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ISSN 1528-3502



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ISSN# 1062-1830



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JOURNAL OF HARVARD

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## Editor's Remarks

The past eighteen months were an exceedingly interesting time for those of us in the public policy community. With the emergence and consistent newsworthiness of the Arab Awakening, the Euro zone turmoil, and the initial stages of the U.S. presidential election, we have all watched and undergone a period with major ramifications for gendered policymaking. The staff and I hope that the pages of this year's *Women's Policy Journal* (WPJ) will serve both as a memorial to this year of profound change and as a tool to decode the implications that this change may have on women around the globe.

The reformatting of this year's WPJ played a large role in our effort not only to distill the excellent work currently being done on women's policy into a more multi-faceted product but also to allow for a far broader array of voices to be heard than is the case in the typical academic journal. The goal of the WPJH is to include a range of work that represents the complexity and diversity of this women's policy. Women's policy stretches into every field of study and each policy arena. Our goal as contributors to the policy conversation, and my goal as editor in chief, was to strip away the regular borders of discussion to show that all issues are women's issues.

To that end, this year's edition is replete with traditional and non-traditional policy debates. Our authors have taken a fresh look at social perceptions of battered wives in the Philippines, and economic and social empowerment in Uganda, Liberia, and Brazil. They have also pushed the boundaries of U.S. Federal employment policy, ethnographic filmmaking, Islamic feminism, and the importance of the 2011 Nobel Peace Prize being awarded to three women. The ideas are fresh, the topics are broad ranging, and the analysis is cutting; our authors have proven the multiplicity and relevance of twenty-first-century women's policy.

While I could not be more proud of or enthusiastic about this year's content, the greatest pleasure for me has been the opportunity to work with such an incredible editorial and finance staff. I arrived with the desire to turn a journal on its head, and they made it happen.

Thank you, team, for making a series of exciting back-of-the-napkin sketches a reality.

Sincerely,

Julia Groeblacher

Editor in Chief, *Women's Policy Journal of Harvard*





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M-RCBG Director Lawrence Summers (far right) fields questions from students at a Forum event.



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## Why They Won the Nobel Peace Prize

BY AMB. SWANEE HUNT AND ZAN LARSEN

As the world faces new forms of extremism, conflict, and violence, the need for sustainable stability is greater than ever. In fall 2011, the Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to three trail-blazers who have brought new approaches and unique perspectives to the full range of activities related to creating security in fragile regions. These three individuals—President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, Leymah Gbowee, and Tawakkul Karman—were recognized “for their non-violent struggle for the safety of women and for women’s rights to full participation in peace-building work.” In their award statement, the Nobel Committee added that “we cannot achieve democracy and lasting peace in the world unless women obtain the same opportunities as men to influence developments at all levels of society.”<sup>1</sup> This decision was an important step forward for two reasons: first, the formal recognition of women’s roles within a new security paradigm and second, the increased legitimacy given to female-style leadership.

Each decision that the Nobel Committee carefully makes is done so within the historical context of the time. During the decade following the collapse of the Soviet Union, powerful countries dramatically increased their involvement in conflict prevention and intervention, and post-con-

flict recovery throughout the developing world. With the security focus broadening beyond stopping the spread of Communism, there was a resurgence of a multilateral spirit that asserted the legitimacy of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration on Human Rights. From Bosnia to Haiti from Cambodia to Somalia, successes and failures revealed key factors to sustainable stability—one of which was engagement of female leaders. Catalyzed by the extensive lobbying efforts of NGOs, this growing awareness of the gendered aspects of war and peace led to formalized efforts for “gender mainstreaming” in security processes. This campaign resulted in the successful passage of UN Security Council Resolution 1325, calling for member states to involve women at all levels and in every aspect of national security and foreign policy that influence peace processes. The resolution was the first formal international recognition of the need for women to become active and equal participants in this arena. The work of all three Nobel Peace Prize winners embodies the sentiment of UNSCR 1325 and demonstrates the true importance of its message.

While this UN resolution was the first international recognition of the broadly conceived need to elevate women’s roles in stopping conflict, the Nobel Prize rec-



ognizes and appreciates the actual application of UNSCR 1325. Historically, women have made their contributions in countless informal ways. Yet rarely were either the ways that women have been affected by war or their contributions toward peace formally assessed. Their unconventional approaches to conflict resolution have often been seen as fulfilling expectations dictated by gender stereotypes and therefore not considered direct or serious contributions to formal negotiations. We can hope that the prize will create a cascade of change. Women's approaches in this domain are often unconventional: sensing the pulse of the community, tending toward cooperation and compromise, following their maternal instincts, and placing the needs of others before their own. The decision of the Nobel committee is a clarion call to the policy community: We can no longer ignore women leaders—the most valuable untapped resource for global stability.<sup>2</sup>

In the first 45 years of the Nobel Peace Prize, only three went to women, and of the 96 awards since 1901, only 15 have been given to women (including this year's winners).<sup>3</sup> Women remain a minority in leadership roles in nearly all spheres of society; however, the peace and security field is particularly resistant to movement toward gender parity since predominant cultural biases favor stereotypical male styles of leadership, e.g., the ability to make hard decisions regarding war, international negotiations, weapons, and military intervention.<sup>4</sup> Francine D'Amico and Peter Beckman argue that women who succeed in politics often do so by emphasizing masculine values even more strongly than their male counterparts do. Yet the three prize-winning women were able to succeed by using feminine styles of leadership. Rather than employing the clunky traditional forms of hard power, these women mobilized large constituencies, bridging religious and ethnic divides. The high-level

appreciation of women's style of leadership will undoubtedly provoke pushback against predominant cultural perceptions, but the Nobel die has been cast.

While both the heroic work of these women and the weight of the Nobel Peace Prize are noteworthy, enormous challenges loom. Until the legitimacy of women's voices at all decision-making tables has been firmly established, we must carry forward the call. This award heralds a new era.

Swanee Hunt is the author of *This Was Not Our War* and *Worlds Apart*.

#### ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.nobelprize.org>

<sup>2</sup> These two sentences were taken from Ambassador Hunt's statement on the Institute's Web site.

<sup>3</sup> [http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel\\_prizes/lists/women.html](http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/lists/women.html)

<sup>4</sup> Based on an interview with feminist theory scholar Laura Sjoberg, March 15, 2011



## Why Women? It's Equality Stupid

BY SAHANA DHARMAPURI

FELLOW, CARR CENTER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS POLICY

Here is a startling fact: There is still no country in the world today in which women are equal to men.

It is true, however, that 2011 was a banner year for women. For the first-time ever, the Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to three women—Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, Leymah Gbowee of the Liberian women's peace movement, and Tawakkol Karman, a human rights activist in Yemen—for their work on women's rights and peace activism. Earlier in the year, the International Monetary Fund appointed France's former finance minister, Christine Lagarde, as its first female head. To-date, women have achieved the highest level of political office in countries as diverse as Liberia, Pakistan, Brazil, Bangladesh, Costa Rica, and Thailand.<sup>1</sup>

Yet these advances cannot obscure the fact that complete equality eludes women globally, particularly with regard to matters of international peace and security. Unfortunately, something that female child soldiers and female heads-of-state have in common is their experience with gender inequality. Gender inequality exists wherever women, compared with men, have fewer political, social, and economic rights, have less access to and control of resources, and have less decision-making power. There is no place in the world where

women and girls do not experience some form of inequality, whether it takes the form of sexual violence, or social or legal barriers that prevent them from participating fully in public life.

Here is another fact: policy-makers are starting to realize that equality makes a difference not only to individual women but also to global peace and security on the whole. In December 2011, U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton presented the first-ever U.S. National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security, which aspires to implement UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (UN 1325), which was passed in October 2000. UN 1325 is a landmark resolution that recognizes women's roles in the international peace and security arena. It advances women's participation in decision-making at all levels of peace processes and peace operations, it promotes security-sector reform, conflict prevention, and the protection of women and children in armed conflict, among many other things. At the heart of UN 1325 is the understanding that peace and equality between men and women are inextricably linked.<sup>2</sup>

The announcement of the U.S. National Action Plan for UN 1325 is good news for U.S. foreign policy, but it is only a first step. Policy-makers' understand-



ing of how individual security—especially women’s security—affects international peace and security is at best limited. One of the most persistent obstacles to implementing UN 1325 has been the call for “evidence” that women’s security is a matter of international security. Notably, it has been asserted that there is no evidence that women should be included in decision-making on matters of international peace and security at all. At first glance, the “evidence” question is disheartening and discriminatory. If Washington policy-makers replaced the word “women” with any other minority group, they would quickly see how discriminatory the evidence question is.

If it is the case that those in Washington circles are really saying, “We think this is important, but we are not sure why; we need to understand this issue better,” then it is an easy fix: women have made strides in the last thirty years that provide plenty of credible data to show that the link between gender inequality and state failures is real and pressing. It is time to think again about the top myths that plague the debate about women and international security. Here are five myths we can do without.

### **Myth #1: We Have No Evidence that Gender Equality Matters to International Security.**

*Not True.*

**W**e now know, from a large body of qualitative and quantitative evidence, that gender inequality plays a role in state failures, either related to interstate conflict or the weakening of the rule of law. Empirical studies by scholars, such as Valerie Hudson, Mary Caprioli and others,<sup>3</sup> show that greater inequality between men and women is related to an increase in interstate violence and the initiation of

the use of force in international disputes. One has only to look briefly at Hudson’s *Bare Branches*—a chilling account of the security implications of India and China’s surplus male population—to get a glimpse of what is at stake. India and China are home to almost 40 percent of the world’s population, and they are countries where gender inequality is reflected in the widespread practice of female infanticide, which creates a surplus male population. That male surplus population is poised to wreak havoc. In the past twenty years, China’s crime rate has almost doubled. A recent study on the relationship between the increased crime rate and the increase in the male population has linked the two phenomena: the rise in human trafficking and prostitution are strongly linked to the increased imbalance in the male-to-female ratio within the population.<sup>4</sup> In India, another country with a huge male surplus, provincial crime rates and sex ratios are also strongly connected.<sup>5</sup> The *Economist* put it this way: “Throughout history, young men have been responsible for the vast preponderance of crime and violence—especially single men in countries where status and social acceptance depend on being married and having children, as it does in China and India.”<sup>6</sup> Hudson writes that “the very possibility of full and meaningful democracy, of peace within and between nations may be tied to the status of women in society. ...”

### **Myth #2: Peace Agreements End Conflict, Period—It’s Not Important That They Include Women.**

*Wrong.*

**C**ontrary to prevailing opinion, peace agreements do not necessarily end in peace. Roughly 50 percent of peace agreements fail within a decade, unleashing more violence and increasing the fragmen-



tation of armed actors.<sup>7</sup> Independently, the World Bank estimates that there is a 50 percent chance that a peace process will fail, and the stakes are even higher when natural resources are at play.<sup>8</sup> The UN estimates that in Africa, the failure rate may be as high as 60 percent.<sup>9</sup> We also know that since 1992, women have signed only 2 percent of peace agreements, and only 3 percent of agreements have included a female peace negotiator.<sup>10</sup> This means that an overwhelming 97 percent of peace agreements are negotiated only by men—and typically they are men with guns negotiating with men with guns. It is widely observed that armed actors who negotiate peace terms are primarily interested in preserving their own interests, not the interests of the civilian population who have been the targets of violence and human rights abuses during a conflict. The fifty-fifty success rate of peace negotiations to date is dismal. In this context, the best evidence that women can make a difference is the failure of current efforts to stop war—efforts made nearly entirely by men. The case of Angola provides a snapshot of what this means on the ground. Women were completely missing from the peace negotiations that led to the Lusaka Protocol in 1994. The exclusion of women from the peace table meant that issues such as sexual violence, human trafficking, abuses by government and rebel security forces, demining, girls' education, and healthcare were not even discussed. By the time the peace process failed in 1998, Angolan civil society had come to view the process as serving the interests of only the warring parties.<sup>11</sup>

The fact is that international security is a male-dominated sector. Many practitioners have documented the obstacles that women face in reaching the peace table.<sup>12</sup> There are very few women involved at the highest levels of security decision-making. There is also a lack of training for

senior leadership on the gendered dimensions of conflict. This means that whether senior leaders are men or women, they are ill-equipped to competently address basic human rights issues of interest to both men and women, once they are involved in negotiations.

With so many failures, it is time to examine who is at the table and to ask whether they are adequately prepared for the job. New strategies to improve the chances of a durable peace can include both the increased representation of women in peace negotiations and increased and regular training on the gendered dimensions of conflict for senior leadership—both men and women—who get tapped to lead negotiations.

### Myth #3: Including Women at the Peace Table is a Western Agenda

#### *Think Again.*

The push to include women in peace processes and conflict resolution is rooted in women's social justice movements worldwide. The Women, Peace and Security agenda, put forward by UN 1325, was brought to the international stage by women living in conflict zones and working to end the violence there.<sup>13</sup> Women's organizations from Sierra Leone, Guatemala, Somalia, Tanzania, and Namibia laid the groundwork for policy debates at the highest levels of the international system that addressed the marginalization of women in peace-building and reconstruction.<sup>14</sup> UNIFEM, with the assistance of women's organizations around the world, documented and publicized the fact that women's traditional under-representation in decision-making has extended into the internal hierarchy of international institutions responsible for monitoring and implementing peace processes—where, incidentally, none of the UN special repre-



sentatives or envoys appointed to areas of conflict were women.<sup>15</sup>

#### **Myth #4: An Equal Number of Female and Male Soldiers in Peace Operations Means There is Gender Equality**

*Not Really.*

**W**omen warriors are ancient history—literally. Even Homer wrote about women who waged war and ruled as men do. While the inclusion of women in peace operations is important and has a significant positive impact on the effectiveness of an operation overall, simply increasing the number of women in operations neither automatically translates into gender-equitable policy, nor does it enhance operational effectiveness.

Experience has shown that female capability has proved an important factor in stabilizing conflict areas. India, Bangladesh, Namibia, and Nigeria have all deployed female police contingents as part of peacekeeping operations, and experience has shown that these female police are able to respond more effectively to sexual violence, and are perceived as more accessible to and able to build confidence within the local population.<sup>16</sup> However, field studies have also shown that mixed-teams (teams comprising male and female soldiers) out-perform female-only teams. According to a 2009 study by the Swedish Defense Research Agency on operational effectiveness and the implementation of UN 1325 in Afghanistan, mixed-teams were more effective in gathering information, were viewed as more credible, and enhanced force protection because they could speak to men, women, boys, and girls in the population, which resulted in a more nuanced understanding of their area of operation. Lieutenant Commander Ella van den Heuvel, former Gender Advisor at ISAF Joint Command pointed out that

“... from a practical point of view ... if you have four military women in your detachment, you can maybe form one female engagement team (a women-only team), but you can form four mixed teams if you don't use female-only teams. And what do you think is more effective—patrolling an area with one female-only team where you engage with women or patrolling in four areas where you can engage women, men, boys and girls?”<sup>17</sup>

To be truly effective and fulfill mission mandates, both men and women in peace operations need to be trained to understand how conflict affects women, men, boys, and girls differently, and what the different security realities are for every sector of the population. Brigadier Karl Engelbrekton, Force Commander of the Nordic Battlegroup for the Swedish Genderforce, has remarked that “understanding the role of women is important when building stability in an area. ... [I]f women are the daily bread winners and provide food and water for their families, patrolling the areas where women work will increase security and allow them to continue [to work]. This is a tactical assessment. ... Creating conditions for a functioning everyday-life is vital from a security perspective. It provides the basis for stability.”<sup>18</sup>

#### **Myth #5: We Know What the Problem Is, But We Do Not Have Solutions** **False.**

**W**e have credible data that show when attention and resources are put toward reducing inequalities between men and women, we can achieve substantial improvements in people's lives and in security interests in general. More than thirty years of international development programming demonstrates that when gender equality is applied to social, economic, political, or even infrastructure projects and programs, it results in more effective and sustainable



development. Numerous studies by the World Bank and other institutions show that societies flourish when women actively participate in their economies and public life, because women reinvest some 80 to 90 percent of their income into communities and family, compared with less than 40 percent reinvested by men. Furthermore, extensive research in the fields of health and economics has shown that equality benefits everyone, not just the already privileged.<sup>19</sup> The past several decades of peace negotiations in various conflicts have also shown that ensuring the inclusion of civil society, especially women's organizations, has strengthened peace agreements. In the words of Geir Sjoberg, Advisor for Peace and Reconciliation at the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Without women's participation, there is less likelihood that a peace agreement will take adequate account of women's interests and needs. If a peace agreement is deficient in this respect, it will be more difficult to ensure that it has the broad support of civil society in the implementation phase, and the chances of the agreement breaking down is greater."<sup>20</sup>

Looking for more solutions? The UN Security Council has already proposed credible policy solutions to the problem of inequality in international peace and security matters via UN 1325. More than thirty-three countries and several regional bodies, including the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the African Union (AU), and the Economic Community of West African states (ECOWAS), have already developed and adopted their own action plans to implement UN 1325, and more than 40 percent of UN Security Council resolutions passed under Chapter VII of the UN Charter now include a reference to women, gender, or UN 1325.<sup>21</sup> In short, the solutions can be found in the regular consultation and inclusion of women at all deci-

sion-making levels, and in the deliberate, systematic consideration of the different security needs, priorities, and experiences of men and women in conflict.

This may be easier said than done, but the evidence is clear: ignoring gender inequality as a factor in international peace and security comes at a high cost—more violence and insecurity, and less peace. We need to develop a nuanced understanding of equality—it is not just a numbers game.

Policy-makers take note: When the "why women?" question turns up, the bottom-line is, "It's equality, stupid!"

#### ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> "The 2011 Global Women's Progress Report," *Newsweek*, September 26, 2011, p27-29.

<sup>2</sup> Anwarul K. Chowdhury, "Doable Fast-Track Indicators for Turning the 1325 Promise into Reality": Paper presented at the United States Institute for Peace Working Group Meeting Implementing UN 1325, Lessons and Experiences a Decade On (Washington, DC: United States Institute for Peace, July 27, 2010) <http://www.usip.org/newsroom/multimedia/video-gallery/session-ii-women-peace-and-security-fulfilling-the-vision-1325> accessed 2/14/12. Ambassador Chowdhury wrote that, "the Security Council expressed for the first time in its history of 55 years its conceptual acceptance that peace is inextricably linked with equality between women and men and affirmed the equal access and full participation of women in power structures and their full involvement in all efforts for peace and security..."

<sup>3</sup> See, for example, Mary Caprioli and Peter F. Trumbore, "Human Rights Rogues in Interstate Disputes 1980–2001," *Journal of Peace Research*, March 2006, Vol. 43:131–48. Caprioli and Trumbore (2006) find that states with lower levels of gender equality are more likely to be the aggressors and to initiate the use of force in interstate disputes (confirmed by Sobek, Abouharb, and Ingram, 2006). Valerie Hudson, Mary



Caprioli, Bonnie Ballif-Spanvill, Rose McDermott, and Chad F. Emmett, "The Heart of the Matter: The Security of Women and the Security of States," *International Security*, Vol. 33, No. 3: 7–45. Hudson, Caprioli, Banliff-Spanvill, McDermott, and Emmett (2009) find that states with higher levels of violence against women are also less peaceful internationally, less compliant with international norms, and less likely to have good relations with neighboring states, and that violence against women is a better predictor of these outcomes than level of democracy or level of wealth. Caprioli and Boyer (2001) find that severity of violence used in an international conflict decreases with greater levels of domestic gender equality. [ Mary Caprioli and Mark A. Boyer, "Gender, Violence, and International Crisis." *Journal of Conflict Resolution*. 45: 503-518.]

<sup>4</sup> Lena Edlund, Hongbin Li, Junjian Yi and Junsen Zhang, "Sex ratios and crime: Evidence from China's one-child policy", Institute for the Study of Labour, Bonn. Discussion Paper 3214.

<sup>5</sup> "Add Sugar and Spice," *The Economist*, April 7, 2011, <http://www.economist.com/node/18530101> (accessed November 1, 2011).

<sup>6</sup> "The War on Baby Girls," *The Economist*, March 2011, <http://www.economist.com/node/15636231> (accessed November 1, 2011).

<sup>7</sup> See Roy Licklider, "The Consequences of Negotiated Settlements in Civil Wars 1945-93" in *American Political Science Review*, 1995, Vol 89, No 3: 681–90. "Research undertaken by Roy Licklider over the period 1945 to 1993 suggests that over the period of 1945–1993 about half of all peace agreements fail in the first five years after they have been signed." African Post-Conflict Reconstruction Policy Framework, NEPAD Secretariat, Governance, Peace and Security Programme, June 2005, p3. <http://www.africanreview.org/docs/conflict/PCR%20Policy%20Framework.pdf> accessed 2/14/12.

<sup>8</sup> "World Bank Study Says 50-50 Chance of Failure", *Washington Post*, November 26, 2002.

<sup>9</sup> United Nations UNDG/ECHA Working Group, Report on Transition issues, February 2004, p14. See also NEPAD Secretariat, Governance, Peace and Security Program, "African Post-Conflict Reconstruction Policy Framework," June 2005, p3.

<sup>10</sup> UNIFEM, "Women's Participation in Peace Negotiations," 2010.

<sup>11</sup> Don Steinberg, *Women and War*, USIP 2010, 115-130.

<sup>12</sup> See for example, Antonia Potter, "Why Conflict

Mediation is Not Just a Job for Men," *The Center for Humanitarian Dialogue*, October 2005. <http://www.hdcentre.org/files/We%20the%20Women.pdf> (accessed December 12, 2011). See also Jolynn Shoemaker and Camille Pampell Conaway, "Women in UN Peace Operations: Increasing Leadership Opportunities," *Women in International Security and Georgetown University*, July 2008. [http://csis.org/files/publication/110713\\_wiis\\_PeaceOpsFinal.pdf](http://csis.org/files/publication/110713_wiis_PeaceOpsFinal.pdf) (accessed December 12, 2011).

<sup>13</sup> After holding an Arria Formula meeting with NGOs and an open debate, the Council passed Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security on October 31, 2000. The Arria Formula meeting on October 23, 2000, prior to the open session of the Security Council on Women, Peace and Security gave representatives of women's NGOs from Sierra Leone, Guatemala, Somalia, and Tanzania a chance to explain their work, demonstrate their competence, and submit their recommendations on a large number of issues. Extracts from Felicity Hill, "NGO perspectives: NGOs and the Security Council," In *NGOs as Partners: Assessing the Impact, Recognising the Potential*, 2002.

<sup>14</sup> Sanam Naraghi-Anderlini, *Women Building Peace: What They Do, Why It Matters*, Lynne Rienner Publishers, Boulder, 2007.

<sup>15</sup> Richard Strickland and Nata Duvvury, "Gender Equity and Peacebuilding, From Rhetoric to Reality: Finding the Way," A Discussion Paper, International Center for Research on Women, 2003, p11.

<sup>16</sup> See for example, "Gender Mainstreaming in Peacekeeping Operations, Liberia 2003-2009, Best Practices Report," United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) and the United Nations Office of the Gender Advisor (OGA), 2010; Fapohunda Tinuke M., "Integrating Women and Gender Issues in Peace Development," *International Journal of Peace and Development Studies*, July 2011, Vol. 2 (6): 162–70; Gender and Peace Support Operations: Opportunities and Challenges to Improve Practice, *International Alert*, October 2001, 10; Ryan Marks and Tara Denham, "A Roundtable on Police Gendarmerie Women in Peace Operations," Pearson Peacekeeping Center, November 2006.

<sup>17</sup> In-person interview with LCDR Ella van den Heuvel, former Gender Advisor ISAF Joint Command, Kabul, on June 2-10, 2011, at the Swedish Armed Forces International Training Center, and email interview on September 9, 2011.

<sup>18</sup> "Resolution 1325 increases efficiency," Karl Engelbrekston, Swedish Armed Forces, in *Good and Bad Examples: Lessons Learned from Working with UN*



Resolution 1325 in International Missions, Uppsala, Sweden, GenderForce, 2007, 29.

<sup>19</sup> See Richard Wilkinson and Kate Pickett, *The Spirit Level: Why Greater Equality Makes Societies Stronger*, Bloomsbury Press, New York, 2009, for a comprehensive look at the effects of global and domestic inequalities in health care and the economy and why equality, not growth, should be policy-makers' focus.

<sup>20</sup> *Implementing Negotiated Agreements: The Challenge for Intrastate Peace*, ed Mick Boltjes, TMC Asser Presse: The Hague Netherlands, 2007, 19.

<sup>21</sup> See ResolutionWatch for the most recent statistics on UN Security Council Resolutions, [http://www.peacewomen.org/security\\_council\\_monitor/resolution-watch/statistics](http://www.peacewomen.org/security_council_monitor/resolution-watch/statistics) (accessed November 1, 2011).



## Made in Kuwait:

### Utilizing Islamic Democracy to Support Female Empowerment

BY JULIA GROEBLACHER

#### ABSTRACT

The goal of this work is to define the current gender gap in Middle Eastern politics, analyze its origins, and suggest policy options through which this gap can be narrowed. The article utilizes the case study of Kuwait's 2009 Parliamentary elections, in which four women were voted into office, as a lens through which to identify potential policy approaches to solve this gender gap. Such an analysis is especially timely given the 2011 Arab Spring movement and the potential for multiple Middle Eastern constitutions to be amended or re-written in favor of increasingly democratic regimes. If it is possible to identify the mechanisms that have allowed for previous women's rights movements to succeed in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, those levers may be utilized to enact similar reforms in other Arab states.

#### DISCUSSING GENDER IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA

Most reputable estimates define the Middle East as a region containing twenty countries (and three dependent regions), nearly 800 million people, and over thirty languages (Anderson 2003,

12; Fawcett 2009). The socioeconomic spectrum spans from an average of \$2,400 annually in Yemen to \$85,600 annually in Qatar, and governing institutions vary from the Iranian Islamic Republic to Lebanon's Confessionalist Parliamentary Republic to Saudi Arabia's Wahhabi Absolute Monarchy.<sup>1</sup> Whatever unity does exist within the region today, it is largely functional: It is a unity related to the outside world rather than from similar geographical and social conditions or from a recent common history, and it is not determined by salient characteristics such as religion or culture.<sup>2</sup> (College of DuPage). Any discussion of the Middle East and North Africa Region (MENA) must contain references to two important considerations; first, that the diversity of ethnic, cultural, intra-religious, and linguistic views held throughout the MENA region results in a need to avoid making broad generalizations between and within countries over time. Second, one must remember that any discussion of MENA culture or politics should not assume that these entities are static; one lesson to be taken from the 2011 Arab Spring movement is that these concepts are constantly in flux. Especially when approaching a conversation about gender dynamics in this region, it is important to remain mindful of Joseph and Slyomov-



ics' caveat that, "we have to be very careful about generalizing about gender issues or any other aspect of social organization" in a period of such radical regional upheaval, "or [about] assuming that these issues are the same across ethnic, religious, racial, national, regional, or linguistic groupings" (Joseph and Slymovics 2000, 1), What one can aspire to do in opening a discussion of contemporary MENA affairs is to provide an analysis of the limited salient features across countries and to offer an analysis of distinct phenomena within countries and an attempt to realistically project more broadly applicable (and therefore less specific) trends. While such an endeavor to provide actionable examples across a diverse region without making unrealistic comparisons may appear limited, it is a necessary starting point for initiating a review of available knowledge in the midst of the current Arab Awakening. If there are broadly applicable trends within existing Islamic democracies, they will provide valuable lessons and frame expectations for Arab Awakening states.

### Family Honor and the Sociological Foundations of the MENA Gender Gap

The gender gap in social, political, and economic indicators present in the MENA region is a well-documented phenomenon. According to the World Bank, "improving women's access to economic opportunities and their participation in the civic and political sphere remains a fundamental development challenge for the Middle East and North Africa Region" (World Bank 2011a). Before discussing recent trends in the factors used to define such analysis, it is important to understand the historical foundations of this reality.

The relationship between men and women in the MENA region is defined and reinforced by the interplay of two

social constructs: the family or community, and patriarchy. The core unit of political, economic, social, and religious affiliation and interaction is the family; this centrality is "enshrined in the constitutions of many Arab or Muslim states (which assert the family to be the basic unit of society), and is reproduced at almost every level of political life" (Joseph and Slymovics 2000, 2). Worker recruitment, wages, and benefits take into account obligations each recipient has to be present and provide for the family unit. Religion is perhaps the area in which family plays the most fundamental role: Not only do the major faiths of the MENA region ascribe authority to the family unit over the individual, religious institutions engage in transactional relationships with families, exchanging guardianship of family integrity for the safeguarding of religious sanctity. (Joseph and Slymovics 2000, 6).

The currency of the family unit in many aspects of life in the MENA region is family honor. Family honor implies that "one's sense of dignity, identity, status, self, and public esteem is linked to the regard with which one's family is held in the community at-large" (Joseph and Slymovics 2000, 6). For this reason, one's actions reflect on the entire unit, and the reputation of the unit is tied to each individual. Just as the availability of currency affects economic behavior, so does family honor direct and restrict the behavior of individual family members. Different actors within the family unit are also assigned varying elasticities through which their behavior can impact overall family honor.

It is through this avenue of differential elasticity that patriarchy emerges as a defining force in establishing a gender hierarchy within the family. Family honor is more elastic with respect to women's behavior than to men's, meaning that an equal social misstep by a man will have a far smaller impact on his family's perceived



social standing than the same action taken by a female relative. Women's sexuality, movement in social arenas, political liberation, and (occasionally) access to employment are placed under male guardianship to protect the family's supply of honor. Though this currency concept holds strictly as a model of gender relations for the nuclear family in the MENA region, it must be tempered with the following caveat: enactments of family honor protection can vary widely throughout extended family ties. In the past few decades, more distant relatives "particularly in urban areas and the middle and upper classes, have been less able to use honor to control the behavior" of their relations (Joseph and Slymovics 2000, 3).

Patriarchy acts as a conduit for additional levels of gendered hierarchal behavior in the MENA region, beyond its association with the protection of family honor. Intra-household relations are defined as complementary, in which female members are taught to respect and defer to male members while males are urged to take responsibility for their female kin (Joseph and Slymovics 2000, 3). The prevalence of patriarchal behaviors is also linked to patrilineality, patrilocality, and endogamy within family and community units. These phenomena are mutually reinforcing and result in an even greater male domination of women; the favoring of males combined with the passing of legal descent through the father (patrilineality) gives males in the father's kin group authority over females biologically within the group and even more so over women who marry into this kinship relation. This double-dominance then increases the likelihood that women will live near their husband's family (patrilocality), a phenomenon made far simpler by the practice of endogamy. In situations where these four forces act in concert, newly married women are subjugated to the authority of both sets of male

elders (Khlat 2010, 63).

While such an arrangement undeniably places constraints on young, married women, it does confer them a possible advantage over non-endogamously married women in that potential in-law excesses are curbed by the presence of the woman's family (World Bank 2011a). A second qualification of this argument refers to its complexity in practice; not all paternal kin fulfill their roles in a socially ideal manner, and "at times maternal relatives are more important than paternal relatives as sources of political clout, social status, or emotional support" (World Bank 2011a). Just as it is important to avoid over-generalizing interpretations of the Middle East at large, the experience of gender relationships may differ depending on the context in which it is analyzed.

The role of the individual female within her household is an important indicator of how her role is defined in society at large. In the same manner that patriarchy reinforces, by definition, male domination over female relatives, this power structure is also recreated in macro-level games. The influence of male-centric attitudes is in fact magnified in political and economic contexts due to the masculinist, mutually reinforcing notions of women's inferior role in the family structure and their relatively less productive role in the nation-state (Joseph and Slymovics 2000, 17). Mere realization of citizenship is a gendered concept, especially in the MENA region; as Pateman argues, the contemporary state constructs a citizenry that resembles a "fraternal patriarchy" due to its historical roots in gendered idioms (relating strength and origin to "bands of brothers" and "founding fathers"), reliance on property ownership (traditionally transferred along paternal lines), and social contract theory (strongly based in property ownership and the establishment of a "civil fraternity" able to freely enter contractual arrangements—a decision



made *by men for women* in many MENA contexts) (Pateman 2002). The ability to be a full member of the state and exercise the rights of citizenship have, therefore, historically been reserved for (property-owning) men.

The non-voting interaction of the citizen with the state or the organization of civil society within a polity are defined by this gendered notion of citizenship. Civil society, usually characterized by Western philosophers as the citizen's reprieve from the potential of state authoritarianism, defines its space of operations as within the public sphere (Centre for Civil Society 2004). This characterization of the space available to engage in voluntary association inadvertently creates a dichotomy between public and private that reinforces the gender norms initially presented in the MENA nuclear family. The institutions traditionally associated with civil society—unions, chambers of commerce, political action groups, professional and community organizations, for example—all operate within the public sphere and are therefore traditionally male spaces. This layering of gendered separations between public and private, social and domestic, and civil society and state all reinforce the notion of an innate difference between the genders, and it is this difference that is then used as justification for differential treatment, resulting in a widely proclaimed<sup>3</sup> gender gap.

### Defining the Current Gender Gap

To make effective policy decisions on issues with ambiguous policy parameters (i.e. human rights claims), it is important to define first the exact content of the problem to be solved. The notion of a gender gap in human development includes a wide array of sub-contexts: health, education, economic activity, politics, and other avenues of public and private life. It

is important to avoid over-generalizing the policy problem being discussed, otherwise the notion of “closing the gender gap” may become too daunting to tackle effectively within a realistic policy framework.

Table 1 in the Appendix provides evidence from the World Economic Forum of the current gender gap in the MENA region. The reported Gender Gap Score is on a scale of 1 (perfect equality) to 0 (perfect inequality) comprised of an un-weighted average of the following sub-indexes (which are then bounded between 0 and 1): Economic Participation and Opportunity, Educational Attainment, Health and Survival, and Political Empowerment (Hausmann, Tyson and Zahidi 2010). Each sub-index is coded by a set of variables defined as a ratio of female-to-male involvement in certain activities (for example: the sex ratio at birth and the ratio of female healthy life expectancy over male value, taken together, compose the Health and Survival sub-index). This Gender Gap index also relies on multiple data sources, including UNESCO, the CIA World Factbook, the World Health Organization, and the International Labour Organization to confirm its stated estimates and improve their external validity.

Most noteworthy in this data is the fact that all but one nation (Israel) fall in the bottom quartile of the 133 country observations. Even Israel is trending downward over time; “there are small losses [in Israel] on all four sub indexes, driven particularly by a widening wage gap and a smaller proportion of women in ministerial level positions” (World Bank 2011a, p 11). While the MENA region ranks in last place among world regions (in comparison with Asia and the Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean, North America, Europe and Central Asia, and sub-Saharan Africa), there has been upward movement in the Arab states ranked in the top half of the MENA region—the UAE, Kuwait, Tu-



nia, Bahrain, and Mauritania—especially due to improvement in female literacy and educational enrollment rates. Kuwait's ranking also benefits from an increase in the number of female legislators since the passage of women's suffrage in 2006 and the subsequent election of four female representatives in 2009 (a phenomenon to be discussed later). The rankings of other Arab states are affected to varying degrees by their scores in the difference sub-indexes. For example, while Lebanon's educational system, taken in a vacuum, ranks fairly well in regard to gender equality of access, female employment and economic participation lag behind many countries in the region. All but one of the countries occupying the bottom half of the regions' rankings—Oman, Syria, Egypt, Morocco, and Saudi Arabia—are ranked at the bottom due to exceptionally poor performance in a small number of indicators (they rank far higher in others). Saudi Arabia, for example, has made large strides in increasing female labor force participation and educational enrollment (22 percent and 37 percent, respectively), but it has the world's lowest political empowerment score: zero (World Bank 2011a, 27).

Yemen is a special case in which the gender gap is firmly established across all indicators. It ranks last in the MENA region and last in the 134 surveyed countries, as it has not yet managed to decrease even 50 percent of its initial gender gap and has deteriorated relative to its own score from 2008–2010 (World Bank 2011a, 32).

Regarding the MENA gender gap, certain progress has been made in a number of the aforementioned areas: the World Bank's MENA Division report on "Bridging Gender Gaps" states that "MENA's achievement in improving women's health and education outcomes in recent decades is impressive. Although gender gaps in school completion rates still exist

in some MENA countries, most countries are well on their way to achieving gender parity in key human development indicators" (World Bank 2011a, p 2). Efforts to improve women's access to education and healthcare, often spurred by international tools such as the UN Millennium Development Goals, have garnered international praise and produced impressive results. In fact, the MENA region leads in improving the rate of female literacy and is second only to South Asia in improving female life expectancy. The World Bank report goes on to say that

the region compares well with other developing countries in these areas. MENA's maternal mortality rate is less than half the Low and Middle Income Countries (LMI) average, and female life expectancy is nearly 4 years longer than the LMI average (Figure 2). And although MENA's female literacy rate is still below the LMI average, the region is at par with the LMI average in measures for gender gaps in education (World Bank 2011a, p 3).

Most impressive regarding recent education statistics is the evidence proving that female enrollment in post-secondary education trumps that of men in a majority of MENA states, and in some states (especially Iran), women earn a higher percentage of PhDs than their male counterparts (Esfandiari 2003).

Yet before writing off education and maternal health as resolved issues, it is important to note that in certain MENA states the gender gap remains fully intact. While increasing female enrollment and literacy are important achievements, reaching an equal level of male and female success in these areas is quite a different issue, and one in which the MENA region still falls short on average. In the region as a whole, female enrollment as a share



of total school enrollment remains below 50 percent at all educational levels (World Bank 2011a). Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Morocco, and Syria exhibit the largest current disparity between male and female school enrollment levels (for example, women make up 32 percent of all students in the Algerian educational system) (Jacobsen 2005). An additional statistic on which there has only recently been extensive evidence is panel data regarding individual female enrollment over time versus male enrollment; this evidence proves that in certain MENA states, women drop out at much earlier ages and higher rates than do men. For example, in Morocco, “while 91 percent of 11 year old girls are in school, this share is only 65 percent among 14 year old girls” (World Bank 2011a, p 4). An additionally interesting finding appears in the World Bank report: women in almost every MENA state enroll and complete primary and secondary education at lower rates than men, but once women reach tertiary education, they outnumber men regularly in enrollment numbers (occasionally enrolling at 200–300 percent of the male enrollment rate). The data on completion rates at the tertiary level are mixed, while in some countries (Kuwait, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and Libya) female completion rates are greater than male rates; in all other nations, women complete tertiary education at lower rates than their male colleagues. This information poses an interesting econometric dilemma: how does one account for the factors that at once allow women to enroll in tertiary education in high numbers, but then do not push them in equally high numbers to finish these degrees (World Bank 2011a)?

While education and health statistics both show slight upward trends in favor of gender parity, two areas remain the bulwarks of the MENA gender gap: economic and political participation. The third section of this paper extensively

addresses the problem of disparately low female political participation, so it will not be discussed in-depth here, allowing for engagement in a (comparatively more cursory) discussion of the gap in economic empowerment.

### The Gender Gap in Economic Activity

Economic empowerment contains a variety of sub-variables, such as the female share of labor force participation and unemployment, average male versus female income, the percentage of female members of board and committees, to name only a few. These factors are important elements of the gender gap because, as Handoussa has written, “The integration of women into the economic landscape is an indicator of the growth and diversification potential of a nation as well as a reflection of the empowerment of one half of its society” (Handoussa 2006, 7). Handoussa’s statement correctly identifies the two aspects of this gender gap dilemma: not only does the exclusion of half a nation’s human capital input place it on a lower initial output frontier, it also reflects directly on the policies and attitudes that prevent women from seeking or being able to seek employment, prevents opportunities from being made available, or prevents the work that women are already doing from being monetized into the economy.

In terms of the core economic data, the World Bank suggests that aggregate female labor force participation (26 percent in 2010) in the MENA region is the world’s lowest of any region. South Asia ranks second lowest among developing regions, with a participation rate of 35.2 percent, followed in increasing order by Latin America and the Caribbean (52.4 percent), sub-Saharan Africa (61.5 percent) and East Asia (68.2 percent). The MENA region’s unemployment rate of 18.5 percent



is also markedly higher than that of any other developing region. While low levels of workforce participation are prevalent across the region, most below 30 percent, the lowest rates of participation are in Iraq, the West Bank, and Gaza. The highest levels of participation are in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, such as Kuwait, Qatar, and the UAE (excluding Saudi Arabia) (World Bank 2011a).

Multiple factors account for this high rate of female unemployment and low labor force participation, and not all are directly attributable to the gender gap. The interplay among factors that regularly account for unemployment and lack of job openings with gender held constant is then magnified with the introduction of gender as a variable. For example, the high rate of violent conflict and the associated investment risk result in low levels of foreign investment in many countries in the MENA region and, therefore, translate to fewer job openings overall. These limited employment opportunities are then subject to gendered employment norms in which males, seen as the default household income earners, are more likely to be hired for the few available positions. This indirect driver (regional conflict), therefore, leads to a furthering of the gender gap in employment. Such analysis can be fact-checked by comparing the levels of female employment as a share of the employed labor force in MENA countries perceived as stable investments (namely, Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the U.A.E) with those in conflict-ridden nations such as Iraq, Algeria, Lebanon, and Syria. The differences in females as a fraction of the labor force and female unemployment are striking: female labor force participation in stable states averages more than 40 percent while females make up only 21 percent of the employed, on average, in conflict states. Unemployment in stable states averages two standard

deviations lower than in conflict states, and the female share of unemployment, though still higher than male unemployment, is significantly lower than in conflict states as well (World Bank 2011a).

Being young and female in the MENA region is a double burden when on the quest for employment. While unemployment rates among young men in the region are already very high, averaging more than 10 percent, the numbers for young women are comparatively stratospheric (World Bank 2011a). While a high rate of youth unemployment is often a feature of economies, holding their levels of development constant, this situation has dire implications for the MENA region, as it is currently undergoing a transition to a far younger population. This is evidence of a larger trend, discussed by the International Labor Organization, that argues that there is an upward trend of youth unemployment across the globe.<sup>4</sup> The same arguments being leveled by Western economists about current college graduates falling behind in wage scales and job skill-building opportunities (see Krugman's 2011) can be applied at an even higher rate to the MENA countries.

An important variable related to women's economic empowerment that must be used to further clarify the impact of these employment figures is the gap between male and female incomes for employed workers. According to a 2008 report from the Arab Fund for Social and Economic Development, several factors have contributed to women's low incomes. These include,

women's low participation in economic activities, less hours paid for women compared to males, fewer perks or non-cash incentives for women, fewer opportunities to use their skills in decision-making, the relatively higher unemployment rate among women, the concentration of women in lower



level positions where there is a big gender gap in terms of wages, a lack of legislation regarding family conditions, and the lack of equitable economic opportunity (Handoussa 2006, 157).

Two elements on this list should be analyzed further due to their implications for public policy: first, a large share of female employment in the MENA region (especially in conflict states) is in the informal sector. This implies that women are either counted as employed—though the low wages of the informal sector still classify them as relatively poorer than men—or that women working in the informal sector are not counted in overall employment estimates (which either increases the percentage of female unemployment or decreases the percentage of women in the labor force).

Such variation in the interpretation of data can bi-directionally influence policymaking: if work in the informal sector *is* included, the policy problem is that of finding an acceptable minimum wage for women. If informal work is *not* included, but women are considered unemployed, the policy problem is, instead, the creation of job opportunities. These jobs, once created, may or may not be taken up by previously informally employed women, depending on the relative opportunity costs of leaving the informal sector.

The second element of the list to be analyzed more thoroughly is when informal work is not included and women are not considered to be in the labor force. This scenario implies that there is a need for a broad-scale employment effort and that there is also a need to change cultural perceptions of women in the workforce to overcome cultural barriers to entry (especially the perception that certain jobs are not “women’s work” or that women should not be formally employed). This last situation has the same opportunity cost of uptake as the second scenario and is also

likely to be more expensive and time-intensive. It is also less likely to be implemented successfully, due to the chance that cultural attitudes may be improperly defined and manipulated.

An important aspect of female unemployment in the MENA region is the disconnect between this ongoing phenomenon and the uptick in female secondary and tertiary educational completion rates (as discussed above). The data suggest that even the most highly educated young MENA women face major hiring dilemmas in the job market. For example, from 1998 to 2006, the percentage of Egyptian women with university degrees doubled from 6–12 percent, but the female employment rate remained stagnant (World Bank 2011a).

An analysis of recent changes in the economic structure of MENA economies, resulting in changes in the labor force and female participation therein, is helpful in explaining the gap between female educational attainment and employment. In recent years, there has been a clear shift in the labor force from rural to urban areas, due in large part to “the increase in education in rural areas, the emergence of non-agricultural activities in these communities, the concentration of development programs in major cities in most countries at the expense of services directed to rural communities, and the low investment levels in agricultural projects compared to other activities” (Handoussa 2006, 152).

The vast majority of the MENA region’s employed population possesses low or medium levels of education. A large percentage of the low-level non-agricultural workforce is illiterate, reflecting the human capital input demands of the current MENA labor market (mostly consisting of low-skill, labor-intensive industries such as petroleum and natural gas production and textile manufacturing). While the MENA economy “suffers from shortages in the



inventory of higher learning capabilities, as manifested in higher education graduates numbering around 12 million, that is, some 12.5 percent of the overall labor force," those who do attain higher degrees are not assured employment. Even though the supply of higher education graduates is lower in the MENA region than any other region, "the labor market has not been able to generate a sufficient number of suitable jobs to absorb this stock, on the one hand, and the gap or mismatch between most of the acquired skills and labor market needs on the other" (Handoussa 2006, 142). For this reason, while the rise in female graduates, viewed in a vacuum, is a positive sign regarding the potential for economic growth and social empowerment, it does not match the current labor market demands in MENA states and has therefore resulted in high unemployment among professional educated women.

A major contributing factor to this gap between female education and employment is the growth of female involvement in the agricultural sector, which is a response to male rural-to-urban migration (Handoussa 2006, 152). This phenomenon has several parts: first, in countries with historically high agricultural activity, male migration (sparked by the reasons listed above) has left agricultural jobs available to the female family members who they leave behind. These jobs are low-skilled and therefore do not require advanced degrees. On one hand, this increases female employment among low-skilled workers, thereby increasing overall female employment, while on the other hand, it creates a specific market for female labor that does not include the skills that the women receiving advanced degrees possess. Therefore, as no new jobs are created in the agricultural sector, overall employment remains stagnant and may even shrink, given the opportunity cost of taking low-skilled jobs for high-skilled female workers.

In addition to the issues faced by the agricultural sector, changes in production patterns have resulted in fewer employment opportunities, "especially in new projects in middle industries which operate according to modern productive technologies requiring higher skills, advanced expertise, and fewer employees" (Handoussa 2006, 152). Therefore, the capacity of such industries to absorb the influx of male rural-to-urban migrants is limited, and this limitation is even greater for women (due to male-preference in job selection in such industries). Labor force mobility between these industries is also limited due to the high cost of retraining workers. The industries seeing the greatest levels of growth in the MENA region are also effectively limiting employment opportunities because, as in the oil industry, for example, firms absorb a relatively small number of employees despite their relatively high added value in that sector. The high level of production technology in these industries requires a small number of highly skilled workers that rarely include local men, and therefore functionally exempt local women from being qualified to seek employment.

Another factor contributing to the gender gap in labor force participation related to the changing job market is women's limited geographic mobility. The impact of transitions in the MENA economy is worsened for women because they are relatively constrained in their ability to move within or beyond their home countries in search of improved educational and employment opportunities. Traditional cultural norms limiting women's opportunities to move away from their families not only restricts their access to the job market but also affect women's negotiating behavior within firms (Handoussa 2006, 162). A woman's choice set is severely reduced in contract negotiations by the inability to change geographic locations to move vertically in her career trajectory.



In addition to the issues specific to the MENA region, women in these countries face the same salient concerns present in other regions: the difficulty of balancing family and work roles, withdrawal from the labor market by women in higher socioeconomic classes (reduced “need” to be working), insufficient governmental support to ease women’s entry into the labor market (such as flex-time and maternity leave provisions), and a lack of role models and mentors to learn from and supportive social networks to rely on. Finally, MENA women make up an insubstantial percentage of regional labor unions and therefore have equally limited negotiation power to improve income and employment opportunities (Handoussa 2006, 162).

Even with these unfortunate realities of gender-based economic disparity, there are steps that the governments and civil societies of MENA states could take to begin to strengthen women’s participation in formal sector training and employment. First, the role of governments in empowering women must be strengthened. Governments have historically been the actors most responsible for effectively enacting policies to overcome patterns of social inequality. Such an effort would include crafting legislation to prohibit *de jure* discrimination and limit *de facto* discrimination against women in employment or career advancement, “especially in jobs where women are underrepresented because of cultural or regulatory policies” (Handoussa 2006, 163). The government can also help to increase policymaking transparency with regard to gender issues by facilitating meetings and conversations between policy-makers and policy implementers; this would help policy-makers to identify the areas of labor market activity in which legislation to promote women’s rights is most needed and would also make members of the government more acces-

sible to non-governmental leaders.

Second, non-governmental organizations, labor unions, and educational organizations targeted toward promoting gender equality should be strengthened. Such institutions are the first line of defense for women experiencing workplace discrimination and are also the most well-informed regarding issues faced by local communities. More tangibly, these institutions are also charged with providing vocational education to women—a service most often provided to men.

Finally, women’s participation in political institutions should be dramatically increased. Without the active participation of women in the policymaking process, it is far less likely that legislation favoring women’s issues will be proposed, passed, and implemented.

### The Gender Gap in Political Participation

As the previous section suggests, female participation in political activities in the MENA region is relatively limited. The past decade has been marked by a number of successes regarding the introduction of women into politics, such as securing the right to vote in multiple states; changes in family status laws to incorporate female rights in property holding, marital decisions, and divorce; an increase in the number of women serving in ministries throughout the region; and the right to stand for election in local councils and parliaments. However, “the nature of women’s participation in government has generally been:

- Symbolic (one or two ministers in most cases);
- Limited to smaller portfolios (usually ministries of social affairs or ministries relating to women); and
- Conditional (the number of female



ministers fluctuates with numerous changes in government)" (UNDP 2005, 202).

Though the recent successes of women entering the political arena are noteworthy, for these reasons above, progress remains limited.

The increase in female representation, while still far lower in aggregate than the presence of women in power in other regions, has been dispersed broadly across countries in the region. In early 2006, even amid the war, Iraq had the highest level of female representation in parliament (25.5 percent), followed by Tunisia (22.8 percent), Sudan (14.7 percent) and Syria (12 percent) (UNDP 2005, 96). The next set of countries hovered around 10 percent representation: Djibouti (10.8 percent), Morocco (10.8 percent), and Somalia (8 percent, though more recent estimates are unclear due to the nation's volatile political situation). At the bottom of the register are Egypt (2 percent, though this may change due to the suggestion of female quotas in the new constitution), Yemen (0.3 percent) and Bahrain (zero). Female parliamentarians in Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia, and Algeria have occasionally held high-level positions in committees of influence, but a woman has never served as a legislative speaker or chief executive member of government beyond Israel.<sup>5</sup> Saudi Arabia and the UAE do not have elected legislative councils, though the UAE routinely has one or more female cabinet members (relegated to legislatively powerless departments). Saudi Arabia has no female representation in government (UNDP 2005, 98).

This remarkably low level of female participation is a recent phenomenon. However, political anthropologists document high levels of female involvement in public life dating back to Khadijah bint Khuwaylid, the first wife of Prophet Muhammad. Khadijah was reputed as an

independently successful merchant who inherited and maintained her family's business and fortune (Bodley 1969). Over time, female influence in the public realm was a constant presence; it is only due to more recent political events that women have retreated (or been driven) into the private realm. As the modern Egyptian state developed, "formal politics expanded and women's participation declined" (Joseph and Slymovics 2000, 35). Similarly, the Shah's rise to power in Iran strengthened formal state institutions and therefore decreased the percentage of decisions made through informal (street) politics, an area in which women had previously been active. The association between strengthening state institutions with weakening female power is further confirmed by its real world counterfactual in states such as Lebanon, where the historically weak government has allowed for strong female participation and authority in non-governmental organizations and social institutions. An additional confounder of female political power in the MENA region occurs when domestic roles become defined as political activities, such as the role of the Palestinian woman as the "producer of fighters" (a similar politicization of the womb was seen during the struggle in Northern Ireland) (Joseph and Slymovics 2000, 36).

Overcoming these historical realities is complicated by two associated factors: the high up-front cost of mobilization and organization and the opportunity cost of engaging in political activity. The ability to organize for political gain in MENA states is limited by the influence of class divisions within society; this is especially the case in the informal space of female participation. "[M]iddle or upper class women may be less likely than working class women to act politically in the street, neighborhood, or square. They may, on the other hand, be more likely to act through more formal organizations: politi-



cal parties, women's organizations, philanthropic organizations, religious institutions, social agencies and the like" (Joseph and Slymovics 2000, 38). This physical separation between the classes limits women's ability to organize around their gendered social cleavage, and strengthens women's self-association with their class or family and therefore with the political parties and organizations representing those interests (and not their interests as women).

This organizational dilemma is compounded by the high cost of entering politics for women compared to their male counterparts. Women often feel compelled to dissociate with their gender and become "honorary males" to retain their family honor in the public realm (Joseph and Slymovics 2000, 39). Women also place themselves at risk of being negatively labeled both sexually and politically if they choose to engage in open discussions of feminist issues within the political arena. The choice often becomes engagement in either feminism or politics.

A number of additional factors serve to limit the ability of women to enter politics. The cultural legacy of discriminatory patriarchy, though difficult to quantify, is ever-present in MENA life. Additionally, the nature of politics in the region "does not provide much security and immunity for those involved in it," which translates into a lack of trust of the process and an aversion for both men and women to join political parties (UNDP 2005, 100). Women are also effectively kept out of politics due to their reduced geographic mobility and economic means, which makes collecting signatures on electoral petitions and assuring campaign financing difficult.

Even when women are able to organize effectively and win seats in parliament, their influence within the legislative body is limited to "traditionally female" portfolios, such as social development and children's issues (UNDP 2005, 96). In

limited instances, women have been given planning, communications, or trade portfolios, but they have never been charged with defense, interior, or foreign affairs. There has also not been a female prime minister or deputy prime minister, except in Jordan, where a woman was selected as deputy prime minister in 1999.

In many MENA states, organized, motivated women are faced with an additional constraint: formally associating themselves with the state may actually undermine the feminist project, making it more effective to work for change from outside formal institutions. The increasing presence of women in the governments of authoritarian regimes coupled with their marginalization in actual political activism may actually undermine the association of women's empowerment with greater political participation in that it, "invalidates women's participation and separates women in power from any popular base that they may have" (UNDP 2005, 95). Staying outside formal government and attempting to create social change may also end badly in that, "work outside of government institutions exposes women activists to repression, especially when these activists link women's social rights to lack of rights and civil and political freedoms in general" (UNDP 2005, 95).

Despite these constraints, there is potentially cause for hope, emerging in a number of MENA states, that female involvement in politics may become a voluntary and acceptable reality. An important element of any such transition is establishment of the appropriate social environment; this seems to have occurred in a majority of states in the region. A recent Arab Human Development Report poll proves that women's political involvement is routinely considered to be as distinguished as that of men: "two thirds of respondents considered the performance of women to be as good as, or better than, that of men"



(UNDP 2005, 97). This change in opinion about the ability of women to be effective leaders is being capitalized on in a number of MENA states to increase the participation of women in the political process.

### The Rise of Female Politicians: Kuwait Case Study

In the past five years, Kuwait has emerged as a leader in women's political responsiveness in the MENA region. Having given women the right to vote in 2006 and elected its first (four) female representatives to the Kuwaiti National Assembly in 2009, the last eighteen months have been characterized by expansive legislative victories on female agenda items; the Women's Parliamentary Committee has reexamined marriage laws and labor force regulations (including the framework for maternity leave and flex-time benefits) and has passed them through the Assembly.<sup>6</sup> Such dramatic successes in enacting pro-female legislation are an anomaly in the MENA region, which necessitates an examination of the context in which they were able to pass. Is there something about Kuwait's politics or recent history that makes it an especially amenable environment for female political empowerment? If so, can this be replicated in other MENA states?

Throughout Kuwait's modern history, the preeminent unit of social involvement for women was the women's group—a semi-formal gathering of mostly middle- and upper-class women funded, like all voluntary associations in Kuwait, by the state. These groups were highly internally organized, with elected boards, written constitutions, and paid memberships; and all fell under oversight of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor. The ministry had the power to collect membership dues and, more important, to dissolve the organizations completely if their activities were not seen to be “beneficial to

society as a whole” (Al Mughni 2000, 176). Both this governmental oversight function and the fact that they effectively gave elite women the authority to control all Kuwaiti women's access to the public sphere, these women's groups effectively inhibited large-scale development of a feminist movement. In much the same way that was discussed in the preceding section, class divisions undercut the ability of women to unite as a gender group and ask for political rights. In practice, these women's groups conformed to official policies and definitions of the “appropriate” role of women in Kuwaiti society, and any alterations to the system they called for were achieved through gradual reform, not through social change. Until the early 1990s, there were only five licensed women's groups: the Women's Cultural and Social Society (WCSS), the Girls' Club, Bayader al-Salam (the Threshing Fields of Peace), the Islamic Care Society (ICS), and the Volunteer Women's Association for Community Services. All had small and overlapping membership consisting of middle-aged middle- and upper-class women, and all had extremely low membership (totaling 1,752 in 1988, at a time when Kuwait's population exceeded 2 million) (Al Mughni 2000, 177).

While women's involvement in civil society has historically been limited, their participation in the Kuwaiti economy has been far higher than the regional average. Since the discovery of oil and the development of the petroleum economy in the 1950s, women have been mobilized into the labor force to reduce the nation's dependency on foreign labor. The decision to include women to a larger degree in the formal economy was associated with the *nahda* movement, which advocated “a departure from rigid traditions and customs in the name of *taqaddum* (progress) and civilization” (Al Mughni 2000, 177). It is important to note, regarding analysis later in this section, that the *nahda* movement



was led by young, upper-middle-class men who had been educated in Egypt.

It was in this transitional period that the five women's groups were formed, though all by and for upper-middle-class women. In 1963, a sixth society was formed, the Arab Women's Development Society (AWDS), whose middle-class membership was determined to address the issues they saw were being strategically avoided by other women's groups; namely gender equality and women's citizenship rights. As opposed to the reformist nature of its sister organizations, AWDS took a more radical stance and challenged official governmental policies regarding women's status in employment and politics, calling for "equality in all fields of employment, the appointment of women as special attorneys to draft family law, the provision of child allowances to married women, and the restriction of polygamy" (Al Mughni 2000, 177). What may have, in other circumstances, been seen as a major step forward, the AWDS success in bringing an equal rights bill to the floor of the National Assembly sparked such a radical backlash from the legislative majority that it almost sank the legislature into complete political disarray, with traditionalists on one side of the divide, and progressive nationalists on the other (Al Mughni 2000, 178).

As if in response to this specific legislation, the 1970s saw a marked increase in state intervention in family affairs, under the guise of protecting "traditional family arrangements," which effectively meant quelling the influence of secular and feminist groups. The aforementioned notion of family honor was reestablished at the forefront of Kuwaiti consciousness with the government's focus on *al-usra al-waheda* (the united family), a concept that firmly separated male and female roles into public and private spheres (Al Mughni 2000, 178).

These traditionalist efforts were

more firmly codified in the passage of the 1978 Personal Status Law, which legally legitimized male control over women. Tougher sentences were imposed on female offenders of the *ird* (honor), and *sum'a* (reputation) restrictions were placed on the Kuwaiti family. Opposition groups, especially a newly formed alliance between the AWDS and the Girls' Club, fought for increases in civil liberties and individual rights for women, but the Kuwaiti government acted to discredit the AWDS by bringing accusations of financial fraud against it and eventually disbanding it in 1980 (Al Mughni 2000, 179).

The early 1980s were a learning period for the two remaining active women's groups, the Girls' Club and WCSS. Their memberships recognized the increasingly Islamic tilt of Kuwaiti society and chose not to work against it, but rather justified their operations through furthering their association with the faith. By slowly ingratiating themselves with the Kuwaiti government as a source of social education for the nation's women on topics ranging from child rearing to cooking and keeping the house, these two organizations built up the political capital to ask for a concession in return. In 1980, the WCSS addressed a petition to the council of ministers demanding that "Kuwaiti women be appointed to senior government posts" (Al Mughni 2000, 179). This piece of legislation led to the opening of key ministry posts and college deanships to women.

This domestic transition coincided with a series of important international political events. Kuwaiti society had already begun to undergo a moderate transition to democracy, highlighted by the passage of the aforementioned women's rights legislation, at the time Iraq invaded on August 2, 1990. In what can, in hindsight, be seen as a unique natural experiment in which a major foreign power made assistance in a conflict conditional on the recipient



nation engaging in severe democratization efforts, the United States (under President George H. W. Bush) spurred an important nation-wide effort to improve Kuwaiti governmental relations with its citizenry. Before offering assistance, many American leaders argued that, "U.S. troops should not be jeopardized to protect a monarchy" (Yetiv 2002, 258). While some members of Congress refused to support an intervention unless Kuwait fully overrode its monarchy in favor of a democratically elected regime, a compromise was struck in which the royal family remained in power, but ceded a large degree of authority to a democratically elected National Assembly (Yetiv 2002, 259). Such a transition was made possible by Kuwaiti leaders' understanding of their position vis-à-vis the United States and other countries in the region; while other Gulf States at the time could afford to remain autocratic due to their more insular international relations, Kuwait depended on the United States and Western Europe for its export market and therefore felt driven to accede to democratization demands. Some prominent Kuwaitis believed that, "in the post-Cold War world, democratic practices represent developing global norms that Kuwait should adopt, in part because doing so can make it more respected and accepted by the United States and the free world, which is vital to Kuwait" (Yetiv 2002, 259). Though this push by the Bush administration was an important turning point in Kuwait's democratization experiment, this last quote is highly instructive. It appears that Kuwait's leaders understood the multidimensional benefits of liberalizing their society; the Iraq invasion merely provided a catalyst to spur action on notions the leadership already felt. This claim is supported by the passage of previously discussed women's rights legislation and the concurrent founding of free media outlets and reevaluation of governmental restrictions

on public assembly.

The 1990s saw incremental gains on women's issues; the WCSS and Girls' Club continued to push for alterations of governmental positions from their location outside the formal system. This slow progression of rights-granting was coupled with a dramatic increase in access to Western media and educational institutions, both of which helped to continue the moderation of the Kuwaiti electors. When Kuwait was surveyed in 1998, Meyer, Rizzo, and Ali (1998, 152) found a positive correlation between being male, Sunni, and either middle- or upper-class and a positive attitude toward women's suffrage.

Major activity on the women's suffrage issue did not gain political traction, despite these cultural shifts, until the early years of the twenty-first century. In November 1999, the National Assembly voted down a bill to grant full rights to women amid the stormiest debate in Kuwaiti parliamentary history; it then voted down a similar bill a few months later (Al Mughni 2000). It was not until external political factors forced a re-evaluation of the role women might potentially play in upholding and moderating the state structure that they were seen as important elements of the voting public. When, in 2004, a women's rights bill was again put forward by parliamentarians associated with the WCSS, the electoral climate was already tense as it awaited a potential alteration in the country's districting procedures; the redistricting bill would overhaul Kuwait's prior system of twenty-five districts with between 1,000 and 10,000 registered voters and replace it with ten, equally sized districts. Members of the existing government feared that such a transformation would favor young, reformist candidates and thought that they could count on women to be a moderate, homogenous voting group. Therefore, including women in the election by passing women's suffrage was



not only socially possible due to the steady trend toward democratization, it was also a politically expedient calculation for the sitting government (Al Mughni 2000). These associated motivations led to the passage of women's suffrage on May 16, 2005, in a 35–23 vote with one abstention (Fattah 2006).

The passage of this legislation, though widely perceived as a victory for Kuwaiti women, did not immediately produce an influx of female legislators rallying around a homogeneous body of legislation. The alteration in voting rules was interpreted by different female interest groups in a variety of ways; Islamist women's groups saw the ability to vote as a way "to empower themselves to create a moral and orderly society in which women and men have different, but not equal, responsibilities," while liberal women believed that "suffrage will allow women to gain the social and civil rights they are currently denied, such as equal welfare benefits and employment rights and formal equality in most aspects of marriage" (Al Mughni 2000).

The true impact of female voting on legislation will require empirical data, gathered over the course of multiple elections to see which camp (or both, or neither) will establish itself as the main female voice in a newly liberated voting populace. The evidence available from the first two elections in which women were able to take part (legislative elections in 2006 and 2009) suggests the following: more than 50 percent of all eligible women voted in each electoral district in both the 2006 and 2009 elections, suggesting a high uptake of the right to vote; women voted in an increased percentage from 2006 to 2009 in each district, suggesting a sustained interest in voting and evidence that voting is becoming a learned behavior; the women elected to the legislature in 2009 (see Tables 2 and 3 in Appendix) were all

members of liberal women's organizations (namely, Masooma Al Mubarak, Salwa Al Jassar, Aseel Al Awadi, and Rula Dashti, see Table 4 in Appendix), and some were leaders of these organizations; and the legislation implemented thus far by these female legislators has targeted women's issues such as maternity leave and flex-time and has done so along relatively progressive lines (instead of, for example, promoting motherhood through benefits that increase by the number of children in a family) (Olimat 2011).

While evidence from the past two elections helps to illuminate potential trends emerging within the female voting population in Kuwait, much work still needs to be done to understand what this may mean for the country and for the potential use and power of the women's vote in the region as a whole. The election in 2009 of four liberal, female representatives suggests that the women's vote swings in favor of progressive gender policies, but this will need to be tested through the introduction of a higher number of Islamist female candidates, through open-ended interviews and surveys of the voting population to see what attributes of each candidate make them relatively more "electable," and through observing over time whether the policies supported by these and future female legislators continues to trend progressive.

Additionally, it is important to note the problems with extrapolating analysis from Kuwaiti politics into the rest of the MENA region. Kuwait, as has been described, is both more socially progressive and more internationally dependent than its neighbors, and these indicators may allow women greater space for political activism. The country's overall population is also both low (2.8 million) and geographically concentrated in urban areas, which lead to a higher degree of social cohesion and level of contact among people (World Bank



2011b). Finally, Kuwait's relationship with the United States has resulted in a large degree of Western media influence and a high exchange of students between both nations. These factors help to influence general opinions about the potential of women in public life (as has been observed over time in the Kuwaiti economic and social sectors).

With these caveats in mind, it will be interesting to observe the scholarship that emerges over time regarding this issue. Kuwait's democratic process has the potential to provide a guideline for the mainstreaming of women's voices into political activism throughout the MENA region, and this possibility opens many more routes to quell cultural discomfort and motivate women to ask for and attain both political and economic rights.



## Appendix: Tables and Figures

**Table 1.** Middle East/North Africa Rankings on Global Gender Gap Index

Country	Score	Rank (Internationally)
Israel	0.6957	52
United Arab Emirates	0.6397	103
Kuwait	0.6318	105
Tunisia	0.6266	107
Bahrain	0.6217	110
Mauritania	0.6152	113
Lebanon	0.6084	116
Qatar	0.6059	117
Algeria	0.6052	119
Jordan	0.6048	120
Oman	0.5950	122
Syria	0.5926	124
Egypt	0.5899	125
Morocco	0.5767	127
Saudi Arabia	0.5713	129
Yemen	0.4603	134

Source: World Bank (2011a, 32).

**Table 2.** Female Representation as a Share of National Assembly Membership

Year	Number of Candidates	Number of Districts	Number of Female MPs	Elected MPs
2009	211	5	4	50
2008	275	5	0	50
2006	253	25	0	50
2003	246	25	0	50
1999	287	25	0	50
1996	229	25	0	50
1992	278	25	0	50
1985	231	25	0	50
1981	446	25	0	50
1975	86	10	0	50
1971	191	10	0	50

Source: Kuwaiti Ministry of Interior. See <http://www.moi.gov.kw/portal/venglish/>.



**Table 3.** Male and Female Voting Statistics in 2009 Elections

District	Number of Pre-cincts	Number of Male Candi-dates	Number of Female Candi-dates	Total Number of Candi-dates	Number of Male Voters	Number of Female Voters
1	19	43	2	45	31,613	37,519
2	13	44	1	45	20,380	23,093
3	15	44	10	54	27,754	34,833
4	18	31	4	35	43,552	56,330
5	20	31	1	32	52,380	57,336
Total	85	193	18	211	175,679	209,111

Source: Olimat (2011, 82).

**Table 4.** Electoral Outcomes for Female Candidates in 2009 Elections

Candidate	District	Number of Votes	Number of Total Votes	Rank among District Winners
Masooma Al Mubarak	1	14247	69,132	1st
Salwa Al Jassar	2	4776	43,473	10th
Aseel Al Awadi	3	11860	62,587	2nd
Rula Dashti	3	7666	62,587	7th

Source: *Al Jareda Daily*, May 17, 2009, cited in Olimat (2011, 83).



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ENDNOTES

- 1 CIA World Factbook. CIA, accessed March 28, 2011, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook>.
- 2 Defining the Middle East. College of DuPage, accessed March 28, 2011, <http://saltspringnews.com/modules.php?op=modload&name=News&file=article&sid=21554>
- 3 As identified by the UNDP Human Development Report and Gender Development Index.
- 4 American Center for Development of Knowledge in Vocational Training, accessed March, 28, 2011. <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/region/ampro/cinterfor/news/unemploy.htm>.
- 5 Ibid.
- 6 Interview with Shahed Al-Ansari, March 8, 2011



## Benefits of a National Action Plan (NAP) to implement UNSCR 1325 for the U.S.

BY ZAN LARSEN

The United States announced the creation of their National Action Plan (NAP) on “Women, Peace and Security” with a presidential executive order in December 2011. The benefits of this policy will come in the form of female engagement abroad; it is also anticipated to increase women’s voices in peace and security careers within the federal government. This action plan comes eleven years after the passage of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325) on “Women, Peace and Security.” Briefly examining the history of UNSCR 1325, other countries that have enacted NAPs, and the current state of women in U.S. government peace and security careers, the stage has been set for the anticipated effects of this recent executive order.

### *History of UNSCR 1325:*

During the decade following the collapse of the Soviet Union, powerful, developed countries drastically increased their involvement in conflict prevention, intervention, and recovery throughout the developing world. While progress in international humanitarian efforts remained largely stagnant throughout the Cold War, the end of the Cold War heralded an expansion of humanitarian international norms through conventions, establish-

ment of international courts, and increased influence of interventionist ideologies in foreign policy. Following the end of World War II, and with the world no longer solely focused on fighting to prevent the spread of Communism, the globe experienced the resurgence of a multilateral spirit that produced the United Nations and the Universal Declaration on Human Rights in the 1940s. From Bosnia to Haiti from Cambodia to Somalia, both successes and failures revealed a number of key factors for achieving sustainable peace. A group of NGOs, predominantly U.S.-based, identified female involvement as one of those key factors.

These NGOs, with support from various governments (including the U.S.), began a campaign to formalize gender mainstreaming in peace and conflict processes. This campaign resulted in the successful passage of UNSCR 1325, calling for member states to involve women at all levels of every aspect of national security and foreign policy that influenced peace processes. Subsequent revisions over the ten years after the passage of UNSCR 1325 encouraged each member state to create a National Action Plan (NAP) that would lay out a strategy to achieve gender mainstreaming in peace and security sectors.



For the last twenty years, at entry and middle-government-salary (G.S.) levels, the gender ratio has been nearly equal, and in some cases women have surpassed their male counterparts in the two main agencies that shape U.S. foreign policy: the Departments of Defense and State (DoD and DOS.) Yet growth in the percentage female at the Senior Executive Service (SES), and at the G.S. 13–15 levels (the levels at which policy decisions are made) has remained stagnant at less than 30 percent in both the DoD and DOS. This section examines the current status and recent history of women in peace and security careers in the U.S. federal government and the implications of a NAP at these levels in the future based on international comparisons. First, I present a statistical analysis of the data of gender ratios within U.S. federal employment, analyzing in particular the ratio of females in SES positions in the DoD and DOS. Second, I present an analysis of qualitative data and anecdotal evidence of a glass ceiling that is preventing the entry- and mid-level cohorts of women from moving up the ladder into SES-level positions.

## Data and Analysis

### *Methodology*

All U.S. data were gathered from the official Web site of the Office of Personnel Management (OPM.) The ratio of federal employees hired through veteran's preference was not available for 2010, therefore, any regressions, including this indicator, only analyze the years from 1998 to 2009. All other regressions include the years from 1998 to 2010. The following variables reflect the total ratio of women within the following groups: the SES level across all federal civilian employment, total federal government civilian employment, all non-military employment in the DoD and DOS, and civilian employment at the

SES level at both the DoD and DOS. Also included in some of the regressions are the ratio of federal employees hired through veteran's preference, both across the entire federal government and in the DoD and DOS. While data are available as far back as 1980, for the purposes of this paper, the included data start two years before the passage of UNSCR 1325.

The ratio of SES employees hired through veteran's preference is not included in the dataset because the exact percentages for each year were not available in open source databases. However, it is important to keep in mind that approximately 20 to 30 percent of all employees hired through veteran's preference are hired into the SES. The two major outcomes that this paper explores are the SES across all government employment, and within the DoD and DOS. The U.S. dataset is used to examine the following three hypotheses: first, the ratio of women in SES positions rises in correlation with gains in the total female employment ratios; second, the DoD and DOS SES ratios rise with general SES increases; and third, that the ratio hired through veteran's preference is negatively correlated with both outcome indicators on both the total federal employment level and within the specific agencies involved in shaping foreign policy.

As indicated in table 1, the strongest correlation supports the second hypothesis. There is a strong, positive correlation between the ratios of women in SES positions in the total government and within the DoD and DOS. Also, the ratio of people hired through veteran's preference (VP Hire) is negatively correlated with ratios of females in SES positions in the DoD and DOS, only to a limited extent, however. The first hypothesis is not supported—the negative correlation seems to indicate the exact opposite relationship between the total ratio of women in federal employment and those in SES positions. However, this



**Table 1: Testing Correlations of Employment Ratios**

Correlations of the female ratios	SES	SES in DoD & DOS	Total Gov't	Total DoD & DOS
SES in DoD & DOS	0.94	n/a	n/a	n/a
Total Gov't	-0.54	-0.54	n/a	n/a
Total DoD & DOS	-0.87	-0.81	0.79	n/a
Ratio of VP Hire	-0.09	-0.12	0.24	0.22

particular result is actually reflective of the fact that the ratio of women in all federal civil employment has remained nearly consistent since 1998 at around 44–45 percent, but the ratio of females in the overall SES has risen 11 percentage points.

The lack of fluctuation in overall female employment paired with gains in female ratios in the SES creates the appearance, mathematically, that they are inversely correlated. However, the more likely truth is that they are simply unrelated—this assumption is affirmed by running a simple regression that reveals that the overall federal ratios are not a statistically significant predictor of ratios in the SES. A similar pattern is seen in the DoD and DOS, where the overall female employment ratio has remained consistently between 36 and 38 percent, while the SES female ratio has increased by 8 percentage points in the past twelve years. One possible explanation for these trends indicates that general cultural perceptions may be slowly shifting to a greater acceptance of females in peace and security careers, making a NAP a part of the natural progression that simply speeds the process. Further evidence of this trend is that “46 percent of all promotions in [DoD and DOS] agencies went to women [in 2009.]”<sup>1</sup>

As mentioned in table 2, the ratio of new hires hired through veteran’s preference (VP Hire) was found to be an important indicator that was negatively correlated with female ratios in both total

federal employment and in the DoD and DOS. As seen in the graph above, the ratio of VP hires has stayed relatively stable in the last twelve years. However, it is consistently higher within the DoD and DOS, while the ratios of women in SES positions are consistently lower within these agencies. Since more than 80 percent of American veterans are male, and only 8–9 percent of federal employees hired through veteran’s preference are female, it is no surprise that as the number of people hired through veteran’s preference rises, the ratio of women falls. In effect this creates a system that inherently opens paths for men within the peace and security career field to advance more quickly than women. This unintentional consequence of a well-intended mechanism only further justifies the creation of counterbalancing mechanisms that target women.

### Qualitative Evidence of the Glass Ceiling

The aforementioned numbers only confirm the general perception among women currently working in the field. For the most part, women feel that gender discrimination in the hiring process has been nearly eliminated but that a number of challenges remain for women moving up the career pipeline that do not exist for their male counterparts. The Women In International Security network (WIIS) at Georgetown University recently published



a report based on interviews with hundreds of women working in peace and security careers. “Women who participated in this study expressed the view that we are at a critical juncture—a time of enormous possibilities if leaders and institutions take steps to build the pipeline of female talent in government.”<sup>2</sup> Participants were simultaneously hopeful about the recent progress and frustrated by the slow rate of change.

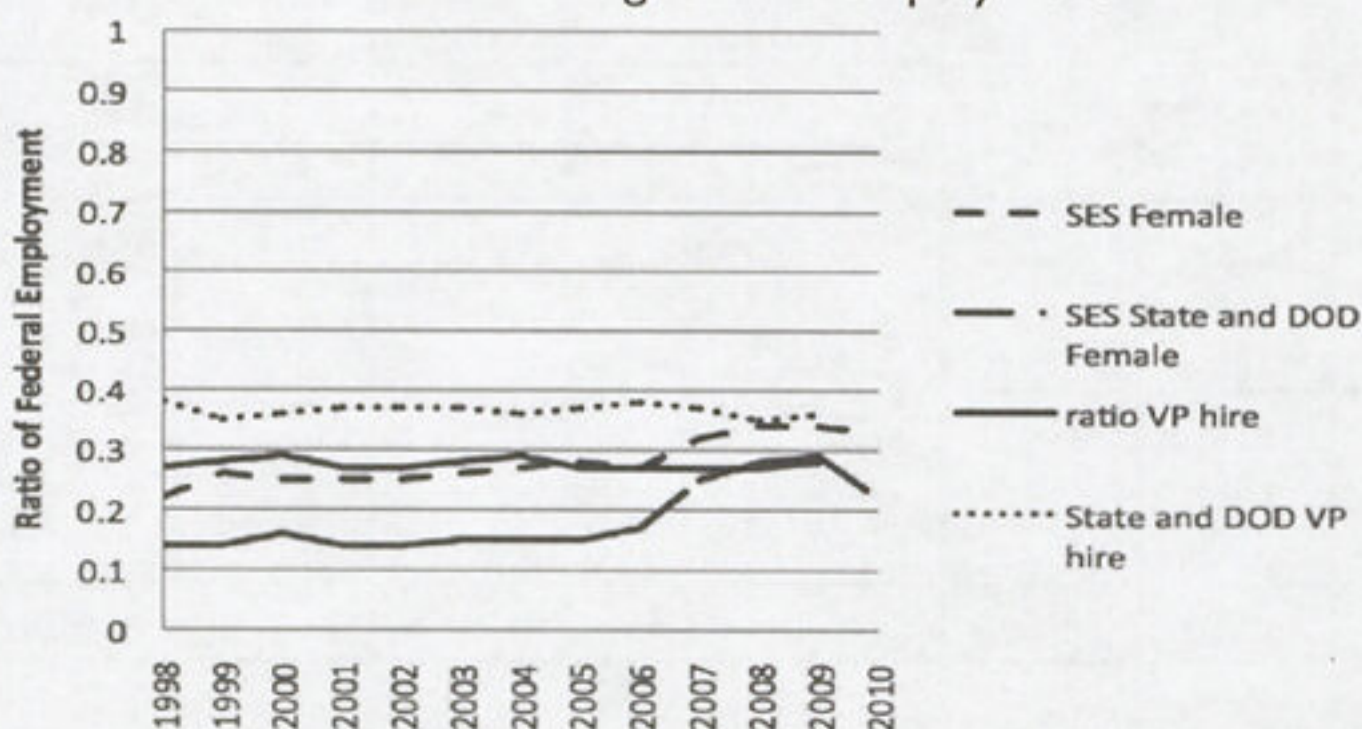
Women in nearly all career fields experience similar feelings, due to perceptions of qualifications and expected behavior based on gender stereotypes that put women at a disadvantage. Many theorists and studies have indicated that these feelings reflect the challenges of making changes when the current voices around the table are predominately male. Furthermore, the peace and security field is particularly resistant to move toward parity since predominant cultural biases favor men for leadership roles and assume only they have the ability to make hard decisions regarding war, international negotiations, weapons, and the military.<sup>3</sup>

Feminist theory regarding leadership, particularly within the foreign policy arena, proposes that “gender is a set of discourses that can set, enforce, and represent meaning on the basis of perceived membership in or relationship with sex cate-

ries. Women and femininity are associated with weakness, sympathy, marginality, dependence, and emotion. When they fall outside these characteristics, they are depicted as masculine. When men fall within them, they are depicted as feminine.”<sup>4</sup> This leaves women who are seeking leadership positions in foreign policy agencies with the tricky task of simultaneously demonstrating their ability as leaders while not being perceived as aggressive or overly masculine.

If the NAP can include ways to address the problem areas identified by the participants in the WIIS report, hopefully the ratio of females at top level positions will increase more quickly and with fewer problems for the women on those career paths. Evidence of the positive impact of NAPs can be seen in an evaluation of countries that already have one in place. Since many of the developed countries with NAPs had existing cultural aspects that made them more likely to pass a NAP, some might say that the United States is not ready to pass one. Progress made before the NAPs in areas such as better maternity leave requirements, higher executive board member gender quotas, and higher rates of elected female politicians may have made it easier to pass legislation for a NAP in some of these countries. However, the

**Table 2:** Tracking Federal Employment





recent trends in U.S. female employment rates at the SES level and the feedback from women in the field indicate that the timing is right and that the passage of a NAP should be an expected next step. Furthermore, while a NAP may have been easier to pass in certain cultures due to pre-existing policies, there is no reason to think that this is the only possible causal direction between the two. In the United States, it is possible that, rather than being the result of equality measures already in place, passing a NAP would actually herald progress in these areas, making pro-parity policies possible.

### NAPs in Countries of the European Union

As early as 2006, members of the European Union (EU) began passing NAPs. By 2011, twelve EU member states had adopted NAPs. While long-term ef-

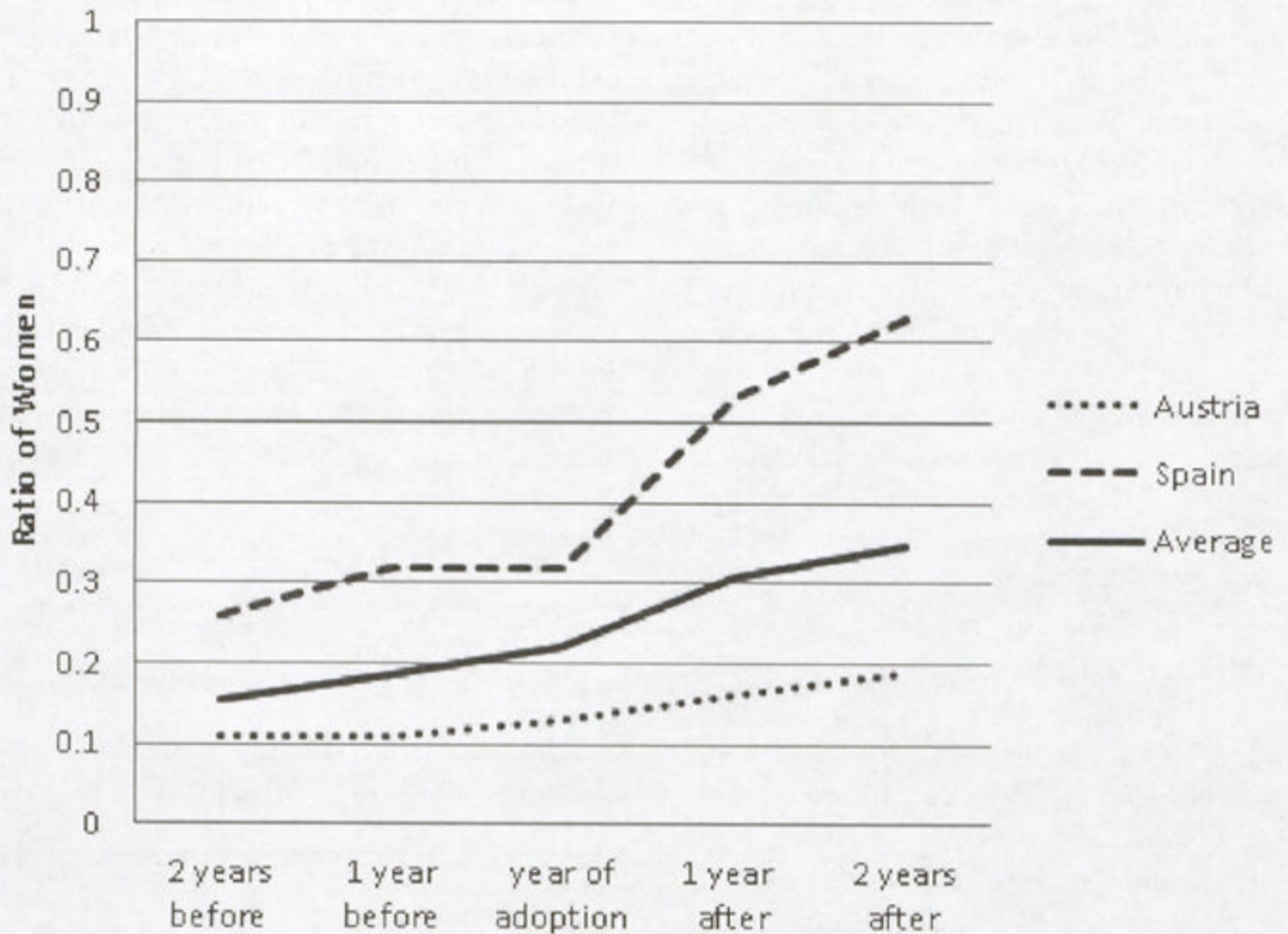
fects are still unknown, enough time has passed to show the immediate impact of NAPs in developed countries on gender mainstreaming in top level positions in national employment. The United States should follow the lead of its European allies and make top-level policy commitments that show support for UNSCR 1325. The United States has begun to do so with its current inter-agency workgroup—a hopeful sign. Beyond its moral responsibility as a global super-power, the United States, evidence indicates, would reap domestic benefits if it were to implement a NAP. Introducing a NAP is correlated with higher ratios of women in government employment and with bringing agencies closer to parity (presumably an objective of the U.S. government) The following section examines the correlation between adoption of a NAP and the ratio of female employment at the top level positions in national government.

**Table 3: Impact of NAPs on Top Level Government Employment (Equivalent of SES)**

Variables Regressed on "Top Level"	Reg1	Reg2	Reg3	Reg4	Reg5	Reg6	Reg7	Reg8
NAP	0.09***	0.13***			0.13***	0.11***	0.10***	0.06***
Total Gov't				0.34**	0.55***			
GEM included	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Country fixed effects	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Time fixed effects	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes
R2	0.0592	0.1124	0.0421	0.0266	0.1677	0.6402	0.6618	0.6967

Notes: Indicates statistically significant at the \*\* 5% level, and \*\*\* 1% level.



**Table 4: Effect of a NAP on Top Level Employment**

### Data Analysis of Impact of NAPs

#### Methodology

The outcome examined was the percent female in total government employment and in top levels of government, with the hypothesis that adoption of a NAP results in higher ratios of female employment at both the top level and in total government employment. Data on the percent of women in total government employment and at top levels of government employment for each EU member state were drawn from the official statistics Web site of the European Commission.<sup>5</sup> Data were not available through open source databases on female ratios within ministries of state and defense. The next step in this research will include requesting further data points from each of the EU member

states, particularly from the ministries that shape foreign policy. The observed impact of adopting a NAP on total and top level gender ratios is strong evidence that once governments intentionally bring attention to gender equality, improvements are seen. This dataset also includes each country's gender equality measurement (GEM), which is an annual ranking given by the UN as part of the Human Development Index, with lower numbers representing higher levels of equality.

Throughout this series of regressions, the GEM is included as a proxy for measuring cultural differences on gender issues. Some of the countries did not have data points for every year; however, these missing data points are accounted for in the regressions that include country and/or time fixed effects. Every country with a NAP, fortunately, had nearly a full set of data points.



In the simple regression, after controlling for differences between cultures and for varying overall rates of female employment in the government, I found that adoption of a NAP is associated with an 11 percentage point rise in female employment in top-level government positions. This relationship is statistically significant at the 1 percent level and is consistent throughout all the simple regressions. However, even when including having a NAP, a country's GEM score, and the overall government female ratio, only 17 percent of the variation in rates of women employed at top government levels is explained. To increase the explanatory value of the analysis, I introduced country and time fixed effects.

Introducing country and time fixed effects builds on the established correlation between NAPs and increased female leadership and comes closer to revealing the causal link between the two in each country. Even after holding all variation over time and within each country constant, the effect of NAPs is still clearly pronounced and statistically significant. Including time and country fixed effects in the regression gives us the best possible understanding of the importance of a NAP for the United States, because it explains nearly 70 percent of the variation in the female top-level employment rates between and within countries over time. However, due to the high number of control variables, the estimated effect of NAPs is very conservative and likely an underestimate of the true effect. Therefore, as reflected in the regression chart, a highly conservative estimation of the impact of NAP adoption is that it will increase the female ratio in top-level government positions by 6 percentage points. In the United States, this would increase the overall SES female ratio to 42 percent—certainly closer to parity than its current status.

As seen in table 4, countries, on

average, experience an immediate spike in the ratio of females in top level positions within government employment. Spain and Austria are included in the graph to demonstrate examples of outliers at both extremes. They demonstrate that regardless of starting-point percentages, a spike occurs upon adoption of a NAP, and is followed by a steady upward trend. Table 5, below, shows both the results of regressions that focused on only the twelve EU countries that have NAPs and the immediate impacts of adoption.

**Table 5: Top Level Employment**

	Reg (1)	Reg (2)
1 year after NAP	0.128**	0.101***
2 years after NAP	0.138***	0.104***
Country fixed effects	No	Yes
R-squared	0.198	0.621

Notes: Indicates statistically significant at the \*\*5% level, and \*\*\*1% level.

These regressions indicate that, after controlling for country-specific variations, one year after a NAP is adopted, the ratio of females in top-level employment increases by 10 percentage points, on average. This effect is nearly twice as large as the effect in the regressions that included all EU countries and the United States. This is not surprising since many of the newer members of the EU have exceptionally low and even downward trending ratios of females in top level positions—this may have minimized the average effect. Also, the general regression examined the effect over time, representing only the gradual impact in each country. Therefore, by isolating only the countries with NAPs and controlling for in-country variables, a better estimate



of the immediate impacts of adoption is produced. In light of the impact observed in EU countries with NAPs, their models can provide essential guidance for the U.S. inter-agency task force.

### Countries with NAPs

The twelve EU countries with NAPs in place provide a good starting point for modeling the U.S. plan. The text of UNSCR 1325 “[u]rges Member States to ensure increased representation of women at all decision-making levels in national, regional and international institutions and mechanisms for the prevention, management, and resolution of conflict” through implementation of a “strategic plan of action calling for an increase in the participation of women at decision-making levels in conflict resolution and peace processes.” Following up on the resolution, the Security Council president has continued to encourage the development of NAPs or other national level strategies through multiple official presidential statements. These statements indicate that, in the eyes of the Security Council, the creation of an action plan provides a clear commitment and initiative to identify priorities and resources, and determine responsibilities and timeframes at a national level for increasing women’s participation at all levels of peace and security processes. As of spring 2011, twenty-five countries had adopted a NAP, while numerous others are in the drafting phase similar to the United States, twelve of these are EU members.

While content varies country by country due to differing cultural and historical contexts, the majority of NAPs include, for example, the following sections: application of the NAP in peace-keeping operations, increasing the ratio of females in assignments to international and regional security organizations, improving inclusion of women at international

negotiations, training and education, and, of course, the domestic application of the NAP in the ministries of state and defense. Even beyond the EU, all NAPs clearly address requirements of inclusion of local women in conflict zones for peace negotiations and democratization processes and provide strong emphasis on the need for increased deployment of women by their country to conflict zones, peace negotiations, and international organizations. The domestic implications of these policies, however, vary from country to country. This paper specifically focuses its recommendations on components for the domestic application of the NAP. Since the data analysis that demonstrates the impact of a NAP included only EU countries, this section also includes only EU countries. Within each of these countries, despite various approaches, the intent for increased participation of women at all levels of government is clearly demonstrated in each country’s NAP. The following is a representative selection of the clearest examples:

**Austria:** “Increasing representation of Austrian women in international peace operations as well as in decision-making positions in international and European organizations. ... The participating ministries get actively involved, at a human resource management level, in creating basic requirements and positive incentives to increase the representation of women.”

**Belgium:** “Keep on focusing on better representation of women in recruitment and secondment ... [and] promote women’s candidatures for international organizations.”

**Denmark:** “Incorporation of gender perspectives in the mandates for the international operations, training of the troops in mainstreaming gender perspectives and identifications and development of other instruments...”



**France:** “Reaffirmed respect for the fundamental rights of women and girls and equal participation of women at all levels of decision-making processes as both objectives and essential instruments of conflict prevention, conflict resolution and peace building...”

**Spain:** “Strengthen women’s participation in decision-making in peace missions ... Promote inclusion of a gender perspective in peace-building...”

**Sweden:** “Full and equal participation of women in all aspects of conflict prevention and peace-building work, including in national and local initiatives ... [and seek] a gender equality perspective in all phases of international undertaking...”

Ultimately, how a government chooses to approach increasing female participation is specific and responsive to that country’s history, culture, and existing institutions. However, a commonality among the countries is their clear statements about increased representation, recruitment and participation of women in the agencies that create foreign policy and therefore shape the peace and security processes of a country. Furthermore, while ensuring direct participation in peace processes is important, it is equally important to have provisions in place to increase women’s role in policy-making that shapes peace processes. For the United States, this means moving toward gender parity in policy-making roles at the DoD and DOS.

Two major themes emerge in the EU action plans, in regard to their domestic application, that can help guide the United States. The first common theme calls for greater female involvement at the decision-making level in peace operations and in all the policy work that contributes to peace processes. Applying this in the context of the United States would mean increasing the ratio of women in positions

at the SES level in the DoD and DOS. The second major theme addresses methods for achieving this. The action plans call for targeting, recruiting and promoting women to these positions through the use of various institutional mechanisms to actively encourage greater female participation.

### Conclusion

The 2010 report from WIIS concluded that “in order for the U.S. Government to retain a competitive advantage as an employer in the future, and ensure that the best talent is focusing on national and international security, much more attention and effort will need to be directed to supporting the entry, retention, and advancement opportunities of women.”<sup>6</sup> Both qualitative and quantitative evidence demonstrate that a NAP is an efficient approach to achieving this. Demonstrating dedication to gender equality in all phases of foreign policy creation, a NAP will reshape the United States’ involvement in peace keeping, post-conflict recovery, and national security to reflect the ideology of UNSCR 1325. Statistical analysis predicts that introducing a NAP would result in at least a 6 percentage point increase in female employment in top-level positions, and likely an even higher increase in the years immediately following its passage. However, this effect is based on including content similar to that in the EU models, which directly addresses domestic mechanisms to increase female involvement. Since the inter-agency task force has already demonstrated a desire for civil society involvement and recommendations, hopefully the recommendations in this paper can contribute to the discussion on the domestic aspects of the draft NAP.



ENDNOTES

1 Pam Benson and Elise Labott, "Woman takes charge of major intelligence agency for the first time," CNN, August 9, 2010, accessed March 2011: <http://www.cnn.com/2010/POLITICS/08/09/woman.intel.chief/?hpt=T2>

2 Jolynn Shoemaker and Jennifer Park, April 2010, "Progress Report on Women in Peace & Security Careers: U.S. Executive Branch (NGO)," Women in International Security Leadership Series Report, accessed February 2011: [http://wiis.georgetown.edu/WIIS\\_ProgressReport\\_ExecBranch\\_fnl.pdf](http://wiis.georgetown.edu/WIIS_ProgressReport_ExecBranch_fnl.pdf)

3 Based on an interview with feminist theory scholar Laura Sjoberg, March 15, 2011.

4 Based on an interview with feminist theory scholar Laura Sjoberg, March 15, 2011.

5 Eurostat Database, accessed February thru April 2011. <http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/statistics/themes>.

6 Jolynn Shoemaker and Jennifer Park, April 2010, "Progress Report on Women in Peace & Security Careers: U.S. Executive Branch (NGO)," Women in International Security Leadership Series Report, accessed February 2011. [http://wiis.georgetown.edu/WIIS\\_ProgressReport\\_ExecBranch\\_fnl.pdf](http://wiis.georgetown.edu/WIIS_ProgressReport_ExecBranch_fnl.pdf)



## The Policy Influence of Women's Organizations in China

BY HONGGANG TAN AND LUOZHONG WANG

### ABSTRACT:

Treating women's organizations in China as a critical field, of study, this article shows how state-organization relationships affect different organizations' influence on public policies. Chinese women's organizations, mass organizations, and formal grassroots organizations represent two emerging modes of policy influence in contemporary China: active state corporatism and embedded pluralism. Both modes manifest current feminist activism, taking into account prior developments and incorporating present opportunities and constraints. They serve as means for Chinese women to articulate and defend their interests.

### INTRODUCTION

Since 1978, the People's Republic of China has experienced broad-ranging economic and social changes. The implementation of reform and opening-up policy created a market economy and an enlarged social space; social interests are much more diversified than they were before. One of the consequences of these changes is the emergence of numerous social organizations.

Two analytical models, civil society/

pluralism and its alternative, state corporatism, have emerged in the literature as ways to understand the nature of Chinese social organizations and the change of state-organization relationships in the reform era. Some scholars argue that a nascent civil society is forming in China and will serve as a competitive and even confrontational power to the state and facilitate China's democratization (Strand 1990; Gold 1990; Whyte 1992; Wakeman 1993). However, the evidence to support the view that China's associations were ever completely autonomous from the state is quite limited. As an alternative to the civil society/pluralism model, some scholars employ the concept of state corporatism to explain state-society relations in China (Chan 1993; Pearson 1994; Unger and Chan 1995; Nevitt 1996; Unger 1996; Gallagher 2004). Most scholars have used the term "corporatism" as Schmitter (1974, 93-94) defines it. According to the definition, state license, representational monopoly, compulsory membership, hierarchically ordered structure, state-controlled selection of leaders, and articulation of interests are the key characteristics of social organizations under a corporatist arrangement. With deepening understanding of Chinese social organizations, various researchers have shown state-organization relationships in China



are actually more complicated than both models describe (Saich 2000; Ma 2002; Howell 2004). Some scholars advocate alternative frameworks consisting of variants or combinations of these models (Huang 1993; He 1997; Frolic 1997; Ding 1998; Ru 2004; Ma 2002). After years of exploration, most scholars studying Chinese social organizations have achieved agreements. First, as far as the relationships between social organizations and the government are concerned, different social organizations have different degrees of autonomy. Second, state-organization relationships in China are highly complicated, so any single model cannot serve as an overarching framework to analyze Chinese social organizations as a whole. Last, but not least, is the argument that "China is a moving target" (Kennedy 2005, 174), i.e., theoretical constructions must keep up with the rapidly changing social reality. As Kennedy (2005, 8–9) points out, these frameworks, as ideal types, "are starting points and not ending points." Civil society/pluralism and corporatism are interest representation systems instead of mere measurements of organizational autonomy from the state. Focusing on women's organizations in China, this research indicates how state-organization relationships affect different organizations' influence on public policies and representation of the interests of their constituencies.

### DEVELOPMENT OF WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS IN CHINA

The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has incorporated women's work (*funü gongzuo*) in its revolutionary agenda since its foundation in the 1920s for the practical purpose of mobilizing women to take part in socialist revolution and construction. Paradoxically, a patriarchal gender system has also been constructed in the body politic of the CCP since its early

years (Gilmartin 1993). As a consequence, the term state feminism is often applied to label socialist gender politics in China, which portrays a paradoxical image of a state patriarch championing women's liberation, although with vacillation and inconsistency (Wang 1996 519).

The organizational embodiment of state feminism in China is the All China Women's Federation (ACWF) established in March 1949. As a mass organization (*qunzhong zuzhi*)<sup>1</sup>, the ACWF represents Chinese women of all ethnic groups in all walks of life who fight for continued liberation under the leadership of the CCP. With local women's federations at every divisional level of government, the Chinese government announced that the ACWF is the biggest NGO (non-governmental organization) to improve women's status in China (Liu 2001, 144). However, the ACWF is not the only organization that works closely with the Party-state to deal with female-related issues. The Department of Women Workers (DWW) under the All China Federation of Trade Unions (ACFTU) is charged with the affairs of female members of trade unions, who encompass the largest portion of working women in China. Established in 1980, China Family Planning Association (CFPA) has grown into another giant association with more than 90 million members and more than one million divisions at every administrative level. Supervised by the National Population and Family Planning Commission (NPFPC), the CFPA aims to facilitate the implementation of the one-child policy that has influenced the lives of most Chinese women.

In the 1980s, only a few women's organizations existed and most of them maintained a kinship with the ACWF system. Several bottom-up organizations were also founded in this decade in the wake of negative consequences of the economic reform for women. The 1995 United



Nations Fourth World Conference on Women (FWCW) and the accompanying NGO forum held in Beijing was the turning point for the development of women's organizations in China. It was an eye-opening and empowering experience for Chinese women activists, and it introduced both the concept and the functionality of NGOs into China (Wang 1996; Liu 2001; Zhang 2001). The Chinese government loosened its control over the establishment of social organizations and encouraged their founding in different sectors before the FWCW. example, China Association of Mayors' division of Women Mayors, the Association for Women Scientists and Technologists, China Women Judges Association, China Women Procurators Association, and China Medical Women's Association were all founded in the early to mid-1990s. Research institutions on women's issues were also set up in this period, including official think tanks, such as the Women's Studies Institute of China (a subordinate unit of the ACWF) and the Women/Gender Studies Center of Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS), and various women's studies centers in universities.<sup>2</sup>

In addition to these organizations with government-sanctioned backgrounds, the FWCW and NGO forum generated grassroots activism in China. Popular women's organizations, salons, hotlines, and Web sites sprang up all over the country. They are independent of the state and enjoy control of their own finances, human resources, and management. Some grassroots organizations have grown into full-fledged organizations with formal constitutions, organizational structures, development plans, and fixed working places and staff/members. Among them, the Cultural Development Center for Rural Women, including an internal sector called Migrant Women's Club, and the Center for Women's Law Studies and Legal

Services of Peking University serve as good examples. Others are still developing with informal organizing. The least organized organizations are those cyber-groups that communicate through Web sites, online forums, or email lists.

The FWCW and NGO forum also introduced the ethos of global feminism into China, which has impacted the native state feminism and changed the feminist discourse in China. From then on, the Chinese women's movement embraced the global feminist agenda and has merged with the international women's movement (Wang, 1996; Liu, 2006). For example, the single most important strategy that the Platform for Action (PFA) offers is "gender mainstreaming," which demands that governments and all other concerned actors integrate a gender perspective into the design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of legislation, policies, programs, or any other form of planned action, so women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated (Liu 2006, 925). Women's issues, as well as women's organizations, have gained more visibility and legitimacy in China. As perceived by the Party-state, women's issues are less of a threat to the regime than are other politically sensitive issues. Furthermore, because of the CCP's traditional agenda of women's emancipation and its reaffirmation of the commitment to gender equality when holding the FWCW, it may grant women's organizations more opportunities to participate in decision-making and more freedom to conduct their activities. These opportunities have made women's organizations a good starting point to investigate the policy influence of Chinese social organizations.



## MAPPING OUT THE POLICY INFLUENCE OF WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS

Chinese women's organizations can be divided into two groups—organizations with official backgrounds and grassroots organizations. The first group can be further categorized as mass organizations, other top-down organizations, and research institutions, including both official think tanks and university centers. The second group can also be divided into formal and informal organizations.

Dividing women's organizations into these categories, we can investigate how state-organization relationships affect different organizations' influence on public policies. In this research, policy influence has three levels of meaning. The first level is organizations' willingness to influence public policies. The second level is the actions taken by social organizations to influence public policies, as "actions speak louder than words." The third level is effectiveness to influence policies. When groups' efforts really contribute to desirable outcomes for them, we argue that they influence policies effectively.

All three of the mass organizations have been very active in influencing public policies. The ACWF was not only the drafter but also the major reviser of such basic laws pertaining to women, such as the Marriage Law and the Law on the Protection of Women's Rights and Interests (The Women's Law hereafter). It was also involved in drafting many other legislations that impact women's lives, for example, Rural Land Contract Law, the Property Law, Employment Promotion Law, the Law on Employment Contracts, Social Insurance Law, and so on. The ACWF was the major advocate and drafter of two Outlines for the Development of Chinese Women, which were the Chinese government's response to the

PFA and served as general guidance to women's development in China. It is worth mentioning that the ACWF pushed these through the National Working Committee on Children and Women (NWCCW), a trans-ministry institution within the State Council with its office in the ACWF (Zhang 2001, 166). Moreover, the ACWF has coordinated with organs of the CCP and the government to issue numerous regulatory documents pertaining to women's issues. For example, the ACWF united with six CCP or government agencies to issue a regulatory document on the prevention of domestic violence in 2008, which was the only specific policy on the issue of domestic violence at the national level. In various documents and leaders' addresses, the ACWF emphasizes that influencing policies is the means "to protect women's rights from the headstream." It has included policy participation in its working plan every year and has paid attention to all the processing legislations in the legislative plan of the National People's Congress (NPC).

The DWW also actively participates in policy-making. It was involved in almost all the laws and regulations related to female workers on account of its own initiatives or by invitation of the legislature and government agencies. It was the drafter and major reviser of Regulations Concerning the Labor Protection of Female Staff and Workers, which is a regulation of the State Council and serves as the most specific legal base for the protection of female workers. The DWW has made every ad hoc effort to push enterprises and trade unions throughout the country to sign special collective contracts for the protection of female workers. This is a concrete measure to take the articles from merely being written to coming to fruition in real life.

The CFPA participated in the formation of legislations, regulations, and out-



lines on population and family planning. It is more influential in local policy-making because many chairman posts in the local CFPA are held concurrently by major leaders of local CCP and governments. The most far-reaching policy change the CFPA has pushed is the implementation of Villagers'/Urban Residents' Self-Government on Family Planning, a reform that aims to change state compulsion on family planning to self-government.

In contrast to mass organizations, other top-down organizations have been very unwilling to influence policies. As a result, they seldom take actions to become involved in policies or exert real influence. A few have listed the protection of members' interests in their constitutions, but few specify influencing policies. The China Association of Women Entrepreneurs, for example, established a group to help its members protect their rights. However, this group has not made visible achievements, and the association as a whole was not involved in any policy-making. The China Medical Women's Association (CMWA), another example, has included an article in its constitution stating that endorsement of medical women's interests is one of its tasks. However, the Law on Medical Practitioners, implemented in 1999, does not include any wording regarding medical women, although the CMWA has been set up since 1995. Other organizations—such as China Association of Mayors' division of Women Mayors, the Association for Women Scientists and Technologists, China Women Judges Association, China Women Procurators Association, and the Special Committee of Women Lawyers under All China Lawyers Association—are more similar to fellowship clubs than motivated associations that can be aggressive in interest articulation and representation.

As far as research institutions are concerned, official think tanks have far more policy influence than do women's

studies centers in universities. As a subordinate unit of the ACWF, the Women's Studies Institute of China (WSIC) has taken on a large number of ACWF's research projects. Many proposals that the ACWF submitted to the NPC and the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) were based on research of the WSIC. A number of scholars of the WSIC are well-recognized feminists in China and frequently attend policy workshops. The Center for Gender and Law Studies under the Law Institute of the CASS is a relatively autonomous research institution within the CASS and maintains close relationships with grassroots organizations, especially the Anti-Domestic Violence Network of China Law Society (ADVN). The center's jurists have been invited to participate in the drafting of a number of pieces of legislation and have submitted many legislative proposals concerning domestic violence and sexual harassment to the NPC and the CPPCC.

Women's studies centers in universities usually engage in teaching and research. They develop curricula and textbooks, and train faculty members. A large percentage of their research focuses on theoretical inquiries rather than practical issues. Even if some empirical questions are addressed, the outcomes are not policy proposals and can hardly be sent to policymakers. Some centers have moved off campuses to participate in public benefit activities or media shows, but these usually do not have policy implications. For example, the Network for Women's and Gender Studies (NWGS) is the first national organization comprised of teachers, scholars, and research centers in the field of women's/gender studies, which has been devoted to curriculum development and student activities, yet it intentionally stays away from political issues. For instance, it announced its support for Deng Yujiao<sup>3</sup> at one time, but, eventually, it withdrew the



announcement from its Web site because NWGS leaders thought they should confine the network to academic issues.<sup>4</sup>

Little research has documented the policy influence of grassroots women's organizations in China. The reason may be that these organizations are regarded as too nascent and weak to influence policies. Howell (2004) and Du (2004) argue there is variation in the capacity to influence public policies among different women's organizations. For example, the influence of grassroots organizations cannot compare with that of the ACWF. This may be true if the only aspect taken into consideration is effectiveness of policy influence. However, as far as the other two levels of policy influence—willingness and actions—are concerned, formal grassroots organizations are no less active than mass organizations in influencing public policies. Furthermore, regarding effectiveness, formal grassroots organizations can exert moderate influence rather than be entirely powerless. This is proven by the activities of some prominent grassroots women's organizations in Beijing.

Based on the services it provided to women, the Maple Women's Psychological Counseling Center conducted a great deal of research on urgent issues concerning women, such as sexual harassment, gender discrimination in labor markets, and domestic violence and other problems within families. It has since developed this research into policy proposals and submitted them to the NPC or the CPPCC. The center also created and implemented the Program of Community Intervention in Domestic Issues in Tianjin. This program was so successful that the Tianjin government has adopted it as a solution to stabilize communities and popularized it in the entire city.

The Center for Women's Law Studies and Legal Services of Peking University<sup>5</sup> is devoted to providing legal

aid to poor women on litigations related to public interests. According to information from its Web site,<sup>6</sup> up to March 1998 (less than three years after its founding), the Center had submitted thirteen proposals to the NPC and/or the CPPCC regarding women's labor rights, marriage and family rights, personal rights, domestic violence, legal aid, and so on. It has tried to propose changes to such legislations as the Marriage Law, the Women's Law, the Property Law, the Employment Promotion Law, and the Law on Employment Contracts. In 2005, the center successfully lobbied the Ministry of Education to repeal the regulations on the bearing right of female graduate students.

The Migrant Women's Club under the Cultural Development Center for Rural Women also seeks to influence public policies actively. It advocated for household registration system reform and submitted proposals in revisions of the Labor Law, the Law on Employment Contracts, and Work-related Injury Insurance Regulations. It held symposiums on the interests of migrant women and invited government officials to attend. The center has acted persistently to submit proposals for the protection of domestic workers to multiple official institutions at both the Beijing municipal level and the national level. In 2006, it successfully lobbied the Beijing Administration for Industry and Commerce to accept their suggestions in drawing a sample contract for domestic workers and their employers.<sup>7</sup>

The Anti-Domestic Violence Network of China Law Society (ADVN) is another grassroots women's organization that has made every effort to advocate various measures to protect women from domestic violence and sexual harassment. The ADVN is a network with both individual and institutional members throughout the country. Many of them are local women's federations, especially at the provincial



level. Still, many individual members are legal experts or other specialists who have opportunities to participate in the formation of legislations. As a result, the ADVN is an influential advocator in a number of provinces. It has been very successful at the provincial level in enacting legislations or regulations. To date, twenty-one provinces have enacted legislations or regulations on domestic violence and another four have included relevant measures in other laws. These achievements are mainly because of the joint efforts of the ADVN and women's federations in those provinces.<sup>8</sup>

However, there is variation in the capacity to influence public policies within grassroots organizations. Those informal organizations, including cyber-groups, are short on formal constitutions and working plans. Most of them maintain loose organizational structures, and some have no structure at all. As a result, they do not have the capacity to influence public policies effectively through concrete actions. Aware of this disadvantage, they stay away from the policy arena. For example, the willingness to influence policies of the Web sites<sup>9</sup> focusing on women, gender, or marriage and family is low. Some Web sites may post existing laws, regulations, or other policies to inform people, yet no information about influencing policy-making is found on any Web site. None of them has served as a platform for influencing policies.

### ACTIVE STATE CORPORATISM AND EMBEDDED PLURALISM: TWO MODES OF POLICY INFLUENCE

**B**oth mass organizations and other top-down organizations are state corporatist organizations. However, they have behaved so differently that they may be considered different in nature. What is the reason for their differences in influencing public policies?

Close observation shows their different statuses within state corporatist arrangements. Because of the high status the state has bestowed on them, mass organizations are granted de jure and/or de facto power of participation in the policy process. For example, according to Article 10 of the Women's Law, when laws, regulations, and policies related to important issues of women's interests are enacted, opinions of the ACWF should be considered. ACFTU's power of participation is also guaranteed by Article 33 of the Trade Union Law. Although there is not a similar article in the Law on Population and Family Planning that guarantees CFPA's power of participation; the association's power is acquired in practice. As mentioned above, major leaders of local CCP and governments concurrently hold many local CFPA chairmen posts, making CFPA very powerful in local decision-making. On the other hand, other top-down women's organizations do not possess such a status, although they maintain a corporatist form. The older organizations among this group were mostly established to facilitate the work of mass organizations, and the newer organizations were founded to welcome the FWCW. Many only play symbolic roles, which are reflected in their main activities, which focus on fellowship and public communications. They have never been granted the power to participate in the policy process. Even the government organs within their respective sectors do not regularly invite them into the decision-making process. Therefore, if state corporatist organizations are not granted the power to participate in the policy process, they will not be motivated to influence policies and will remain as mere policy-takers. This kind of state corporatism can be called "symbolic state corporatism." In contrast, if state corporatist organizations are granted the power to participate in the policy process, they will be motivated to



influence public policies and may play important roles in the policy arena. This kind of state corporatism can be called "active state corporatism." Although the weight of decision-making power lies heavily on the side of the state in both situations, active state corporatism incorporates more and better opportunities to represent the interests of the constituencies than does symbolistic state corporatism.

Research institutions are not corporatist organizations because none of them was licensed or created to monopolize women's studies, yet the above logic can also be applied to analyze their policy influence. Official think tanks are guaranteed access to channels into the policy process while women's studies centers in universities have minimal access to policymakers. Furthermore, they do not have the same obligations as official think tanks to conduct policy-related research. Although they may occasionally conduct such research, their interest in influencing public policies tends to recede over time.

As mentioned above, formal grassroots organizations in China are seeking to influence policies actively and have had some moderate achievements. However, does this mean that these organizations act completely outside the government? Close observation provides an answer in the negative. Instead of isolating from the state, these organizations take on non-confrontational attitudes toward the state and even seek opportunities to cooperate with the state. They deliberately embed themselves in the restricted political environment and complex sociopolitical networks. This embeddedness is not just a passive adaptation to ensure survival; it is an active manipulation of available resources to achieve organizational goals. More important, this embeddedness is not at the price of organizational autonomy. As is discussed below, these organizations can still develop and follow their own agendas even

though they cooperate with the government. This special mode of policy influence in China can be called "embedded pluralism."<sup>10</sup> Furthermore, the relative degree of embeddedness depends on organizational capacity. Lower capacity leads to lower embeddedness. This means some organizations cannot adapt to the sociopolitical environment well enough to influence public policies. This is why informal grassroots organizations have maintained their silence in the policy arena. This kind of pluralism can be called "silent pluralism."

Active state corporatism and embedded pluralism have emerged as major forms of feminist activism in China. The two cases below will further describe these two modes of policy influence.

### The ACWF and the Women's Law

After implementation of the reform and opening-up policy, the negative consequences of the Women's Law on women were made increasingly visible. From the mid-1980s, the ACWF began to lobby major CCP leaders and the NPC to enact a new law to protect women's interests. Because the president of the ACWF is always the vice chairman of the standing committee of the NPC, she has the ear of top political leaders. Eventually, the Committee for Internal and Judicial Affairs of the NPC invited the ACWF to be the main drafter of the law. Preparation for the FWCW further accelerated the legislative process, and the Women's Law was adopted in 1992.

However, the drawbacks of the law were exposed in the 1990s when market reforms were furthered, thereby making women's problems more acute. ACWF's local cadres, as well as some female scholars, urged the ACWF and the NPC to revise the law. In 2002, the ACWF participated in a large-scale inspection of the implementation of the Women's Law launched



by the NPC and discovered that the problems ascribed to the law were factual, especially its inapplicability in practice. As a result, the ACWF lobbied the NPC to put the revision of the Women's Law on its legislative agenda; it succeeded eventually. Again, the NPC and the Legislative Affairs Office of the State Council invited the ACWF to draft the amendments.

The ACWF conducted substantive research regarding the urgent problems related to women all over the country and held numerous workshops and colloquia to listen to opinions from all sides. The amendments were adopted in 2005 and reflected the voices of the masses. Most of ACWF's proposals have been adopted. It was reaffirmed that equality between men and women is a basic state policy of China. ACWF's power of participation in the policy process was guaranteed. A number of new issues, such as the protection of women from sexual harassment and domestic violence, the provision of legal aid to poor women, and the protection of economic interests of rural women, have been added into the new law. The amendments also emphasize the responsibilities of the government in protecting women's interests and make the law more applicable in practice. Since the adoption of the new law, the ACWF has made great efforts to push for enacting the Implementation Measures of the Women's Law in provinces through its local branches and has succeeded in twenty provinces.

### The Center for Women's Law Studies and Legal Services of Peking University and the Bearing Right of Female Graduate Students

Before 2005, to have a child was just a dream for a matriculated female graduate student in China, because it was forbidden by most universities. The legal basis of these rules was the relevant provisions in

former Management Regulation on Current Students of Colleges and Universities issued by the State Education Commission, renamed the Ministry of Education (MOE) in 1990. According to the regulation, marriage of undergraduate students is also prohibited. Because of the dramatic social change in China, the MOE initiated the process to revise the regulation in 1996. However, the process was so opaque and slow that the new regulation had not been promulgated even after almost nine years.

The Center for Women's Law Studies and Legal Services of Peking University was involved in a number of lawsuits before 2005 about the bearing right of female graduate students. Among them, Ms. Tang's case represented the most typical case. She complained that she was forced to leave graduate school when she gave birth to her child. The center decided to resolve the problem by advocating for the abolishment of relevant provisions in the MOE's regulation. It conducted research on the rules of twenty universities and surveyed about 1,500 undergraduate and graduate students and found most students were dissatisfied with the relevant rules at their universities. With these data in hand, the center launched a media campaign to raise the visibility of the issue in the public. The topic quickly received much attention. In January 2005, the center held a symposium to discuss the issue. In addition to jurists, scholars, and representatives of numerous universities, the center also invited officials from relevant governmental agencies to attend the symposium, including the MOE, the Ministry of Civil Affairs (MOCA) and its Beijing branch, both of which are in charge of marriage registration, the NPFPC and its Beijing branch. Both take charge of birth quotas, and the Ministry of Public Security and its Beijing branch, which are responsible for household registration. According to an interview with a major leader of the center,



prior to this event, it was difficult for the center to invite government officials. Their presence at the symposium was due to the importance of the issue and the successful media warm-up preceding the symposium. This symposium was a decisive element in the success of the lobbying; a consensus was achieved at the symposium that the right to receive an education and the bearing right of female graduate students should be respected. Most important, this symposium was reported by various media outlets, including two popular Internet portals, and triggered wide-spread public debates. Because most people argued against the regulation, the MOE decided to accelerate the process of revision. In March 2005, only two months after the symposium, it promulgated a new regulation in which all the restrictive provisions on the marriage and bearing rights of college and university students were erased.

State corporatism is often depicted as a social structure under dictatorship for top-down control. Its main feature is that the weight of decision-making power lies very heavily on the side of the state (Unger and Chan 1995, 31). However, the variations within state corporatism have remained unnoted thus far. As stated above, whether an organization is granted the power to participate in decision-making determines the motivation of state corporatist organizations to influence public policies. Once they are bestowed the power, they will become very active in representing the interests of their constituencies and participate in the policy process. When they take such actions, they can usually effectively influence the policy outcomes. Although the state still maintains the final say in policy-making, it increasingly must take various interests into account. Corporatism is not a concept used only to describe organizations' distance from or involvement with the state. Rather, it is an interest representation system in which

lives of millions of people are affected.

After 1978, most mass organizations transformed to active state corporatism, because they faced an environment of diminishing planned economy and increasing social differentiation, and they realized that if they disregarded the interests of their constituencies as before, they would lose their legitimacy. On the other hand, the state needs trustworthy social organizations to transmit the voices of the masses in the reform era. Thus, although mass organizations still serve as a mobilization tool for the state, they have begun to increasingly represent the interests of their constituencies and influence public policies. Given the political reality in China, active state corporatism serves as the major means for Chinese women to defend their interests.

What accompanies the pessimistic conceptualization of state corporatism is suspicions about the genuineness of Chinese grassroots organizations. Admittedly, the non-confrontational, cooperative attitude toward the state is popular among grassroots women's organizations in China; almost all interviewees claimed that their organizations did not oppose the state. They were trying to establish good relationships with the government and expected to implement programs funded by the government. However, this does not imply that they wanted to be incorporated into or coordinated by the government. When they were asked their opinions on the relationship between cooperation with the state and organizational autonomy, the interviewees answered without hesitation that cooperation should not be achieved at the price of autonomy. Li Ying, vice director of the Center for Women's Law Studies and Legal Services of Peking University, expressed the typical view as follows<sup>11</sup>:

We can transfer our ideas to the government gradually by cooperating with the government. Cooperating with the govern-



ment is the means to mainstream social organizations and make the government listen to us. If we oppose the government, we cannot proceed. How can we continue our work if we commit suicide? However, social organizations must maintain their autonomy. Although they cooperate with the government, they bring forth their own ideas. In this way, they will not be turned into appendages of the government. Our center does not cater to the government for channels by sacrificing our autonomy. The relationship between cooperation and autonomy is a question of controlling the boundary. It requires our wisdom and ability of dealing with things with flexibility.

These organizations behave differently from Western pluralist ones because they are situated in a different political context. Provided with a dominant-Party state, they must follow the rules and keep in contact with the official system. Falling short of open and institutionalized access to the political system, they must rely on informal channels and connections. This embeddedness is a non-optional but effective strategy for these organizations to both survive and achieve their organizational goals. According to the case above, grassroots women's organizations can accomplish their objectives by cooperating with the state without sacrificing their autonomy. Although the strategy may not guarantee the achievement of all individual goals, it does not result in encroachments on organizational autonomy.

Therefore, active state corporatism embodies the adaptation of Chinese mass organizations to changing social conditions and a globalizing world. Embedded pluralism reflects the growing grassroots activism within a restricted political environment

and complex sociopolitical networks. Both coexist in an enlarging social space, and they reflect the efforts of Chinese women's organizations to defend the interests of Chinese women and promote gender equality under the complicated sociopolitical conditions in China. Although these two modes of policy influence did not exist for a long time, the lives of millions of Chinese women have been relatively improved.

## CONCLUSION

Treating women's organizations in China as a critical field of study, this article shows how the state-organization relationships affect different organizations' influence on public policies. After mapping out the policy influence of women's organizations in China, we find different levels of policy influence are evident not only between grassroots women's organizations and organizations with official backgrounds, but also within each of these two categories. Among Chinese women's organizations, mass organizations play an important role in the policy process while formal grassroots organizations are increasingly seeking such a role. They represent two emerging modes of policy influence in contemporary China—active state corporatism and embedded pluralism. Both reflect the efforts of Chinese women's organizations to articulate the interests of their constituencies and influence public policies.

Whether a genuine civil society exists in China, Chinese women have found practical ways to defend their interests. Both mass organizations and formal grassroots organizations have pushed the Chinese women's movement ahead and connected this movement with the movement's international agenda. Nevertheless, the global women's movement is never abstract and universalistic. It is a



joint endeavor of women living in different parts of the world and reflects their diversified interests and contexts. Active state corporatism and embedded pluralism are the current forms of feminist activism in China, resulting from prior developments and reflecting current opportunities and constraints. To articulate and defend the interests of their constituencies, they are bargaining with the state for more influence and widening the space for themselves. In so doing, they will empower women and all citizens, and expand and deepen public participation and civil rights in political life, which will contribute to the improvement of democratic governance in China.

### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This paper is a part of Honggang Tan's dissertation project funded by the Chiang Ching-kuo Foundation for International Scholarly Exchange. We would like to thank Professor Deng Guosheng at the NGO Research Center of Tsinghua University and Professor Xu Jialiang at the Center for Civil Society and Local Governance of Beijing Normal University for their assistance in the field work.

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#### ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> There are twenty-one mass organizations managed directly by the State Commission for Public Sector Reform directed by Wen Jiabao, premier of China since 2003. They are guaranteed special status by the Party-state. For example, they are exempted from the obligation to register with the Ministry of Civil Affairs (MOCA). Among them, the All China Federation of Trade Unions (ACFTU), the China Communist Youth League (CCYL), and the All China Women's Federation (ACWF) are the most prominent.

<sup>2</sup> In comparison with the official think tanks, these centers are more alienated from the state, and their inception was often driven by combining bottom-up and top-down forces. However, given that the universities in which these centers reside are all run by the government and provide resources to them, these women's studies centers still have more or less official backgrounds.

<sup>3</sup> Deng Yujiao is a young woman who was involved in a criminal case that occurred in May 2009. She killed one local official in her workplace. The official was accused of harassing and probably attempting to rape Deng. Deng received widespread sympathy throughout the country, including from many women's organizations. Because the case involved government officials and triggered broad public participation, it has gone beyond a criminal case and has been politicized.

<sup>4</sup> Author interview with a member of NWGS' council, 9 September 2009, Beijing, China.

<sup>5</sup> According to an interview with one of the major leaders of the center on 25 August 2009, Peking University had shown dissatisfaction with the center's practice, especially its involvement in politically sensitive litigations. As a result, Peking University intended to end the center's affiliation with the university. In March 2010, Peking University announced dissolution of four affiliated institutions, including the center.



Therefore, the Center for Women's Law Studies and Legal Services of Peking University no longer exists. However, Guo Jianmei, one of the center's founders, registered a law firm in September 2009 and another commercially registered institution called Beijing Zhongze Women's Legal Counseling and Service Center in April 2010. The original team of the center is working in the two new institutions.

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.woman-legalaid.org.cn/detail.asp?id=165>, accessed 21 August 2009.

<sup>7</sup> Author interview with Han Huimin, the director of the Migrant Women's Club, 21 August 2009, Beijing, China.

<sup>8</sup> Author interview with Chen Mingxia, the chairman of ADVN's council, 13 October 2009, Beijing, China.

<sup>9</sup> For example, <http://www.alleyshot.com/>, <http://www.ladyscn.com/>, <http://www.feminist.cn>, and <http://www.edujt.com/>.

<sup>10</sup> Some scholars have similar findings in their research on other types of Chinese social organizations. For example, Ho (2008, 8) puts forward the notion of embedded social activism to describe the environmental movement in China. Kennedy (2005, 140, 164) also finds business associations act in the same way.

<sup>11</sup> Author interview with Li Ying, 25 August 2009, Beijing, China.



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# Un-Buttering the Battering: The Lived Experiences of Separated Filipina Battered Wives

*A Thesis Presented to the Faculty of the College of Nursing  
University of Santo Tomas*

BY CHARLES A. CRISOSTOMO, ARIEANE C. CRUZ,  
CHRISTINA MARIE V. CRUZ, MICHAEL G. CRUZ

## ABSTRACT

**B**ACKGROUND: This study explored the lived experiences of separated Filipina battered wives. Through the accounts of the key informants, the descriptions of their abusive relationships and prior relationships, the common triggers of battery, the employed coping mechanisms, and the affectation on their various roles as women their respective views of the experience were attained.

**M**ETHODOLOGY: Descriptive and interpretative phenomenological approaches were utilized in the study. A total of nine (9) women who experienced battery participated in the study. They were chosen by snowball sampling and criterion sampling techniques. Face-to-face semi-structured interviews were used to facilitate data gathering. The number of the subjects was confirmed upon reaching data saturation, wherein no new data surfaced and there was repetition of answers. Colaizzi's method was used to analyze the data.

**R**ESULTS: The experiences of separated Filipina battered wives are meaningfully coined in the term "S.U.R.V.I.V.O.R.". Each designates an important happening in the life of the subjects, and it stands for the following: (S) Smooth start, (U) Unexpected changes in the relationship, (R) Role assumption failure, (V) Violence, (I) Independence, (V) Vigilance to possibilities, (O) Overcoming the traumatic experiences, and (R) Reintegration.

**C**ONCLUSION: Separated Filipina battered wives are living proof that the cycle of battery can be overcome. An awakening or self-realization on the part of the victims makes this possible. There is optimism that as long as women acknowledge their condition, they can overcome this experience and positively act on it. In the context of modern times, Filipinas are more aware of their rights, which empowers them. Hence, being a victim or a survivor is a choice that lies solely on the hands of the battered wives.

**KEYWORDS:** battery, battered wife, separated Filipina battered wives, survivor



## CHAPTER I: PROBLEM BACKGROUND

### 1.1 Introduction

Battery and abuse can happen to anyone, yet the problem is often overlooked, concealed, or denied. According to Leonore Walker's book, *The Battered Woman* (1979), a battered woman is any woman who is coerced into doing what a man desires, whether this coercion is accomplished through physical force or psychological behavior. It has been claimed that the social problem of violence against women involves acts where husbands "produce wives as victims" (Loseke, 1987).

In a ten-country study on women's health and domestic violence conducted by the World Health Organization, between 15 and 71 percent of women reported physical or sexual violence by a husband or partner. Many women said that their first sexual experience was not consensual. Between 4 and 12 percent of women reported being physically abused during pregnancy (WHO 2007).

There is no one single factor to account for violence perpetrated against women. Consistent with Innocenti Digest (2000), cultural, economic, legal, and political factors perpetuate abuse. Several complex and interconnected institutionalized social and cultural factors have kept women particularly vulnerable to the violence directed at them, all of which reflect historically unequal power relations between men and women. Humanity Against Local Terrorism (HALT) enumerates that factors contributing to these unequal power relations include: socioeconomic forces, the family institution where power relations are enforced, fear of and control over female sexuality, belief in the inherent superiority of males, and legislation and cultural sanctions that have traditionally

denied women and children independent legal and social statuses. Lack of economic resources underpins women's vulnerability to violence and their difficulty in extricating themselves from a violent relationship.

According to the statistics on violence against Filipino women conducted by the Philippine Commission on Women (PCW), the number of violence against women (VAW) cases reported to the police rose by 37.4 percent from 2008 to 2009. The trend, however, was not conclusive of numerical changes in VAW incidents in the country, because data were based only on reports to the Philippine National Police. Within the twelve-year period from 1997–2009, physical injuries and/or wife battering were the most prevalent cases of abuse, accounting for nearly half of all reported VAW nationwide (PCW 2009).

Since 2004, if a VAW victim files a wife battering case, it is categorized under "Violation of Republic Act 9262," (R.A. 9262) or the "Anti-Violence against Women and their Children Act of 2004." All other VAW cases, regardless of who reports the case, fall under the physical injuries category of section 5 of the same article. Violation of R.A. 9262 ranked as second most offended law (17.8%). Between 2004 and 2009, reported cases under R.A. 9262 increased from 218 to 5,285. This increase may have been a result of a continuous massive public information campaign about the law (PCW 2009).

Several factors are associated with battery of wives in the Philippines. First, a traditional, universal worldview of husbands toward their wives is that they are mere possessions. These men feel that they are in charge of the relationship and that their wives must always serve and respect them. Second, a widespread factor in the Philippines is the active involvement of the batterer in substance abuse, such as alcohol and drugs. The mental alteration caused by these substances leads to unfavorable



circumstances for women. Third, as the batterer reinforces feelings of worthlessness in his victim, the battered can develop poor self-esteem. The abusive husband might try to isolate his victim from engaging in friendships with others, participating in social activities, or holding a job. Fourth, economics plays an important role in battery. Many women feel that they will not be able to survive on their own if they leave the batterer or if the aggressor is imprisoned. A woman may worry that, without a partner, she would not be able to support herself and her children, which are large concerns for Filipina wives.

To add to current research on domestic violence, particularly in Southeast Asia, the experiences of battered wives is explored in this study. The feelings and reactions of these wives before, during, and after the physical and emotional abusive incidents and the effects of these incidents are discussed. Coping mechanisms, both effective and ineffective, are also weighed.

Considering that battery is such a common occurrence, this study determines and documents how battered women view these experiences and how they were able to cope with such situations.

## 1.2 Statement of the Problem

This study aims to explore the experiences of battered wives. Specifically, it addresses the following sub-problems:

1. What was the nature of a battered woman's marital relationship before the battery?
2. What are possible triggers of battery?
3. What experiences and usual problems are encountered during episodes of battery?
4. How do battered women cope in order to restore sense of worth?

5. How does battery affect a battered woman's role as a mother, wife, and woman?

6. How do battered women view this experience?

## 1.3 Significance of the Study

To the clients who were victims of their partner's violence. This gave an opportunity for the participants to narrate in their own words their experiences. Most important, this study helped them to enhance their feelings of self-worth.

To the clients who are victims of their partner's violence. This can help them to better understand their current situation and guide them in further undertakings.

To the families and relatives caring for clients who are victims of their partners' abusive violence. Families and relatives being privy to the abuse empowers the immediate support system to devise future plans and goals for their abused relative.

To the nursing administration. The study helps to determine what the institutions may do to improve their delivery of services in a variety of ways. Specialized facilities and competent nurses are important, as cited in the study.

To the healthcare professionals. Professional growth and awareness is promoted, as it widens professionals' knowledge regarding women who are victims of abuse. This study may help them to devise better protocols and serve as a guide in providing more holistic and sensitive care.

To nursing education. This study imposes an active challenge regarding good role modeling, improving therapeutic communication skills, and laying a good foundation for the students. Students gain awareness and understanding of what they may need to prepare for in their new field of work.

To past and future research. This



study supports previous research regarding battered wives and may also be used as a reference for future research grounded in the same subject. Future researchers may also interpret the experiences of these subjects via a differing approach, which could be valuable.

#### 1.4 Scope and Limitations

Considering the factors that are pertinent to the Filipino culture, the researchers required Filipina participants to be born and raised in the Philippines. Participants had to be between 25 and 35 years old, regardless of educational attainment, to see the effects of personal maturity in relation to battery. The abused and the batterer may or may not have been legally married, as long as they considered themselves husband and wife under one roof. The key informants must have been battered at least three times within one (1) year of living together, be it continuous or intermittent—this made their views regarding the matter more extensive and reliable. They also must have had at least one (1) child with the partner. Last, the participants had to be legally separated or physically separated from the aggressor, or their marriage had had to be annulled. This is to facilitate ease of sharing, as the dread of receiving an unfavorable reaction from the partner was canceled, and helped determine post-battery effects more extensively, especially regarding reintegration into previous support systems.

## CHAPTER 2: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### 2.1 Research Design

This study utilized a qualitative research design, specifically a phenomenological approach. Phenomenology seeks to explore the subjective experiences of participants; in this case, researchers explored the incidences of battery. Both descriptive and interpretive phenomenological methods were used. The former involved four steps: bracketing, intuiting, analyzing, and describing. The latter included interpretation of a phenomenon, in this case, the abusive experiences of the battered women. The researchers conducted face-to-face semi-structured interviews with victims, either at the referring organization's receiving office or at the personal homes of the informants.

### 2.2 Data Gathering Procedure

#### (A) Preparatory Phase

1. Before conducting the interview, the researchers introduced themselves to the key informant.
2. Rapport was established, and consent was secured from the subject, including her consent to record the conversation.
3. The key informant was told that confidentiality and anonymity would be observed during the entire process.
4. Free flowing conversation was allowed to promote the key informant's expression of her views regarding the experience.

#### (B) Interview

1. Each member of the research group was assigned a subject to interview.
2. The interviews began with the



gathering of pertinent demographic data.

3. The interview guide was utilized during the data-gathering process.

4. The data gathered were based on the problems identified by the researchers.

5. After the interview, the subject was reminded that the researchers would return to her to validate the result of the data after they were analyzed.

### 2.3 Data Analysis

The study used Colaizzi's method (Polit and Beck, 2008) for data analysis, wherein seven (7) steps were followed. The advantage of this method over others is the participation of the key informants in validating the interpretation of the researchers' findings.

### 2.4 Ethical Considerations

The ethical principles adhered to in the study include informed consent, confidentiality and anonymity, beneficence and non-maleficence, and justice. Written informed consent forms were also presented to the participants. The interviewers reiterated participants' right to withdraw and skip inappropriate questions. It was emphasized that the interview would be audio recorded and that the data gathered in the interview would be used for academic purposes only. The researchers assured the informants that the information gathered in the interview would be strictly confidential and anonymity of their identities would be constantly maintained. The study used code names to conceal participants' identities. Recordings were also kept to aid in the transcription of their verbatim accounts. The researchers also ensured that the possible beneficial effects of the study outweighed its possible harmful effects and that the results may help the victims as

well as other members of the community. Following an interview, a short debriefing session was facilitated by the researchers. This allowed the informants to process their narratives.

## CHAPTER 3: EMERGING PATTERNS

The clusters were further reduced and grouped to form the emerging patterns or the level III codes. After careful data organization and analysis, the researchers were able to recognize five emerging patterns; namely: (1) A slow but steady deviation from the ideal Filipino family standard; (2) Role assumption and role-taking failure; (3) Subjection to unwarranted battery; (4) Utilization of individualized coping mechanisms; and (5) Emergence of a survivor.

The recognition of a slow but steady deviation from the ideal Filipino family standard resulted from five cluster findings, which included: an ideal beginning, attitude change of the husband, role performance of the wife against her will, communication breakdown, and deterioration of the relationship. In the study, a common description of their lives before the incidences of abuse was that they were happy. Participant Agueda said, "We used to be okay. We were happy. We were able to raise our children well. My former husband was actually a good person."

Although the marital relationship of the participants was pleasant in the beginning, various changes caused injury to their harmonious relationships. An example of this came from participant Trinidad who said, "Before, we were okay. However, as we started having more children, his true attitude started to come



out." Participant Gregoria even admitted that she was unhappy from the changes that appeared in their relationship. She said, "It came to a point when we were coming home not knowing who the other person already was." Consequently, these changes and their effects on their relationships reached a certain end point. "In the end, at some point between the course of the relationship, it was as if everything disappeared," said participant Marcela. The effects of these events happened slowly and steadily as the members tried to maintain the unity in their families. This is supported by Bulatao (1973), who said that a core value in the typical Filipino family is family solidarity. These accounts describe a deviation from an ideal Filipino family, which consists of a breadwinner father, a caring mother and children (Ochi 2005).

The next emerging pattern is derived from six categories, including: failure to assume new roles, trust issues, conflicting personalities, scarcity of resources, verbal demeaning, and child involvement. The six clusters were combined, as they all describe the failure of the husband to adapt in a family and to assume his role as a husband and as a father. The interplay of certain factors, such as substance abuse, negative peer influence and/or engagement in acts of adultery, changed them. Because of these vices, the husbands lost time and attention toward the performance of their duties, even so far as being completely absent from the home setting. "If he was not outside the house, he would either be drinking or spending time with his friends," said participant Teresa. Trust issues limited the freedom of the abused. The husband's lack of trust toward his wife may have risen from the maladaptation of the abuser to his new role as a spouse. In the case of conflicting personalities, both the abuser and the abused have unsuccessfully compromised. "There was a time when we were arguing because of the cooking. We usually

did not agree with each other in terms of cooking," said participant Gregoria. Some of the informants and their husbands disagreed on how resources should be allocated, which led to conflict and negative changes in family life. Further evidence of role-taking failure is violence in one's children: "There was a time when he hurt my child, he beat him with a dipper. I felt bad for my child," said participant Josefa. The abuser was unable to fulfill his socially required role as a father, which resulted in physical abuse of his child.

The subjection to unwarranted battery is also an observed emergent pattern. Physical abuse, which can be associated with the Filipino culture of male superiority, was the most common type of abuse that was experienced. In the traditional Filipino culture, husbands are expected to be heads of families; therefore, women are usually considered as their subordinates or, at most, their equals. Men are symbols of power and strength in the family, which stems from their key positions as the main sources of authority and provision in the family (Lee, 2007). At present, this culture is slowly changing, as women are more often asserting their independence and becoming breadwinners and decision-makers in the family. Due to this shift in familial roles, men try to regain their status through violence. According to Lee et al. (2007), female independence is severely damaging to the male gender identity and pride because of a community expectation for men to be in control and dominant. The same study revealed that, even in the privacy of their home, men did not like their authority to be challenged, and if it were, familial conflict and violence could result. One informant in our study described a situation in which her husband asked her to do something. She could not complete the request, as she was carrying her sleeping child. Her husband responded to her disobedience by pounding her with a



remote control.

Emotional abuse has been noted to be at the core in the continuity of the cycle of violence. A study by Mikaeili et al. (2010) showed abnormal behaviors, pessimism, insecurity, social relation problems, feelings of isolation and worthlessness, identification as a victim of the family, weakness, sensitivity, and anxiety in female victims of abuse. Words, such as curses, were utilized to make the abused woman feel insignificant, which led to lower self-esteem in the women. Economic abuse also occurred, in which abused women assumed the role of the abusers who were supposedly playing provider roles. Both financial burdens and constraints result from the shift of roles. Additionally, only two of the nine informants had encountered sexual coercion, wherein the abused woman was forced to have sexual encounters without her full consent. Though it was not prevalent, sexual coercion remains a pressing concern. Conservative Filipino values discourage women from being open about such sensitive topics. One of the informants felt that it was humiliating on her part to talk about abuses that were sexual in nature, and she even narrated this part of the story in a low tone of voice.

Another emergent pattern was the individualized utilization of coping mechanisms by the battered wives. All informants had taken measures to deal with their present and and foreseen endeavors, with past experiences affecting their current experiences. The participants shared the common goal of achieving a life of substance, despite the abuse they had faced.

With the personal losses resulting from battery, Filipina battered wives resorted to re-composing themselves by going back to the core of their self-identities: their family orientation (Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines 1997, 43). Given the close family ties, it is common for Filipino families to be very

accepting and warm toward their members to promote community reintegration. In Asian cultures, the individual is group-focused and one's wants are subordinate to those of one's family (Lee et al., 2007). This is exhibited by the re-inclusion of the woman, including her children, to the family household.

Another common Filipino value is social acceptance. Friends are commonly seen as a second refuge, following the home. Lee et al. (2007) found that Asian women rely heavily on informal rather than formal networks. A battered wife seeks comfort from people such as friends, whose presence is always assured. However, when social support systems fail, a number of people readily depend on themselves for encouragement. Rodriguez (2011) concluded that abused women have excellent psychological well-being in terms of their ability to re-craft their purposes in life. Victims also engage in spiritual coping, as the majority of Filipinos are Catholic. Difficult times strengthen one's belief in divine interventions and engagement in prayerful reflection. Interpersonal violence challenges fundamental assumptions about the self and world, including issues related to benevolence and justice (Fallot 2005).

Victims engage in outward expressions of their feelings as a coping mechanism. They become more assertive, which may not be readily acceptable to men, whose authoritative image remains in the Filipino's paternal structure. The differences in physical strength lead women still to feel powerless in the end, so crying ensues, which channels the recovery in a more socially acceptable manner. However, the complete facilitation of the psychological effects laid on the victims can only take place once they are withdrawn from the place of abuse (Rodriguez 2011).

Another core Filipino value is thinking positively about the future, which results in Filipina battered wives diverting



their negative thoughts into more meaningful and worthwhile activities. Rodriguez (2011) elaborated on how these victims can change certain factors in their environment to suit their personal needs and preferences. The women focused more on the possibilities of being able to survive not just for themselves but also for their children. Self-improvement and finding new means to successfully raise their children make the victims feel sufficient, even with the given absence of their previous partners.

However, in our study, there were still numerous Filipina battered wives who chose to initially weather the experiences with utmost forbearance. They failed to uphold their personal rights in their relationships, which immersed them more into victimhood. A study conducted by Taft et al. (2007) supports this claim; they observed an increase in frequency of relationship abuse once disengagement coping, rather than engagement coping, is utilized. The desire to save the family relationship takes a toll on the victim's own personhood. The eventual collapse of her self-concept leads to the feeling of wanting to separate herself from the abuser.

The separated battered wives' roles as wives, mothers, and women have been affected in different ways. First, as wives, the abuse made them wiser. As victims, they were able to enhance their intellectual and emotional maturity, which helped protect their integrity as persons. They were strengthened by the experience, as they realized they needed to be very careful in identifying potential partners. In this study, some informants were able to realize that they must know how to work and earn a living to achieve independence from their partners. Helfrich and Aviles (2001) noted that a woman's ability to attain independence was influenced by her financial situation, work skills, and overall life management skills. The factors affecting a woman's decision to leave the abusive

relationship, the stressors she faces, and her resources affect her ability to overcome domestic violence. Moreover, learning from the past served as a step to move on and maintain a positive outlook on life. However, resentment toward the perpetrator and excessive lingering fear, including the fear of having future relationships, manifested as a negative emotional impact of the abuse. The American Psychiatric Association ([APA] 1994) states that characteristic features of post-traumatic stress disorder include re-experiencing the traumatic event, emotional numbness or avoidance, and increased arousal. Already overwhelmed with their own psychological and physical health, the need to deal with their children's psychological and physical health and the demands placed on them as a parent heightened the negative emotions they were feeling (Carpiano 2002). Some informants also felt disrespected knowing that the abuse came from their own husbands. Persons who they expected to love and respect them had failed to do so and this left a deep scar that would never be forgotten.

Second, battery has an effect on the victim as a mother. As a result, an enhanced mother-child relationship occurred, because the experience made them love their children more and led to improved communication and sensitivity between them and their children. These findings, however, are contrary to the results of a study by John Wiley & Sons John Wiley & Sons deleted. Correct: These findings, however, are contrary to the results of a study by Lapierre (2010), which found that domestic violence creates a context that complicates women's mothering, which is partly due to the fact that men tend to target their partners' mothering and mother-child relationships as part of their violent strategies. According to Wiley & Sons, women are left with scarce resources to care for their children and several women have to



leave their houses, which means that they find themselves having to settle down with their children in a new environment. In the same way, the majority of the Filipina battered female informants cited financial issues related to meeting the needs of the children by themselves. Nonetheless, they were motivated to perform both parental roles because of their children, who became their driving force to continue. Sometimes the abusive experience created a gap between the mother and her children, which made her feel as if she were ineffective as a mother. Johnson and Sullivan (2008) found that women themselves tend to underestimate the efforts they display to protect and care for their children. Given the women's desire to achieve "good" or "perfect" mothering, it is devastating for them to be seen as "failing" mothers.

Third, the aspect of being a woman in an abusive relationship leads to lower self-esteem and feelings of belittlement, humiliation, and disrespect. Most of the informants became conscious of what others were saying about them and their families and felt like they had lost the respect that was due to them. However, few informants said that they looked down on themselves after the abuse. Javaherian, Underwood, and DeLany (2007) found that women struggled with issues of trust and poor self-esteem and had to deal with others' perceptions of their experience, which were often negative. A number of participants in our study questioned God as to why these things happened to them. Paranoia also developed as a result of the abusive experience as well as the belief that they were not loved by their husbands (i.e., unreciprocated feelings). However, one informant said that she was not affected since she was the one who wanted to end the relationship in the first place.

Although these women have encountered abusive experiences, some gained empowerment from the abuse. Some vic-

tims became more independent and stronger, and acted as support systems for other women who encountered the same fate as theirs. One of the participants mentioned that battered women tend to draw strength and courage from each other knowing that they had experienced the same thing. Haj-Yahia and Sadan (2009) found that women in the shelter they studied became a reference group, and each member experienced herself and what was happening to her from the perspective of that group, where the members provided support and each member served as a personal model for the others. Regardless of whether one woman perceived the situation as more difficult, she had a basis for comparison that enabled her to draw conclusions and make decisions. Additionally, victims are empowered through obtainment of new skills and strategies, which are developed to tackle problems as they arise. However, several informants developed mistrust of other people and a need to guard themselves from other people. A majority of the informants chose to suppress past memories and most regretted the relationship with their former partners.

Overall, this study confirms the existence of the cycle of violence in the relationships of Filipina battered wives with their husbands. However, each of the participants showed that there can be a definite end in every abuse, and this can be attained by a woman's full awakening to the realities of the situation during any part of the cycle. Although it was a tedious and painful process to break free, participants were able to move on and begin a new life on their own.

The themes identified in this study depict the experiences of these women as they rebuilt their lives free from their abusers. They reflect the women's courage, the complexity of their struggles, the difficulties of starting over, and their goals for a better future. Their experiences contributed



to our understanding of surviving battery. Rebuilding their lives was a difficult process that was unique to each woman's situation, yet they shared common characteristics as a result of the abuse. These Filipina battered wives will certainly always remember their struggles, but regardless of these feelings, strength resulted within them. They learned to appreciate what was left and to make the most of what they have. Hence, they are now living survivors—those who look back while moving forward.

#### **CHAPTER 4: PHENOMENON**

The S.U.R.V.I.V.O.R. phenomenon, or the experiences of separated Filipina battered wives, has resulted from comprehensive analysis of the initial codes, cluster findings, and emerging patterns. The SURVIVOR abbreviation as representative of the battered wives' experiences has been validated by the key informants themselves. Again, it encompasses the following: (1) Smooth start, (2) Unexpected changes in the relationship, (3) Role assumption failure, (4) Violence, (5) Independence, (6) Vigilance to possibilities of forming new relationships, (7) Overcoming the traumatic experiences, and (8) Reintegration.

The couples' respective relationships started on a good note with appropriate levels of communication and understanding. The give-and-take relationship was still present at the time. Being together brought mutual happiness and feelings of security. However, a shallow knowledge regarding the true nature of the partner may have been present.

The continuity of the relationships

allowed the wives to see their husbands in a different light. Deleterious factors in the relationship started to appear, such as a change in how they communicated with each other and an ineffective division of familial roles, including taking care of the child and providing for the family. Continuing the abusive relationship accounted for the increasing frequency of misunderstandings.

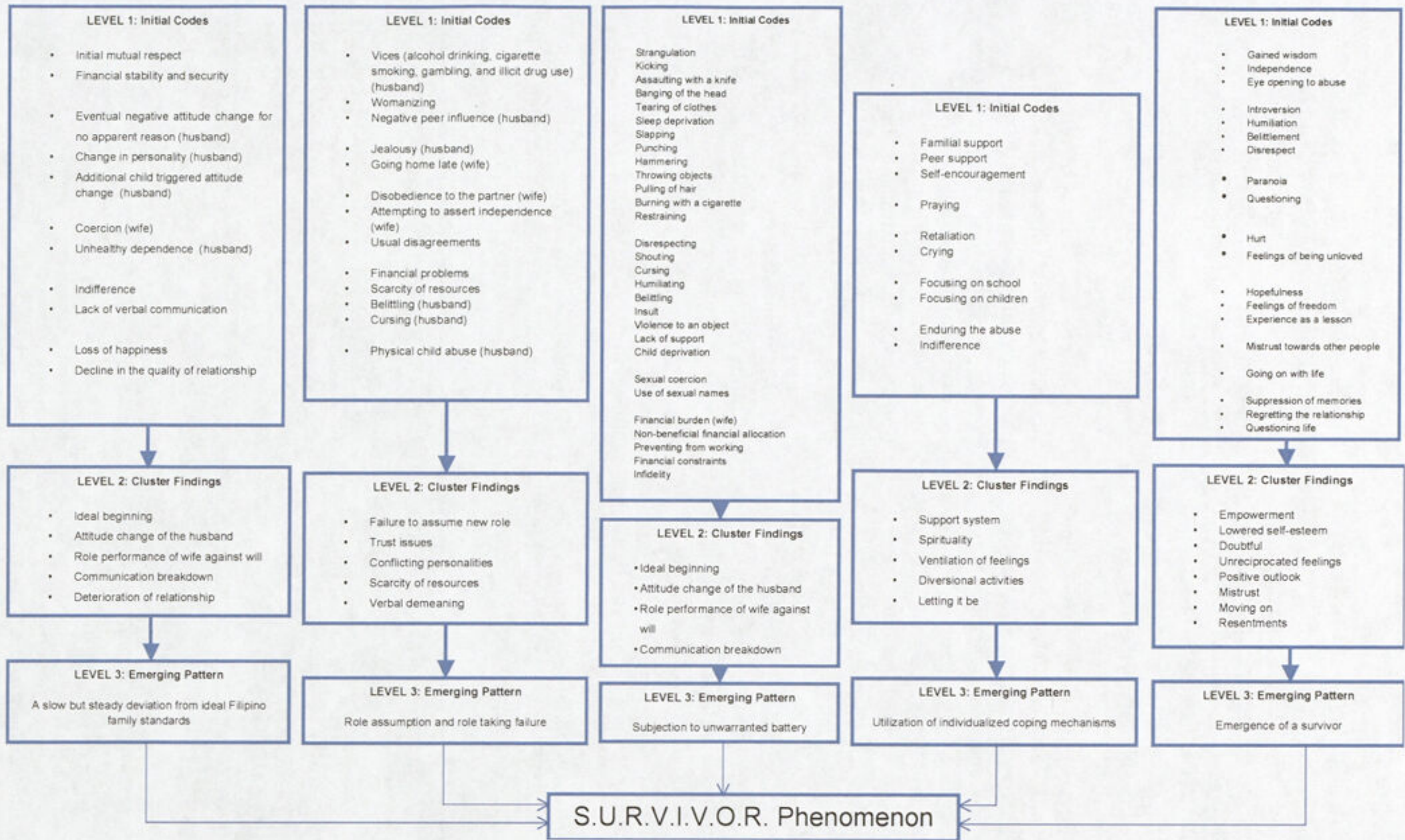
Violence resulted due to inappropriate channeling of feelings and thoughts. The sudden outbursts threatened the integral health of the women. The suppression not only made the women feel weak and incompetent, but it also gave undue empowerment to those enforcing power. Hence, the role of the wife in the family became more difficult due to the addition of internal concerns and conflicts.

The battered wives were able to release themselves from undue harm when they asserted their independence. It became an ongoing struggle for the wives, and the difficulties of adjusting were overwhelming for them. However, the wives had no choice but to pursue what they thought would be best for themselves and their children—to be liberated from the unhealthy relationship. Stemming from the fear that they experienced in their abusive relationships, the victims started to know what they needed to seek and avoid in dealing with other people.

After going through the immediate post-battery effects, these battered wives started to restructure their lives. They employed individualized coping mechanisms to move-on. Though they were yet to be completely healed, they were vying to achieve total recovery from the situation.

Finally, participants had taken greater concrete actions to facilitate moving on. Resumption of their disrupted activities had taken place. Also, they had entertained other factors that may aid them in their





A Diagram on the Process of Discovering the Phenomenon



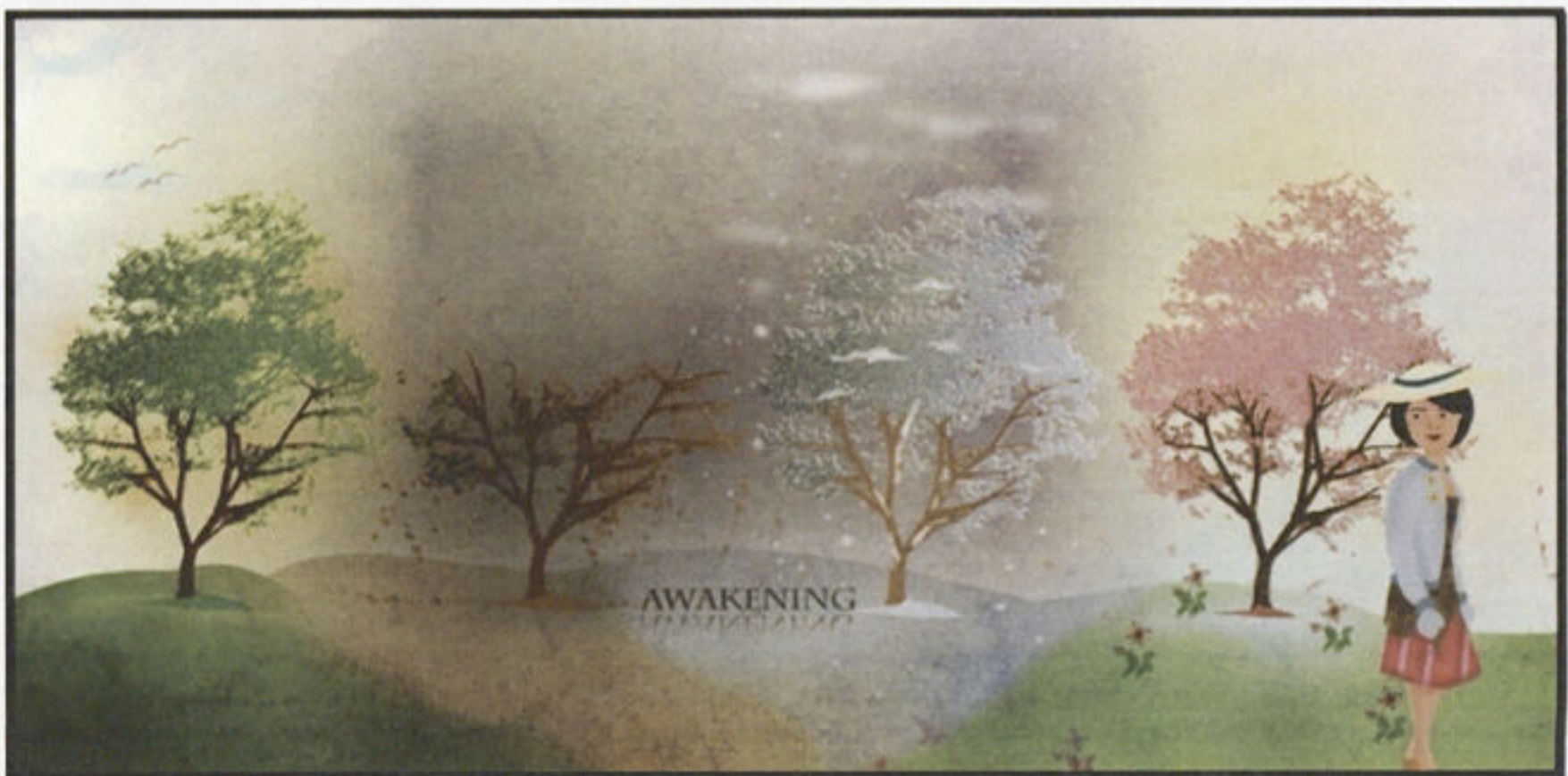
desire to prove their worth to themselves and to the larger community.

The researchers created "The Seasons of Life Model" to depict the stages in any individual's life. It is composed of four distinct but continuous stages. The person goes through all the periods chronologically; no stage can be skipped, or interchanged, in the arrangement. Summer is the representation of all good things. The warmth it brings is associated with happiness, energy, and excitement. These are the initial moments when everything seemingly appears idealistically bright and hopeful. Fall stands for the destructive experiences a person experiences. These are the challenges faced after having instances of joy and positivity. There is a decline in composure of character, including disturbance of previous personal well-being and functioning. This is where the cycle of battery generally falls. To transition into the following phase, self-realization needs to begin at any point during the progression of the domestic violence. Winter is associated with an individual's feelings of isolation and loneliness. This is when all the negative emotions that resulted from the traumatic experiences start to burden the person. Withdrawal at this point may occur as a means of reflecting on and

internalizing the experience. Initiation of independence may be the result of growing self-awareness. Spring, as the last season in the continuum, deals with blossoming. The prior internalizations are translated into improved perceptions and principles. An improved person appears at an end-point of wisdom and strength.

The model may be applied in different settings to facilitate easier understanding through an abstract imaginative comparison. The results of this study on separated battered wives may be directly plotted on this model.

In accordance with the findings, the married woman initially felt happy and enjoyed her husband's company, given the normalcy of their relationship. However, as it progressed, the man wilfully damaged the personhood of the woman. The battery took place in different ways, and it eventually altered the woman's concept of herself and their relationship. She, then, moved away from the aggressor to begin moving on. This usually took time, as the woman was ambivalent about the idea of being non-conformant to societal standards as well as to her personal ideals concerning relationships.. Eventually, the battered wife developed a sense of enlightenment. This realization equipped her to face possible





intrapersonal and interpersonal challenges.

Although the seasons repeat themselves and are predictable in nature, it is important to note that the episodes of battery happened on one complete occurrence of the seasonal changes in the woman's life. What she has experienced will guide her as she addresses subsequent problems, given that the benefits of overcoming the battery episodes have affected her holistically.

### The Phenomenon in the Seasons of Life Model

Also, the model adds light to the optimism that may take place after the episodes of battery. Given that previous studies in psychology focused on the cycle of battery, it is also important to note how it is possible to break the chain and proceed to the other remaining stages. The phenomenon, therefore, offers a bigger picture of how eventual happenings may proceed once the woman chooses to liberate herself.

In the event that a previously battered wife chooses to enter into any new relationship, it does not guarantee another cycle of battery. In reality, people experience several summers, for example, but no two summers are the same. They may be similar in some ways, but they always present themselves differently (e.g., involve different people). Above all, the person does not return exactly the same, which affects the results. Hence, this proves that not all predictable factors account for definite, predictable results.

## CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 5.1 Summary

The study explored the experiences of separated Filipina battered wives. These women have sustained physical, psychological, emotional, sexual, and/or economic abuse from their husbands. The study used the direct narrations of victims as primary data to support a better understanding of battery as a common occurrence in the community, including its other specific contextual implications in the Philippine setting. Researchers interviewed nine Filipina battered wives about their pre-, during, and post- battery experiences. Simultaneous transcriptions of the initial findings or level 1 codes, which included verbatim accounts and field notes, were done by the researchers. The formation of clusters and emerging patterns under coding levels 2 and 3, respectively, were finalized and analyzed to serve as a basis for the formulation of the phenomenon.

### 5.2 Conclusion

An ideal or a smooth beginning was the typical response of the Filipina battered wives when asked to describe their relationships with their abusers. As time passed, having children demanded increased resources to meet familial needs. This, in turn, caused the gradual elevation of tension between the husband and wife. There were negative attitudinal changes in husbands that allowed them to take advantage of their vulnerable wives, which, in turn, led to unhealthy dependence. There was also a communication breakdown, and it contributed to the progression of a deteriorating relationship, wherein loss of happiness and dissatisfaction between the



spouses dominated the relationship.

The start of battery was triggered when the husband chose to neglect his roles. Vices, women, and peers were factors or agents that negatively affected the abusers' assumption of responsibilities as a husband and as a father. The aggressor's mistrust of the woman was another factor that degraded the quality of relationship. Conflicting personalities of both parties became prominent as the relationship advanced, which produced hostility in the relationship. Scarcity of resources was a remarkable component that predisposed the husband and wife to heated arguments, especially when the family experienced economic crises. Actual battery often started with verbal demeaning; the woman tried to assert herself, which eventually provoked the aggressor.

Filipina battered wives primarily coped through the help of support systems, especially the family because of close family ties. Peer groups (e.g., friends) and self-motivation or self-encouragement were also utilized as support mechanisms. Religious practices (e.g., praying), retaliation, and crying were also effective ways of coping with the situation and providing women with control and stability. By shifting their attention to other things, women forgot the traumatic experiences and also brought back a positive self-concept (as women were able to perform activities that were fulfilling, such as assuming a motherly role).

Effects of battery influenced the roles of the victims as wives, mothers, and women. Generally, they became empowered individuals, as manifested by improved intellectual and emotional maturity and ability to move on from the abuse. The tragic event also enhanced the mother and child relationship, which increased the mothers' perception of their competence to perform both parental roles. However, some battered women developed

a negative view as a result of the battery. They had negative emotions toward their aggressors because of the pain and trauma that they had experienced. They also felt overwhelmed as they were now being challenged to raise the children alone, which resulted in lowered self-esteem and perceived uselessness as a mother. The victims suppressed past memories, regretted the relationship, and questioned life because of such negative experiences. Some women developed mistrust of other people and feelings of doubt as they searched for answers as to why the tragic event happened to them in the first place.

The battered wives came to a point where they realized that it was their choice to end the relationship: a choice that would bring them to a state of helplessness or survivorship. This study found that battery can be stopped at any point during the relationship. Filipina women are more empowered in modern times than they were traditionally. Women are able to break free of the notion that they are inferior and submissive to their husbands. The rights of victims of domestic violence are being widely and intensively promulgated through awareness campaigns and laws that seek to eradicate gender inequality. In sum, although the cycle of abuse happens, it can end through a decision-making process. In our case, the women had to let go of their husbands for a foreseen positive personal gain.

### 5.3 Recommendations

#### Community:

This study may help in understanding the trials that battered wives face. It may help in eliminating the misconceptions regarding them and their experiences. The researchers recommend increased access to effective coping mechanisms, such as interaction with support systems (e.g., family members and friends). This



may enhance the client's recovery from the traumatic experience.

### Nursing Practice, Research, and Education:

Greater emphasis on the psychosocial aspect of care is also needed. The study can help nurses further understand the experiences of battered wives, allowing them to readily recognize and assess the typical behavior of victims. It may also be beneficial for nurses and victims to share an optimistic view regarding the victim's experience, since in reality, the cycle can be broken. This variation in providing nursing care may be useful in areas such as emergency room nursing, community health nursing, and psychiatric nursing. Overall, this study may encourage nurses to provide a more holistic form of care. A more effective therapeutic relationship between the nurse and the patient could be attained, in which the nurse could help victims alleviate the effects of the traumatic experience and restore self-worth.

The researchers recommend that future studies explore the experiences of the other family members affected by the battery, including the husband and the children. A more comprehensive view of the effects of domestic violence may be attained that way, which could show how significant its effects are to the basic unit of the community. Furthermore, researchers should study women who are currently being battered. This may help to identify the common vulnerabilities that victims of battery share. Additionally, it would be beneficial to include a study that compares the effectiveness of coping mechanisms.

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## Women of Kireka

BY KATIE GLEASON

There are two stone quarries in Kireka, a bustling and dusty neighborhood on the outskirts of Uganda's capital city, Kampala. The smaller of the two serves as the primary employer of roughly two dozen men and women on a given day. The men spend the working day descending steep, dusty paths to retrieve boulders loosened from the ground by sticks of dynamite. Once extracted, the men balance the large rocks on their backs and carry them back up the paths. The women, sitting at the top of the quarry, overlooking its depths, receive the boulders and use a hammer to crush the large rocks into small pieces. Trucks transport the crushed rock from the quarry several times a day to nearby construction sites. The wages of the workers in the quarry are dependent on the volume of stone either carried or crushed—almost always amounting to fewer than two U.S. dollars a day. Accidents and long hours are common in quarry work, with reports of lost fingers, toes, and even occasional deaths, recounted by those who chisel stones for a living.



Jasinta, a resident of Kireka and member of the Women of Kireka cooperative, works in the quarry crushing stones to provide for her ten children. She and her family moved to Kireka from Northern Uganda in 1998.



The view from the top of Kireka Quarry.



Down the path from the quarry, toward the main road running through Kireka, sits a small, two-room workshop. On a good day it is filled with twelve women talking, sharing stories, watching one another's children, and rolling paper beads. The workshop is home to a cooperative called Women of Kireka (WoK). WoK was formed in 2008 with the help of a Canadian journalist and Project Diaspora, a not-for-profit organization based in Texas. In its three years of existence, the cooperative has grown from a group of women looking for alternate ways to make ends meet to an enterprise with its own product line and international customer-base.

Using strips of recycled paper, the women of WoK roll beads by hand and then fashion them into bracelets, necklaces, and earrings. The strips of paper used to craft the beads are obtained from a variety of sources, including discarded magazine pages, calendars, and posters. The paper is purchased from local vendors who, realizing that discarded paper has commercial uses, have created businesses in their own right. The women have more than twenty jewelry designs in their professional repertoire and have started expanding their product line to include coin purses, handbags, bowls, and coasters.



The Women of Kireka in their workshop.





Helen nearly finished rolling beads (above and below).







Beads that have been rolled and are ready to receive several coats of varnish—the final step before they are used to create necklaces, bracelets, and earrings.



Beatrice concentrating as she rolls a bead in the workshop. If the materials (including the paper, small glass beads, and clear fishing wire) are readily available, the entire process of creating a piece of jewelry takes about three days. After the paper is cut, the women roll each strip around a small metal rod, securing the end with a small dab of clear glue. The beads are then strung onto a piece of fishing wire, dipped in varnish, and hung in the sun to dry. Several coats of varnish are applied to ensure that the beads are hard and glossy. They are then taken off the string, sorted by size and color, and finally combined with small glass beads to make a necklace, bracelet, or earrings. While the process, and in particular rolling each bead, is tedious, the women cite market access and not production technology as their primary impediment to success.



# The Future of Development in Liberia: Keeping Women on the Agenda

BY HALA HANNA  
AND  
ANNA LUCIA ALFARO



The year 2011 has been a good one for Liberian women: Ellen Johnson Sirleaf was re-elected to the presidency, shortly after receiving, with her compatriot Leymah Gbowee, the Nobel Peace Prize. The recognition of these two women's work stems from their lifelong dedication to the non-violent struggle for women's rights and the safety of women in their country. The prize stands as a symbol of the strength of Liberian women. Indeed, during Liberia's fifteen-year-long civil war, women ensured their families' survival through farming; women also brought an end to the war. Peace activist Gbowee was

at the head of the interfaith peace movement that is largely credited with restoring peace in the country.

When President Sirleaf came to power in 2006, she made women's rights one of her priorities. In addition to building, from scratch, the country's institutions and convincing the international community to forgive Liberia's debt, Sirleaf's administration placed a renewed focus on the plight of women in Liberia. During her first term, women's political voices were strengthened. First, she established the Women's Legislative Caucus, a multiparty committee in the House of Representatives that

ensures a gender-sensitive approach to the legislature. Second, women's representation was increased from 6 percent in 1995 to 13 percent in 2010 in the National Legislature, and to 17 percent in the Senate. The Inheritance Act was also passed, establishing rights of inheritance for spouses of both statutory and customary marriages. And rape, long used as a weapon of war, was made punishable, with a maximum sentence of life in prison.

Under President's Sirleaf's leadership, Liberia has also made significant progress in achieving several Millennium



Development Goals (MDGs). Most impressive, the gender gap in primary education has almost disappeared in the past six years. The ratio of female to male enrollment increased from 72 percent in 2000 to 90 percent in 2009 at the primary level, and from 71 percent to 75 percent at the secondary level. Improvements were also achieved in the areas of macroeconomic stability, governance and the rule of law, commitment to fiscal responsibility, and increased engagement with strategic development partners.<sup>1</sup> As a result, the country's performance on major development indices and socioeconomic indicators has improved. For example, in 2009, the country rose to 169 (out of 182 countries) on the United Nations Human Development Index (HDI). After years at the bottom of the HDI ranking, this is a significant improvement.

tant areas of security and socioeconomic development.

Rape and sexual violence against women remain the country's largest crime problem: around 17.6 percent of women ages 15–49 and around 22 percent of those ages 25–39 (that is, more than one in five women) have experienced sexual violence. This makes the spread of HIV/AIDS that much harder to control. The prevalence of HIV/AIDS remains higher for women than for men in both urban and rural areas.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, the majority of Liberian female workers are still laboring in the unpaid and informal sectors, characterized by insecurity and low productivity. Around 90 percent of Liberian women are employed in the least productive sectors of the informal economy or agriculture, compared with 75 percent of working men.<sup>3</sup> Significant headway is needed to achieve the MDGs

related to gender equality and women's empowerment. Despite the significant gains in gender equity in education among youth, there is still a remarkable gap in adult literacy rates; in rural areas, only 30 percent of women are literate, compared with 60 percent of men.<sup>4</sup> Liberia still suffers from one of the world's highest maternal mortality rates at 1,000 per 100,000 births. Due to poor transportation, only 46 percent of all births are attended by skilled health personnel (doctors, nurses, or midwives).



Despite the herculean efforts that President Sirleaf and her administration have already made, the challenges confronting Liberian women remain immense. Liberia still suffers from the fragile conditions that typically plague post-conflict states, hindering its progress in the impor-

The goals of eradicating extreme poverty and hunger, achieving universal primary education, improving maternal health, and combating the spread of HIV/AIDS are all necessary to make progress toward giving Liberian women equal and productive roles in society. To help



achieve these goals, President Sirleaf must nurture an environment that will guarantee women's rights and access to justice. Increasing women's access to courts and truth commissions and implementing

to Liberia's.<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, the Liberian government should increase support for women's legal organizations, position more women at the frontline of law enforcement to increase the reporting of sexual violence, and, most importantly, prioritize gender equality at the heart of Liberia's Millennium Development Goals.<sup>7</sup>



Liberia has made great strides in improving the economic, social, political, and legal statuses of women over the last six years. President Sirleaf continues to transform her country from war-torn devastation to one of growth and opportunity for women and men alike. However, the country continues to face many urgent and difficult

gender-sensitive legal reform and gender-responsive reparations programs are two of the policy recommendations that UN Women<sup>5</sup> provides for post-conflict governments facing challenges similar

challenges, especially with regard to gender equality and women's rights. These must be overcome to ensure that every entity of Liberian society plays a positive role in its future.

#### ENDNOTES

1 UNDP and Government of Liberia, "Progress, Prospects and Challenges towards achieving the MDGs," Millennium Development Goals Progress Report, 2010.

2 [http://data.unaids.org/Publications/Fact-Sheets01/liberia\\_en.pdf](http://data.unaids.org/Publications/Fact-Sheets01/liberia_en.pdf).

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5 UN Women is the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women.

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7 UN Women, "Progress of the World's Women 2011–2012: In Pursuit of Justice," 2011.



# Marching from the Margin to the Center: Rural Brazilian Women March on Nation's Capital in Marcha das Margaridas

BY JAIRA J. HARRINGTON

On August 17, 2011, 70,000 rural women marched in Brasilia, Brazil in the Marcha das Margaridas, or March of the Daisies. This demonstration sought to draw attention to the social, political, and economic issues related to the lives of rural women and to bring about comprehensive policy reform. Among the 150 demands that the women made, some themes included environmental protection, combating hunger, political participation, greater governmental transparency, economic autonomy, health, children's rights, education, and violence. The march was inspired by the farmer and rural-worker activist Margarida Alves, who was murdered in 1983.

Many of the participants in the march reflected on how women of the rural zone are often overlooked and their needs are rendered invisible. These photographs represent how they were seen on August 17, 2011. Dilma Rouseff, the President of Brazil and various other government officials publicly acknowledged the women's demands that very same day.



This year's theme was "Sustainable development with justice, autonomy, equality and liberty."



Tens of thousands of rural women representing various regions of Brazil descended on the nation's capital on August 17, 2011.





Among the workers' rights organizations to support the 2011 Marcha das Margaridas was the National Confederation of Agricultural Workers (CONTAG), the Central Unit of Workers (CUT), and the World Women's March. In addition to the support from various domestic and international organizations, inter-generational support was evident at the event.

The calls for change rang clear in the posters and signs at the march. This particular sign was designed by the Fishers of Arari Waterfalls in the state of Pará, a region in the North of Brazil. It reads: "CLAIMED: Health education in rural and urban areas; combating the destruction of the environment; and the creation of nurseries in traditional coastal communities."



The central protest song for the event called for the attention of the capital: "Look Brasília. ... [T]he decided women are arriving. ... Look Brasília, at these flowers in bloom. ... [I]t is the desire, it is the desire of the daisies!" Activists filled the streets of the nation's capital, carrying signs and flags and singing songs of protest.

Marchers gathering in front of the Capitol Building in Brasília—the site of federal political power in Brazil.



The principal protest song also emphasized the diversity of the women: "We are of all different kinds, of different kinds of hair, big, small and elevated. We are all daisies!" Capitol Building, Marcha das Margaridas 2011, Brasília, Brazil. August 17, 2011.





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## SELECTION OF NEW AND UPCOMING RESEARCH IN THE FIELD OF WOMEN'S POLICY

### "Wombfare: The Religious Basis of Fertility Politics"

In *Political Demography: How Population Changes are Reshaping International Security and National Politics (Paradigm)*

Monica Duffy Toft, Jack Goldstone and Eric Kaufmann, eds.

May 2012

**ABSTRACT:** The field of political demography—the politics of population change—is dramatically underrepresented in political science. At a time when demographic changes—aging in the rich world, youth bulges in the developing world, ethnic and religious shifts, migration, and urbanization—are waxing as never before, this neglect is especially glaring and starkly contrasts with the enormous interest coming from policymakers and the media. “Ten years ago, [demography] was hardly on the radar screen,” remarks Richard Jackson and Neil Howe of the Center for Strategic and International Studies, two contributors to this volume. “Today,” they continue, “it dominates almost any discussion of America’s long-term fiscal, economic, or foreign-policy direction.” Demography is the most predictable of the social sciences: children born in the last five years will be the new workers, voters, soldiers, and potential insurgents of 2025 and the political elites of the 2050s. Whether in the West or the developing world, political scientists urgently need to understand the tectonics of demography in order to grasp the full context of today’s political developments. This book begins to fill the gap from a global and historical perspective and with the hope that scholars and policymakers will take its insights on board to develop enlightened policies for our collective future.



**“Female Leadership Raises Aspirations and Educational Attainment for Girls: A Policy Experiment in India”**

Sciencesexpress

Lori Beaman, Esther Duflo, Rohini Pande, Petia Topalova

12 January 2012

**ABSTRACT:** Exploiting a randomized natural experiment in India, we show that female leadership influences adolescent girls' career aspirations and educational attainment. A 1993 law reserved leadership positions for women in randomly selected village councils. Using 8,453 surveys of adolescents aged 11-15 and their parents in 495 villages, we find that, compared to villages that were never reserved, the gender gap in aspirations closed by 25% in parents and 32% in adolescents in villages assigned to a female leader for two election cycles. The gender gap in adolescent educational attainment is erased and girls spent less time on household chores. We find no evidence of changes in young women's labor market opportunities, suggesting that the impact of women leaders primarily reflects a role model effect. <http://econ-www.mit.edu/files/7504>

**“Dyadic Interracial Interactions: A Meta-Analysis.”**

Psychological Bulletin 138(1): 1-27.

Toosi, N. R., L. G. Babbitt, et al.

January 2012

**ABSTRACT:** This meta-analysis examined over 40 years of research on interracial interactions by exploring 4 types of outcomes: explicit attitudes toward interaction partners, participants' self-reports of their own emotional state, nonverbal or observed behavior, and objective measures of performance. Data were collected from 108 samples ( $N = 12,463$ ) comparing dyadic interracial and same-race interactions, predominantly featuring Black and White Americans. Effect sizes were small: Participants in same-race dyads tended to express marginally more positive attitudes about their partners ( $r = .07$ ), reported feeling less negative affect ( $r = .10$ ), showed more friendly nonverbal behavior ( $r = .09$ ), and scored higher on performance measures ( $r = .07$ ) than those in interracial dyads. Effect sizes also showed substantial heterogeneity, and further analyses indicated that intersectional, contextual, and relational factors moderated these outcomes. For example, when members of a dyad were the same sex, differences between interracial and same-race dyads in negative affect were reduced. Structured interactions led to more egalitarian performance outcomes than did free-form interactions, but the effects of interaction structure on nonverbal behavior depended on participant gender. Furthermore, benefits of intergroup contact were apparent: Differences in emotional state across dyadic racial composition disappeared in longer term interactions, and racial minorities, who often have greater experience with intergroup contact, experienced less negative affect in interracial interactions than did majority group members. Finally, there was a significant historical trend toward more egalitarian outcomes across dyadic racial composition for explicit attitudes and for nonverbal behavior; however, participants' emotional responses and performance have remained consistent.



“Race is Gendered: How Covarying Phenotypes and Stereotypes Bias Sex Categorization” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 102(1): 116-131.

Johnson, K. L., J. B. Freeman, et al.  
January 2012

**ABSTRACT:** We argue that race and sex categories are psychologically and phenotypically confounded, affecting social categorizations and their efficiency. Sex categorization of faces was facilitated when the race category shared facial phenotypes or stereotypes with the correct sex category (e.g., Asian women and Black men) but was impaired when the race category shared incompatible phenotypes or stereotypes with the correct sex category (e.g., Asian men and Black women). These patterns were evident in the disambiguation of androgynous faces (Study 1) and the efficiency of judgments (Studies 1, 2, 4, and 5). These patterns emerged due to common facial phenotypes for the categories Black and men (Studies 3 and 5) and due to shared stereotypes among the categories Black and men and the categories Asian and women (Studies 4 and 5). These findings challenge the notion that social categories are perceived independent of one another and show, instead, that race is gendered.

“Sex Work and Sexually Transmitted Infections in Asia: A Biosocial Analysis” *The Journal of Infectious Diseases*; 204 (suppl 5)

Joseph D. Tucker, Joan Kaufman, Jacqueline Bhabha, Arthur Kleinman  
2011

**Abstract:** The Harvard University Asia Center hosted a symposium in October 2010 focused on sex work and sexually transmitted infections in Asia, engaging a biosocial approach to promote sexual health in this region. Asia has an estimated 151 million cases of curable sexually transmitted infections (STIs; eg, syphilis, gonorrhea, chlamydia) each year, with commercial sex interactions playing a large role in ongoing transmission. Substantial human movement and migration, gender inequalities, and incipient medical and legal systems in many states stymie effective STI control in Asia. The articles in this supplement provide theoretical and empirical pathways to improving the sexual health of those who sell and purchase commercial sex in Asia. The unintended health consequences of various forms of regulating commercial sex are also reviewed, emphasizing the need to carefully consider the medical and public health consequences of new and existing policies and laws.

“Women’s Empowerment and Economic Development”

National Bureau of Economic Research

Esther Duflo

November 2011

**ABSTRACT:** Women’s empowerment and economic development are closely related: in one direction, development alone can play a major role in driving down inequality between men and women; in the other direction, empowering women may benefit development. Does this imply that pushing just one of these two levers would set a virtuous circle in motion? This paper reviews the literature on both sides of the empowerment-development nexus, and argues that the inter-relationships are probably too weak to be self-sustaining, and that continuous policy commitment to equality for its own sake may be needed to bring about equality between men and women.

<http://econ-www.mit.edu/files/7417>



**“Education, HIV and Early Fertility: Experimental Evidence from Kenya”**

Ester Duflo, Pascaline Dupas, Michael Kremer

25 August 2011

**Abstract:** We provide experimental evidence on the relationships between education, HIV/AIDS education, risky behavior and early fertility in Kenya. We exploit randomly assigned variation in the cost of schooling and in exposure to the national HIV/AIDS prevention curriculum for a cohort of over 19,000 adolescents in Western Kenya, originally aged 13.5 on average. We collected data on the schooling, marriage, and fertility outcomes of these students over 7 years, and tested them for HIV and Herpes (HSV2) after 7 years. We find that subsidizing education at the upper primary level reduces the dropout rate by about 18 percent. For girls, the education subsidy also leads to a significant reduction in teen pregnancy and teen marriage, but does not reduce the risk of sexually transmitted infection (STI). In contrast, bundling the education subsidy with the delivery of the HIV curriculum (with its abstinence-until-marriage message) leads to a lower STI risk for girls, but to a smaller decrease in early fertility than the subsidy alone. Finally, the HIV curriculum by itself has no impact on STI rates or on early pregnancy, although it reduces the number of unwed teenage pregnancies. These results are consistent with a model of sexual behavior and schooling decisions where girls choose whether to have casual or committed relationships, and teenage pregnancy may be a comparably desirable outcome for girls who cannot continue their education.

<http://econ-www.mit.edu/files/6951>

**“Just Add Women and Stir?”**

Parameters-The U.S. Army War College Quarterly; 41(1): 56-70

Sahana Dharmapuri

1 June 2011

**Introduction:** October 2010 marked the 10th anniversary of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (UN Resolution 1325). The unanimous passage of UN Resolution 1325 recognized, for the first time in the history of the Security Council, the link between gender equality, peace, and security. The 10th anniversary of this landmark resolution heralds a move toward implementing UN Resolution 1325 in peace and security operations to improve operational effectiveness. Today, gender equality is recognized as a force multiplier in operational planning and execution strategies. Yet when military planners and policy makers credit what has increased effectiveness in peacekeeping and security operations, they rarely, if ever, mention gender equality. Nevertheless, recent efforts made by UN peacekeeping missions and NATO to implement UN Resolution 1325, show that security actors are more successful when they take into account the different needs, status, and experience of men and women in the local population, and when peace and security missions include women in executing operations and decisionmaking. A growing body of evidence from the field reveals that the inclusion of women enhances operational effectiveness in three key ways: improved information gathering, enhanced credibility, and better force protection. Empirical evidence underscores the fact that attention to the different needs, interests, and experiences of men and women can enhance the success of a variety of security tasks, to the benefit of both civilians and soldiers.

<http://www.carlisle.army.mil/USAWC/Parameters/Articles/2011spring/Dharmapuri.pdf>



“Moving Teenagers Out of High-Risk Neighborhoods:  
How Girls Fare Better than Boys”

American Journal of Sociology 116.4: 1154-1189

Susan Clampet-Lundquist, Kathryn Edin, Jeffrey R. Kling, Greg J. Duncan  
January 2011

**Abstract:** Young people who grow up in high-poverty urban neighborhoods experience crime and violence, resource-poor schools, restricted labor markets, and other forms of deprivation at a much higher level than those who are raised in middle-income or affluent neighborhoods. In addition to individual and family characteristics, these neighborhood contexts can place teens at risk. Numerous studies have documented a correlation between socioeconomic neighborhood-level variables and adolescent sexual behaviors (Hogan and Kitagawa 1985; Crane 1991; Billy and Moore 1992; Coulton and Pandey 1992; Brewster, Billy, and Grady 1993; Brooks-Gunn et al. 1993; Ku, Sonenstein, and Pleck 1993; Billy, Brewster, and Grady 1994), the home environment (Klebanov, Brooks-Gunn, and Duncan 1994), child maltreatment (Coulton et al. 1995), crime (Sampson and Groves 1989), dropping out of school (Crane 1991; Coulton and Pandey 1992; Brooks-Gunn et al. 1993), and delinquent and risk behavior (Johnstone 1978; Kowaleski-Jones 2000; Wikstrom and Loeber 2000). Children who grow up in public housing developments may be at particular risk for these adverse outcomes, since families who live in public housing are typically in neighborhoods with higher poverty than families who are similarly poor but have no housing subsidy (Newman and Schnare 1997). Beginning in 1994, a large federally operated housing mobility demonstration, Moving to Opportunity (MTO), used a special Section 8 voucher to help relocate a randomly selected group of program applicants living in highly distressed public housing projects in five U.S. cities into communities in which fewer than 10% of their neighbors were poor.<sup>2</sup> Over 4,000 families signed up for the program, and roughly one-third received a voucher to relocate to a low-poverty neighborhood. Several years after random assignment, survey data showed that teen girls appeared to benefit more from the treatment than teen boys (Kling, Liebman, and Katz 2007). We use in-depth interviews with a subset of MTO teens in Baltimore and Chicago to explore how boys may have been less able to take advantage of this type of housing mobility policy than girls. We find six underlying factors that may contribute to the differences in outcomes for boys and girls: daily routines, fitting in with neighborhood norms, neighborhood navigation strategies, interactions with neighborhood peers, delinquency among friends, and involvement with father figures.



# Abigail Disney, Director of *Women, War, and Peace* PBS Television Series

BY COURTNEY WALSH

## Abigail E. Disney Bio:

Abigail Disney is the executive director of the documentary series *Women, War, and Peace*. She also produced the film *Pray the Devil Back to Hell* and is involved with other projects centered on women's issues, peace-building, and social issues more generally. Beyond her work on documentary films, Disney co-founded the Daphne Foundation, which is a New York City-based organization that provides assistance to low-income communities. Disney completed a bachelor of arts degree at Yale University, a masters degree at Stanford University, and a doctoral degree at Columbia University. Disney has received numerous awards for her work, including an Epic Award from the White House Project, the Changing the Landscape for Women Award from the Center for the Advancement of Women, and an International Advocate for Peace (IAP) Award from Cardozo School of Law. Disney has also chaired and served on boards for various organizations, including The New York Women's Foundation, the Roy Disney Family Foundation, the White House Project, the Global Fund for Women, and the Fund for the City of New York. Disney is a member of the Writer-Guild of America.<sup>1</sup>

## Women, War, and Peace Interview:

Abigail Disney is a humble, independent, determined woman. During her recent trip to Harvard Kennedy School, I sat down with Abigail to interview her about her experience shooting the PBS series *Women, War and Peace*, which is about women's roles in peace processes and armed conflicts around the world. She began the interview by noting that although many people would naturally go to Daddy's company (given the Disney name), she did not want to follow this course of action.

*What was your (Disney's) inspiration for the film?*

By virtue of being friends with Harvard Kennedy School's Ambassador Swanee Hunt, Disney had the opportunity to go on a trip to visit Ellen Johnson Sirleaf in Liberia. Disney remarked how she went along simply to see parliamentary procedures and interview women activists. However, from this experience, she developed a passion for women's roles in armed conflict. She wanted to make a film about this topic, and after reconnecting with an old friend in the film industry, the idea of *Women, War, and Peace* was born.



*Why should women be included and why do women matter?*

Disney exclaimed, "We are too big to be a subset!" The idea of women being included is inaccurate. As Disney said, "We are half the population—we are not a special interest." Disney went on to state that when women step up, it is for everyone's benefit in society. Women need to be at the center of peace talks. The peace talk conversation needs to morph into a conversation about what needs to happen to move beyond conflict, such as focusing on solutions for education, finance, and road systems. Conflicts do not pause or stop; in Bosnia, for example, even if the shooting stops, conflict exists in other forms unless one addresses the underlying issues. Disney stated that 80 percent of peace negotiations fall apart within the first five years. So what do societies need for this not to be the case? "We need women!" In her film series, she asks the audience to imagine what kind of world could be created if women were present in these situations.

*What was it like for women to be able to speak for themselves?*

In the series, African women proclaim: "I'm so tired of being spoken for." Disney remarked how the women portrayed in the film are not women who have a hard time expressing themselves. The capacity for women to express themselves has always been there, so all that was needed was to turn the camera to the women. Women feel validated telling their stories, as they are made visible to themselves. The Afghan women interviewed in the film, Disney stated, had never been visible to themselves, which may be difficult for western women to understand and digest. On a technical level, Disney made the decision from the beginning to use high level production values to grant individuals in the film authority, legitimacy, and invincibility. Furthermore, Disney and her

team committed themselves to conducting extensive research to ensure that segments were not put into the series unless they were entirely accurate.

*What if we looked at war as if women mattered? What does this mean to a broader audience?*

Disney remarked that her idea to portray women's significant role in conflict was "strong and provocative." She garnered interesting reactions from people in uniform, particularly pertaining to the active debate within the military about what the future of war looks like. In the face of terrorism and the increased involvement of non-state actors, countries and forces are no longer able to win wars in actuality. Therefore, Disney believes that we should be concerned mainly about conflict prevention, reconciliation, and peace, and proclaimed how "...the heart and soul of that is women."

*What about other marginalized groups? Why are women the protagonists in the film?*

Societal matters encompass a large spider web. Disney stated how "women function at the center of these webs." They form the common lines across ethnicities and classes.

### **Review of the Women, War, and Peace Series:**

*Women, War, and Peace* is a five-episode series that premiered on PBS during fall 2011. It portrays the tribulations and victories of women around the globe in their fight for peace and dignity in the midst of war and violence.

The first episode, "I Came to Testify," reports on the systematic raping of women in Bosnia and centers on sixteen female wartime survivors who were imprisoned during the war. One witness remarks, "We were treated like animals. But that



was the goal: to kill a woman's dignity." Their astonishing courage and their stories led to a victory in the international court of law and the establishment of new international laws about sexual violence in times of war. Episode 2, "Pray the Devil Back to Hell," chronicles the women's fight against dictator Charles Taylor in the midst of a civil war in Liberia. Across different religions and ethnicities, the women faced the opposing forces responsible for the bloodshed in Liberia and refused to back down until a deal was rendered. Their perseverance resulted in Taylor's exile and the rise of Africa's first female head of state, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf. "Peace Unveiled," the third episode in the series, witnesses Afghan women's diligent efforts to ensure women's rights were represented in peace talks with the Taliban in the wake of the U.S. troops' presence in Afghanistan. Three women from different walks of life—a parliamentarian, a former midwife, and a young activist—work tirelessly to have their voices heard in the peace council and by powerful figures, such as General David Petraeus and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton. Episode 4, "The War We Are Living," takes viewers to Colombia, where rural civil war over gold still pervades daily life. The episode chronicles two Afro-Colombian women who are fighting for gold-ridden land, which is the mainstay of financial support for their communities. These women, as part of a larger female network of leaders, are fighting against being uprooted and becoming a part of the already 4 million individuals in Colombia who have been forced to leave their homes. The last episode, "Women, War & Peace, War Redefined," showcases how women, since the Cold War, have increasingly become targets and casualties of war but have also become pivotal in war and peace negotiations.<sup>2</sup>

The series as a whole defies misconceptions about women's roles during conflict and spreads seeds of hope for women around the globe who are actively trying to gain a voice in the peace processes of their respective societies. The women in the series are emblematic of Disney's own courage and innovativeness in bringing women to the forefront of war-torn regions. The overriding message of this work is that women *matter*. The notion that women matter permeates other spheres as well: women matter as leaders, politicians, and innovators. They have always embodied central roles, so it is about time the light is being shown on them in this context.

#### ENDNOTES

1 <http://www.pbs.org/wnet/women-war-and-peace/about/about-the-producers/>; <http://www.huffingtonpost.com/abigail-e-disney>

2 Synoptic information partly taken from <http://www.pbs.org/wnet/women-war-and-peace/category/full-episodes/>



# Where Power and Protection Remain Incomplete

## A Review of *Women & War: Power and Protection in the 21st Century*

EDITED BY KATHLEEN KUEHNAST, CHANTAL DE JONGE OUDRAAT,  
AND HELGA HERNES

REVIEWED BY THAO NGUYEN

With the passage of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325), October 31, 2000, marked a promising advancement in the peace and security of women worldwide. For the first time, the UN Security Council pledged to evaluate the impact of armed conflict and violence on women and acknowledged the unique position women hold in both conflict prevention and peacekeeping operations. UNSCR 1325 appeared to provide a framework for expanding a gender-sensitive approach to conflict resolution.

Over a decade since its ratification, however, UNSCR 1325 remains short of this goal. In *Women & War: Power and Protection in the 21st Century*, editors Kathleen Kuehnast, Chantal de Jonge Oudraat, and Helga Hernes engage in a critical, gender-focused analysis of the accomplishments and shortcomings of UNSCR 1325. With this piece, they set the groundwork for establishing a more inclusive role for women in the realm of security. The editors challenge conventional literature that depicts women as simply passive, sidelined victims of war, instead acknowledging women's critical roles in conflict prevention

and in maintaining a sustainable post-conflict society. Made up of a collection of essays that use anecdotal evidence from affected women in areas of conflict, and including an analysis of current literature on the topic, *Women & War* elaborates on the key challenges of both implementation and development of the resolution's goals, emphasizing two pillars of UNSCR 1325 from which the title takes its name—power and protection.

The book departs from the traditional analysis of conflict, centered on the role and security of nation-states, and instead focuses on the security of women. The editors shed light on a less frequently told story—the sexual violence inflicted against civilians, not only by combatants but also by peacekeepers and state sponsored agents, such as military actors. Such an observation suggests that any policy developed to enhance the safety of women must target those who are less traditionally seen as violators of women's freedoms.

The editors delve further into the issue of wartime rape by examining the rationale and logic behind the egregious practice. In doing so, they attempt to



explain why and in what situations this abuse is employed. Rather than accepting what the current literature claims to be an inevitable weapon of war, the editors appropriately argue that many armed groups do not systematically employ rape despite repeated contact with civilians. The book further analyzes the nuanced conditions under which armed groups, such as state militaries, leftist insurgent groups, and secessionist ethnic factions, refrain from sexual violence as a war strategy and the internal dynamics of those groups.

Additionally, the editors examine the systematic and traditional cultural and religious reasons that propagate such violence to determine a sense of accountability for these crimes. This approach transcends the usual approach, which holds only those directly perpetrating the crime responsible and instead focuses on the systems in place that allow the practice to continue unabated. Such an approach by the editors addresses the root of the violence rather than the byproduct. The editors provide readers with valuable insight with which to reassess policy options related to curtailing wartime sexual violence against civilians and empower women to become actively involved in conflict prevention and peace-keeping efforts.

Kuehnast, de Jonge Oudraat, and Hernes in turn identify the lack of available empirical data and research chronicling women's roles in pre- and post-conflict situations as the most significant setback to achieving the resolution's goal of incorporating women into the field of security. Accordingly, they provide their own data, making *Women & War* a valuable resource in the study of women's roll in wartime conflict resolution. The editors also provide the reader with a compilation of research for additional essential analysis. The editors further distinguish among the various types of data needed in the future, attributing challenges to data collection not to a

lack of documented cases, but rather to the *type* of data available. One such example includes the varying degrees of sexual violence during wartime, which helps to differentiate the magnitude of the violation and thus demands a separate approach to resolving the issue. A lack of a common, universally agreed upon distinction and methodology for how best to measure these differences remain critical challenges to effective data collection. The editors are optimistic in their assessment, urging academics, policymakers, and readers that more thorough and accurate research is an integral step toward reaching this goal.

While *Women & War* is written in an exceptionally lucid style, some generalized claims made throughout the book are lacking in substantive supporting evidence. Though the book attempts to pave way for incorporation of more empirical data, most of the data included in *Women & War* stems from anecdotal evidence, which is not necessarily reflective of the population of women as a whole. In attempting to pioneer for more empirical data, the editors should perhaps be more cautious of this shortcoming in their own research. This aspect of *Women & War* may unfortunately make readers a bit wary of the analysis provided in this otherwise insightful book.

Despite the limited empirical data provided in the book and the shortcomings of the current global effort to reach the goals of UNSCR 1325, the editors of *Women & War* maintain a positive outlook on the resolution's future impact and its subsequent significance for women. In the final chapter of the essay collection, United States Agency for International Development Deputy Administrator Donald Steinberg outlines an agenda for action that both utilizes the unique position women have in their communities and empowers women to stay active in bringing about peace. He does so by laying out eight courses of action necessary to carry out the



resolution's momentum: 1) bringing more women to the peace negotiating table; 2) establishing gender-specific post-conflict recovery packages; 3) ensuring an effective UN women's entity; 4) offering assistance for private women's groups in conflict-affected countries; 5) creating timetables for UN goals; 6) extending outreach to refugees and internally displaced persons; 7) providing effective training in gender issues for reformed security forces; and 8) dedicating new financial resources to these efforts. These tangible goals can serve as a benchmark for moving in the right direction toward bettering the security apparatus for women. *Women & War* is an instrumental resource for policymakers, practitioners, and academics, providing real examples, and a roadmap for the next decade to realize the full promises of power and protection set forth by UNSCR 1325.



# The Libyan Woman

A POEM FOR IMAN AL-OBEIDY

BY DANIELLE ROGERS

They tried to keep me quiet  
The men who took my pride  
They bound me up, shut me down  
Tried to make me hide.

But I escaped them all  
Both beaten—battered and bruised

I will speak up  
Speak out, I cried  
My freedom I will not lose

My spirit how it ached  
How fearful I was, still am  
My insides bruised, my body battered  
I walked just like the lamb

The news junket was gathered  
Secret Libyan police stood there.

But  
I'll speak up, speak out  
I cried!  
Through hellish flames I stand.

The government tells lies about me  
They say I am unkempt.  
A loose rebel cannon  
With men lying on her lap.

But I never changed my story  
The pistol at my back—  
And I'll speak up  
Speak out I cried,  
Allah will pave the path

My future is still uncertain  
The threats from tongues still wag  
But I will fight for freedom—  
Until my dying breath

Those men they thought  
How weak she is  
so easy to attack—  
but I'll speak up speak out I cried  
my face is not a mask.



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