obviously a major reason behind that. Amal, a Syrian student, points out “I just go to a store to buy things. I do not even have a credit card to order things online. Besides, why pay more for shipment?” Yasmine, a Sudanese student, adds “I always shop with my mother in the mall; she helps me choose things, especially clothes. She pays for that too.”

Some non-local students are actually bothered by how locals are obsessed with brands and the big amount of money they spend on buying them. Areej informed me about one her local friends, Amneh,
and how she would come to campus wearing stuff (watch, bag, shoes, phones, and clothes) that is worth too much money, something like AED 80,000. She kept saying to me “can you believe that? Is she coming to classes or to a party?” Another student says,” I know some students who buy things only to be photographed in Snapchat or Instagram, and this is really a strange habit”

Consumerism and Identity

Due to its malleability, fragmentation and instability, individual and group identity is constantly being rewritten in response to changing circumstances. Several scholars have addressed the key role played by consumer practices and material possessions in the construction of consumers’ identities. A significant share of consumerism provides people with tools through which they can construct and express their identities and display their socio-economic statuses. People seem to fashion themselves through what they consume, be it clothes, food, music, or other products.

Mary Douglas describes consumption as “the means by which we create and identify roles and groups” both through association and distinction ( ). Anthony Giddens too argues that “modernity opens up the project of the self, but under conditions strongly influenced by the standardizing effects of commodity capitalism” (1991: 196). Along the same lines, Williamson (cited by Gabriel 2013: 81), argues that consumerism, through advertising, ‘sells us ourselves’ as we recreate ourselves every day in accordance with an ideology based on property – where we are defined by our relationship to things and possessions, rather than to each other. Lash and Friedman (1992) also point out that identity in postmodernity deeply roots itself in culture but in the form of the commodity rather than the group.

Indeed, the hegemonic project of the capitalist class and its allies entails reshaping people’s dispositions regarding not only work and political action but also consumption. As Dunn (1998) notes, the central strategy of the flexible regime of capital accumulation has accelerated the rate of production and specialization targeted at particular segments of the market. Consumption speedup requires that styles appear, disappear, and then reappear with great rapidity. Also, Harvey (2000) indicates that flexible accumulation requires strategic industries like fashion and advertising to target selected parts of the population to facilitate consumer motivation and choice in a way that is consistent with an accelerated production and marketing of goods.

According to a report by Chalhoub Group (2013), the GCC (Gulf Cooperation Council) is an attractive market for luxury brand owners, with a high level of purchasing power that belies its relatively small consumer base. More than in the rest of the world, the younger generation consumers in the Gulf have known wealth since birth and are already experienced consumers of luxury. UAE residents say luxury is not just an indulgence but a lifestyle, and feel less guilty about buying flashy high-end goods than their counterparts in many other countries. A quarter of the people surveyed in the UAE said luxury was a lifestyle, and only one in five said luxury was "over and above what you need" (Ligaya 2010 - the National). Among the main factors influencing people’s decision to buy luxury products were the opinions of others; mostly peers, family, role models, and celebrities. People tend to pay close attention and follow the footsteps of opinion leaders when making decisions regarding luxury goods. Emiratis strongly believed that the luxury products they owned was a reflector of their social image; therefore, they were very cautious in their luxury purchases and often took inspiration from the upper social classes (Prakash Vel et. Al 2011)

Through buying luxurious brands-mainly bags, sunglasses and shoes- and consuming them conspicuously, UAEU students seek to express their wealth, but more importantly their personal identities. They use their available resources (mainly money and time) to express their style and distinction, to be labelled “stylish”. It is not uncommon to see students walking on campus with Chanel bag and Armani or Rolex watches, in addition to other luxurious products. When asked about the main reason that makes young consumers in general and students in particular buy brands, most interviewed students answer “boasting, showing off, and obsession” in addition to the high quality. As Alserhan et.
al (2014) mention, it is a common thing among our female students to talk about what brands they are wearing and from where they bought these brands. For example, it is considered prestigious to proclaim that “I bought this bag from London” or “I went to shop x in Paris.”

Given that students on campus are all girls who come from rich families, and that most, if not all, of them wear similar traditional clothes (Abaya² and Sheila³), students distinguish themselves and create their personal identities through brands. One may initially think that they all look the same, when in reality they are not. The style and fabric of the Abaya as well as the logo on its back symbolize the style of the person and her knowledge and awareness of fashion. As one student narrates: “I buy only brands because they make me look different and thus feel good about myself. They are worth the money you pay for them.” Another student points out that “each person has a style and you try to present your style through what you wear and consume. People these days judge you based on how you look.”

Young consumers in UAE continuously adapt Western brands to the local Arab-Islamic culture and traditions. This demonstrates the active role of the consumer. Hannerz ( ) and Willis ( ) stress the agency of the consumers to select and adapt products according to their desires, knowledge and interests. Consumers impose their own systems of values and practices on imported products. This can be clearly noticed in consuming clothes and cosmetics. As has been mentioned before, Emirati females wear the black Abaya and Sheila in accordance with the local traditions and norms. However, the design of the Abaya and its color has changed significantly over time. Young consumers seek continuously to adapt them to fashion and fads. Some of them wear jeans pants underneath the Abaya.

Conclusion

As has been discussed throughout this study, consumption is examined as a social and cultural process involving cultural signs and symbols rather than a pure economic, utilitarian one (Bocock, 2005).

Young Emiratis in general and female students in particular have increasingly become hyper-consumers. Several significant factors have contributed to unprecedented rising levels of materialism and consumerism in the UAE including advanced technology, financial capability, and spread of giant shopping centers and malls which are saturated with luxury products and brands. In a society that values physical appearance, people become obsessed with conspicuous consumption and symbolic value to commodities. Physical appearance and attractiveness are very important for females, especially if they are young.

Interviewed female students have shown a rising appetite for consuming luxury brands. Technology and social media have played a vital role in brand consciousness among then. They tend to spend their available resources (money, time, technology, knowledge) on consumption. They seek through their consumer practices to define themselves and to display their personal styles.

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2 A loose over-garment, essentially a robe-like dress. It is usually black and covers the whole body except the head, feet and hands.
3 A black head-cover (headscarf)
References:


The Problem of the Education for Women in Indonesia at 1950’s:  
An Opportunity and A Chance

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Abstract
This paper aims to discuss the creativity of women in reducing educational and political restrictions through an organization. The opportunity of education for women in Indonesia in the 1950’s was a critical problem. There were some problems as to why the culture for women was limited. First, the 1950’s was a period of early independent Indonesia. Indonesian society was struggling with the new bureaucracy and curricula. People were in search of a new form of curricula that conformed to Indonesia’s independence. Second, the number of the school was still limited and mostly reserved for men. The limitation of space provided the opportunity for the best women to rise. Almost all of the educated women at the during the period became political leaders, such as S.K. Trimurti, Soekaptinah, Maria Ulfah, etc. This proves that women in the 1950 solved their limited opportunities and cultural constraints through their active political participation and gained confidence in their ability to change the situation. Historical methods are used in this paper, including interviews.

Keywords: education, history, Indonesia, women

Introduction

The study of Indonesian women’s movement has developed rapidly since Coora vreede-de Stuers wrote her dissertation in 1959, Saskia Wierenga wrote in 1990’s, Susan Balckburn published her books in 1993. The three researchers noted that there is a close relationship between the education and the development of Indonesian women’s movement. Through the training, women organization was formed, First Women’s Congress was attended, and women’s newspaper was published. Afterword it was changing when the new Indonesia government disallow some women’s organization which closed by the leftist. The activities of leftist women’s organization considered as a participant of PKI (Indonesian Communist Party). Saskia argues that 1960’s was the crushing period of the women’s organization in Indonesia.

The growth of women's organizations from 1928 to 1960’s indeed could not be separate from the education. The majority leaders of women's organizations were educated women, who in previous period had pursued modern education. As educated women, they closed by the ideas of modernization. They start to have a new friend, a further reading, and a new hope. It means that through the education, the educated women could learn the awareness of women’s right. They realized that their cultural issues were the ideal target to improve the life. That is why the historian cited that the 1950’s was period of survival for the educated women after the previous year they called it a substantial period.

There was an interesting dynamic along the Women’s Indonesia Congress to 1960’s. Historically, the Indonesian women's movement was experiencing a significant reinforcement. The roots of the organization were built not only in the big cities but a small one. Women's organization was not only formed on the island of Java, which became the center of political, economic activities from the colonial era to the present, but in the surrounding islands. Some areas such as Samarinda, Minangkabau, Menado, etc. had grown women's organizations. Besides, organizational activity outside Java Island recorded in various newspapers published at that time. Based on these ideas, this paper discusses how women dealt with the problems they faced with the limited educational space for women in the 1950’s. Historical data note that a few women had the opportunity to pursue formal education, however from the limited space women activist could show themselves as an independent and creative person. Their strategy of negotiating with the circumstances and the way to solve their problem is the focus of this paper.
The Traces and How to Use the Data

This paper is written using historical methods. The most important thing in using historical data is finding the contemporary sources, such as archives. The public files in Jakarta recorded the activities of women organization in 1940’s, entitled “Pendaftaran Orang Indonesia jang Terkemoeka jang Ada di Djawa,” that contain the background and the actions of the women leader. It recorded in the bundle of O.T. number 1489 etc. These written records are complete versions of data and never found in others.

Furthermore, the national archives recorded the contemporary interviews with the women’s activist. Almost all prominent figures were interviewed and filed on the bundle of the government secretary number 165 etc. These all data later analyzed to write this paper. Indeed, the source that contains women activities is rare than the origin of man. The canonization in the history causes this limitation. Legene and Waaldijke argue that the most important thing to remove the myths of canonization in history is critical thinking of the data. Consequently, the various data must be collected, both textual and visual, then be criticized. Essential could start to answer the information about the authors, the backgrounds the publication, and the period this data.

This paper utilizes newspapers and periodicals. The national press such as Api Rakyat, Merdeka, and Berita Indonesia published the various information about educational activities as well as women’s activities. Through the newspaper, the author should be the critic in answering beyond the data. Then, different treatments were made to visual data in the form of photos and sketches of images. Under certain conditions photographs and drawing, designs are often more realistic in providing data information than written sources. For the picture and drawings of the model, the historian should be given a particular treatment, by looking at the desires of the photographer by questioning the importance of the photo made, where the picture made (natural or artificial images), and the authenticity of photographs/sketches of images. By carefully criticizing the photographs and illustrations of the models, the data collected from the text becomes more meaningful. The all data then collected, read, interpreted, and compared before narrated. In the process of narration, situations and narrations produced by men and women must be seen equally. So historians must accommodate the conditions and narratives recorded in the data.

Expected research and writing about women in the past, this paper can fill the void of women’s historical studies in the past. The emptiness of women’s historical studies in the history has gripped by such researchers, such as Francois Gouda, Kuntowijoyo, Bambang Purwanto, and Jean Gilman Taylor. They argue that both, women and man have a history. The role of the historian is to exploit and analyze all of the data.

The Opportunity of the Education and the Political Ideology

At the end of the nineteenth century, the Colonial Government introduced a primary school for Indonesian society. Its school opened in a big city of Java, such as Jakarta, Bandung, Semarang, Surabaya, and Yogyakarta. This program was a part of the Ethical Politic, who known as a humanity program. As a new program, the government invites the European teachers to teach. Just after the number of graduates fulfills, the government opened the teacher's school, and the name of the school increased significantly in the early twentieth century. Although the number of schools is rising slowly, the priority target of this school was the sons of the bureaucrat. Through the bureaucrat, it’s become more accessible to set up the political ideology. The evidence of this ideology could be seen through the register of the student at the school who studied at European School, the study on abroad.

The difference situation happened to women. Although the government introduces the education since the end of the nineteenth century, only the son of the bureaucrat can enter. It’s difficult for women to join the school. The Department of the Education reported that in 1928 the number of female students in Java and Madura compared to the number of boys was only 24%. Most of them were bureaucrat family. A lot of bureaucrat family, such as Kartini and her sisters, had limited opportunities for education. It means that even the bureaucrats realize the importance of education for women, the training for women has not yet given. They usually only bring in private teachers to teach their daughters in the house. Kartini was a part of this type. It fortunate for Kartini, She was given an opportunity by her father to be able to establish relationships with European families. Hence, Kartini
had more comprehensive access to the public space, and She could publish as a correspondent book entitled *Habis Gelap Terbitlah Terang*, which was a reflection of her feelings as a woman.

The next chance for women to enter the school was in the 1930’s. Some state and private school for women opened in the big city. The curriculum of this school was still at a fundamental level. Only gave women the ability to read, count, and speak in Dutch. Just a few forward-thinking noble families, then present their daughters a chance to pursue a better education, so some names like S.K. Trimurti, Maria Ulfah Santoso, and Soekaptinah Soenarjo Mangoenpoespito were able to continue this school.

### Tabel 1
The Distribution of Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Place of Birth</th>
<th>Educations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Soemasih Yati Aroedji Kartawinata</td>
<td>Bandung</td>
<td>HIS Pekalongan, Nationale Kweekschool Jogjakarta, Sekolah Mengetik di Jakarta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soedjatin Kartowijono</td>
<td>Yogyakarta</td>
<td>Meisjes E.L.S. Jogjakarta, MULO, Europeeschesschool Jogjakarta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soewarni Pringgodigdo</td>
<td>Jakarta</td>
<td>HIS Kartini Bogor, MULO Bandung, Sekolah Mengetik</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maria Ulfah Santoso Wirodihardjo</td>
<td>Serang</td>
<td>ELS Jakarta, HBS V Jakarta, Universitas Leiden bagian Hukum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trimurti</td>
<td>Boyolali</td>
<td>HIS Kartosura, Meisjekweekschool Solo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soekanti Soerjotjondro</td>
<td>Ponorogo</td>
<td>Meisje ELS di Madiun, HBS Bandung</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Siti Soekaptinah Soenarjo Mangoenpoespito</td>
<td>Yogyakarta</td>
<td>HIS Keputran Yogyakarta, MULO Yogyakarta, Kweekschool Taman Siswa Yogyakarta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Srioemiatli</td>
<td>Madiun</td>
<td>Holland Javaanse Meisjeschool Yogyakarta, MULO Yogyakarta, Europese Kweekschool Jakarta, Lager Akte Angels Utrech, Europeeses Hoofdakte Den Haag</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emi Soehaemi</td>
<td>Bandung</td>
<td>Openbare 2de HIS Bandung, Kweekschool Bandung</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Siti Wahjoenah Mangoendiningrat</td>
<td>Sawahlunto</td>
<td>ELS di Manado, HBS di Surabaya, Sekolah Kehakiman Tinggi Jakarta</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source:     National Archive bundle OT number 1223, 1489, 1511, 1929, 2127, 2274, 2530, 2722, dan 2845.

The table above shows that some of the women consistent to study although they faced by the different situations. They studied across of the period from the Japanese Occupation to 1950’s. Maria Ulfah Santoso, for example, they studied in European School, then She continued to study at the school of law in Netherland. She became a first female social minister in Indonesia. As well as Maria Ulfah Santoso, Sri Oemiati, continued her study in Women School, then She continued her education in Denhaag. In the 1950’s, Sri Oemiati active in a political organization. She became ones of the leader of Parindra, the nationalist party at 1950’s. Another woman, like S.K. Trimurti, Soekaptinah, and others,
the study on the teacher school. After they graduated from teacher school, they became a teacher, journalist, or women leaders\textsuperscript{xxiv}.

The consistency of study proven by women activist shows that they have an ideal plan for the future. The considered that education was the most important thing to solve the cultural ideology of women. Traditionally, the social thinking in Indonesia controlled by the idea of patriarchy. Its concept reproduced from generation to generation and placing the women only on the subordinate for everything. In the middle of this condition, women did not have the discretion to be independent. Through the education, women have the imagination to change the situation and proved it. The news in the newspaper showed that condition.

At 1950’s Indonesia start to look for the ideal type of education. The women activist then can be a part of this program. The curricula at that time arranged independently by the activist. In these condition, women activist to be a part of the initiator of the new curricula. Its curricula organize to break out their collective memory from the Colonial era\textsuperscript{xxv}. As a result, the activist thought that they had to open immediately the high level of school. That is way, the senior high school and the university build in a big city in Java\textsuperscript{xxvi}. Universitas Gadjah Mada, Universitas Indonesia, Universitas Islam Indonesia build at 1950’s as a part of this program. It means that the orientation of the study was changing from the primary school to advance.

### The Strategy of Women to be Independent

In the 1930’s up to 1950’se, there was three strategy for women to be independent. Firstly, they entered the education systems even though they should move to another city. Soemasih, for example, that born in Bandung, she should study in Yogyakarta. Maria Ulfah should survey in Jakarta etc. There was some reason why the women activist had to consider in a remote place. Firstly, they followed their father who promoted to another city. Secondly, the had to go out of their hometown because of their own considered. S.K. Trimurti, for example, she was born in Boyolali. Then She studies in women school in Solo. She thought that study in Solo would give her a new chance. Moving to another city and living by another family was a common phenomenon. Traditionally, Indonesian people to be accustomed to staying with another family that has higher status. Its conditions were a part of the effort to raise the state\textsuperscript{xxvii}.

Secondly, the women could expand their network after they finished their study. The data record that there were several international events that educated women attended. The first event was at 1931 when the women activist visited on Asia Women Congress in Lahore\textsuperscript{xxviii}. Afterword in 1951, the Indonesia Women Congress send two delegates (Mrs. Susilowati and Miss T. Kusumo Utoyo) to attended on Pan Pacific Women Congress in New Zealand\textsuperscript{xxix}. At 1952 the Indonesia Women Congress send five envoys conducted by Mrs. Kartowiyono to participate on the Internasional Conference that was held by UNESCO in New Delhi\textsuperscript{xxx}. At 1955 accompanied to the Women International Conference in Manila. Finally, at 1958 the Indonesia Women Congress send Miss Maria Ulfah Santoso to the Asia-Africa Women Conference in Colombo\textsuperscript{xxxi}. It proved that woman activist in Indonesia at that time start to consider that international networking was essential to make the activities of women organization more confident.

The thirdly, there was a type of educated women, after they were to be a women leader. Several of women were getting married with the political figure. The following table shows this type.

### Table 2

**Woman Activist and Her Husband**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Name of her Husband</th>
<th>Name of Organizations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Soemasih Yati Aroedji</td>
<td>Aroedji-Kartawinata</td>
<td>Journalis (Suluh Islam Medan, Hong Po Jakarta, Tjahaja Timur Bandung)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kartawinata</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soedjatin Kartowijono</td>
<td>P. Kartowijono</td>
<td>Istri Indonesia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soewarni Pringgodigdo</td>
<td>Pringgodigdo</td>
<td>- Meisjekring Jong Java Bogor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- The Leader of Poetri Indonesia Bandung</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- The Leader of Istri Sedar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Position</td>
<td>Committee/Role</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maria Ulfah Santoso</td>
<td>Santoso Wirodihardjo</td>
<td>- The Leader Istri Indonesia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- The Leader of Marriage Commission at Jakarta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trimurti</td>
<td>Mochammad Ibnoe Sajoeti</td>
<td>- Gerindo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Gasfi Jakarta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soekanti Soerjotjondro</td>
<td>Soejono Soerjotjondro</td>
<td>- Keputrian Indonesia Muda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Perkumpulan murid HBS Bandung</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Studyclub Jakarta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Siti Soekaptinah Soenarjo</td>
<td>Soenarjo Mangoenpoespito</td>
<td>- The Secretary of Badan Konggres Perempuan Indonesia I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Istri Indonosia Yogyakarta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- JIBDA Jakarta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- The Leader of 4th Women Congress</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: National Archive Bundle OT number 1223, 1489, 1511, 1929, 2127, 2274, 2530, 2722, and 2845.

The table 2 shows that a partner of all that women was a political figure. Soemaisih Yati Aroedji to be a wife of Kartawinata, Soedjatin to be a wife of Kartowijono, etc. It looks that the marriage was another strategy of women to be a leader of women organization. Through the big name of their partner, the women activist finding the new way to negotiate to the significant issues.

**Conclusions**

The creativity was the best way for the women activist in 1950’s dealt with the dominance of patriarchal culture. The creativity was manifested through their intellectual abilities, socializing and interacting with the lives of societies that transformed through socio-political organizations and realize their ideas through the activities they strive. Another thing that done, the women also create a network of thought with women activists abroad through their participation in various international-scale congress. These conditions reinforce the awareness and sensitivity of women to improve the lives of surrounding communities when independence had just materialized.
References:


*Indonesia Raya*, 24 November 1955.


Bra-Burning, Slut Walk and Night March: An Analysis of Feminist tools of Mobilization, Protest and Resistance

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Abstract:

This paper looks at specific means of protest and demonstration that the feminist movements in India and the western world have used. It takes up a discursive analysis of these protest measures and reads them as signifiers of a certain political temperament, opportunism and negotiated agency. We read these protest means within the specific context of contemporary Feminist Movement within India: rise of Dalit Feminism and intersection of gender with caste/religion, emergence of a non-monolithic conception of ‘woman’ and the appropriation of feminist voice by ultra-right forces. These are some of the factors which shape the way demands are raised, conceptualized and articulated. Claims to power manifest themselves in a peculiar manner in the age of Third Wave feminism(s) and social media activism. This paper is divided into three sections — i) The politics of space and Feminism, ii) Having a ‘voice’ and breaking the ‘silence’, iii) Performativity and protests.

Introduction

The feminist movement in India, for a long time, assumed a pristine category of woman. The woman that hence imagined was devoid of her ascriptive identities of class, caste, race, language, religion and region. Since the 1990’s, this category of a supposedly unmarked woman has been questioned, more so in the post-Beijing Conference period, with the rise of Dalit Feminism, recognition of transgender rights in the country and the emergence of a positive international discourse on LGBT/Queer identities. In the light of the above, how do we envisage agency on the part of ‘women’ in India?

The question of women’s agency is tied to the ontology of women as citizens. Does the Indian State view her as capable of equal citizenship? The recent controversy surrounding Hadiya depicts the murky waters one waddles in while contemplating consent through intersections of gender and religion/caste. However, this paper steers clear of any linkage of political agency with consent. Agency is instead paired with political action—political action is identified as activism, public protests, marches, mobilization etc.

Political participation in the form of public meetings, strikes, protest gatherings and movements is equated with political unrest (Pateman, 1970). The idea is that any political activity which is outside of the institutionally established checks on power is an obstacle to democratic efficacy (O’Neill, Young and Shanley, 2008). However, in the Indian context, collective political acts have been a perpetual phenomenon since before independence which makes this dichotomy between participation and political stability inconsequential. The relation between the two is tenuous, however this heightened fear of disorder due to a crisis of democracy needs to be allayed. Democracy and democratic institutions are products of political and social movements. In a chaotic society like mine, the illusion of order is deeper than the illusion of consent (O’Neill, Young and Shanley, 2008). The feminist movement in India has been one of the contributors to this chaotic political landscape.

Theorizing women’s resistances requires us to push the boundaries of what we deem ‘political’. To meaningfully understand women as political agents, one needs to locate power differently. ‘Political’ then becomes wherever power manifests itself, and where there is power there is resistance. The aforementioned statement puts in place a neat scheme of things to assess the conditions of women’s political action. The subtext of this scheme however, points towards some of my assumptions—1. Personal acts of resistance within the private sphere is political; 2. Women exercise power whenever they resist structures of power irrespective of the public-private distinction; 3. Collective and public acts of protests are only one of the many forms of resistances that women resort to.

In this paper I only focus on collective expressions of dissent which have been categorically deemed as ‘feminist’. The paper is divided into three sections which look at— i) The politics of space and feminism,
ii) Having a ‘voice’ and breaking the ‘silence’, iii) Performativity and protests. The paper takes up a discursive analysis of various protest measures and reads them as signifiers of a certain political temperament, opportunism and negotiated agency (Chhachhi, 2012).

The Politics of Space

Political ‘participation’, within a liberal democratic worldview, has a benign resonance to it. It conceals the intimidation which stems from a masculine imagery of assertion, disenchantment and indignation. The purpose of this romanticization is to allay fears of dismantling of public institutional spaces as legitimate arenas for political discourse to unfurl. This liberal romanticization of political action is to comfort and caress a particular kind of reader—a reader who believes in ‘peaceful’ forms of protest and democratic institutions but wants to be sympathetic to those, the Other, who do off-the-floor politics and may or may not resort to non-violent means of agitation. It seeks to legitimize political participation on the pretext of peaceful demonstration.

This view of participation makes, the Other, who appear hostile and dangerous comprehensible (Morrison, 2017). The labels of self and other are theoretical constructs. They have been frequently used to understand unequal power relations in different contexts (for instance, colonialism, etic-emic ethnography, slavery etc.). When I say that these protesters are the ‘others’, I am defining this other through a spatial metaphor, to throw light upon the hierarchy, the physical and ideological distance between those protesting and those trying to read the symbols (academicians, administrators, politicians, journalists etc.) that this Other deploys in protests. Thus, the imagery of ‘peaceful protesters’, police vans, buses and water tanks near protest sites, Kristen Visbal’s bronze sculpture in New York city called ‘Fearless Girl’ are all privy to this romanticization.

More than often, attempts are made to reconcile this Other with the Self, a self which has faith in the democratic machinery and peaceful protest. After the brutal assassination of Gauri Lankesh, Huffington Post tried to clear the air around her association with the Naxalites, and published the following xxxiii:

*For the last several years, Gauri actively worked in rehabilitating Naxalites to the mainstream. Several of them, including former Naxal leader Sirimane Nagaraj surrendered to the state in December 2015, thanks to her tireless efforts*…(Ghoshal, 2017)

It is this conception of participation which furthers the imagination of the field of protest as a ‘provisional’ space, access to which would be conditional and temporary.

There is a link between this othering and the provisionality of protest spaces. The Other is confined to these provisional physical and ideological spaces till the time they can be co-opted or reconciled with the mainstream. The temporality of these spaces ensures that they don’t bleed into the mainstream, even if they co-exist with it. I have referred to this mainstream as ‘out there’ in the following paragraphs. Public spaces often work on the principle of exclusion. Women are relegated to the domestic sphere with only limited and conditional access to public spaces (Phadke, Khan and Ranade, 2011). Thus, the idea of space seems immensely important to feminist politics.

How do women find their place in political spaces like the protest site? The making of a protest space, a space which would be congenial to collective political acts of women is carved out and insulated from an Out There (Morrison, 2017). The purpose of the protest is to reform and change this out there. However, the provisional-conditional-temporary character of protest spaces allow them to spring up and die out within this supposed out there.

As stated earlier, women only have conditional access to public spaces. A protest site for feminist politics emerges when favourable conditions are created. The night of a Night March is a space (and time) which would be different from the night-space of the same street on other regular nights. The night-space of the New Year’s Eve of mass molestation in Bangalore(Reuters, 2017) was starkly different from the night-space of the night marches which erupted following this incident. One needs to ask very substantial questions regarding feminist politics in India when critiquing its urban lineage. Is
it possible to carve out such spaces in an *out there* where a khap panchayat\textsuperscript{xxxiv} dominates? Is it possible to carve out a protest space in an *out there* where the media fails to reach? Is it possible to carve out a safe-space in an *out there* which is prone to communal rioting and has ghettoized living quarters?

These are not rhetorical questions; the answer to these questions is not a definitive no. This is because in certain ‘magnified moments’ (Bridges, 2010), these spaces have been created in a seemingly impossible *out there*\textsuperscript{xxxv}. To say that an urban *out there* is more conducive to the emergence of protest spaces and safer than a rural *out there* is an overstatement. Metropolitan and urban spaces are shrouded with the narrative of safety and non-safety (the *kafan* or shroud of protectionism), often marked by women’s daily negotiations with public spaces etc. (Phadke, Khan and Ranade, 2011).

The argument I make in this section relates to the sovereign status of institutional spaces as legitimate political spaces. This causes protest spaces to be ephemeral, opportunistic and provisional. The emergence of these protest sites becomes a condition/variable/criterion that facilitates the conditional access of women to various public spaces. This kind of a formulation leads to several anomalies, some of it being— how well are these protest sites insulated from this *out there*? Are protest spaces free of sexual harassment? And are they inclusive of and accessible to all sections of women?

**Breaking the Silence**

Radical feminists, in the 1970’s, believed that women’s shared experience can create a sense of togetherness among women, be a force that would mould the sisterhood. In contemporary times, the emphasis laid on experience within feminism comes from the need to believe in and acknowledge women’s narratives, their account of their metaphysical and lived realities. “Actions speak louder than words” stands refuted, as for contemporary feminism, experience does the speaking, and this speak is a speech-act. Due to this, the dichotomy between acting and saying is disturbed. For instance, posting #MeToo serves as a form of perlocution which inspires action. The public pronouncement of harassment and assault experienced by women worldwide, through #MeToo, makes sexual harassment a ‘phenomenon’ in the gendered lives of women.

The relationship of women’s experiences to feminist discourse is often taken for granted (Marder, 1992). The assumption is that ‘women’ have similar experiences within patriarchy, and this collective experience of subordination leads to a feminist consciousness. However, we must understand that ‘Feminism’ and ‘woman’ are constructions, the content of which are undecided and marred with conflict and contradictions. According to Marder, feminism has no one discourse or language, feminist scholarship politically intervenes to clarify, only provisionally, what it means to be feminist (Marder, 1992). Thus, the experience of oppression and subordination is spoken using a particular language of feminism (Marder, 1992).

The construction of a feminist ‘voice’ is a power-driven phenomenon. Competing feminist articulations have to be negotiated; some are discarded, others are invoked from the past. Therefore, various articulations of feminist politics and thought often supplement, compliment, and compete with each other to give form to the language of feminism. The power in the construction of a feminist language is most clearly visible in the recent controversy around sexual harassment within Indian academia, where names of some academic stalwarts found a place in an online list curated by Raya Sarkar, now popularly known as LOSHA (List of Sexual Harassers in Academia). Spectators were quick in making a crude distinction between old and young feminists. While the old feminists were in favour of ‘due process’ and sided with institutional means of reporting sexual harassment, younger feminists brought to attention the crisis of institutions due to failure in taking strict action against the perpetrators and the leniency of punishment.

In the past, one such politically charged language of feminism was that of the Radical feminists. During the 1970’s Miss America Protest, radical feminists burned articles which symbolised patriarchal expectations; one of the articles they burnt was a bra. Burning has been a frequently deployed means of political expression—self-immolation of Chinnasamy, yearly burning of the Manusmriti, idol-burning of politicians etc. are all vociferous expressions of rage and disenchantment\textsuperscript{xxxvi}. In the case of bra-
burning, this rage is infantilised, and women are seen as incapable of anger, frustration and retaliation. The purpose of burning feminine articles which objectify women was to express the need and urgency to reclaim women’s bodies and thwart patriarchal expectations from women. This was reflected (but misread) in the protest tactics, protest language and techniques of mobilisation of the radical feminists. Radical feminism was responding to—the dismissal of women’s experience of powerlessness, the presumption of ‘emancipation’ and the fear of co-option by a male-dominated, masculinity-endorsing party system (Firestone, 1971). The purpose of this radicalism within feminism was to keep intact the authenticity of a particular kind of feminist voice in a time when there were multiple factions of women’s groups (conservative-Christian, militant etc.) (Firestone, 1971).

Similarly, within the Indian context, the difficulty in grappling with the intersections of gender and religion has resulted in the patriarchal state and the ruling party resorting to a language of pseudo-feminism (Balagopalan, 2010) and claiming to be the custodian of Muslim women’s rights. Mere presence of women in protests and public meetings is seen as feminist, irrespective of the content of their demands and leadership. The fault in this kind of evaluation became obvious with the Anti-Mandal protests of 1990’s, where OBC (Other Backward Classes) women came out to protest against the denial of jobs to their future husbands (Mani, 1987). This is problematic on two fronts: the women didn’t transgress the boundaries of tradition and domesticity to fight for their rights, further the idea of marrying lower caste employed youth was absurd to them.

In this section, I argue that the language of feminism is constructed in a manner so as to respond to a contemporary context. This construction is conflict-ridden and demonstrates a power-play between competing voices of feminism. The language of radical feminism has been misread and there is a need to further analyse feminist expressions of resistance, what they actually signify and how they are received.

**Performativity: The Politics of Meaning-Making**

Gender is performative; performativity is the process of becoming our gendered-selves. Contrary to the universal views on human ontology, performativity challenges the idea of an essence to who we are. There is something ritualistic, routine and habitual about how gendered identities take shape. Thus, gender needs to be practiced, learnt and re-learnt; it is not intrinsic and natural. If femininity or masculinity of a particular kind is an aspiration, then performativity is the praxis of that femininity/masculinity. The gendered-self is always in the making within the frame of performativity. It would be apt to say that performativity is a response to a plethora of images that are fed to us—red lipstick, a goatee, khadi wear, man-bun. It is not merely a response, it is a representation. It is mimesis of the most complex variety where what is reified is reproduced through our lifestyle and personality. Performativity involves a carefully put together play of images and representations of such images. These images acquire distinct meanings in different contexts within the frame of performativity. Hence, it is deeply enmeshed in the craft of meaning-making.

How does performativity then help create meanings on the site of protest? Body politics and performativity pushes us to read bodies as texts, bodies with semiotic and symbolic dimensions (Butler, 1999), bodies as not pre-discursive and pre-political. Butler draws from Julia Kristeva’s reading of Lacan and distinguishes symbolic from semiotic (Butler, 1999). Unlike Kristeva, Butler believes that the semiotic, which challenges the symbolic, is not free from its cultural and contextual precursors (Butler, 1999). The semiotic arises from a different kind of construction within the same continuum as the symbolic, and is not entirely free of the cobwebs of the organization of power it is trying to subvert. Thus, the semiotic and the symbolic are part of the same discursive terrain according to Butler. This is the terrain of performativity; just as performativity of sex-gender in a heterosexual set up reinforces patriarchy, performativity can also be a source of subversion (Bridges, 2010). It is only because the terrain of our discussion on semiotic and symbolic is performativity that we continuously ask the question—do these feminist political tools challenge or reproduce patriarchal gender roles?

There are semiotic and symbolic dimensions to protest measures and mobilization tactics of body politics. For instance, protest marches like SlutWalk challenge the symbolic of rape—the idea that
women dress a particular way to invite rape and a woman’s morality is reflected in her appearance (Nguyen, 2013). These ideas are countered using a set of images which serve as semiotic subversion—6-inch heels, bras, dominatrix outfit, G-string, pasties for nipples etc. (Nguyen, 2013). SlutWalk treats the bra and other ‘sexually explicit’ feminine articles as a means of transgression, to challenge notions of ‘good’ and ‘bad’ women.

Contrariwise, in the previous section we had looked at bra-burning as an expression of anger—the act of condemning bras as the way to liberation. It is here where things start to get complicated. The feminist movement plays on the contradictions of patriarchy and responds to the then situation accordingly. The problem arises with this difficulty in locating the frame of reference for the imagery of SlutWalk and bra-burning. Despite the fact that the organizers of SlutWalk are referring to the feminist discourse on assertion of female sexuality and sex positivity, the dominant and much easily available frame of reference (for instance, the femme fatale) is a patriarchal one. Reclamation and resignification of the word ‘slut’ is performative, in the sense that it needs to be repeatedly wrenched from the symbolic. I think that bra-burning could not be salvaged from the symbolic of the patriarchal backlash it faced.

Butler’s take on the semiotic’s cultural basis seems very important to Third-World Feminism as it can help adapt feminism to be relevant to specific contexts. In early 2017, 8-months pregnant Mona Hayder rapped about wrapping her hijab. The idea was to re-signify the hijab or the headscarf which is a part of some Asian and African cultures. The purpose was also to create a sense of togetherness among hijabi women around the world who feel discriminated against. The video shows women of color donning different kinds of headscarves. Hayder has sought alternatives to western narratives of freedom and women’s autonomy. She draws from popular culture and her own cultural heritage. Despite her close affinity to feminism, western feminism didn’t offer her the language of subversion to challenge the symbolic of hijab.

In this section, I argue that gender performativity is the discursive terrain for feminist political tactics. Performativity allows us to create, re-signify and reclaim meanings on the field of protest. It is crucial in understanding the frame of reference that different feminist protest strategies intend to invoke or fail in invoking.

Conclusion

At the onset, we reflected upon what would be ‘political’ to feminism, and we also identified resistances which may well be beyond the purview of collective political action. The focus on political action is only one and by far, probably the most doable way of operationalizing the question of women’s agency. When one focuses on political action as the central variable in the assessment of agency, agency revolves around—proximity to and exercise of power, capacity to contest and challenge, and power to shape discourses etc. In a different scheme, for instance, in the capability approach, agency could be read in terms of women’s access to various primary goods like social dignity, income and wealth etc. This paper argued that protest sites are provisional in nature and they create conditions for women to access certain spaces. Further, the language of feminism is constructed, and this construction has evolved over a period of time. The performative terrain of feminist political tactics allows us to understand the difficulty in locating the frame of reference to read the meanings invoked by the various protest measures.
References


Impact of Female Characters on Movie’s Return on Investment
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Abstract
In the age and times where women empowerment is a significant topic of discussion, we aim to analyze the potential gender diversity influence on the box office revenue. The following research is carried out by collecting data from 400 Hollywood movies between the years 2014-17 and performing regression analysis to find a correlation between the presence of female characters in movies and their return on investment. The paper finds that there is a positive relationship between the commercial success of the movies (ROI) and the gender diversity i.e. more the number of female characters, higher the revenue generated. Another factor such as Number of Votes also has a direct impact on the revenue of the movie. The research not only takes into consideration the mere presence of women on screen but also the exchange of at least one dialogue among themselves, which is presented by the Bechdel Score of the movie.

Keywords—Bechdel, Diversity, Hollywood, Return on Investment.

I. Introduction

The entertainment industry, particularly film and movie industry has seen tremendous growth in the last two decades. As per Film and Movie Statistics [1], the global box office revenue has been forecasted to increase from 38 billion USD to a whopping 50 billion USD. The introduction of multiscreen Cineplex complexes added a new dimension to the industry which made it possible to showcase multiple films at the same time thus generating more revenue and meeting the exponential customer demand. The technological advancement from 2-D to 3-D and now 4-D, the graphics, Ultra HD, Artificial reality and the most recent being drones in the cinema have completely revolutionized the industry.

But does this technological advancement is instrumental in providing equal opportunity to female characters? The issue of gender representation is inarguably the most urgent and prominent one in the industry. It is often said that the movie industry is still gender biased. We see more male characters than the female counterparts. As per the report titled “Inequality in 900 popular films” [2], it is observed that the percentage of female speaking characters has moved from 29% in 2009 to 32% in 2016. Only 12% of the films out of 900 depict the correct balance between the gender representations. With a dismal ratio of 2.3 males to every female, we found strong evidence that the industry is biased towards men. The reports also point interesting facts across 1438 content creators where only 4.2% of the set are female directors, 13.2% are female writers, 20.7% represent female producers and 1.7% represent female composers. On having a closer look at the earnings of top 10 actors and actresses in Hollywood [3], we see a huge gender pay gap. The differences in the paycheck amounts to even 3X. While the top 10 actors banked a cumulative $488.5 million, the top 10 earning women banked only $172.5 million.

II. Motivation for our Research

Similar enduring patterns of gender inequality have been observed throughout the paid labor force, but it is the film industry that represents so much complexity in employment and pay. Over the past few years, both the government and corporates have worked towards increasing women representation in the workplace. Even the research has concluded that inclusion of women in the Board of Directors resulted in a positive outcome i.e. increase in sales/revenue for several companies across the globe [4, 5, 6]. If the corporates can take a noteworthy stance in bridging the gender gap then why not entertainment industry? Do we require a law to culminate this inequality gap in the industry? The question is why entertainment industry seems to be so far behind in dealing with this issue. We rarely see films that are powered by ineffaceable female protagonists. It is also not difficult to miss the ever-
existing perceptible male dominance. Can all this be attributed to the dearth of female directors, screenwriters and other people behind the camera? In other words, would having greater diversity behind the scenes go to change this? Exorbitant paychecks for a male actor seem to strongly indicate that the industry sees huge returns from a role played by a male character as compared to a role played by a female character. But is it really true?

To have a better understanding of the relationship between the women in the cast and the commercial success of the movie (e.g. Return on Investment), it is important to study the impact of gender diversity on movie performance. In this paper, movie diversity refers to the number of females in the entire movie cast. For analyzing this effect, we will use regression analysis technique to identify that factors that contribute towards influencing the ROI of a movie and the degree of correlation among them. The data used in the research is collected from Internet Movie Database IMDb covering 385 movies between the years 2014-17 and each having at least one female in the entire movie cast. IMDb is the most trusted website which hosts 180 million data items including movies, TV shows, cast and crew members. Data was scrapped from the IMDb [7] using python code. The following section of the paper highlights the exact methodology used in the performing the analysis. Figure [1] describes the journey of our research starting from data extraction to the end results –

III. Research Method

A. Research Strategy

The study uses the quantitative method. The research is not restricted to one genre of the movie. It covers all the genres: adventure, comedy, drama, romance for the period 2014-17.

B. Data

We decided to consider only those movies which have at least one female member in the entire cast. The cast here means all the artists who were seen on screen during the movie irrespective of their role duration. There were certain movies for which either budget or gross US income were not available. Hence, we decided not to consider these movies record as we were unable to calculate the ROI for such movies. After deleting the movies record with such irregularities or missing data, we were left with 385 movies spread across the years 2014-17.

C. Dependent and Independent variables

The dependent variable is the Return on Investment (ROI) for the movie which is calculated using Gross Income (GIC) and Budget of the movie (BUG). Although, we considered taking Number of Votes (NOV) as the dependent variable but it is not necessary that all the viewers would have voted for that movie. The first independent variable is the gender ratio (GER). This variable is expressed as the percentage of females in the cast to that of the total cast size. The second independent variable is the number of countries (CON) where the movie was released. The third independent variable is the language (LAN) in which the movie was released.

D. Control Variable

To minimize the bias, control variables are introduced in the regression. The first control variable is the Rating (RAT) of the movie. The second control variable is the Bechdel Test Score (BTS). Bechdel test is a famous test named after American cartoonist Alison Bechdel, which aims to gauge the fact if
two women in a work of fiction are talking among themselves and on something other than men. On the blog named after Bechdel [8], the Bechdel score of the sample movies was collected for the research based on the following criteria –

a. If the Bechdel score is 3, all the conditions are satisfied by the movie and the Bechdel rating given by us is 1
b. Else, if Bechdel score is either 0, 1 or 2, one of the three conditions [8] is not satisfied by the movie, and the Bechdel rating assigned is 0.

The third control variable is the Number of Votes (NOV) for a movie.

IV. Conceptual Model

The work aims to highlight the effect of having more female characters in the movie cast. Hence the hypothesis is as follows:

\( H1: \) The presence of more women in the movie cast is positively related to ROI of the movie.

To test the hypothesis, regression analysis will be performed. The regression function is as follows –

\[
ROI = \alpha + \beta_1 GER + \beta_2 CON + \beta_3 LAN + \beta_4 RAT + \beta_5 BTS + \beta_6 NOV + \epsilon
\] (1)

Where,

ROI = Return on Investment
GER = Gender Ratio of a movie cast
CON = Number of countries where a movie was released
LAN = Number of languages in which a movie was released
RAT = IMDB Rating
BTS = Bechdel Score Passed/Failed
NOV = Number of Votes

V. Results

Regression analysis was performed in Microsoft Excel which will help to answer the hypothesis. First, the descriptive statistics of all the variables are presented. Then the correlation result between the variables is discussed. In the end, the result of multiple linear regression is presented.

A. Descriptive Statistics

The total sample size is 385 observations. Table [1] shows the statistical description of the variables –

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>ROI</th>
<th>GER</th>
<th>CON</th>
<th>LAN</th>
<th>RAT</th>
<th>BTS</th>
<th>NOV</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>1.40</td>
<td>2.78</td>
<td>1.52</td>
<td>0.18</td>
<td>6.46</td>
<td>2.15</td>
<td>1.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard Error</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>6.40</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>1.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard Deviation</td>
<td>3.16</td>
<td>1.20</td>
<td>0.63</td>
<td>0.39</td>
<td>0.91</td>
<td>1.05</td>
<td>0.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sample Variance</td>
<td>9.99</td>
<td>1.43</td>
<td>0.40</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>0.82</td>
<td>1.10</td>
<td>0.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kurtosis</td>
<td>-1.20</td>
<td>-0.56</td>
<td>1.21</td>
<td>0.75</td>
<td>0.19</td>
<td>-0.94</td>
<td>0.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skewness</td>
<td>0.56</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>1.05</td>
<td>1.66</td>
<td>-0.36</td>
<td>-0.74</td>
<td>-0.51</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TABLE I – STATISTICAL DESCRIPTION OF THE VARIABLES

The variables are tested for normality. The input sample contains variables that are not normally distributed namely: ROI, Gender Ratio, Country, Language and Number of Votes. For all the variables,
except for the Number of Votes, we found the mean of the sample and compared each individual sample with its sample mean. The variables are assigned the category depending upon the degree of variation of its observed value with the mean. Example, if the gender ratio is greater than or equal to 0 and less than 0.1, then it falls under category 0. Similarly, if the gender ratio is greater than or equal to 0.1 and less than 0.2, then it falls under category 2 and so on. The logarithmic operation was performed on the variable Number of Votes to transform it to a normal form. Normalization check was performed by going through the descriptive statistics for the variables - Table [1]. A window of -2.0 to +2.0 on kurtosis and skewness [9, 10, 11, 12] for a variable was set as the baseline to decide if the variable is normalized or not. Fig [2] (a, b, c, d) shows the normally distributed graph for certain normalized variables.

B. Correlation

Table [2] shows the correlation data among the variables. Two variables are said to be linearly correlated if the value is either -1 or +1 [13]. As the value approaches closer to zero, the variables are said to be less correlated with each other. For regression, it is necessary to have little/no correlation between the dependent and independent variable [14]. We can see a little correlation between the variables as the value range from -0.25 to +0.23 in Table 2. The control variables i.e. Number of Votes (NOV) and Rating (RAT) have a modest level of correlation (0.59). This value is not essential as the correlation is between the control variables and not between the independent variables [14]. To cross-verify the correlation, Variance Inflation Test (VIF) is also performed for the independent variables [12]. The result shows, the VIF value below 5 for all the variables, hence we can conclude there is no correlation between the variables [12].
C. Multiple Linear Regression

The regression result is shown in Table [3] indicate that the presence of women in the movie cast has a significant impact on Return on Investment (ROI) of the movie ($t = 3.63$, $p < 0.05$). The coefficient of gender ratio GER (0.495) indicates a positive effect. So our hypothesis, $H1$ namely: The presence of women in the movie cast is positively related to movie ROI stands true.

Interestingly, the dummy variable Bechdel Test Score (BTS) also has a significant p-value (0.04) and is positively related to the ROI (0.27). The results can be corroborated by simple observation of the raw data. Figure [3] shows the films having high female characters (Bechdel Score 3) also has high ROI of 2.04 for every dollar spent. While the average budget spent for films that do not pass Bechdel Test is way higher than those that pass the test.

The variable Countries in which movie is released (CON), Rating of the movie (RAT) and Languages in which movie is released (LAN) do not have a significant p-value ($p >0.05$) considering 95% confidence interval. Hence, it indicates that the ROI of the movie does not depend on these factors. The Number of Votes (NOV) has a significant ($p<0.05$) and a positive impact (1.311) on the ROI of the movie. The movie becomes more popular as the people start giving votes – the act of assigning star rating [15]. Word of mouth or spread has a significant impact on the ROI of the movie [16]. The Adjusted R Square value for the model is 28.21%, which means only 28.21% of the variance in the dependent variable (ROI), can be explained by variances in the independent variables [13].

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Coefficients</th>
<th>Standard Error</th>
<th>t Stat</th>
<th>P-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intercept</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>#N/A</td>
<td>#N/A</td>
<td>#N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GER</td>
<td>0.495</td>
<td>0.136</td>
<td>3.630</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CON</td>
<td>-0.976</td>
<td>0.057</td>
<td>-1.932</td>
<td>0.054</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LAN</td>
<td>-0.758</td>
<td>0.401</td>
<td>-1.889</td>
<td>0.060</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RAT</td>
<td>-0.219</td>
<td>0.154</td>
<td>-1.423</td>
<td>0.156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BTS</td>
<td>0.270</td>
<td>0.157</td>
<td>1.721</td>
<td>0.046</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOV</td>
<td>1.311</td>
<td>0.421</td>
<td>3.115</td>
<td>0.002</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Multiple R 0.542
R Square 0.294
TABLE [3]: Showing result of Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adjusted R Square</td>
<td>0.282</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard Error</td>
<td>2.925</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observations</td>
<td>385</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F Statistic</td>
<td>26.304</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

VI. CONCLUSION

A lot has been talked and discussed about having better parity between sexes in the society. News flashing the appointment of a female contender as the next CEO of a company or the next President of a country gathers accolades from all. These events, although very rare, do become a source of inspiration and women have started receiving their share of the pie, but is this really the truth?

We tried to investigate the current status of women in entertainment industry by understanding the male to female ratio across 385 Hollywood movies. The question addressed by the paper is “Whether the presence of more female characters in the movie has a direct impact on Return on Investment”. The results depict that presence of more women in the cast, thus increasing the gender diversity, has a positive impact on the commercial success of the movie. Therefore, the scriptwriters and directors should take this fact into consideration and involve more women roles or scenes in their story.

The research has some limitations though. Gender diversity is measured by only considering the number of women present in the entire cast. This Gender Diversity does not give a clear picture of the duration of the role. There might be cases when the cast has too many women but still, the women do not have a significant role in the movie. Although Bechdel Test Score (BTS), which lays importance of at least one dialogue between women in the movie, is taken into consideration by the researcher. Still, there is a scope where we can consider the duration of the role which might give a different picture. The researchers are planning to consider this aspect for their future work. Also, we aim to carry this study for movies across several film industry and not restrict to US film industry.

Fig. 3: Showing average ROI, Gender Ratio and Budget spent across films for different categories as per the Bechdel score
VII. REFERENCES


[8] Bechdel Score and Test - www.bechdeltest.com


Conceptualizations on Femininity and Identified Issues in Women

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ABSTRACT

The study aimed to identify women’s understanding of their femininity and their issues about it. The qualitative study had fifteen heterosexual women from Davao Occidental, Philippines with ages ranging 20 to 28 years old. Findings showed three main themes of the conceptualization of Femininity including (a) Feminine Qualities, (b) Shifting Paradigms on Femininity and (c) Femininity Roles. The identified issues on the other hand, revealed three major aspects namely (a) Intrapersonal Conflict on Femininity, (b) Experienced Gap due to Shifting Paradigms on Femininity and (c) vulnerability to violence among young adult women. The conceptualizations of femininity and identified issues have interactive relationship with each other. Women are experiencing issues due to the standards of femininity. Several relationships between the conceptualization and the issues: (1) femininity qualities in physical attractiveness increases intrapersonal conflict on femininity enhancement. (2) Shifting paradigms on feminine roles also heightened intrapersonal conflict of role fatigue, vulnerability to abuse and experienced gap due to the shift. Thus, recommendations are to promote Women Empowerment, helping women to balance femininity standards and ideologies in order to address different femininity issues and perhaps help them change their mindset and behavior for the better status of women in the patriarchal society.

INTRODUCTION

In the Philippines, few literatures on femininity are found during the period of colonialism. During that time, the Spanish friars gave the Filipina only two representations of self, either they are virginal martyrs, able to fulfill the mother role of Mary or the other extreme of being the evil woman like Magdalene who is a seductress. During the 90s era another representation has been added to the concept of the ideal Filipina namely, long suffering until death of a woman. This is the complex culture of martyrdom and because of it the Filipinas are more known as being non-complaining and silent. It is also suggested that this somehow explains why there are numerous cases of rape and battered Filipina victims as they believed these women are representing the last model of the ideal Filipina (Claudio, 1991).

Another study from Lukey (2012) suggested that the Filipino femininity is more defined by the traits that were grouped according to social desirability. The Filipina femininity adapted the universal femininity that is also common to different cultures like being caring (maasikaso) and being sensitive to others (maramdamin). Filipina Femininity also displays distinctive Filipino characteristics like being intuitive (malakas ang pakiramdam) as this signifies partly the female intuition that is highly valued in the Filipino culture and being mapagkimkim as defined by the woman who prefers to keep things to oneself.

Moreover, Filipino women in the Church have roles of being the ulirang ina (exemplary mother), the superwoman who is multi-faceted in different roles and the change agents as these women are called by God to influence change in the lives of people through service. Because of this they experience difficulty in organizing schedules for their family, especially with their children and the demands of the husband’s work and her service to the church. However, the Filipina also feel that they have to obey their husband’s decision. Thus, these women employ ways of coping with gender bias from by being passive to the patriarchal system having silent resistance by not cooperating and showing active resistance by showing their opposition (Broncano, 2013).

With these few studies on Filipino femininity, the present study utilized an emic approach of the conceptualization of femininity among young adult women in the province of Davao. According to Mandin, the action officer of the Integrated Gender Development Division of Davao, having the welfare code for women empowerment is just one aspect of women’s liberation (Condeza, 2017). Mandin also added that laws and programs of women empowerment in the patriarchal culture remains a challenge as women are still perceived as the object of pleasure especially in selling products (Condeza, 2017). As these double standards give women more confusion, this study served as a framework to modern Filipina who are affected by the ideals of the universal femininity stereotypes and the cultural femininity ideology. The results of this study provided as well new information to come up with new strategies for women empowerment, especially in promoting the anti-violence against women, women’s health and gender equality. As women empowerment helps women increase their positive well-being, this study provided a culturally appropriate way
METHODS AND MATERIALS
The selection used a purposive non-sampling technique. The qualitative data collection used two types of collection tools. (a) Demographic tools were used to distinguish if participants fit into the criteria of the study. (b) The second tool is a semi-structured interview guide. Data treatment process used a thematic analysis. Data includes interview transcripts, notes taken, demographic profile and observations during the data gathering procedure. The categories were then checked by co-raters. Another revision of categories was made, themes were extracted and validated. A table was utilized to summarize the themes, subthemes and only significant verbatim. An analysis of main and subthemes are done via corroboration with related literature. An emergent model is then conceptualized.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
Femininity Qualities, Shifting Paradigms on Femininity and Feminine Roles were the main themes of the conceptualizations of femininity in young adult women.

Feminine Qualities. Femininity refers to the quality of appearance, behavior and practices that are ascribed to women (Macdonald & Dolan, 2013). For the participants, 12 different qualities of women were revealed namely modesty, kindness, empowerment, respectfulness, physical attributes, assertiveness, religiousness, contentedness, followership, fragility, unpretentiousness and attractiveness to men.

Modesty. Modesty was frequently cited by participants who prefer simplicity, appropriateness of appearance and behavior and possible adjustments to modern life but remains to be conservative. In the case of women’s attribution, it can be said that modesty is one of the highly valued quality of women because of its characteristics that tend to individualize women to men (Budworth & Mann, 2010).

Kindness. Responses of being generous, taking an effort for the comfort and good of others were categorized as kindness among the responses of the participants. Otake, et al., (2006) also suggested three components of kindness in women: (a) the drive to be kind to others; (b) the appreciation of kindness from others; and (c) the act of being kind in one’s daily life. These 3 components were reflected in the responses of the participants as they perceived women to be hospitable, helpful and living in harmony and not conceited.

Empowerment. The flexibility of women in work because of its equality of tasks with men, independency, having the ability to influence and lead others were responses of participants that were categorized as empowerment. Specifically, the gender equality in Philippines surprisingly ranked as Top 1 in the Asia and 7th in the world in the year 2016 (Mercurio, 2016). This was reflected when the participants observed changes of how women in the Philippines are becoming famous around the world from being winners in beauty pageants to being high demand of men’s work in other country such as welding and factory workers. Regardless of the fact that most of the women in the Philippines are still marginalized (International Labor Organization, 2014), the implementation of women’s empowerment that helps the women to make decisions based on their own views and perspectives is rising (Castro, 2014) as this may be the reason that empowerment is lately becoming one of the qualities of women.

Respectfulness. The quality of being respected, respect to self and others is perceived by the participants as an ideal quality that should be present among women. It was found out that women who came from vulnerable populations had lower feeling of respect towards their pregnancy (Vedam, et al., 2017). This is similar to the responses that women should be respected as they are the ones who will create another life, yet they observed the lack of application to one’s self. A quality of respect is also essential for the self as some responses link respect to possible causes of violence. It was emphasized that not all disrespect act will result to violence, however, all violence against women starts with disrespectful behavior (Australian Government, 2016). Hence, most of the participant’s responses about respect were about women’s accountability of the violence because of some women’s appearance and behavior. The participants prefer women to have decency in order to be respected by men and be far from the threat of violence.

Physical Attributes. Participants also talked about specific standards of beauty. This was then categorized as Physical attributes. The physical qualities that participants included were to be beautiful, tall, long hair and have flawless skin. A study from Wiederman and Hurst (1998), found out that for young adult women, concerns about physical attribution is more focus on the sexual esteem than the actual body size. It was studied that facial appearance like bright
facial skin and high nose is the most important domain of physical attribution following the body weight, skin color and texture of hair (Rongmuang, et al., 2011).

**Assertiveness.** Another quality on femininity that the participants described is assertiveness or being firm. Assertiveness is essential for empowerment as well as for women’s mental health (Acharya, et al., 2016). A study from Onyeizugbo (2003) found out that adult women were more assertive than adult men. In the Philippines there is a rising oppression of women because of the same patriarchal issues (Lukey, 2012). However, Philippines also have emerging empowerment for women where the possibility of assertiveness is also increasing.

**Religious.** Participants also include quality of women as being religious. This was defined as being devoted to one’s religion. Filipinos in general, are mainly Roman Catholics who possess strong belief in God and continue to be faithful in the religion, thus, the reason of seeing themselves as religious people (Abad, 2001). The participants associated religiosity to feminine qualities as all of them are Roman Catholic.

**Contentedness.** Another quality that described as maintaining physical appearance with satisfaction and comfort. Adult women were found to be more satisfied with their body and that body satisfaction has high positive correlation with body appreciation (Tiggemann & McCourt, 2013). This was supported by the study of Barcalow, et al., (2010) where they found out that there are many characteristics of positive body image in young adult women. These include recognizing their own unique beauty and functionality of their bodies. The current responses are highlighting their lesser enhancement in femininity as they are satisfied with their appearance in general.

**Followership.** Being a good follower in her workplace and law-abiding citizen is part of feminine quality tagged as followership. Women in workplace willingly accept the subordination role as they perceived this as beneficial to their professional experience (Modroño, et al., 2017). Most of the responses under this quality talks about their role in the society as a follower rather than a leader. A study from Braun, et al. (2017) showed that the role of ideal follower is strongly associated with female role and women were perceived more in followership positions. Followership, in a society can also be known as citizenry or people who follow rules in the society (Onyekwere &Elueze, 2014). This is related to the responses of the participants who viewed themselves as law-abiding citizen.

**Fragility.** The need of women to be protected because of emotional and physical limitations was described as fragility. Glick & Fiske (2001), explained benevolent sexism with stereotyped views such that women were perceived as innocent and nurturing but recognized to have a need of protection (as cited by Young &Nauta, 2013). The need of women to be protected was most likely from the common stereotype of vulnerability and marginalized gender in the society (Ghosh &Choudhuri, 2015).

**Unpretentiousness.** Responses of participants also highlighted the need of women to be real and not exactly to follow the social norms are labeled as unpretentiousness. Lawler (1999), saw the need for women to become unpretentious as women are more associated to artifacts like aesthetic make-ups. Participants have observed how women were trying to abide by social norms that they tend to portray something not like themselves. The participants in this study also promote the reality of women despite the norms that contribute to women being unreal or sophisticated.

**Attractiveness.** The last quality that emerged from the responses is the need of man’s attraction to women. Responses show women taking effort to look beautiful in order to attract men. Previous literature in evolutionary theory discusses the natural sexual selection and its innate traits of women preparing themselves to find a mate and developed their reproductive roles since childhood (Papalia, et al., 2010; Shields, 1975; Shields, 2007).

**Shifting Paradigms on Femininity.** The conceptualizations of femininity also revealed responses on changes in femininity over the years. Shifting image, roles, personality characteristics and lifestyle and traditional thinking were the subthemes found in shifting paradigms of femininity.

**Shifting Image.** Participants observed changes over time in the image of femininity with its increasing empowerment image, changes of appearance due to lesser conservativeness in clothing, religion and behavior. Fading of respect to self and others are also seen in women of this generation. Letts’ (2008) concluded that the media portrays feminine qualities as a representative of women in gender differentiation. However, these images of women in media are end up as sexual objectification as Letts (2008) see it as approval for men’s desire. Some changes of femininity are shown via participant’s specification of losing conservativeness in clothing in response to the media’s promoted feminine quality. Changes of clothing in general regardless of the environment are more influenced by the media. This influence has been explained as another way to express their values and traits, as today’s behavior is more of self-image and self-expression to show uniqueness and at the same with social conformity (Saravanan &Nithyaprakash, 2015). Moreover, participants also responded to how women became aggressive in drinking alcohol, and that alcohol can
increase aggression in women (Giancola et al., 2009). Empowerment on the other hand, is the apparent changes in participants as this is also growing in the Philippines due to its prevalent awareness in fighting for the marginalized society (International Labor Organization, 2014; Castro, 2014).

**Shifting Roles.** There is a change in relation to the household chores of women from being purely limited at home to being a financial provider at the same time. It also emphasized that women have lesser chores in lieu of their additional job or the availability of the helpers compared to previous generation. Women’s role in the family changed over the past two decades in connection with balancing professional work and personal life (Shah & Shah, 2016). Abdullah et al., (2008) found out that modern women have struggles between modern life challenges and traditions. Despite the increased employment of women, they are still expected to be responsible for the family as well as to portray other traditional roles of women. Nonetheless, women are still capable to be of both career woman and a housewife (Lantara, 2015). Expression of freedom was also seen in the changing roles of women. It was suggested by Narayama and Ahamad (2016) that freedom of expression in women should be increased through awareness programs in order for women to properly address their needs and concerns.

**Shifting Personality Characteristics and Lifestyle.** Changes in personality characteristics and lifestyles throughout the participant’s age have been experienced. Specific changes were from prioritizing one’s self to prioritizing one’s family or work. It has been said that despite the changes of women’s role, women are still focused on family matters. When given a choice between work and family, they will always choose the latter (Abdullah et al., 2008). Women who also had vices before changed their behavior of being responsible and focusing on household. A study in Korea found out that women who tried to change their alcoholic problems have active social life (Kim & Kim, 2008). Women who have higher social life tend to be affected by other people’s comment, thus, when people looked them down they are motivated to change (Kim & Kim, 2008). The upturn determination of women to excel in career has also been observed. The positive attitude towards the difficulty, confidence and determination to face the challenge and accept failure were observed as main factors to women’s success (Hassan, et al., 2014).

**Adjustment to Traditional Thinking.** Despite the various changes in women, there were still other women who wanted to remain in some traditional norms regardless of the adjustment to modern life. The traditional thinking of participants includes the preservation of courtship and dating, not following the trend and being conservative. Maria Clara archetype as the common image model of the Filipina depicted modesty and virginal image (Sanchez, n.d). Yet, only few Filipina can portray these characteristics due to the differences of current women with regards to their behavior and image that contradicts the ideal archetype. However, most of the women still viewed this as an ideal that led Filipino women to experience moral fault and social guilt if this image is not achieved (Sanchez, n.d.).

**Femininity Roles.** This theme discusses the nature role natural to women that served as the primary concept of gender labeling of women. Domestic Work, Motherhood and Wife are the roles naturally ascribed by the participants.

**Domestic Work.** Household chores, taking care of the child and budgeting the expenses are the common responses of participants for women in doing domestic work. In studying the different household tasks, it was found out that in food making, women are the most likely to be in charge, yet for taking care of the child or other elder or sick members, an equal responsibility between men and women has ensued (Jain, 1985; Sharma, 1986; Ramu, 1989; as cited by Sourabh, 2007).

**Motherhood.** The function of women to create a life inside their body with utmost care and affection, the opportunity to influence their child with their views and be their mentor were described as mothering role of women. Hence, for mothers, influencing their children has always been the basic part of motherhood. Adult women also see motherhood as a requirement in fulfilling sex-role stereotypes (Russo, 2010).

**Wife / Partner.** Being a wife or a partner is also part of the participant’s perspective on the roles natural to women. Being a wife means to take care of her husband and serve him. A wife is also the husband’s source of support and a friend who can possibly give feminine perspectives. A friendly relationship with the husband is one factor that could make the relationship successful (Asoodeh, et al., 2010). Moreover, the roles of wife as being supportive, helpful and good in taking care of the family is still needed (Dumelow & Griffiths, 1995; Andor, 2013).

**Identified Issues on women**

**Intrapersonal Conflicts on Femininity.** Intrapersonal conflicts on femininity are the participants’ personal conflicts with their thoughts in relation to femininity. These conflicts involve dilemma on enhancing one’s femininity, strong
Influence of social media, effects of early pregnancy, frustrated desire to be a mother, expectations of single motherhood and role fatigue.

Conflicts on Femininity Enhancement. Different struggles of femininity involve insecurity in relation to other women. Watkins (2017) found out that women evaluate and identify quality rivals to other women on the basis of their physical appearance. Moreover, the hassle in time and money of doing make-up has also emerged. It has been said that grooming in women which includes cosmetics and body enhancement are women’s way to gain status in the society (Samarasinghe, et al., 2014).

Strong Influence of Social Media. Respondents also reported how social media strongly influenced their personality and characteristics. However, it was explained that social media is not solely the issue since it has numerous negative and positive impact to an individual (Mastrodicasa & Metellus, 2013). Hence, Mastrodicasa & Metellus (2013) emphasized the problem about the use of social media and its purpose which makes a difference on the impact to women.

Effects of Early Pregnancy. The inability to help the family is the main reason of the participant’s realization of the effects of early pregnancy. Participants have the belief that education is the key to help their family in the future, however, because of their early experience in pregnancy they were not able to help their family. Due to early pregnancy, females may experience psychological disturbance as they are not ready to deal with multiple responsibilities due to their young age (Ahmed, et al., 2014).

Effects of Infidelity. Forgiveness given to a partner after he cheated on her are the experienced effect of infidelity experienced by the participants of the study. For women, emotional infidelity is the most difficult kind of infidelity to forgive (Urooj, et al., 2015; Shackelford, et al., 2002). Thus for the participants, besides from the love they have for the husband and for the welfare of their children, it could also be that they try to forgive their partners, as most of the cheating incidents happened via sexual infidelity.

Frustrated Desire to be a Mother. The inability to bear a child is also experienced by one respondent. She reported that it is always their husband’s desire to have a child of their own. Despite the inability, they always tried to manage to keep their relationship intact. It was found out that one of the effects of infertility in couples is the striving to keep the marriage as they see their infertility a factor than can destroy their relationship (Kohan, et al., 2015).

Expectations of Single Motherhood. The personal conflict experienced by a participant from being a woman to becoming a single mother is also seen as an issue. The single mother respondent reported how she is still tempted to hang out with friends, yet at the same time wants to be a good mother to her son. According to Taylor & Conger, mothering role of a single mother can be very demanding. Being a single mother is also vulnerable to different risks. However, it was found out that with help or support for a mother’s psychological well-being, single mothers are also responsive to change (Taylor & Conger, 2017).

Role Fatigue. The last intrapersonal conflict from the respondent is role fatigue. Respondents talk about how exhausting it is to be a woman because of different roles they have to do, from being a mother, employee to being a wife. In this generation, many women have paying jobs but they are still expected to be responsible mothers and good wives. This is an observed struggle for women (Abdullah et al., 2008).

Experienced Gap due to Shifting Femininity. The theme discusses the differences and struggles of women along with the changes in roles, image and traits of femininity. Majority of the change was on how respondents changed their roles that gave rise to experience conflict in their relationships. It could be that these experienced gaps relate to role strain. Role strain is the conflict experienced when one role has multiple statuses (Simpson, 2005; as cited by Perrone, et al., 2009). Thus, role conflicts usually result into role strain (Briderger, et al., 2007; as cited by Perrone et al., 2009). In general, the experienced gap that emerged was mostly from the different roles of women who have difficulty in balancing their roles while adjusting to the modern life.

Vulnerability to violence among young adult women. This issue revealed how respondents become increasingly vulnerable to abuse. A study found out that through body language, a judgement of vulnerability will be seen that can lead to sexual assault (Murzynski&Degelman, 2006). Similar to the response, the inappropriate behavior of participants served as the primary basis of the perpetrators. Moreover, it was found out that the higher the assertiveness the less likely the probability of being abused (Iglesias, et al., 2012). Such responses from the respondents who had a short experience in abuse also fought back and stood for what they believed in. Hence, assertiveness can also be a good trait to prevent abused for women.
CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

- Inner qualities of modesty, kindness, empowerment, respect, etc. were more emphasized as feminine. This is in comparison to shifting paradigms on femininity and performing feminine roles. Feminine roles are considered to be naturally related to one’s gender. The experience of change in how women are conceptualized brings about an adjustment to how the young adult women see themselves. Hence, femininity conceptualizations gain more distinction from the masculine in terms of inner qualities, acknowledging change and need for adjustment as well as conforming to perform gender expected roles in society.

- The conceptualizations on femininity also undergo shifts in relation to the femininity image, roles, personality characteristics, lifestyle and traditional thinking. This shows the dynamic value of the conceptualizations on femininity that is shaped by the interaction of intrapersonal, interpersonal and environmental factors such as innate biological mechanisms, developmental tasks, social media and religion.

- Roles in relation to femininity are mostly considered to be the expected roles natural to women owing to their biological characteristics and functions in society to differentiate men and women.

- Identified issues are not independent of each other as one’s intrapersonal conflict may aggravate the experienced gap and may make women more susceptible to violence in society.

  - Intrapersonal conflicts increase a female’s insecurity when seeing other women as rival in terms of physical attractiveness.
  - Social media emphasizes physical attractiveness as a way of gaining status despite the cost of spending resources such as time and money. The woman is pulled towards and against keeping physically attractive as it can be beneficial as well as costly.
  - When young adult women become pregnant and are unprepared for its responsibilities, it escalates intrapersonal conflict.
  - The experience of infidelity of a partner may challenge the feminine quality of forgiveness.
  - Becoming a single mother at an early age also contribute to the challenge of giving up one’s vices.
  - Because of the shift in their life experiences from single to single motherhood or early pregnancy, there is gender role strain and the need to adjust. Otherwise, there is heightened role fatigue. The difficulty in adjusting leads to an experienced gap because of the shifting role expectations. When these young adult women experience these issues, they become at risk or vulnerable to violence. This makes intrapersonal conflict aggravated and the need for change in image and lifestyle is called for.

- There is interrelationship of the conceptualizations on femininity to the identified issues.

  - This implies that the femininity quality on physical attributes on attractiveness increases intrapersonal conflicts on enhancing femininity. If a woman enhances her attractiveness as dictated by expected femininity qualities and influence of social media, it also perpetuates body objectification of women. This may consequently result to heightened vulnerability to abuse.
  - The ability to get out of expected gender roles like being employed contributes to the perceived empowerment and assertiveness of the young adult women. This implies also an adjustment to traditional thinking on women as solely for domestic work, motherhood and wife.
  - The ability to adjust femininity image, personality characteristics and lifestyle to being more responsible leads to adaptive mindset and behavior.
  - The inability to adjust may increase gap in relation to shifting paradigms and contribute to more role fatigue and vulnerability to abuse.

The study suggests that organizations may do programs that advocate a balance among ideologies on femininity via the use of the emergent model on femininity conceptualizations to address intrapersonal conflicts, experienced gap and vulnerability to violence of women in society. For future studies, the following are suggested: cross cultural study regarding the conceptualizations on femininity as perceived by adolescence, adults and aging women, comparative study on conceptualizations on femininity between male and female adults, contributing factors to vulnerability of violence among women and perceptions on womanism and feminism.

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References


The countries studied are those for which explanatory data has been gathered and are not included in the MID.


Stockholm International Peace Research Institute website https://www.sipri.org/databases/armstrfers (Final access date: 1/31/2018).

The trend indicator value shows the movement of military resources and is calculated in both qualitative and quantitative terms.


Indonesia Raya, 24 November 1955.


Bintang Timur, 19 Januari 1955.

24-year-old Hadiya, previously known as Akhila, consensually married a Muslim man and converted to Islam. However, her father filed a complaint raising concerns about the legitimacy of her marriage and suspecting ‘Love Jihad’. ‘Love Jihad’ is a term coined to refer to Muslim men allegedly luring, converting and marrying Hindu women. Conversion has been a controversial matter in the country as it has electoral and political consequences; mass conversion has been used as a political tool to break free of the clutches of the Hindu caste system. (Jacob, 2017)

Gauri Lankesh, editor of a Kannada Weekly and critic of Hindutva extremism, was brutally assassinated by members of a right-wing Hindutva organisation in 2017 in front of her house. Soon after her death, attempts were made to declare her an anti-national for her left-leaning political ideas and her association with Naxalite leaders. Naxalism is a people’s revolutionary movement which has its roots in the rural-agricultural belts of about 9-States in the Union of India. It has been in controversy for use of violent means of protest and bargain. The Indian government claims to be in the last phase of ‘cleansing’ the country clean of Naxal violence.

Khap Panchayats are caste-based local-rural bodies comprising village elders (male elders). These are non-governmental bodies with customary powers given to them by villagers or members of particular caste-groups. They are notorious for honour killings and are generally seen as a regressive societal force.

Chinnasamy was a poor farmer from the State of Tamil Nadu, India who set himself ablaze in 1965 over the issue of imposition of Hindi as a national language by the Union government at the expense of vernacular and regional Tamil language (Venkatesan, 2002). Manusmriti, an ancient Hindu-Vedic text which defends and propagates inequalities of the caste system and patriarchy, is symbolically burnt every year on 25th December to commemorate B.R. Ambedkar’s public burning of the same in 1927. (*Why did Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar publicly burn the Manu Smruti on Dec. 25, 1927?,* 2017)

Representation (or re-presentation) refutes the claim of reproducing reality as it is; the representation of a reality presents an image which may be partial, relative and only resembling (not mechanically capturing) reality. In the process of learning to be a man or a woman, in a predominantly heteronormative framework, the practitioners of gender understand, negotiate, pick-and-choose from, ignore and disobey the ‘normal’ to give shape to their gender identities. Thus, representation creates a reality of its own.

The symbolic refers to the canonical reference of meanings, it is dominant and powerful. Semiotic, on the contrary, is the subversive reference of meanings. The distinction between the two is similar to the difference between great-little traditions. The symbolic is dominant, whereas the subversive is marginal.