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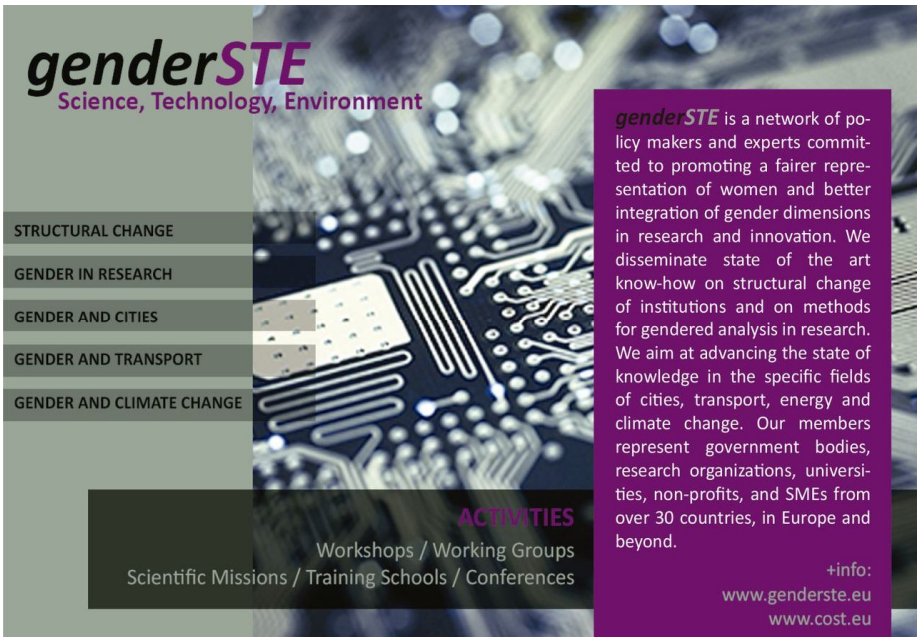
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The Spanish Society for Women's History (Asociación Española de Investigación de Historia de las Mujeres-AEIHM) was founded in June 1991 as a development of the National Commission of the IFRWH (International Federation for Research in Women's History), federation of which it is now a member. For over twenty years, it has developed many activities in order to promote research, teaching and dissemination of women's and gender history, as well as the theoretical and methodological renewal of the historical discipline, through conferences and seminars, workshops, publications, awards, dissemination of its own and others' activities through website and mailing list and participation in collective actions. It has currently 300 members.

Its aims are to promote and spread women's and gender history through research, teaching at different academic levels, and outreaching to society at large. On an annual basis, and continuously since 1993, AEIHM has been held international conferences and seminars for discussion between national and foreign specialists in women's and gender history.

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MACHINE LEARNING AND MEANINGFUL CAREERS: INCREASING THE NUMBER OF WOMEN IN STEM

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ABSTRACT. Meaningful work that gives one a sense of purpose is of great importance to young people who are entering the workforce, especially women. They are even willing to earn less money, provided that they work at a meaningful job. Only 17.9% of computer science graduates are female. More women might enter this field if they are made aware of the meaningful nature of the work. Computer science is an ideal major for students who want to improve the world and make it a better place. The authors examine the literature, and demonstrate how numerous areas including health care, education, the military, environmental studies, and crime prevention are being transformed by technology, especially newer technologies such as artificial intelligence and machine learning.

Keywords: meaningful work; artificial intelligence; machine learning; education; computer science; diversity; cyberwarfare.

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Introduction

According to the National Girls Collaborative Project, women earned 57.3% of bachelor's degrees in all fields in 2013 and 50.3% of science and engineering bachelor's degrees. However, while women receive over half of bachelor's degrees awarded in the biological sciences, they receive far fewer in the computer sciences (17.9%), engineering (19.3%), physical sciences (39%) and mathematics (43.1%) (National Girls Collaborative Project, 2016).

It is very surprising that the proportion of computer science degrees awarded to women was only 17.9%. Clearly, women are reluctant to major in computer science (note that the ratio is 43.1% for mathematics, which requires a similar skill set).

The theory of planned behavior (TPB) posits that "attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control" are the key factors that influence behavior such as career choice (Mishkin et al., 2016). Mishkin et al. (2016) examine the career choice of engineering students and discovered that women were more influenced by subjective norms (i.e., what family, friends, and colleagues have to say) than men. Therefore, they recommend that women role models should be used persuade talented young women to pursue careers in science-related disciplines.

In one study, girls in K-12 were less likely to say they had learned computer science (50% of girls vs. 59% of boys), while boys who learned computer science were more likely to say they learned it on their own (54% of boys vs. 41% of girls) (Wang, 2017). Another study found that modifying the high school curriculum and making it obligatory for male and female students to take advanced mathematics courses did not "level the playing field" when it came to choosing STEM fields in college (Hubner et al., 2017).

The relative shortage of women in technology fields does not bode well for the future. Friedman et al. (2016) provide compelling evidence that an essential ingredient for augmenting creativity is diversity, i.e., people from various kinds of backgrounds with diverse opinions working together. Any homogeneous group consisting only of people with similar backgrounds and experiences will generally not be as innovative as a diverse group. Women are extremely important to the creativity of a team. The collective intelligence of a group is not additive; it is the social sensitivity of group members that determines how well the group, as a whole will function. According to Thompson: "A general collective intelligence factor explains a group's performance on a wide variety of tasks. This 'c factor' is not strongly correlated with the average or maximum individual intelligence of group members but is correlated with the average social sensitivity of group members, the equality in distribution of conversational turn-taking, and the proportion of females in the group" (Thompson, 2015).

Women seem to be better than men at social sensitivity, i.e., the ability to correctly perceive, interpret, and respect the feelings, viewpoint, and opinions of others in the group. This is why having females in a group improves its "c factor," i.e., it becomes smarter (Thompson, 2015). The value of diversity in enhancing "creativity, discovery, and problem solving" has been documented by psychologists (Duarte et al., 2015). CEOs that encourage diversity and collaboration will ensure that there is a steady flow of innovative ideas. It is therefore important to find ways to encourage women (and minorities) to consider careers in computer science.

Interestingly, the opposite problem exists when it comes to careers in nursing. There is a shortage of nurses, particularly male nurses. Despite this only 10% of nurses are male. Much of this has to do with perception. Men do not see nursing jobs as being "manly." Men also fear that they do not have the emotional skills needed for these jobs. Sociologists have found that "Work is at the core of what it means to be a man, in a way that work is not at the core of femininity" (Chira, 2017). It is very important for both men and women to break down these psychological barriers. This may help increase the unbelievably low labor-force participation rate which is only 63%.

Meaningful Work

There is a strong relationship between performing meaningful work and employee engagement. Thus, an organization that wants to hire and retain the best employees has to create a corporate culture where employees feel that their work is meaningful and "bestows a sense of purpose." Employees that perform work that makes a difference – i.e., work that benefits society – demonstrate much higher levels of job satisfaction than those not engaged in meaningful work. Moreover, "having meaning in your life increases life satisfaction twice as much as wealth" (Bersin, 2015; Barker, 2014; Taylor, 2013; Thottam, 2005). Indeed, researchers have found that "when people are able to connect their jobs to something meaningful, their productivity increases as much as five times" (Goudreau, 2015).

Meaningful work is especially important to women, even more than security and opportunities for a promotion (Tolbert & Moen, 1998). Women are underrepresented in fields such as mechanical or chemical engineering if they believe that these majors result in jobs that are not societally meaningful. Framing the engineering major in a way that stresses solving societal problems attracts women to the field (Nilsson, 2015). MIT has a program that "focuses on developing technologies that improve the lives of people living in poverty" and that program is 74% female (Nilsson, 2015).

In 2006, administrators at Harvey Mudd College, a small liberal arts school in Claremont, California, were attempting to find ways to close the gender

gap in computer science. Dr. Maria Klawe, the president of the college, who happened to be a computer scientist, noted: “The difference is, females in general are much more interested in what you can do with the technology, than with just the technology itself.” An introductory course was created specifically for students without programming experience. The purpose of the course was to demonstrate to female students the connection of computer science to other disciplines and see the many possibilities offered by a computer science major. It also enabled students to meet female role models working in computer science. Today, the percentage of female computer science majors at Harvey Mudd College has skyrocketed from 10% to 43% (Cassidy, 2014).

A study done by the University of Wisconsin-Parkside found that women were more likely than men to value careers that would allow them to help others. Participants in the study generally did not think that CS careers involved helping others (Beyer et al., 2004). Many women do not realize that computer science is being used in numerous industries to help people. The purpose of this paper is to demonstrate how computer science can provide an individual with a meaningful career that can bestow a sense of purpose. In fact, computer science is a great choice for a major for students who want to make the world a better place.

Changing the World with Computer Science

There are many different careers where someone with a computer science degree can truly do meaningful work that affects the lives of thousands, if not millions, of people. This is even more pronounced with the increased use of machine learning. Machine learning is a subfield of artificial intelligence that allows computers to find hidden insights without explicit programming instructions. Machine learning takes historical data and builds a model based on that data to make predictions when confronted with a new situation. Data Scientists and Machine Learning Engineers are now employed in companies of varied industries to use machine learning in all sorts of extraordinary ways. *Harvard Business Review* stated in 2012 that data scientist was the “sexiest job of the 21st century. *Glassdoor* recently named it the “best job of the year” for 2016 (Smith, 2016).

Machine learning, together with general computer science, is transforming the world in numerous diverse ways and areas of life. The following sections contain a small selection of the ways we are already using computer science to change the world – hopefully, for the better.

Social Media

The power of social media to change the world has been discussed by the World Economic Forum: "Around the world, billions of us use social media every day, and that number just keeps growing. In fact, it's estimated that by 2018, 2.44 billion people will be using social networks, up from 970,000 in 2010" (Guzman, 2016).

"Social media is changing how we govern and are governed" (Guzman, 2016). Politicians can reach millions of people using Facebook and Twitter. Communication can be a two-way street and it is now quite simple for officeholders to interact with voters.

The rate and impact of information dissemination has reached unprecedented levels using the internet and social media. The term "going viral" is used to describe the chain reaction that might occur when people spread anything from an amusing photograph to an interesting article. The YouTube video Gangnam Style has more than 2 billion views (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9bZkp7q19f0). This can have both positive and negative effects. The proliferation of fake news websites that spread false information portrayed as factual, empirical events is becoming a serious problem. One fake news story that asserted that the Clintons were involved in a child sex trafficking ring in the Comet Ping Pong pizza shop led someone to fire a rifle inside of the shop. This incident has been called "Pizzagate" and caused Donald Trump to fire Michael G. Flynn, who spread the false story on Twitter, from his transition team (Rosenberg et al., 2016). Both government and technology leaders are trying to find a way to solve the growing problem of fake news.

Fraudulent health studies have also caused immense harm. Thousands of women with breast cancer died because of fabricated research by Dr. Werner Bezwoda. He published studies that claimed that his treatment which involved high-dose chemotherapy followed by bone marrow transplants could cure late-stage breast cancer. In actuality, what happened was that thousands of women died from his treatment (Gaddy, 2016). There are numerous studies demonstrating that vaccines do not cause autism (Centers For Disease Control and Prevention, 2015). The original study by Andrew Wakefield has been shown to be fraudulent. Wakefield had a huge conflict of interest since he was paid by a personal injury lawyer that represented the parents of children supposedly harmed by the vaccine (Park, 2011). Despite all this, many people will not vaccinate their children and the number of children that become ill or die from vaccine-preventable diseases continues to grow.

The solution to the problem of the diffusion of false digital information will hopefully be solved with new tools. Currently, Snopes.com (http://www.snopes.com/) is one website that can be used to check whether a rumor is

true or not. Facebook has turned to machine learning to help with detecting fake accounts:

> Through technical advances, we are increasing our protections against manually created fake accounts and using new analytical techniques, including machine learning, to uncover and disrupt more types of abuse. We build and update technical systems every day to make it easier to respond to reports of abuse, detect and remove spam, identify and eliminate fake accounts, and prevent accounts from being compromised… In France, for example, as of April 13, these improvements recently enabled us to take action against over 30,000 fake accounts (Weedon et al., 2017).

Facebook is also helping fight terrorism by using machine learning to identify terrorists' accounts and posts that support terrorism so they can quickly be removed before people have seen it (Bickert & Fishman, 2017).

Computer science impacts many other areas as well which are not directly related to technology. A few are listed below.

Health Care

The number of patients a typical doctor can see in a year depends on how much time the physician is willing to spend with each patient. A not unreasonable number is 15 minutes per patient and they might see anywhere from 15 to 60 patients a day. Collar (2013) has the following to say about our current system: "The challenge, of course, is that our current system still rewards speed and procedures much more richly than patient interaction and thorough analysis. Although not a new concept, as reimbursement continues to decrease necessarily (Medicare's pockets aren't as deep as they used to be) and more patients gain access to the system, addressing the question of 'medical speed' will become increasingly important" (Collar, 2013).

Telemedicine, which relies on telecommunications technology such as smart phones, email, and the webcam is transforming health care (Beck, 2016). Today, a significant number of doctors are evaluating, diagnosing, consulting with others, and treating patients using electronic communications. Moreover, patients can be monitored at home using various devices that measure vital signs such as heart rate and blood pressure. According to the American Telemedicine Association, the number of Americans that availed themselves of telemedicine services was more than 15 million. Doctors without Borders relays difficult questions from its physicians in Africa and Asia to its network of experts around the world from 5 to 10 times a day (Beck, 2016).

Mercy health systems has a Virtual Care Center that provides remote support for emergency rooms and ICUs in smaller hospitals that do not have

available doctors 24/7. Critical care doctors monitor patients using video monitors and can see if there are any health issues that require attention. Thus, if a patient needs to have her heart restarted with electrical paddles, a doctor at the Virtual Care Center outside St. Louis can instruct a nurse in say, Oklahoma, to start electroshock treatment (Beck, 2016).

A number of health plans are allowing patients to connect with doctors they have never met using a web company such as Doctor on Demand. These virtual doctors are being used for nonemergency problems such as flu, skin rashes, and colds and cost considerably less than a visit to an emergency room ($45 vs. $750). There have been some problems with misdiagnosed conditions but telemedicine still holds "enormous promise, particularly in dermatology" according to one medical researcher (Beck, 2016).

Robotics is another area which is transforming health care. Currently, the most commonly used robotic surgery procedure involves a system that consists of high-definition computer screen that provides a magnified, three-dimensional view. The surgeon works with a computerized, robotic arm that has the surgical instruments and camera attached to it. In theory, since the surgeon sees the images via a screen and controls the robot arm using a computer, she does not need to be in the same place as the patient. A key benefit of this type of surgical procedure is that it is minimally invasive; surgery may be performed with pinpoint accuracy.

Nanomedicine is the application of nanotechnology, the engineering of extremely small machines, to prevent and treat disease. It involves using manufactured nano-robots to repair damaged and diseased cells. Nanoinformatics is a new area that develops computer science applications to be used in nanomedicine (http://nanoinformatics.org/nanoinformatics/index.php/Nanoinformatics:WhatisNanoinformatics). One important application of nanotechnology is in the use of nanoparticles to deliver drugs (e.g., chemotherapy drugs) directly to diseased cells (Bosyen, 2016). One of the problems of psychoactive medicine is that psychotropic drugs used for, say, depression or bipolar disorder, also affect the entire brain and have many side effects. With nanomedicine, it will eventually be possible to "selectively stimulate specific regions in a safe way" without side effects (Infante, 2014).

Shirley Pepke, a genomics researcher, used big data and machine learning to save her life after she was diagnosed with ovarian cancer. She teamed up with Dr. Greg Ver Steeg, a professor who specializes in data mining. In 2014 Ver Steeg developed an advanced machine learning method called Correlation Explanation (CorEx) that enables researchers to find hidden relationships in huge data sets.

> Ver Steeg has applied his machine learning algorithm to problems in neuroscience, psychology and finance often crippled by over-

> whelming amounts of data. A study published last year looked at over 200 potential biomarkers in 566 older adults with CorEx, identifying those that were most predictive of cognitive decline and brain atrophy. Online dating website eHarmony recently recruited Ver Steeg to improve its matchmaking process, in hopes that CorEx can target the hidden factors that contribute to happy relationships (Kim, 2016).

When Pepke's ovarian cancer came back, the two used CorEx to analyze publicly available data from the Cancer Genome Atlas in order to find hidden factors that correlate with patient survival. Using CorEx and data about her own tumor, she decided not to follow her oncologist's recommendation and selected an immunotherapy drug that had not yet been approved. In any case, this type of "precision medicine" that allows one to select the best treatment for their cancer did help Pepke and her cancer is now in remission. It is too early to tell whether big data is the way to go to cure cancer, but it is very promising (Kim, 2016).

Researchers are also exploring using machine learning to help diagnose mental health disorders. In a collaboration between IBM, Columbia University Medical Center, and researchers in South America, automated speech analysis combined with machine learning was used to predict young people at risk of schizophrenia based on changes in their speech patterns (Bedi et al., 2015).

Helping the Disabled

There are many new technologies helping people with disabilities. We will discuss a few below that are helping paralyzed people and the visually and hearing impaired. Especially with the use of artificial intelligence and machine learning, the possibilities here are very promising and there is much more work to be done in this area.

A man paralyzed from the shoulders down recently regained some use of his arms and hands via a brain-computer interface. Electrodes were placed in the motor cortex region of his brain and recorded brain signals while a computer learned which signals encoded commands for movement as he controlled a hand in virtual reality. The next step was a procedure in which muscle-stimulating electrodes were implanted into his arm. Using his paralyzed arm, he was able to reach out, grasp a mug, and drink from a straw (Ajiboye et al., 2017).

There are also more and more technologies being created to help people who are visually impaired. Digit-Eyes is an iPhone app enables people who are visually impaired to identify items using their iPhone, iPad, or iPod by reading manufacturer's UPC and EAN codes (Winograd, 2010). Microsoft is creating "Seeing AI" glasses that use artificial intelligence to help visually

impaired people become more aware of what is around them. It can even describe ages, gender and emotions of nearby people (Weinberger, 2016).

YouTube is using speech-to-text software to automatically caption speech in videos. They rolled out machine learning algorithms to indicate applause, laughter, and music in order to improve the experience of the deaf and hard of hearing (Wang, 2017).

IBM created a tool called Content Clarifier to help people with autism and dementia in addition to aging people or those learning English as a second language. It works by leveraging natural language processing and cognitive computing to analyze and condense content into a simplified form so people have an easier time comprehending the most important concepts (Ramachandran, 2016). A hacker created a GPS that navigates based on landmarks to help autistic people. The GPS app pulls Google Street View images off a calculated route and uses Clarifai's image recognition API to identify specific landmarks. It uses this to present a more visually-oriented means of navigation (Liu, 2017).

Other important areas where technology is essential are Cyberwarfare and crime fighting.

Cyberwarfare

One of the lesser-known heroes of World War II was Alan Turing and the people at Bletchley Park who broke Germany's Enigma code. By 1943, Turing's machines were deciphering two messages a minute. The U-boats sank many ships that were providing crucial supplies for Britain. After the code was broken, convoys were able to avoid the U-boats and bring the desperately needed supplies to Britain without getting torpedoed. Turing and his codebreakers also cracked the code for a new German machine – they called the Tunny – used to communicate between front-line generals and Hitler and the Army High Command who were in Berlin. This enabled the Allies to know what the Germans were planning to do. Turing and his fellow cryptographers probably shortened the war by as much as two years and thereby saved the lives of 14 to 21 million people that would have been killed (Copeland, 2012). Turing saved millions of lives; Lyudmila Pavlichenko, arguably the best sniper of all time, had 309 confirmed kills and terrorized Hitler's German army during World War II (Lockie, 2015). We tend to think that the greatest heroes are soldiers and generals when the unsung heroes might be physicists (think of the Manhattan Project) and computer programmers.

There are many different ways that the United States could be attacked using cyberwar tactics.

> In September 2012, the State Department took a public position on whether cyber activities could constitute a use of force under Article 2(4) of the U.N. Charter and customary international law. According to State's then-legal advisor, Harold Koh, "Cyber activities that proximately result in death, injury, or significant destruction would likely be viewed as a use of force." Examples offered in Koh's remarks included triggering a meltdown at a nuclear plant, opening a dam and causing flood damage, and causing airplanes to crash by interfering with air traffic control. By focusing on the ends achieved rather than the means with which they are carried out, this definition of cyberwar fits easily within existing international legal frameworks (Theohary & Rollins, 2015).

This is why the right kind of computer scientist can help protect the country from cyberattacks.

Fighting Crime and Terrorism

Computer science and machine learning are also used to help fight crime. PredPol is a predictive policing system, based on statistics and police crime reports, that "is about predicting where and when crime is most likely to occur, not who will commit it." It was used in Kent, England and crime dropped by 12% (Murdock, 2016).

Police departments are using all kinds of technology in the fight against crime. These include: videos from body cameras, police drones with cameras to view crime scenes, street cameras, robotic cameras to act as "eyes," in-vehicle computers, mobile devices to read fingerprints, license plate readers, and facial recognition technologies, and even mobile consoles for fingerprint reading, are some of the tools used in law enforcement (Avalos, 2016). Several police departments are using map-based apps as a tool to alert police officers of the location of known criminals (Avalos, 2016). "Officers can drive down the street, and have a smartphone or a tablet device, and have the map app open…The app can tell them the addresses of a person wanted for a crime, known incidents of felonies in the area, someone who is a registered sex offender. It provides situational awareness that is integrated with records management and emergency call systems" (Avalos, 2016).

Technology is also helping with the fight against terrorism. One example is Patriot One Technologies, Inc. They use machine learning to detect concealed weapons, such as guns, knives, and suicide vests, even on moving targets. Google is now using video analysis machine learning models to remove terrorism-related content. This accounts for half of the terrorism content removed in 2017 (Walker, 2017).

Another important area being completely altered by technology is education.

Education

Technology has totally transformed the way people teach and learn. The chalkboard is just about obsolete. Smart boards – interactive white boards connected to a computer – are the modern way of teaching. Students are using tablets to take notes and instructors are using homework managers to help students learn. Students do not have to go to a library to do research; today, research is conducted using the Internet. Wikipedia and Google have changed the way we acquire information. Motivated people can teach themselves almost any subject by using the Internet. Kahn Academy prides itself on "You can learn anything. For free. For everyone. Forever." There are all kinds of MOOCs (massive open online courses) available to people who want to learn. Technology is making it easier and cheaper for people to learn about any subject. This is especially important in developing countries where many people are too poor to afford more than a few years of classroom education.

Countries with low literacy rates include South Sudan (27.0%), Afghanistan (28.1%), Burkina Faso (28.7%), Niger (28.7%), Mali (33.4%), Chad (35.4%), Somalia (37.8%), Ethiopia (39.0%), Guinea (41.0%), and Benin (42.4%) (WorldAtlas, 2016). A key problem besides poverty is that education for women in many of these countries is seen as being unnecessary.

> Many of the countries who have been reported as having very low literacy rates are also among the poorest in the world. A huge majority of the people living in these countries are barely able to eat three square meals per day let alone worry about going to school or learning how to read and write. On the other hand, the alarmingly high illiteracy rate among women from India, Pakistan and Nigeria is attributed to the social inequality that they are experiencing. Women generally receive less education in these countries with their roles still majorly relegated to secondary importance. … It is imperative now more than ever for everyone to recognize that education is a basic human right and must be given freely to all including women and children (WorldAtlas, 2016).

Technology might solve the problem of illiteracy if simple, inexpensive computers can be provided to people (especially women) living in these countries. It is a great deal cheaper to provide people with simple computers than paying for teachers and schools. There are firms trying to build extremely inexpensive computers that will cost around $30 so that every person will have access to one (Gaikwad, 2016).

Lastly, we will discuss how technology can help protect the environment and help businesses.

Protecting the Environment

Many companies are concerned with the "triple bottom line": people, planet, and profit. Computer scientists have the ability to do a great deal to improve the planet (Slaper & Hall, 2011). A great way to monitor water quality and save water is with computers and mobile devices; the same with air quality. Computers are used in many companies and homes as a tool to save energy. Computers are being used with all kinds of machines ranging from air conditioners to automobiles to lights to washing machines to save resources.

Technology is also important in fighting fires. It enables fire personnel to make better decisions. For example, GPS devices are used by firefighters to locate the closest source of water and to navigate rough terrain. Technology can also be used to analyze and predict fire behavior which includes the "rate, direction, and severity of fire spread based on a broad spectrum of inputs, including weather, fuels conditions, terrain and aspect, and fire history." Risk assessment is also important in fighting fires. This involves considering factors that include "lives, property, and critical infrastructure such as power lines and roads and cultural, scenic, recreational, and other values that may be affected by a fire's spread." These tools enable fire managers to make the optimum decisions on the best use of equipment and crews in fighting fires (Ascherfeld, 2012).

Business

Companies today are using analytics and machine learning to examine big data sets to discover correlations and patterns. By studying historic patterns, firms can then predict future behaviors such as what products customers will want next. It can be used to promote cross-selling opportunities. Once companies know what customers want, they can design products that do a better job of satisfying customer needs than the current ones.

Machine learning will also have a major impact on management. A survey of 1,770 managers from 14 countries found that, on average, they spent more than 50% of their time on "administrative coordination and control tasks." This includes changing shift schedules because of various emergencies. This is something that can be easily automated by machine learning (Kolbjørnsrud et al., 2016). Artificial intelligence (AI) will also help managers solve problems.

> AI will ultimately prove to be cheaper, more efficient, and potentially more impartial in its actions than human beings. But such a scenario should not be cause for concern for managers. It just means that their jobs will change to focus on things only humans can do.
>
> Writing earnings reports is one thing, but developing messages that can engage a workforce and provide a sense of purpose is human through and through. Tracking schedules and resources may

> soon fall within the jurisdiction of machines, but drafting strategy remains unmistakably human. Simply put, our recommendation is to adopt AI in order to automate administration and to augment but not replace human judgment (Kolbjørnsrud et al., 2016).

Conclusion

In February 2013, President Barack Obama stated: "One of the things that I really strongly believe in is that we need to have more girls interested in math, science, and engineering. We've got half the population that is way underrepresented in those fields and that means that we've got a whole bunch of talent…not being encouraged the way they need to."

There is no question that if the United States wants to remain a major world power, more students have to be encouraged to major in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) areas. In particular, women who comprise about 60% of college students must be encouraged to major in these areas. The myth that these are areas for men has to be shattered.

This paper demonstrates that a computer scientist can have an impressive impact on diverse fields that include health, cyberwarfare, education, environmentalism, crime fighting, and business. Students must recognize that computer science is an unbelievably versatile major and can be combined with many other disciplines including music, education, or psychology. Stanford was one of the pioneers in offering what is known there as CS + X majors, i.e., computer science together with humanities (Ruff, 2016). In April 2017, Apple posted a job description for a Siri Software Engineer where, in addition to strong programming skills, additional requirements included "Peer counseling or psychology background" since "People talk to Siri about all kinds of things, including when they're having a stressful day or have something serious on their mind" (https://jobs.apple.com/us/search#&ss=health&t=0&so=&lo=0*USA&pN=0&openJobId=56398598).

People argue about what is the most important job: The various opinions include nurse, teacher, sanitation worker, soldier, cop, journalist, and firefighter (Kirby, 2015). These are indeed important jobs but computer science can make everyone engaged in these jobs considerably more efficient and creative.

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ARE YOU MY MOTHER? PERPETUATING GENDER INEQUALITY THROUGH LISTENING EXPECTATIONS AND RELATIONAL ROLES

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ABSTRACT. Since the 1980s, ethics of care scholars have interrogated the gendering of care virtues and argued for divorcing virtues from binary masculine-feminine thinking. In this paper, we draw upon two case studies that situate listening as care and use corpus linguistics to explore ways in which expectations of care, enacted through listening, continue to not only be gendered, but heavily coded as feminine responsibilities. More specifically, we investigate the ways in which mothers and expectations for listening as care provision are intertwined, as further evidenced by the "mom friend" phenomenon. We argue that lessons from ethics of care scholarship may provide opportunities to challenge the mobility of feminized expectations of care and further decouple gender from care virtues.

Keywords: ethics of care; listening; gender; mother; care expectations; corpus linguistics

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1. Introduction

In a classic children's storybook by P.D. Eastman (1960), a baby bird hatches while his mother is away and immediately asks himself, "Where is my mother?" The story proceeds through the little bird's decision to leave the nest in search of his mother. In the first part of the story, the baby bird "did not know what his mother looked like" and inadvertently walks by her during the search. As the pages turn, the baby bird meets multiple animals and vehicles in the search to find his mother. Each time the little bird poses the question "Are you my mother?" or calls out "Here I am, mother!" he is met with rejection, denial, or silence. The baby bird persistently declares, "I have to find my mother," "I want to go home," and "I want my mother!" throughout. At the end of the story, the bird finds his way back to his nest and mother, who asks the baby bird, "Do you know who I am?" The baby identifies his mother as a bird, affirming, "You are my mother," and snuggles under her protective wing. This classic narrative offers a glimpse into the ways that many children have been encouraged over the past 60 years to identify with their mothers – someone who is like them, someone who feeds and shelters them at home, someone who is uniquely fit to enact care.

In this paper, we investigate the ways that care has been gendered in our discourse, particularly through feminine familial roles. Specifically, we consider the ways that Western society, exemplified by the United States, perpetuates expectations of certain enactments of care, such as listening. We begin with the assumption that listening is foundational to the provision of care and consider gendered expectations of interpersonal listening through analysis of two cases: online crisis hotline counseling and face to face focus group discourses about ethical listening. Throughout the analysis, we find a pervasive expectation and desire for a listening and caring mother-figure, or "mom friend," that underlies an ongoing search for the moment when they feel listened to, cared for, and can declare "You are my mother!"

To contextualize this empirical analysis on macro and micro levels of care in society, we utilize two sets of literature. First, we ground our analysis in the social construction of gender and the ways that emotion work reflects gendered binaries. From this foundation, we examine empirical data that positions listening as care, demonstrating how our expectations of who should be listening perpetuate a binary construction of gender that importantly couples gendered familial/relational roles (e.g., mother) with care. Finally, we consider how the feminist philosophical ethics of care tradition can offer a perspective through which to break the cycle of socially inequitable expectations of listening and care, resist perpetuating a social system in which the emotion work of listening is primarily conscripted to feminine family roles,

and extend our ability to interrogate gendered expectations of care and increase visibility of care that does not conform.

Within current social understandings of care, feminine-coded understandings of care that emphasize emotional support and empathy (cf. Gilligan, 1982) are associated with social expectations of female gendered relational roles, such as mother. This intertwining of care expectations and role serves to not only underscore gendered expectations of care via cultural stereotypes and representations, but to also perpetuate a myopic cultural understanding of what care is and who can provide it. We utilize examples of the "mom friend" concept used in popular media and draw upon two empirical contexts, online enactments of listening in crisis situations and face to face discussions of ethical listening expectations to be performed in everyday life in family structures, to shed light upon the stickiness of gendered expectations of care and social mobility of mothering.

In online and face-to-face discourses, we explore how current expectations of listening as care perpetuate gendered understandings of care. We situate this exploration within the realm of a larger question: "How might we create better expectations for listening interactions that promote more holistically caring societies?" By moving away from binary thinking that codes aspects of listening and care as masculine and feminine, we can better question the gendering of virtuous care entirely. For, across both cases, we observe that people typically seek caring listening from those filling feminine relational roles (e.g., mothers and sisters), and when that expectation is not met, rather than seeking a listening ear from another person within the family structure who fills a masculine role, people seek listening from a "mothering" role outside the family, such as a "mom friend."

2. Social Construction of Gender and Emotion Work

The social construction of gender and emotion works are foundational theoretical concepts to this work. These concepts impact a productive discussion of a feminist ethic of care position and the paths by which gender is produced and reinforced in particular ways through our expectations and practices of care. This paper proposes the need for interrogating and dismantling binary thinking embedded within a heavily gendered social role, that of "mother," in relation to expectations of care provision. By doing this, we contribute to the interrogation of a binary embedded in societal expectations of listening and communication scholarship.

2.1 Perspectives on Gender

The social construction of gender and opposing theories favoring gender essentialism are well-trod theoretical ground for feminist scholars, and traditions useful for our purposes of interrogating gendered expectations of listening care. Understandings of gender rooted in essentialism position gender as a binary system of male and female identities, eliminating alternative identities between these poles and making available interpretations that situate gender identity as deriving directly from physical sex. Such views have received extensive critique from scholars, such as Fausto-Sterling (2000), arguing that binary systems at once render invisible both intermediate physical identities (e.g., intersex) and gender identities (e.g., nonbinary and genderqueer), and are weakened by the existence of identities rendered invisible. Binary understandings of gender are additionally critiqued for inadequacy in addressing intersectionality and accounting for how autonomous individuals may resist oppression (Nagoshi et al., 2014).

In contrast, social constructivist views of gender divorce physical sex and gender identity, distancing gender from the physical body and instead suggesting that gender is expressed or performed based on socially prescribed understandings of gender roles (Butler, 1988). One result of this view is positioning gender identity and expression as fluid, representing a full spectrum rather than opposing poles. Such a conceptualization allows for the visibility and validation of identities invisible in a binary system, as well as the decoupling of physical sex and gender. A social construction of gender similarly allows for culturally variegated understandings of gender identity and performance, as well as for the mutability of gender identity and expression over time.

That said, in moving from theory to practice, the constraints of a gender binary remain salient in everyday experiences, as social constructivism and binary thinking can overlap. When gender becomes an axis of oppression, as in our current cultural climate, a binary understanding of gender reinforces this inequality. That is, as sociologist Risman (2004) notes in an elucidation of gender structure theory, "even when women and men with feminist identities work in organizations with formally gender-neutral rules, gender inequality is reproduced during everyday interaction" (p. 436). Gender expressions normalized under binary views that recouple physical sex and gender (e.g., the notion that women are naturally suited for childcare because their anatomy allows for childbirth) function to "universally define and enforce an all-encompassing set of socially expected appearances and behaviors" (Wilchins, 2004: 29). The real-world effects of such expectations are visible in myriad contexts, including familial caregiving and emotion work, as discussed below and in the empirical analysis of listening expectations to follow.

2.2 Emotion Work and Gender

Originally coined by Hochschild (1983), emotion work refers to "the unpaid efforts of family and personal life" behind the "intentional management and display of one's own feelings, usually undertaken in order to influence the feelings of others" (DeVault, 1999: 52). Since the term's introduction, literature on emotion work appears dominated by empirical investigations into North American heterosexual families (often white, often two-parent households, though emotion work in the context of divorce has been addressed) (cf. Coltrane, 2000, for review). Although limiting, this orientation is not surprising, given that one vein in this tradition argues for the importance of considering emotion work in furthering understanding of household labor and the gendered division thereof (Coltrane, 2000; Erickson, 2005). Erickson (2005), for instance, argues specifically that expanding "family work" (typically taken to mean housework and child care) to include emotion work further underscores "the view that the division of household labor varies according to culturally based constructions of gender rather than on the basis of biological sex" (337).

The relative invisibility of emotion work at all, let alone gendered emotion work, makes available the temptation to view women's social role as emotional caregiver as a "given," again coupling gender with binary understandings of physical sex and resultant social expectations. As Erickson (2005) argues, "continued neglect of emotion work within the family work literature risks perpetuating the view that being an emotional caretaker is something women are rather than something women do" (349). Thus, further work is needed to not only dismantle binary understandings of gender in practice, but in doing so to bring to light individuals made invisible by such binaries and expand our cultural understandings of care and the expectations for where that care comes from.

Listening, like all communication, is inflected by issues of power and gender. Certain people might be expected to listen and remain silent while others have the rights to listen in, even eavesdrop. Indeed, listening is often equated with silence and seen as a feminine aspect of communication (Glenn & Ratcliffe, 2011). According to Lacey (2013): "Like any other cultural practice, listening is embedded in the complex realities of unequal power relations, cultural specificities and the dynamics of continuity and change" (22). Active and responsive listening is often conceptualized in everyday discourse as a strength of those filling feminine roles and a weakness of those in masculine ones. Yet listening, as an active form of communication, requires something of the dialogic partner and contributes to the ongoing discourse through particular social roles and power relations. Gilligan (1987) presents listening – of understanding by hearing and being heard – as an aspect of care in relationships and central to ethical social interactions. Ayim

(1997) emphasizes this connection between care and listening, arguing that "if language is caring, it will begin by displaying a readiness to listen to the other speakers" (99). Thus, although listening is often coded feminine in the communication process, it has also been constructed as an aspect of care and foundational to ethical social dialogue.

In the following section, we describe the ways that listening, as an act of care, is feminized in social discourses and becomes emotion work of those filling feminine roles. By highlighting the ways that the emotion work of listening as care is put in feminine domain, we hope to both expand ways that care might be conceptualized and push back on societal construction of listening as feminine work that places the burden of listening (and caring as listening) on particular societal roles.

3. Two Cases: Calling on Feminine Listeners

We consider feminized care in two contexts in this paper, personal crisis management and everyday listening. We consider the gendering of care by examining gendered expectations surrounding listening, as both a category and foundation of care, in these spaces. The first case spotlights the use of gendered familial/relational terms in contexts for which individuals seek crisis counseling. More specifically, this case draws on publicly available data from a text-based crisis hotline, which provides a form of listening care to anonymous clients. The second explores the use of gendered familial/relational terms (e.g., mother, father, sister, brother) in self-reports of listener expectations in everyday discourse. This data was drawn from a larger research project related to ethical listening in diverse cultural communities. It reflects an intra- and intercultural discourse that, in part, reflects the ways that particular communities construct listening as care.

Throughout these online and face to face discourses about care, we explore the questions: How do the constructed expectations of listening care in people's online and face to face discourses reflect gender binary systems? How can current theorization of gender, emotion work, and ethics of care confront these understandings? What are initial steps that might be taken to expand care practices, especially through socially constructed listening gender roles? These questions are explored through analysis of the discourse used to construct gender roles in these cases. Particularly, a basic corpus linguistic methodological approach was adopted to explore the frequency with which gendered terms were used in the discourse.

Corpus linguistics is one way to analyze language through a quantitative approach, and typically involves analyzing frequencies of particular linguistic parts to understand how often certain linguistic features appear in a given discourse, how this frequency may pattern across different parts of the

corpus, or how often particular linguistic features (whether that be particular morphemes, lexical items, or phrases) co-occur with each other (Gries, 2010; Nesselhauf, 2005). Frequency results can then be used to uncover the ways that texts in a given corpus create and reflect a broader discourse. Through corpus linguistics, researchers select particular linguistic features to study in the corpus and analyze these parts of language to formulate conclusions about the ways that linguistic patterns answer target research questions. In sum, corpus linguists are interested in linguistic frequencies and make discursive claims based on those statistics. Researchers base their claims on the idea that by using larger samples of text than could easily be processed manually, and by identifying linguistic variation that occurs more frequently than would be expected by chance, one can infer particular language practices across groups and cultures (Yates, 2001). This is true both for larger corpora and for smaller interactional discursive texts (Caldas-Coulthard & Moon, 2010; McCarthy, 2003). In this study, we use analysis of word frequency to infer particular cultural practices around listening and emotion work.

Through both empirical cases that we analyze here, the expectation for those occupying feminine roles to be the primary listeners in a relationship appears deeply embedded. This empirical evidence is intended only to illustrate, on a broad level, the pervasiveness and extent of feminine care expectations. Limitations of the data we draw upon are noted throughout, but the ways in which listening care is socially constructed as the responsibility of those occupying feminine roles will become clearly evident.

3.1 Case 1: Listening in the Online Crisis Hotline Context

Launched in 2013, Crisis Text Line (CTL) is a free, text-based crisis counseling service offered within the U.S. that pairs individuals facing stressors (texters) with trained volunteer counselors; counselors utilize a web browser-based platform to engage in "active listening" techniques (Bodie, 2015) and provide care resources (issue-specific hotlines, shelters, etc.) to anonymous texters in real time. Texters connect with counselors and initiate discussion by texting a start word (e.g., "help," "start," "hello") to 741-741. The intent of CTL is not to diagnose a condition or provide tangible aid, per se, but rather to help a texter "move from a hot moment to a cool calm" by facilitating emotional processing and creating a strategic plan to manage the stressor or one's response to the stressor (Crisis Text Line, 2016a). Texters tend to skew young, rural, and low-income; nearly 75% of texters are under 25 years of age, while 19% of total texter volume is from the 10% lowest-income zip codes (Crisis Text Line, 2016a). As of January 2017, the organization reported processing more than 29 million text messages (Crisis Text Line, 2016a).

Crisis Text Line supports texters experiencing myriad social stressors and mental health issues, including relationship issues, sexuality questions,

divorce, self-harm, depression, suicidal ideation or intent, and so on. While individual texter data are anonymous and unavailable from the organization, CTL publishes aggregate data, including conversation content pertaining to issues/stressors communicated by texters during conversations with counselors (Crisis Text Line, 2016b). These particular data appear as word clouds, labeled by "crisis type," such as Anxiety, Health Issues, or Physical Abuse. Each word cloud contains the 35 most frequently appearing words in conversations about that crisis type. Within each word cloud, the size of each word indicates the relative frequency with which the term was mentioned by texters within the topic context. According to CTL, data are gathered via surveys completed by crisis counselors during/following each conversation with texters (Crisis Text Line, 2016b). A single conversation with a texter can address multiple crisis types or topics. Word clouds were captured from the CTL website in spring 2017 for the purpose of this analysis.

This data set is limited in several ways. In addition to opacity regarding the corpus of individuals contributing to the word clouds, it is also impossible to infer the discrete context(s) in which each top term was used across conversations, or even directionality. For instance, "friends" appearing in the word cloud for depression could indicate that texters sought support from friends, that friends contributed to depression, that friends did not know about the texter's depression, etc. We argue, however, that the salience of relational terms, particularly familial relational terms, is telling, in spite of the ambiguous relationships between crisis topic and top terms.

Familial terms appeared in all of the 18 word clouds made available by CTL. Such terms include broader categories, such as "family" and "parents," as well as more specific relationships, such as "mom" and "dad." Across the 18 word clouds, "mom" appeared in all 18; "dad" in five; "parents" in 11; and "family" in eight. As suggested by these frequency results, multiple terms often appeared in the same word cloud (e.g., "parents" always appeared with "mom"), though some appeared with greater frequency both across word clouds and within topics, as suggested by the size of each word relative to others in each topic cloud. The term "dad" appeared salient in topic word clouds labeled Bereavement, Physical Abuse, Stress, Family Issues, and Sexual Abuse; in each instance, however, "dad" was dwarfed by the relative size of "mom." We do not mean to imply that the presence and relative size of a term is indicative of a parent's involvement in perpetuating the stressor/topic for which a texter sought support (as in, perpetuating physical abuse), but rather to highlight the salience of such relationships in broadly dealing with such issues based on the higher degree of frequency with which these relationships are referred as compared to each other. It is telling, for instance, that even when "parents" appeared in a word cloud, "mom" was additionally and specifically referenced. It is also worth noting that the only relational

term, aside from "mom," apparent in all 18 word clouds is "friends." Similarly, "listen" appeared significant in these contexts as well, appearing alongside "mom" and "friends" in six word clouds, for topics labeled Bullying, LGBTQ, Health Concerns, Friend Issues, School Problems, and Eating Disorders.

We thus posit that this consistent proximity between topic and mothers suggests gendered expectations of the presence of care and parental involvement. That is, while directionality is opaque, the salience of "mom" suggests expectations, regardless of whether those expectations are met or not. For instance, a texter may suggest "I told my mom but she didn't do anything" in relation to Friend Issues; we parse this phrase as suggesting the texter expected the individual filling their mother role to provide some form of care, was disappointed when that expectation was not met, and then sought assistance elsewhere.

Again, one of the limitations of corpus linguistics as a methodological approach is that it is impossible to infer the context in which such terms were used which is. The salience of listening as a concept commonly mentioned by texters in relation to these topics is notable, however, and points to their importance in the discursive culture as a whole, especially in conjunction with the frequency of feminine role references. In the second case, we see how these concepts are also closely connected through the dialogues of a number of focus groups as they talked about good listening in their everyday lives.

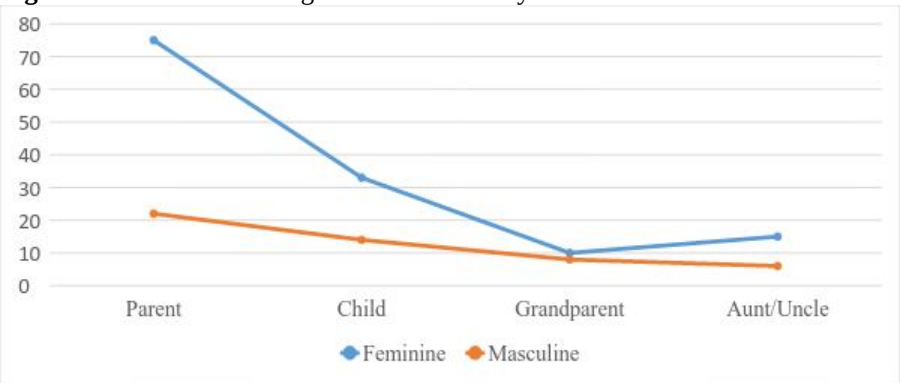
3.2 Case Study 2: Face to Face Focus Groups

The second case includes a corpus of texts constructed from 11 focus group dialogues about good listening that were video recorded, transcribed into English (using the open source software ELAN), and exported to text documents (using Microsoft Word). This corpus represented two types of dialogues: the first set of seven texts were dialogues about good listening within particular communities of difference (Asian, ASL, Latino, First Nation, Caucasian LGBTQ and Allies, Caucasian Men, and Caucasian Women) and the second set of four texts were three multi-difference dialogues and one multi-gender Caucasian dialogue. The second stage of focus groups and the texts that resulted from these dialogues were comprised of several of the participants in the first stage of focus groups, and the facilitator was the same in all 11 discourses. The final corpus included 100,958 lexical tokens representing 4,639 different word types as uttered by 40 distinct interlocutors.

Based on analysis of the corpus, family roles that were gendered feminine (e.g., mother, daughter, grandmother, aunt, etc.) were referenced significantly more than masculine roles (e.g., father, son, grandfather, uncle, etc.). Stories that were told related to listening typically included references to women who were clearly constructed as performing the emotional work of listening

in family structures. For example, whereas references to mom/mother totaled 75, there were only 22 references to dad/father (a ratio of 3.5:1). Whereas there were 33 references to daughters, there were only 14 references to sons (a ratio of 2.4:1). Whereas there were 12 references to sisters, there were only seven references to brothers (a ratio of 1.7:1). Whereas there were nine references to aunts, there were only six references to uncles (a ratio of 1.5: 1). Whereas there were ten references to grandmothers, there were only eight references grandfathers (a ratio of 1.25:1). Taken independently, any of these individual ratios may not at first appear significant. Taken together, however, when discussing the role of listening in community life, there is a clear pattern that privileges references to feminine family roles over masculine ones,[1] as seen in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1 Gendered Listening Roles in the Family



Throughout the community's discourse, references are consistently made to the feminine gender roles in family as being the people who listen and teach how to listen. A different perspective in which a participant frames one of their masculine family members as being a good listener rarely appears (with four specific exceptions mentioned by four separate participants in the Asian, LGBTQ and Allies, Caucasian Women, and ASL groups – a husband, brother, son, and grandfather, respectively).

Consider, for example, the following participant quotes in which listening is correlated with feminine roles by participants who identified as Latino, First Nation/Native American, and Caucasian. In this first excerpt, a Latino participant describes the way that his mother does not listen to him and he confronts her during the act of interruption. In this discourse, he indicates that listening is a crucial part of allowing a person to "fully appreciate their experience" and to offer support and care:

> I've had to do this with my mom, where um. Where I – I started talking to my mom about some of the things you know, uh, I went

> through as a child that she didn't know about. Or maybe she did, but you know, but we didn't talk about it. And so, she would interrupt me, and say 'Oh, oh hijo.' You know. And I said, 'Mom. You know what? I love you but you need to like listen to me right now. This is important stuff. And – and I – and I think that um we want to automatically step in and help somebody, you know, by shutting them out so they don't have to feel the full impact of what – of what they've experienced. And so, when we don't allow somebody to fully – someone when they're confiding in you – something traumatic that's gone through their life – and we cut them off and say, 'Hey. I understand what you're telling me.' We don't allow that person to – to fully appreciate their experience. And they don't tell you what's deep inside them that's been hurting them all these years. We cut them off of that, and sometimes when we do it to some people, you know, that – that they want to share something? But they really don't. You – you are essentially telling them, 'You know what? It's okay for you not to speak about your experiences.' And you're – you're – you're negating their experience, you know, as a person.

As seen in this narrative, the Latino participant emphasizes that listening is a part of caring. That when a person chooses to interrupt and does not allow someone to fully confide, it communicates a negation of their experiences and even of their life as a person. Lack of listening thus implies lack of care and it is constructed as important for a mother to counteract this behavior and intent.

The importance of this care by a person in a feminine familial role is emphasized in the discourse of a member of the First Nations community as well. Here, a focus group participant indicates that her mother discriminates against her daughter and that it is important to teach her daughter to have realistic expectations about the behaviors of her grandmother:

> It's more on the lines of protecting my children? 'Cause when this happens it's usually, um, my mom discriminating against my daughter on certain things. Um, and I tell her, you know, cause of the history between my mom and I? I've already seen her actions. I can tell when she's giving bad advice and stuff. Or, when she's manipulating people and stuff. And I'm like, I've already experienced this? You know, don't – don't listen to her. Don't take any of her advice. You know. It's bad advice. Um, and that's just me being a mom and just protecting her.

In this remark, the speaker is constructing herself as listening well to both her mother's capacity (or lack thereof) and her daughter's needs. She acts as the mediator between both people filling these feminine familial roles,

simultaneously indicating that her own mother did not care for her well, "I can tell when she's giving bad advice…when she's manipulating people…" and that she will care for her daughter well, "…and that's just me being a mom and just protecting her." In this excerpt, we again see the importance of care by both the complaints and the declarations of the speaker.

In the final excerpt we include here, a Caucasian woman points out the ways in which her mother cut her off so that she did not feel listened to and this resulted in the negative outcome of her shutting down her feelings. In this discourse, as seen in the previous two, the participant invokes the expectation for her mother to care through listening and although she considers her "a good mom," she indicates that a lot of her own current self-perceived negative behaviors (including not listening and cutting off people) are tied to her own mother's lack of listening:

> Because my mother was a notorious cutter-offer. And so like, you'd start and to this day does that. And um, and so you – so not feeling listened to. You could never get your whole sentence out. So you were always just in this state of talking fast. You know? Shutting down your feelings? Because you couldn't get it – you couldn't like – and I guess often times it happened more in conflict. So if you, you know. You, whatever, get caught as you know a high schooler you know doing something or whatever. And you're trying to explain your thinking and you – you just get shut down. That's where you – and I had a good mom. I don't want to make it sound like I didn't. But she – but that – that was my mom and my conflict. But I can trace it back to a lot of behaviors that I have now. Like, I'm a person now where I have to – I struggle because I will cut people off. I will – I married into a family that everyone cuts each other off.

These are just three examples of a common discourse that ran throughout the focus group discourses. Throughout the conversations about listening, mothers were constructed as creating more or less effective listening spaces. The frequency with which they were referenced and the ways in which they were discussed showed a set of expectations among participants that mothers should be listening, whereas masculine family roles were rarely mentioned in the conversations about good listening, and throughout the hours of discussion, fathers were not mentioned even once.

3.3 The Feminine Work of Listening

As seen across these cases, listening is primarily constructed through the discourse as feminine work, especially as work to be done by individuals in feminine family roles. In the first case, callers into a crisis hotline both refer to listening and more frequently refer to feminine roles as they engage the

listener. In the second case, focus group participants discussing listening in their everyday lives consistently reference feminine familial roles at a much higher rate than masculine ones. In other words, listening is constructed as the virtue and emotion work of women.

Although listening appeared embraced by all participants as meaningful and important in a variety of contexts, the emphasis on interpersonal listening and care is placed in the feminine domain. As good listeners are framed as feminine family members, they also gain the implicit responsibility to enact that listening role as it becomes socially expected. This reflects Friedman's (1987) description of gendered moral projects, which "would determine which commitments and behaviors were to be considered normal, appropriate, and expected of each gender" (64). Despite the expanding conceptualization of gender as socially constructed and its resistance to categorical binaries, it appears, based on these cases, that listening is a type of care that is expected from those filling feminine familial roles. Although life stages may impact the expectations that people have for how much their families must or ought to listen to them (e.g., a person in their early 20s may have a different expectation than someone in a later life stage), this is not necessarily true as people's family experiences vary widely. Additionally, the age of the participants in the focus group dialogues about good listening did not appear to impact their discourse that consistently referenced feminine familial roles at a higher rate than masculine ones. Thus, caring listening appears to be a specific moral ideal that society is constructing for women. This construction may be taking place in both public and private spaces, among strangers, friends, and families.

4. Families, Ethics of Care, and the Listening Relationship

In the section that follows, we discuss ways that a person's ethical framework – such as expectations of ethical care through listening – might develop socially. By briefly summarizing the way that the feminist ethics of care tradition began with reliance on a gender binary and has evolved to embrace more nuanced understandings of both gender and care as embedded in healthy relationships that defy gender binaries, we use lessons from the care ethics tradition to resist perpetuating a social system in which the emotion work of listening is primarily conscripted to feminine family roles. Through this discussion, we point to a way in which all humans can be encouraged to perform their ethical responsibility and courage to care through listening to each other, arguing not that women should avoid caring as listeners within or outside of the family structure, but rather that we must expand our expectations around who should listen to be based more on the many diverse relationships and gender expressions that impact our ethics.

Families are one of the primary institutions in which culture is passed down between generations, in which discursive environments are set, in which humans learn their ethical understandings, as experienced in many of our lives. This is exhibited in the care discourses in our two case studies, and also in the historical construction and promotion of certain societal values and virtuous ideals (Frede, 2013). As Baier (1987: 56) puts it: "We are born into families, and the first society we belong to, one that fits or misfits us for later ones, is the small society of parents (or some sort of child-attendants) and children, exhibiting as it may both relationships of near equality and of inequality of power." Many ethical systems have assumed that a person's sense of ethics develops in a family structure that is healthy and fair to begin with (Kymlicka, 2002). Yet, if families are the primary place where people learn how to be good, ethical, citizens – it does not take us very long to find examples where families function in fundamentally unjust ways. For all theorists that attempt to build ethical acquisition from the family – it is not only the family structure that shows examples of not being caring that they must contend with, but also the fact that some children grow up with a number of different family cultures and cultural transmission may occur outside of traditional nuclear families. These early relationships in our families serve to structure our understandings of how the rest of society functions, beliefs of how listening should function, and helps construct the ethical frameworks that guide all of our interpersonal interactions and the expectations that we have for ourselves and others to communicate in particular ways.

Arendt argues, "labor is the necessity of answering the call of the other" (Ohler, 2008: 120). The labor of answering another's call requires one to listen to the call. Thus, listening itself becomes a form of labor. Those who engage listening with their whole beings invest energy and resources that might have been used otherwise. Any demand on resources – including a call to listen – comes at a cost to someone and serves to reinforce social exchange of resources that may be ethically or unjustly practiced. As Erickson (2005) puts it: "Offering encouragement, showing your appreciation, listening closely to what someone has to say, and expressing empathy with another person's feelings (even when they are not shared) – day after day, year after year – represent emotion work of the highest order" (339). Thus, listening – especially that which requires extra amounts of the community's emotional concerns of comfort, love, respect and care – becomes one type of emotion work. Construed this way, listening is a labor of care that lies in the domain of the feminine in families.

One philosophical tradition that has explicitly considered how care is a central organizing principle to ethical behavior is ethics of care. The ethic of care tradition is a set of feminist philosophies, which call for a transformation of our perception of what counts as humanity's highest virtues and/or

promote discussion of differences that may arise as people develop differing modes of moral understanding based on their particular experiences and standpoints. While it is not the only feminist ethical philosophy, it is highly influential and specifically takes into account more diverse voices than that of traditional philosophy. Of chief concern to care ethicists is the virtue of care and the ways that it can lead to a better society. Two of the primary philosophers motivating early ethics of care theorization are Carol Gilligan and Nel Noddings, both publishing important care-based texts in the early 1980s. Ethic of care theories tends to frame morality and ethics in terms of caring and nurturing (and other virtues typically associated with femininity) rather than ethics of justice and individual autonomy (and other virtues typically associated with masculinity). Based on her empirical research, Gilligan (1982) argues, "The moral imperative that emerges repeatedly in interviews with women is an injunction to care, a responsibility to discern and alleviate the "real and recognizable trouble" of this world. For men, the moral imperative appears rather as an injunction to respect the rights of others and thus to protect from interference the rights to life and self-fulfillment" (100). Although Gilligan and Nodding tend to emphasize the distinctness of men's and women's morality, other ethics of care thinkers suppress this gendered claim, choosing instead to focus on how different voices (regardless of gender) may choose to focus their discourse on that of rights and justice or responsibility and care. It is useful here, however, to understand the roots of care ethics as it's helped set the trajectory of the care ethics tradition and also reflects an ongoing gendering of care that is exhibited in current discourse.

Gilligan's (1982) *In a Different Voice* prompted the field of care ethics that continues to be debated and expanded today (Larrabee, 1993). Her ideas contrasted with other ethical philosophies by proposing differences between the ways that moral themes (often associated with women's and men's voices) are expressed. Gilligan argues that men tend to use terms of justice, autonomy, and rights to understand ethics and morality, while women tend to use terms of caring, relational ties, and responsibility. Even though the moral development of men and women may differ in shape, all people are obligated to provide caring responses to other people in their relational network. Because her work is typically construed as making statements about men and women's voices in total, it is beneficial to note that she attempts to "highlight a distinction between two modes of thought and to focus a problem of interpretation rather than to represent a generalization about either sex… no claims are made about the origins of the differences described or their distribution in a wider population, across cultures, or through time" (Gilligan, 1982: 2). Thus, although Gilligan points to a gendering of care and justice impulses, she does not argue that this is a definitive aspect of a person's sex

but rather could be a result of any number of factors. Gilligan's care ethics focuses on developing virtues of care that are founded on ideas of particular and situated others, concrete relationships, care for other persons that are gained through understanding their own positionality and difference, embedded in specific relationships, combining both emotion and cognition with concrete responses and actions, and as universal principles that have multiple appropriate responses depending on the particular situation (Blum, 1993).

In this same era, Noddings' (1984) *Caring: A Feminine Approach to Ethics and Moral Education* worked toward articulating a morality based on the idea of caring. Noddings grounds ethics in human affect. She argues for a virtue ethic that arises out of caring while not placing caring on a long list of abstract ethical ideals or conceptualizing caring as virtue itself. She establishes caring as the sentiment that calls us to take care of other people and pursue their best. Noddings argues that each human is unique and the ways that we care for each other will be subject to lived experiences – but the foundational need and desire to both care for others and be cared for in dynamic relationship is universal. That is, we all care for others and need to be cared for, but how we enact that care can differ dependent on our individual needs, social networks, and cultural perspectives. Through this lens, as with gender, the social construction of our values is shaped by the discourse of all members of a society.

Since Gilligan's early work, care ethicists have developed a number of branches that fit under the umbrella of the care ethics tradition. These branches tend to emphasize the particularity of human experience and primacy of relationship in determining and enacting virtuous living. While some care ethicists focus more on the universality of relationships, others focus on particular and localized relationships (e.g., Larabee, 1993, and Tronto, 1995). Regardless of which approach one takes, it is clear that care ethicists place the focus on "care-fully" engaging others. The relationship is what drives the ethical care that people are responsible to provide, especially for the most vulnerable members of communities and relationships.

Listeners run the risk of ignoring that gendered performance of their caring listening can be enacted in myriad and diverse ways by any particular individual. Gender, like all facets of human identity, is socially constructed performance – including the identity of "listener." Thus, even in the development of what it means to "care," it is crucial to recognize that privileging any one type of enactment of care in the name of feminine forms of communication can serve to reify societal structures and expectations that are better dismantled, or at least critically interrogated.

Indeed, the stickiness of listening care and feminine familial relations is visible in the transposition of familial roles to other social situations. It is

worth reviewing an illustration of how archetypal "mother" care can be assigned to others while maintaining the relational association. For instance, "mom friend" is a term coined by younger generations in recent years. Somewhat similar to a "den mother," it references a member of one's social circle who takes on additional caretaking responsibilities, such as acting as a designated driver, reminding others to eat meals and take medications, and listening. The term is ubiquitous enough in the U.S. to have earned an Urban Dictionary entry as well as descriptive articles from popular content outlets such as Buzzfeed (Penn & Parker, 2016). In this instance, "mom" refers to a gender role rather than a biological role, as one need not be a literal mother to be a "mom friend," and thus further entangles expectations of care with a gendered relational role. The attachment of care to "mother" is known to ethics of care scholars, and we highlight it here to encourage revisiting this coupling and its potential consequences.

Orr (2014) argues that ethics of care theories are grounded in the role of a caring "mother" being central to a healthy society. Yet, the potential of care ethicists to thereby reify care as a feminine responsibility is real. If ethics of care is grounded in feminist traditions, how is it that we have silo-ed virtues based on a gender binary? Part of the answer is that "feminism" is not monolithic. Yet, as seen in this brief overview of care ethics, the origins of this feminist ethic has moved the focus of ethical development from that based on women's voices and "mothering" to one emphasizing the importance of our relational responsibilities, regardless of the gendering of that relationship.

The role of "mother" is often the ultimate feminine caregiver archetype (Mayseless, 2016). Thus, the social reinforcement of "listeners" as being women or as performance of emotion work in the feminine domain can minimize the ways that caring listening might be enacted by those filling non-feminine gender roles. It can also serve to enable or allow people who want to avoid being affiliated with such roles to avoid the social responsibility and emotion work of listening. It is not enough to say that women should not be the only people expected to listen in society. We must instead dismantle the entire binary gendering of virtues or risk silencing those who do not identify with that binary. Although the focus on listening to women's voices that was present in ethics of care theorization was important to the ethical narrative, we need to promote listening to those who identify differently and yet still enact care in its many facets – including listening.

5. You Are Not My Mother (But You Can Still Care)

Both the online and face to face discourses in our case studies underscore the persistence of gendered expectations of listening care, and the difficulty in

enacting in everyday life the shifts that are already underway in academic thinking, as seen both in our discussion of the social construction of gender, of emotion work, and of ethics of care philosophies. The corpus linguistic analysis of both cases shows a frequency of referencing the mother figure as someone who is expected to care-fully listen, yet this expected task perpetuates gender inequity. Many people can care and listen without needing to perform feminine gender roles as perpetuated through a gender binary.

As so many feminist scholars have remarked, associating femininity with care can result in unequal divisions of household labor, the devaluing of care professions, and in other ways render invisible the work done by carers and the importance of care more generally. Suffice it to say, gendering care – specifically denoting care as restricted to a feminine domain – has far-reaching consequences in society. We suspect that persistent coupling of listening as care with the feminized "mother" role results in similar consequences, not least of which are imbalanced familial expectations of care, listening, and dialogue.

We reiterate that decoupling care from gender is crucial not only for expanding our understanding of care and situating listening within care, but also for increasing the visibility of those whose care does not conform to gendered expectations or "mother" – care as a tool for this expansion. As a first step to expand care practices, especially through socially constructed listening gender roles, we argue for renewed recognition of listening as emotion work and as foundational to care, and call for further interrogation of gendered expectations of listening within our family institutions in particular, and performance of care in society as a whole.

Ethics of care scholars have done much work to decouple gender and care virtues, yet this pair finds a new home in the particular domain of motherhood; this connection appears so ingrained that "mother" as a relational role has achieved greater mobility than the values and behaviors of care, such that friends demonstrating care become surrogate emotional mothers and "mom-friends." We thus call for a systemic challenge of this association and push for a renewed effort to divorce gender and care, such that "mother" is no longer the archetype. Doing so may also facilitate an expansion of care, such that previously-deemed masculine aspects of care come into focus as additional tools, in balance with feminized care aspects of empathy and emotion. As we expand our care toolbox and become more skilled in expecting and accepting care of many different kinds from many different people, it is our hope that our social relationships and individual well-being will be strengthened.

NOTE

1. The one outlier to this pattern occurs with the terms husband and wife. Whereas husbands were referenced 27 times, wives were only referenced 6 times. Based on the demographic information of the participants in the focus group dialogues, there were more participants who indicated that they had husbands than had wives. This could indicate the increased referencing of these roles in the dialogue. In addition, more participants indicated that they were mothers than fathers, which may lead to increase of self-referencing and related use of terms related to mothers. However, when limiting the calculations to references of "my mother" or "my father," the pattern of privileging feminine family roles still holds with "my mom/mother" garnering 55 references and "my dad/father" only 14, an even higher ratio than when not filtering self-references (3.9:1 as compared to 3.5:1).

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THE INTRICATE INTERPLAY BETWEEN VICTIMIZATION AND AGENCY: REFLECTIONS ON THE EXPERIENCES OF WOMEN WHO FACE PARTNER VIOLENCE IN MEXICO

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ABSTRACT. This article is based on qualitative research in Mexico City focused on low-income women who face intimate partner violence. It is in line with works that question, through the lens of intersectionality, the false opposition between agency and victimization observed in a large proportion of literature on intimate partner violence. The investigation analyzes the women's descriptions of the everyday forms of resistance they use to survive alongside their aggressors. Our results demonstrate that, through different resistance strategies, they exert different forms of *agency* that are, or can be, a way of questioning male domination, and can lead to a more open demand for rights, if adequate social and institutional conditions are met.

Keywords: intimate partner violence; agency; intersectionality; Mexico

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Introduction

In the field of public attention to intimate partner violence in Mexico, the complaint that women "always repent and forgive" their aggressors, is often

heard. In the majority of cases, the complaints are used to justify the minimal effort or interest in attending to the issue (Herrera, 2009; Herrera and Agoff, 2006; Castro and Herrera, 2008; Saucedo, 2002; Incháustegui et al., 2010). Nevertheless, it is true that the greater part of women that endure violence in Mexico abandon the process of searching for help, and especially of filing a complaint (INEGI, 2017).[1] The spontaneous explanations of these behaviors range from the idea that women are "emotionally and morally dependent," that they put up with the violence because "it's better for them to have someone to support them," or even because "they like" the abuse. To avoid the recreation of these common notions on the apparent passivity of women, it is important to understand the meanings, reasons, and motives they have for acting in that manner. Women's agency must be analyzed within symbolic and interactional structural limits, within specific contexts and groups.

The main contribution of feminist theories to the understanding of partner violence was calling to attention those power structures whose permanence depends on, among other things, the control of women's conduct. Gender violence would be one of the central mechanisms for keeping women in the positions assigned to their gender within the system of *male domination*. Nevertheless, the use of certain ideas associated with this notion can also be confused with the argument for "emotional dependency" to explain the apparent passivity of women facing their partner's violence. It can likewise offer a false, essentialist, and almost universal image of women as victims and men as victimizers.

Many studies have fruitfully used the notions of *symbolic violence*, *gender habitus*, *naturalization of violence*, and *male domination* that Bourdieu (2000) developed to clarify the seeming paradox in which the victims are the ones who recreate the power relations that keep them subordinate to begin with. Nevertheless, some feminist scholars have warned of the problematic association between the almost universal conception of male domination and the idea of *victimized woman* (Lamas, 2006; Badinter, 2003; Sokoloff and Pratt, 2010; Lovell, 2000). This would derive an excessive emphasis on the idea of *habitual and unconscious reproduction* of violence, and would divest women of their capacity for *agency*.

It was precisely in the field of empirical studies on partner violence that these concepts began to be questioned and enriched. This took place in part after finding that the majority of women, even having recognized the violence, *chose* to stay with their abusers instead of abandoning the relationship. In accordance with the dichotomy of "victim vs. agent" predominant in the literature on the subject (Aisyah and Parker, 2014), a criminal complaint against the abuser or divorce are the main indicators of agency for women. Nevertheless, as Haj-Yahia (2002) laments, a large part of the knowledge that studies on Intimate Partner Violence offer comes from postindustrial,

individualist societies, and do not reflect the reality of women in traditional, transitional, and collectivist societies. Many studies in these contexts have documented that the women are never passive, that they resist violence, and that they attempt to negotiate with their abusers, even if they have not made the decision to get a divorce or file a complaint (Kandiyoti, 1988; Yount, 2011; Sokoloff and Pratt, 2010; Valle, 2011). Moreover, "women remain in abusive relationships for a variety of reasons, some created by extremal constraints – economic instability, lack of community support upon separation, concern about children – and others that women actively choose, such as maintaining their relationships with their partners" (Goodmark, 2012: 318).

In this work, we maintain that it is necessary to recognize the role the elements of *agency* present in women's behavior, including those who live in the most critical situations, play within gender structures. As will be seen later on, we define *agency* not as the individual liberty needed to make autonomous decisions – though the concept contains it – but rather as the *capacity to negotiate within power relations* and structures of domination.

In this sense, we share the central idea of the intersectionality approach through which some Afro-descendant and post-colonial feminists drew attention to the fact that violence and male domination do not affect all women equally. Similarly, there is not just one type of agency; it depends on the sociocultural context in which gender relations take place. Those authors question the emphasis of Western academic feminism on almost universal ideas of male domination – and of its opposite, the emancipation of women – based on liberal normative notions of the autonomous subject aware of her rights. This stance tends to explain women's "incapacity" to recognize themselves as victims and liberate themselves from domination through the argument that they find themselves trapped in traditional forms of authority, which only an external agent (a feminist consciousness) could help challenge. As an example of the undesired effects of this position, the critical authors mention its tendency to propose predominantly legal solutions to intimate partner violence, often rejecting the wants and needs of those affected and especially harming the most vulnerable, particularly those who suffer the articulated effect of different types of oppression – gender, class, race, and sexual orientation, among others (Sokoloff and Dupont, 2010; Ngan-ling Chow et al., 2011).

Given that women exercise their agency "in the interstices of power," it is relevant to study what they do and think in their daily life (Parker and Dales, 2014), in socially situated concrete relationships. An analysis of this sort, upon focusing on the way women experience the intersubjective dynamic of violence, allows an understanding of some of their motives for "not rebelling against gender domination" at all times, and could inform the future design of more realistic and effective interventions, which, far from treating women

like the passive objects of guardianship, recognizes their needs and enhances their capacities and liberties.

This work is based on a qualitative study developed in Mexico City with low income women[2] who lived or had lived a pattern of intimate partner violence close to that which Johnson (2005) denominated "intimate terrorism," where the abuser dominates in the relationship and exercises control over the woman through various types of violence that tend to worsen over time in frequency and severity.[3] The fieldwork was completed in 2008, at a time of the problem's increased public visibility in Mexico. One of the study's assumptions was that this visibility would be reflected in the way the women spoke of and faced the violence they endured, since it would cause an expansion of the repertoire for reflection and action available to them. At present, that situation has hardly changed.

The Complexities of Agency

To understand women's agency in concrete relations of power, some feminist sociologists attempted to overcome the apparent dilemma between voluntarist or routine views of agency (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998). On the one hand, they questioned the idea of agency associated with the theories of the rational actor for being based on what they consider a *masculine and voluntarist idea of the agent*, which, according to them, is updated in the contemporary theories of reflexive modernity. These theories, upon privileging the agent's understanding capacity, collect elements of possessive individualism based on the "supposed capacity to separate oneself from one's body" and have a reflexive relationship with the self (Skeggs, 2004; McNay, 2004). These authors believe that Bourdieu's theory can be used to correct the excessive emphasis of this focus on the possibilities for a self-aware "modeling" of identity, particularly for that of gender, because the body, emotions, practical reasoning, and rationality form a complex framework for the construction of subjectivity.

The concept of *habitus* is one of the few within sociological theory that has been applied to the issue of relationships between genders. The *gender habitus* would be a social construction through which women pre-reflexively internalize the symbolic violence of masculine domination through the privileged path of feeling (Bourdieu, 2000). The action that emerges from the *habitus* is at the same time a practical and embodied one. In McNay's view (2004), this concept allows the postulation of a non-cognitive and non-individualist reflexivity in the comprehension of the practice due to its unconscious character and the incorporation of the social into the body, elements which are not always present in a reflexive interpretation. These authors, nevertheless, also question the assumption of agency that underlies

the concept of *habitus*, which would be a contradictory combination between docile body (in Foucault's terms) and strategic agent that maximizes capitals (Skeggs, 2004). The problem they find with this notion is that the possibilities for the subject to rebel depend on some measure of awareness provoked by extraordinary factors. According to Bourdieu (2000), this occurs when a misalignment is produced between the *habitus* and a determined field, such as when women gain access to spaces considered masculine. As this seems to become more "normal" than extraordinary in late capitalism and globalized societies, a notion of agency based on a more fluid relation between pre-reflexive and reflexive aspects of action is needed (McNay, 2000).

Within feminist theory, Butler (2001) has affirmed that social norms are inherently unstable and are never assimilated or internalized completely by the subjects, because the practice – or the lived gender – is changeable and temporal. The "paradox of subjectification" implies, for Butler, that the conditions which ensure a subject's subordination are the same that offer the means to become an agent and a self-aware identity. In accordance with her concept of performativity, in the habitual repetition each norm structure carries its own possibility of "undoing itself," because the repetition can fail and be re-signified for different purposes from that of the consolidation of the norms themselves. For Butler, thus, the identification with the dominator is never total, nor immobile, and differs per social situation. In the cases where a more or less critical distance with the lived types of domination exists, the discomfort can be manifested openly only with the appearance of more favorable material conditions, initially as a complaint within the established order, and later breaking with this order.

Post-colonial feminists questioned the "teleology of emancipation" and the "romanticizing of resistance" that underlies the reflections of many Western feminists, who, according to them, equate agency with free will and the capacity to make autonomous decisions and question domination. Mahmood (2001) argued that in many feminist studies that aim to evidence women's agency, the "humanist wish of autonomy and self-expression," assumed to be universal, constitutes the substrata, or the "inactive ember" that can ignite in the form of an act of resistance when the conditions are met. This a similar position to that of Scott (2000), who claims that amidst the dominated there always exists a hidden discourse on liberty, which is almost innate and is disposed to become open criticism when the relationship between forces is favorable to it. For Mahmood (2001), even when post-structuralist feminists like Butler were key to decentralizing the liberal notions of autonomy, voluntarism, and transcendent subject, thanks to their emphasis on the impossibility of a resistance external to the discourse of subjection, the subject they propose continues to be libertarian, and its agency conceptualized in terms of resistance to social norms. For this author, if the idea

that desires are socially constructed and not innate is accepted, it is possible to question how different types of desire emerge, *including those of submission* to a variety of goals. In this frame, agency is a capacity for action created and made possible by specific relations of subordination, where resistance to the norms is only one of a number of options. Thus, for this author, what can be seen as passivity from a progressive viewpoint, can be a form of agency, since agency does not refer solely to actions that result in radical or even progressive changes, but can also apply to those that seek continuity and stability. Mahmood's study (2001) on Muslim women reveals that agency can mean a progressive possibility for change, or the capacity to endure, resist, suffer, and persist within a system of domination, not always seen as such.

As Lamas (2000) points out, the articulation between the social world and the subjectivity involves the individual unconscious and the diverse forms in which each subject positions her desires and identifications, submitting, resisting, or developing the cultural gender code. We believe that all these positions, though they are hard to isolate in practice, need some level of investment of effort, which implies agency.

The previous discussion shows us that, while the different notions of agency either based on voluntarist liberal ideas of autonomy (with their postmodern reflexivity variants) or on routine accounts of practical reason, *habitus*, embodiment or performativity are useful for organizing analysis, they must be endowed with empirical content and not be taken as abstract or universal ideas. From our point of view, agency is a capacity present in every subject, which can acquire multiple forms and have different developments and consequences, not always in the direction expected by a normative position. Those forms can range from compromise to confrontation with the abuser, passing from subtler to more overt types of resistance, depending on the situation. Similarly, it can be motivated intentionally or not, voluntarily or not, by the need to express emotions or by the conscious pursuit of individual or group interests. The notion of agency as a capacity to negotiate within power relations involves a more fluid account of the relation between reflexive and pre-reflexive aspects of action. In this frame, agency is a capacity for action created and made possible by specific relations of subordination, where resistance to the norms is only one of a number of options.

In this sense, even when presumably most of the time women's agency is motivated by practical, "pre-reflexive" elements, or by the "intertias of the *habitus*," it can produce cumulative changes of differing magnitudes in daily life, and eventually transform itself in a more conscious reflection of gender relations, or even into an open criticism of the system of domination. This is only a possibility, however, which depends on determinate social, cultural, and subjective conditions that may create tensions which in turn allow for a

critical distance from daily routine. Agency is also a process of social involvement inserted in time, informed by the past but also directed toward the future and toward the present. The changes in the temporal orientation can also involve variable degrees of ingenuity and reflexivity in relation to the action and its temporal and relational contexts, though not always in a linear fashion.

In the field of intimate partner violence, the rupture of the abusive relationship does not always imply more agency in an emancipatory way. Neither does it necessarily suppose a questioning of the dominant gender norms. Given that women's strategies are molded by several levels of constraints, "*the* right answer" which can eradicate gender violence, does not exist. Structural arrangements "seriously complicate individual options for women who are marginalized" (Richie, 2010: xvi). We agree with some scholars who point out on the erroneous idea behind the theory of the helplessness of battered women and show the multiple ways in which they employ creative strategies in resisting (Gondolf and Fischer, 1988; Abraham, 2010; Goodmark, 2012b). We think that the idea of a woman victim is not only incorrect but also harmful. As Sokoloff and Dupont (2010) observe, the stereotypical images, which characterize battered women as passive and helpless, can have severe consequences that may prevent them from accessing legal and social services (op. cit., 2010: 5). As Goodmark (2012a) has pointed out, women who fail to conform to the stereotypes of the helpless victim or to tell the types of narratives that legal system actors are conditioned to hear may find it difficult to secure relief through the legal system. In relation to the result of resistance strategies, Coates and Wade suggest that, though they may not be enough to stop violence, they "are profoundly important as expressions of dignity and self-respect" (op. cit., 2007: 514). Withaeckx and Coene (2014) have also pointed out that in many cultural contexts women seek to actively redefine gender norms that are meaningful to them, more than distancing themselves from them. It is precisely these processes and their meanings that were explored in this study, through the shared experiences of the women themselves.

Some Theoretical-Methodological Aspects

We designed a methodological strategy based on discussion groups. The discussion group is a data-production device that collects the communicational exchange prompted by the moderator as well as those that spontaneously emerge. As Morgan (1996) has emphasized, such interactions offer "valuable data on the extent of consensus and diversity among the participants." In this device, a single expression is taken into account only inasmuch as it produces some kind of echo, either through the response or silence of the group,

that is, in its emerging role. Specifically, the group discussion technique intends to explore those common areas of experience that emerge within group exchanges. This happens in three different modes: as explicit knowledge, which is a product of reflection and can be articulately verbalized, as expressions of emotion, and as practical knowledge, that is, knowledge that has not been the object of reflexivity and that may emerge as deep group insights related to everyday practice. Thus, every group discussion represents a privileged access to shared emotions, to practical knowledge, to common sense on women's social value, to gender representations, and to meanings attached to intimate partner violence from the perspective of the affected women as Ferraro and Johnson (1983) have also described.

Six discussion groups were conducted in Mexico City between March and April 2008 with a total of 72 participants and an average of 12 per group. Women were chosen following two selection criteria: that they had experienced intimate partner violence of the type described above – regardless of whether they were still in the same relationship or if they had separated –, and their age (in the 20–29 years old rank, 30–39, and 40 or more), assuming that there could be some type of change after the exposure to new social discourses on violence. Both criteria corresponded to the profile of low income women (minimum wage stands at US$110 a month). This use of segmentation to create groups composed by particular categories of participants (Morgan, 1996) enabled us to have groups of women as homogeneous as possible by age, socioeconomic status, and place of residence (Mexico City). It also allowed age comparisons in the analysis of the use of different resources by the women that successfully had solved the problem.

For the conformation of the groups an agency specialized in recruitment for qualitative studies was used, and worked closely with the researchers in the definition of the profiles of the participants and provided the facilities to host the discussion groups. The search for participants was done at care institutions and through the snowball technique. The discussion groups were held in a Gesell room provided by the same research agency. Each discussion was conducted by a professional moderator and was co-moderated by one of the authors. All the participants gave their informed consent and were guaranteed anonymity. All of them received economic compensation for their participation in an amount equivalent to US$20, and they were provided with information about services and care centers related to partner violence.

The majority of participants were housewives and all had children of different ages. Some of those who had separated or divorced had new partners. The participants had an average level of 9.4 years of education and an income of between 3 and 5 times the minimum wage. The group discussions were held and transcribed in Spanish. For the purposes of this paper, however, we hired a professional translator whose first language was English but

was living in Mexico City, having substantial knowledge of the local uses of Spanish.

The discussion was guided by a question set that covered the following topics: 1) violence as a normal experience in the resolution of couple conflict; 2) tolerance, legitimation, and justification of violence; 3) presence, type, and quality of social networks; 5) autonomy and empowerment; and 6) justice and reparation.

The analysis consisted of an inductive procedure through which meaning and theory were generated from data (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Strauss and Corbin, 1990; Myles and Huberman, 1994). It is important to remember here that the focus of the analysis is not the "real" interactions between the women and their aggressors, but rather the ways in which they retrospectively signify their experiences, and especially their notions of common sense as well as the consequences that these ways of signifying can have in terms of agency.

Subtle Forms of Women's Agency

In the discussion groups, the women brought to light and collectively questioned ideas of common sense about being a woman and being a man, marriage, family, violence, relationship break-ups, and action against the abuser. Despite not knowing each other previously, through expressions like speaking at the same time, laughing in unison, assenting, hugging each other, and crying while another spoke, they revealed shared experiences and a notable consensus, practically from the beginning of the discussion. This allows us to speak of a shared experience, beyond the differences in their individual appreciations.

From the narratives and the group discussion we were able to observe different ways of exercising agency, which range from what Mahmood (2001) calls "endure or persist" in silence, to actions of rupturing the relationship, through various forms of veiled criticism and open confrontation (Scott, 2000), first of the violence and later of the system of matrimonial obligations. These ways can coexist in one woman at different moments and do not always change by following a linear pattern, though we found slight variations which appear to relate to the moments in a woman's life cycle, as will be seen later on.

According to Scott (2000), among dominated groups there are forms of resistance which he calls "fugitive," which, due to their ambiguous nature, are difficult to repress or punish. These are disguised aggressions that offer a kind of practical reparation. One of these types of veiled criticism, which emerged in almost all the groups, was the disqualification and the mockery of certain behaviors of their partners. Through this reaction, the violent man

is no longer worthy of respect, though he is not confronted openly. We can see an example of this in the following fragment of the discussion:

> M: You see him and he's the woman. I call him "my live arm-chair" because he comes home at four in the afternoon and doesn't care about anything but soap operas and don't dare interrupt him because Oh! ... And I am going to tell you something: obesity has given him problems because we have not had sex for three years ... but he prefers to insult me. He said that he could not get it up with me because I was probably sleeping around. L. comments: You should give him a ball of yarn so that he can then start knitting and do something and you will be happy with so many sweaters [She gestures knitting. All of them laugh.] (Group of women over 40, current violence)

> G.: Sometimes too, it is their rage, that we sometimes show them that we are stronger than they are [Nods] because in the end, it is true. Why were we given the joy of being able to have children? Because men cannot endure a headache, one toothache and he is dying. [Nods and laughter.] J: I think that with giving birth once, they die, right? (Group of women between the ages of 20 and 29, current violence)

Just as the expectations of women's behavior are the framework that serves to justify the violence men exercise against their partners, the values and social norms associated with masculinity are the measure by which they are judged in the form of mockery. In other cases, mockery is produced through moral putdowns of the husbands' families and of their values and customs even when they are shared by their own families and serve to justify men's violence against women (Agoff et al., 2007). The immature relationship between the men and their mothers also serve to take away their respectability.

> Moderator: Why do you think men are abusive? C.: Because their mothers have castrated them [Laughter]. (Group of women between the ages of 30 and 39, past violence)

In these cases, it is possible to observe expressions of collective amusement and laughter, which reveal shared experiences of covert resistance against aggression. Another manifestation of this type of resistance is typically gossip, in which other people are told what the aggressor does or says, but without addressing the problem directly with him. The destabilizing power that gossip (real or imaginary) has over the aggressor is palpable when women talk about the strict prohibitions imposed on visiting other people, especially relatives:

> He did not like me to go and see my mother because I was going to bellyache, to tell her what he did to me. Going to see my mother

> would really get his goat ... Sometimes I would sneak out to see her… (Group of women between the ages of 20 and 29, current violence)

Nevertheless, what provokes laughter in the discussion groups due to a situation of collective catharsis can be, in the daily life of the women, an experience of pain and frustration that they endure because conditions to rebel do not exist:

> Honestly what I do is say he's right, even if he's not: "Oh yes, yes… Don't worry!" but inside I'm burning… Moderator: And why? What do you gain from doing that? G: Not arriving at an extreme where "I don't want to talk to you anymore…" or that he starts to say nonsense. Because I'm not in a position to make demands, I do that instead." (Group of women between the ages of 30 to 39 years, current violence)

"Muttering" or "grumbling" (Scott, 1990: 186) is another form of complaining indirectly or not face-to-face that represents another symbolic form of resistance. This form can assume different manifestations – either verbal or non-verbal – and is mainly characterized by the fact that the victim tolerates violence because she does not have enough power to openly confront the aggressor, but she does not give him authority over her. This form, also known as "talking back," is nevertheless an important strategy for resistance since "it voices a woman's resentment at her treatment and challenges her oppressor's power and control" (Abraham, 2010: 258).

> I am not ashamed. I have never been ashamed. Nor is it something to be proud of to say "my husband beats me," is it? But I have never hung my head. That is what gets him riled when he says things to me. I challenge him and I never lower my gaze, even if he is killing me. (Group of women between the ages of 20 and 29, current violence)

> If I talk with someone I really trust a lot, a friend or someone… yes, I do start to cry, but he has never gotten a tear out of me. Later on, he says, "you have an iron soul" [Laughter]. I do cry, but when I am already asleep, I think. [Loud laughter]. Really, because it does hurt and offend, but I do not show it to him. (Group of women between the ages of 20 and 29, current violence)

This particular form of resistance seems to indicate that there are certain situations that impose a limit on what one's pride can tolerate: a refusal to drop one's head, to respect him by force, to give in to the demand for an apology, to cry in front of the aggressor, and to ultimately show signs of submission.

There are other forms of veiled resistance, through small sabotages that can also assume different forms of "getting away with it." This seems to be about reclaiming that which the patriarchal order expropriates from women: their bodies, resources, and freedoms. Among these forms of sabotage there is paid work in secret, the resulting manipulation of time devoted to housework, and sexual and reproductive manipulation.

> It has been three years without sex because his whore is no more. From the day he insulted me, there has been no more sex with him. We are together, but there is no sex. (Group of women between the ages of 30 and 39, current violence)

> I would always put in my child, and if he wanted [to have sex], well, that is where he got stuck [Laughter] because I would leave one of my girls in between, and now, as they say, tough luck, right? (Group of women over 40, current violence)

One form of resistance of this sort is what we call "skimming resources," which in our case is evidenced by women's practices, like "the nest egg" (small secret savings), buying things without permission, or giving money in secret to people who are important to the woman, among many other ways of regaining "what they deserve without it being noticed":

> My father had an accident three years ago. He was burned, so his hands are no longer a hundred percent well. So I work and now I can, from the little I earn, in secret, I give him money … in secret. (Group of women between the ages of 20 and 29, current violence)

In this category, we also include the refusal to serve or help, taking advantage of the other's moments of weakness, as seen in the testimony of this woman who, amid the laughter of the women in the group, shares a small revenge against her drunken husband, in which she also gives glimpses of fantasies of the aggressor's death:

> He got drunk and starting saying things to me and he just remained in the armchair. I do not like him staying in the armchair [Some nod]. I hate it and I told one of my children 'help me get him upstairs' because the bedrooms are on the second story, and also because he is really tall… And we are going up the stairs just barely and he slips out of our hands [laughter] and I ask my son, 'Is there any blood?' 'No, well no…' and a bit later, 'Is he breathing?' so I throw a blanket over him [Laughter] 'Leave him there' [on the floor]. It just gets me real angry and I could not get back at him because he is so tall and I am so short. The next day, he says, 'Hey! Why did you leave me on the floor?' 'Well that is

> where it caught you.' [Laughter] (Group of women over 40, current violence)

We also observe the creation of strategies to regain freedoms. The husbands have a way of controlling their going out when they are not present: if the house and the children are not spotless, they suspect that the housework was not done because they went out and did not have enough time. Time management is therefore a resistance strategy for them. Some commented that they put a lot of effort into keeping the house in perfect condition and being very efficient in order to create extra time in which to get away to see relatives or friends, and then come back in time for the husband to find them at home and "attend him" the way he wants. In some cases, and depending on the moment, the small gain of liberty incentivizes them to take a step further each time, which suggests a risk they are sometimes willing to take:

> I.: What I did during the time I was with him, I started studying design without his knowing… Moderator: He didn't let you study? I.: No! It's more like he didn't let me go out, like, I would go out often and he'd say, 'What? The neighbors, my ex-boyfriends were around there' ... No, no, no… It was awful… but yes, I could finish school… luckily. (Group of women between the ages of 20 and 29, past violence)

In these cases, the women evaluated the risk in a practical manner and they confronted it with their desire to gain something that was "worthwhile" for them, in one case the circumstantial liberty to go out, and in the other a more long-term plan for independence.

Discourses Available to Signify Violence

Gender inequality and the naturalization of violence are maintained by institutions and traditions. When these undergo changes, such as laws that criminalize gender violence and gender equality awareness campaigns, it is possible to observe certain changes in the way some women account for the violence they experience. However, these changes are very slow in coming about, even more than their practice. In our groups, we did not discern that younger women were more receptive to the equality discourse, but the contrary. It was in groups of younger women that descriptions of veiled strategies of resistance appeared the most; however, this does not mean it was a direct challenge against male dominance. These women were also those who tended to place the origin of violence on reasons outside of the man's control. However, forms of weighing the advantages of remaining at the side

of the aggressor, creating absolvitory explanations and minimizing the harm, are strategies that after a few years of violence are no longer acceptable.

> Because I think that people we say we love, or think we love, look for a way to justify it [Several agree]. So, when you begin to realize 'I wasn't wrong. He was wrong.' But I knew if I told him, he'd never understand that he was wrong. Imagine that! It would be a never-ending battle. As he'd say, 'it's that you…' and he would already be throwing a punch. And how to solve problems? At least my way of solving problems was to keep quiet and say, 'yes, you are right.' (Women between the ages of 20 and 29 with past violence)

More discontent and awareness of the need to set limits on the abuse were observed among the older women. However, while some of them had done this though various actions, many others had resigned themselves to staying in the relationship. In the case of those with assertive discourse, covert resistance had become overt, using actions such as police reports, separations and unguarded complaints. In the case of the women with more disappointed discourse, we found that it was a type of resignation to – more than consent to – male domination.

The reasons the women gave for putting up with the violence ranged from emotional (like "love," the fear of what people would say, or retaliation from the abuser), to the practical, like convenience and the need for maintenance of themselves and their children.

But forms of enduring violence, in which obedience to the abuser is feigned, must be understood in the frame of the cultural and structural limits which leave little leeway for autonomous action for the women of this social sector. It has been argued that in Mexico, changes in the family brought about by the economic crisis and women's entry into the labor market have not denoted a parallel questioning of the values that uphold the traditional gender system (Ariza and de Oliveira, 2001). This does not mean, however, that readjustments and changes in everyday gender relations have not been made. Though the traditional gender model is not questioned, the changes which have limited the possibilities for men to adequately provide for their household have put into question their absolute authority in the family, including the prerogative of disciplining the woman through violence. In the majority of cases, what the women want is that their husbands cease to be violent, not question the gender norms that are the basis of that violence. In fact, when the aggressor fulfills the traditional gender role, like providing for the household, violence is more tolerated.

> I sometimes say 'I feel as if I provoke it and look for it' without any need to because I have a roof over my head, I have food on

> the table with my mother, but I think the fact that we have something from our family influences our values and our self-esteem a lot, doesn't it (Group of women between the ages of 30 and 39, current violence)

When women depend financially on their partners, have small children and do not have enough schooling to get a job, remaining in a relation of violence without exposing it is convenient for their immediate interests. In these cases, women's conformity as resistance (Yount, 2011) or passive resistance influenced by patriarchal bargains (Kandiyoti, 1988) applies. But as we said earlier, it is difficult to distinguish in one experience the elements of "strategic calculation" or negotiation, from the aspects more rooted in the gender habitus, transmitted from generation to generation and sustained by cultural norms, like the social recognition given to marriage and the family.

> It was really hard to get out … I think that since we got married, they would start lowering your self-esteem and say you are nobody, that you're good for nothing and sure enough, unfortunately, you believe it because who can you tell! You go and tell your mother-in-law and the mother-in-law tells you, 'don't tell anyone.' (Women between the ages of 30 to 40, past violence)

The fear of the social stigma of a separated woman, who is usually seen as "available" for male sexual harassment, is another factor that we could consider emotional and "strategic" at the same time, when pondering the options in the face of leaving a relationship:

> When a person is single or divorced or abandoned… there are always those who see her with a brother, with a friend, [and] they already put you in bed with that person. That's really true because I know it is. (Group of women over 40, current violence)

Women weigh the options and from the result obtain an apparent naturalization, domination through emotions, or implicit consent. However, most of the time, this is actually assessing the risks in an adverse situation and a kind of function that implies certain capacity for agency. Women weigh the use of different strategies and their efficacy "in the light of class, ethnicity, legal status and socioeconomic viability, as well the accessibility of alternate support systems" (Abraham, 2010: 254).

> Well, for example, I don't work. He's the one who takes care of all my expenses. If he leaves … I am as poor as a church mouse... 'Think about it. And what do I do?' I didn't finish my degree or anything and I say, and what do I do? (Group of women between 20 and 29, current violence)

In addition to the lack of economic autonomy, the women of these sectors lack the social recognition needed to make decisions like the criminal complaint against the abuser. In Mexico, access to justice is difficult for women, and even more so for those who depend economically on their partners and lack other resources to subsist. In the institutions of justice, they tend to be re-victimized in various ways (Saucedo and Melgar, 2011). The small hidden resistances help them defend themselves and restore dignity while they uphold the appearance of obedience for the duration of the threat, and above all, while there are no safe ways of openly rebelling:

> Unfortunately, you cannot go complain at the borough, you cannot file a report until you are dying, because they do not pay attention [to you]. (Group of women between 30 and 39, current violence)

It is a fact that the resistance exists, but it is also true that it coexists with the "normalization of domination and violence." And while each time there are more conditions to rebel, like the symbolic power of the law and the dissemination given to the discourse of women's rights, beyond law enforcement not offering real solutions, there are also "reasons" to remain at the aggressor's side to the extent that separation can still lead to family disapproval and ostracism in a context like Mexico's, especially for poor women. Hence, the seeming contradictions or tensions in women's sayings: "if he provides for the home, does not get drunk, and does not hit me, there is nothing to question;" "if he provides for the home, but he also hits me, what should I think?" Or following the line of reasoning we wanted to highlight in this article, "What things am I in a position to do?" This is where we see the coexistence of conflicting ideas in the discourse of the women themselves, like, "it is a crime" vs. "it is your cross," or "I stay with him because of the children" vs. "you do not need a 'bastard' to live." These ambivalent discourses reflect Yount's idea (2011), that "women's conformity to patriarchal kinship as a means to mitigate IPV is a double-edged sword […] it reflects a genuine attempt by women to change gender boundaries in the context of marriage, while minimizing the risk of social and economic backlash" (op. cit., 2011: 55).

We observed that women say enough is enough when their lives are in danger, when no matter how much they "behave" the violence does not diminish or worse, increases, or when they feel socially supported whether through social networks or institutions, including the law, with ways of legitimizing their discontent and their demands. Many women mentioned that awareness of the harm to the children acted as a trigger for them to want to end the relationship.

> You too, because of preconceptions, for love, because you have someone at your side, for everything it represents, you can put up with it and it blinds you. It makes you close up, it makes you close up. But when they touch your children, that's when it gets to you and you become aware of a power you don't have. In my case, for example, there is no work, there is nothing to eat, there is nothing. (Group of women between 30 and 39, past violence)

A dangerous increase of aggression can also serve as a trigger for gaining awareness of violence. It is a "major event" or turning point that coincides with a sudden shift in perceptions of the violence (Arriaga and Capezza, 2005):

> He threw me against a piece of furniture we had and it cut open my head. When I saw the blood, it was a real shock… I acted. I didn't call the patrol car again because the patrol car had come many times and they didn't pay any attention to me. I called the judicial police *[state attorney general's office]*. (Group of women between 20 and 29, past violence)

The women in this study were reticent to the word "feminist," which they associated with media images of the successful, independent, sexually liberated, and potentially "alone" woman in a *machista* society. But they used the discourses at hand to support their idea of dignity as women. In other words, the existence of social discourses that recognize the rights of women can be a key factor in the progression from covert resistance to overt criticism and the taking of concrete actions in daily life.

However, one inescapable condition for advancing an awareness of rights, in addition to the institutions responding, is that the women share their experiences and come out of the isolation that impedes the denaturalization of violence, as the discussion group demonstrated:

> …I think so… if we raise our voices, many of us… they listen to us, but if we stay quiet one after the other … we keep making machos [male chauvinists… and we'll never eliminate them… or we'll never make them think… (Group of women between the ages of 20 and 29, violence in the past)

Conclusions

Through this study we aim to contribute to the analysis of the agency of women in situations of intimate partner violence. We were able to corroborate that "the idea that battered women are helpless and lack agency comes from our understanding of victimization and agency as existing only

in the absence of the other (Mahoney, 1994, cited by Sokoloff and Dupont, 2010: 3). In effect, the dichotomy of victim vs. agent is not the best way to conceptually approach the phenomenon, not only because it does not correspond to the reality of many women, but also because it inhibits the path to the claiming of rights, especially when the notion of victim is associated with helplessness. As we attempted to demonstrate, judging women's agency by its results in terms of divorce or criminal complaints against the abuser is not useful because there can be agency without them, and inversely, divorce can take place without the decision of the woman, as is frequent. In addition, as Hydén points out (1999), the increase of violence can be a sign of greater resistance and not the contrary.

Paradoxically, in a large part of the literature, calling oneself a victim is seen as an indicator of gender awareness, and as the first step to empowerment. The participants in our study did not consider themselves as victims, but they also didn't show themselves defenseless. The capacity to "endure" made the women feel stronger than their partners in many aspects of life. Due to the study's limitations, it is not possible to affirm that not calling themselves victims is an indicator of physical and emotional dependence on the abuser, as Taylor (2002) suggests in her study with black women who maintain the stereotype of "being strong" while they stay in the relationship, and see themselves as victims when they succeed with "disengaging" from the abusers. What we can support is that feeling strong despite everything is a form of agency that allows them to resist. Moreover, the participants did not believe that they deserved the violence, but maintained the normative model of a life given over to family, and explained their partners' violence through frustrations or childhood traumas, which they hoped to "cure" with love. In the discussion groups, nevertheless, while the younger women began to doubt this illusion, the older women had already become disenchanted with it, giving way to different actions, from the criminal complaint and separation, to negotiation or even resignation to "continue enduring" if the circumstances required it. As Goodmark (2012b: 178) has stated, abused women define justice in different ways. For some, justice is criminal punishment, but other women often equate justice with validation (from families and communities of their abuse) and vindication (through the community's condemnation of the abuse). Justice may also mean breaking free of the continued emotional hold that their partners have over their lives, even after the abuse has ended.

Against the idea of "moral or emotional dependency" present in common sense, we analyze the way in which the women recount the motives for their actions; instead of classifying them in terms of agency vs. subordination, we see that emotional, rational, and strategic elements exist, which are not always easy to distinguish. For example, the rejection of divorce has, as simultaneous motives, the need for maintenance, the fear of losing social recognition and

family support, the desire to avoid becoming an object for other men's assault and women's criticism, as well as the illusion of a united family, justified by the needs for the "healthy" development of the children. Thus, the strategic action motivated by immediate interests is sometimes confused with action motivated by values (family, matrimony) and emotional action, making it difficult to distinguish moments of habitus vs. reflexive action. On the other hand, in expressions of self-blame present in sayings like "we're dumb" or "we love too much," we see an internalization of the misogynist discourses, while at the same time it is a justification for "enduring."

The intersectionality approach has allowed us to understand what cultural discourses and structural limits imply for the agency of socially situated women. Those structures are cultural (like the norm of matrimony), and social (the obstacles of gender, ethnicity, and class in the access to justice). These elements modify the value of the family in each case, favoring or reducing the tolerance of violence. While in Mexico the value of family crosses all social strata and holds preeminence over the individual liberties of women, in practice the women in the lower class have even fewer options for social recognition. As Ortner (2014) says, in the modern world "many women may feel that they experience little patriarchal oppression in their personal lives and many other women may feel that a patriarchal family and kinship system offers more benefits than costs." Lower class women in Mexico City have access to discourses on gender equality and women's rights, but they are also exposed to middle class ideals of family and romantic love. This idea is used by the youngest women to show that they are not so traditional by choosing their partner on their own. Love thereby justifies staying in a relationship for material need or even desires for submission, unpopular ideas in the modern urban environment. The older women do not speak of love because after a life of mistreatment they have become disenchanted with it; but they all adhere to family values as a source of social recognition for women. For these women, the majority of whom are housewives, losing "decency" is losing the right to be protected by their extended family, which is sometimes the only social network they can count on. To the extent that all the participants shared similar social and cultural conditions, that is, they were economically dependent on their partners and had low educational levels, their strategies of resistance and bargaining with their aggressors were also similar. As discussed above, however, some minor differences were found in the ways that younger women perceived their situation in comparison with the older ones. Younger women in earlier stages of their relationships and with younger children, tended to express more desires to continue their relationships and also more hope in the changes they could foster in their abusive partners.

The analysis of the women's motives from a more complex concept of agency, allows us to situate the interplay between the reproductive and transformative aspects of action, as well as to observe how this can change in different directions, either through a certain routinization or through the problematization of the experience.

The remaining question is how much potential do these forms of agency have of a rupture with the gender structure. The apparently more conformist position of the younger women leads us to think that, contrary to our first supposition, the new social discourse of gender equality has only offered women a symbolic scope that they use to resist everyday violence, without confronting traditional gender norms. The majority agreed that a good mother and wife did not deserve violence, especially when the husband did not fulfill his role as household provider. They didn't want to "eliminate the machos [male chauvinists]" (in the sense of their obligations), but they did want to "make them think" and change their behavior. The expressions we found in the group discussions of disrespect for the abusers were based precisely on that, upon failing to fulfill their obligations, their masculinity was thrown into doubt, which took away their rights, such as controlling *all* the household money, using them sexually whenever they wanted, deciding who they could see or what activities they could do, or to be attended to, and supported by them at all times.

We can say that the forms of agency found give indications of rupture with some of the rules that govern conjugal relationships, without breaking with the traditional gender model. The discourse of rights functions as an echo that allows them to distance themselves a little from the norms transmitted by their mothers, which suggest that matrimony includes subordination and sometimes violence. The women can "self-develop" themselves, obeying the gender order by being good wives, but sometimes being clever, or "mean" to their husbands when the children require it. Perhaps the life of a separated woman is very hard in this cultural environment, especially in this social class, and this, along with the problems of access to justice, may be the biggest obstacle to the subjective appropriation of rights. At the same time, these women's common attitude toward the feminist discourse, which tends to present itself as an individualist model of feminine empowerment as Fraser suggests (cited by Ortner, 2014), may make them prefer strong social ties – though with this they must withstand violence – to a life they imagine to be solitary. However, if we understand that these compromises, emotions, reflexivity, and action occur in routine practice and not only in moments of open criticism, we can hope that these subtle ruptures will erode the gender system long-term, intentionally or not.

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NOTES

1. According to the last national survey on domestic violence ENDIREH 2016, 78.6% of women who suffered physical and/or sexual violence from their current or last partner, husband or boyfriend, did not search for help or filed a complaint (INEGI, 2017). This same survey shows that in the country, 43.9% of women report violence in their last relationship, with emotional violence being more prevalent (40.1%), followed by economic violence (20.9%), physical violence (17.9%), and lastly sexual violence (6.5%).

2. Even if women who belong to upper social strata are also denied justice or social support and also have to develop some forms of resistance (in current times, Mexican women linked to powerful men or criminals), the most recent version of the national survey on domestic violence (INEGI, 2017) shows again that domestic violence in Mexico is most pervasive in the lower social strata. In their analysis of the ENDIREH 2011, Casique and Castro (2012) had shown that women in lower socioeconomic strata faced 1.3 higher risk of suffering emotional violence and 2.3 higher risk of suffering physical violence, compared with women in higher social strata. Data form the ENDIREH 2016 is still under analysis.

3. This pattern, – different from that known as "situational partner violence" – is characterized by having the goal of controlling and disciplining a woman, to force her to obey the mandates that the traditional model assigns to women (serving the husband and children, fidelity, abnegation, etc.) For this author, while situational violence is not necessarily *gender* violence, intimate terrorism is.

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INTERSECTIONALITY IN THE PRACTICE OF MIXED METHODS GENDER RESEARCH

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ABSTRACT. In this paper I show how to apply intersectionality concepts in the design of empirical research combining quantitative and qualitative methods. I argue that intersectionality concepts can serve as an analytical approach enabling the integration of time and space dimensions, which is key in order to avoid fragmentations or biases from quantitative and qualitative methods. As an example I use my previous research to reformulate a research design for the analysis of the impact of gender and education in the transnational professionalization of IT work. I suggest that the application of intersectionality concepts enriches the practice of mixed research methods as well as the research of gender and work, particularly the transformation of work in digitalizing and globalizing societies. Emphasizing the importance of the research question in methodological decisions, the intersectionality approach can be flexibly adapted to include time and space dimensions, in order to improve gender research in multiple areas of social inquiry.

Keywords: intersectionality; gender research; mixed methods research; research design; work and professionalisation research; transnationalism, processual methods

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Intersectionality and Mixed Methods Research Design

The combination of multiple methods of social research has been debated for a long time and during the 1980s scholars tended to make a rather radical distinction between quantitative and qualitative approaches. Institutions in some countries have also contributed in establishing this distinction (Howe,

2004: 53–54). Moreover, qualitative work was attributed to exploratory approaches whereas quantitative research was linked to confirmatory analysis (Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2003). The distinction also included specific criticisms. Qualitative methods have been criticized due to the lack of generalization of their outputs or the impossibility of reproducing the research, whereas the critics targeting quantitative methods do so in terms of an overly narrow focus on variables without a consideration of the peculiarities of the cases, or in relation to a lack of reflexivity on the part of the researchers during the whole research process.

The number of scholars rejecting radical methods distinctions increased during the 1990s. These scholars frequently debated issues such as the concept of triangulation that emerged in the '70s (e.g. Denzin, 1970; Jick, 1979; Webb et al., 1966; Olsen, 2003) and more broadly methodological pluralism connected to the need for reflexivity in social research (Popa and Guillermin, 2017; Archibald, 2016; Archibald et al., 2015; Creswell, 2016). In particular, the dissemination of the concept of triangulation (Kelle, 2001; Denzin, 2012) increased the interest in mixing quantitative and qualitative methodological traditions. As Olsen defines it, triangulation means the mixing of approaches in order to obtain two or three viewpoints on the topics studied. It aims to increase learning about the contrasts between apparent self-evidence in interviews, underlying messages in lay discourses, and what appears to be generally evident in surveys, and on the differences between these and their official interpretations (Olsen, 2004: 4). More recently, Denzin (2012) has discussed the risks of confounding triangulation with mixed methods. He suggests the use of mixed methods in the service of social justice, in line with suggestions also articulated by other scholars (Hesse-Biber, 2010; Mertens et al., 2016; Morse, 2011). It is particularly in this sense that intersectionality can serve as a basis for combining qualitative and quantitative approaches. Intersectionality as an analytical approach departs from the recognition of the dynamic complexity attached to plural, interrelated inequalities regarding their construction, evolution and impact on social life. To this end, the aim of this paper is to explore how the intersectionality approach, used in gender research but widely ignored in other areas of social inquiry, can provide a basis of convergence for qualitative and quantitative methods. I provide an example of the development of a research design based on intersectionality principles and combining both methods, to underlie potential ideas that can be used in the practice of future research in further areas of social inquiry.

The paper is organized into three parts. In the first part I explain the concept of intersectionality, including the importance of time and space dimensions, and discuss how this concept can be conceived as a basis for the design of mixed methodologies. In the second part I focus on a concrete

empirical example of how to apply this theoretical approach in the practice of mixed-methods research, designed to capture the sequential transnational allocation of employees in jurisdictions existing in a particular period of time during a professionalization processes of IT work. I finally summarize, in the third part, the contribution of this approach, including space and time dimensions, for gender research and other areas of social inquiry.

Intersectionality as basis for designing mixed methodologies research: The importance of time and space

Intersectionality has developed in gender studies during the last two decades as an alternative analytical framework to avoid monolithical perspectives over particular forms of inequalities such as gender or class, and has been widely used in gender research (e.g. Rodríguez et al., 2016). It aims to recognize the interlinked construction and impact of diverse forms of inequality in social life. Basically, intersectionality departs from a conceptualization of plural inequalities, recognizing the complexity regarding their construction, evolution and impact in social life. Inequality categories are understood as dynamic constructions affecting each other simultaneously and mutually in different grades. Intersectionality is a framework and not a completed theory of inequality (Knapp, 2005; Davis, 2008; Anthias, 2012; Kallenberg et al., 2013). The concept's roots are black feminism in the USA and indigenous as well as third world feminism discussions, raised in the context of rejecting frameworks prioritizing particular categories, such as gender in feminism research or race in racism analysis (Collins, 1990; Hooks, 1989; Nash, 2008). Crenshaw coined the term (Crenshaw, 1989). Since then many suggestions have been made to increase the precision and concretization of the concept of intersectionality, particularly for gender research. Whereas some gender scholars emphasize the theoretical potentials of intersectionality (McCall, 2005), others authors focus on its political content (Dhamoon, 2011), or claim it is better to concentrate on methodological innovations and analytical potentials (Hankivsky, 2011, 2010; Wilson, 2013; Hankivsky, 2014), especially for gender research. McCall (2005) distinguishes three main views on intersectionality: an anticategorical questioning processes of categorizations based upon qualitative methods (personal narratives, case studies, etc.); an intracategorical process emphasizing the diversity existing within given categorical groups (where the proposed method for this intersectionality perspective is the focus on marginalized groups); and an intercategorical view, which focuses on the nature of relationships within and between unequal groups. This third perspective uses categories of difference as a departing methodological point. The emphasis on categories in the three perspectives suggested by McCall (2005) has been criticized by some scholars (e.g. Grace, 2010), though others also rely on a "categorical" perspective to develop their

concept of intersectionality. For example, Hancock (2013) has shown, in her conceptual tables, how the relationships between diverse categories could serve as an open template to use in the process of empirical research and analytical discoveries (Hankivsky, 2014). The discussion around whether to use or reject categories remains open. Choo and Ferree (2010) have suggested applying another three perspectives to conceptualize intersectionality: group-centered, process-centered and system-centered. Choo and Ferree (2010) favor the latter for analytical purposes because it looks for processes that are interactive and complex as well as historically determined.

The developed ideas rooted in gender theory and research (Carastathis, 2016; Hill Collins and Bilge, 2016; Winker and Degele, 2009), and in the recognition of the complex realities that both intend to address (McCall, 2005), still have not solved inherent conceptual problems with respect to decisions about relevant categories and adequate levels of analysis, or about the nature of the linkages between categories. Moreover, it is not clear why some categories might be empirically relevant in some contexts or influence other categories simultaneously in different contexts in some moments and not in others. However, intersectionality, in the same vein as triangulation, is not conceived as fixed template for research, but as an approach for understanding social relations, in the case of intersectionality particularly those related to social inequalities. As a foundation for this approach towards understanding evolving and situated contextual constructions and meanings of inequalities in social lives and relations, a conceptual framework is needed. In order to build such a conceptual framework it is firstly necessary to reject the idea that intersectionality is an "all in one" analytical principle. The basic recognition of interrelations between social categorizations within intersectionality can serve as a departing point for designing empirical inquiries about which categories, how, why, for how long and in which particular spaces, become relevant for social relations. These interrelations between social categorizations take place in social spaces and locations as well as in timeframes where social relations emerge and evolve.

Social spaces can be understood as the contexts in which social categorization boundaries are constructed through multiple social relations. It is in these spaces where social categories and their mutual intersections become meaningfully situated and are interpreted, enacted, reproduced and changed from the different perspectives and positions that social actors take in different social times (Ruiz Ben, 2009). When it comes to designing empirical inquiries, this recognition of the different positioning of social actors in different social spaces and times coincides with the triangulation claim for integrating different viewpoints in empirical research. Moreover, the need for situating social relations in time and space makes it necessary to apply quantitative and qualitative methods of social research that enable the analysis

of situated meanings and their change over time or, in other words, interpretative qualitative methods and quantitative methods offering an overview of transformation paths. Recently, Hankivsky et al. (2015) suggested some basic principles of intersectionality that can be useful for empirical inquiries and for the development of mixed methods beyond categorization disputes. These principles are the intersecting of categories, the multilevel nature of analysis, the importance of power, reflexivity, time, and space, and the involvement of diverse knowledge sources (Hankivsky et al., 2015).

Keeping the principles suggested by Hankivsky (2014) in mind, I suggest intersectionality is considered from a broad methodological viewpoint to further concretize the concept as a heuristic methodological design program to be empirically adapted to particularly situated research questions. In this sense intersectionality constitutes an analytical approach to explore situated inquiries about social inequalities framed by dynamic power relations, situated in particular spaces and evolving in time. For this purpose, more than just a combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches is required to empirically apply the analytical approach of intersectionality for the design of research methodologies. The question at this point is also how, where and in which time sequences these methods should be combined. To develop an adequate design, inequality dimensions and their relations to power should be operationalized, clarifying to what extent of time and space we consider their construction processes as well as their effects. This coincides with Olsen's (2004: 5) claims on the development of mixed methods, suggesting a focus on design skills rather than on separated methods. I add to this, agreeing with Havinsky et al. (2012) that the design should integrate time and space dimensions. Anthias (2012) builds the concept of the "translocal" thinking of spatial, political, and economic locations as contextual and temporal, and basically as a spatial, socially constructed set of configurations which extends beyond the physical space (ibid., 103). Contradictory processes that lead subjects to be placed in contradictory social locations on the basis of simultaneous impact of gender, ethnicity and class should be considered (ibid., 107). Intersectionality, as Anthias remarks, has not explored this issue yet. However it is becoming particularly relevant due to extensive growth of migration all over the world and to diverse forms of mobility, including those enabled by digitalization, especially in relation to work (Ruiz Ben, 2013; Huws, 2014). An intersectional and a transnational approach are simultaneously needed to analyze work allocation processes in a global and increasingly digitalized world. The translocal perspective, combined with intersectionality as Anthias proposes, makes reference to the social locations conceptualized as social spaces defined by boundaries and hierarchies, as processes and structures both contradictory and dynamically reinforcing each other.[1] This means that differences and inequalities between subjects are not

characteristics possessed by individuals, but rather sets of processes and configurations (ibid., 108).

The combination of intersectionality with the translocational framework also suggests that contradictory locations may offer parameters to the subjects to potentially open up and transform their situations. In terms of work, the reference to the translocal points at the relational dimension of work in transnational spaces configured by relations of workers, multinationals and international organizations and laws, agreements, treaties, etc. on work, workers' rights, etc. and evolving at the pace of their day-to-day workplace practices, where meanings of social boundaries and hierarchies are enacted. The spatial and time extension and impact of these processes, institutions and structures differ. In empirical terms, this means not only including these operationalized dimensions in the design of the research, but also taking into account the sequentiality of actions in the research design. Should the research begin mapping social structures with quantitative methods or looking at categorizations and meanings by applying qualitative methods? At what point(s) should researchers combine inquiries about social structures and meanings of categorizations?

In the next section I explain how to apply the basic idea of intersectionality (inclusion of space and time dimensions, multilevel analysis, and the intersecting of categories), combining quantitative and qualitative methods in the design of the empirical analysis of transnational professionalisation processes.

The application of an intersectional perspective in the analysis of transnational professionalization processes

As an empirical example to apply intersectional ideas for developing a mixed methods research design, I reformulate my past research about social inequalities in the internationalization of the IT industry (Ruiz Ben, 2013). One of the departing research questions in this finished research* was about the effect of gender and education on the allocation of IT employees in particular work areas of international companies.

As a first step I situate the research in a particular context, defining the space-frame of the professional "ecologies" as the "translocational" in terms of Anthias' (2012) suggestions. The term "ecologies" refers to Abbott's (2005) idea of a set of social relations or interactions between multiple elements, not fully constrained or independent, that comprises three components: actors, locations and relations or "ligations" between actors and locations. Using ecological theory, Abbott emphasizes processes of interaction over preexisting structures in constituting social space.[2]

I argue that work areas are locations that actors attempt to control in translocational ecologies configured by the relations between companies and

employees as well as professional associations in different countries (Ruiz Ben, 2013). I focus the framing of the design on these three actors, though other actors take part as well in the translocational ecologies of IT work, such as the companies' clients or adjacent ecologies like consultancy work. To further consider the multilevel dimensions of the "translocational" professionalization processes in IT work, I focus on the following levels and dimensions:

-National (Germany) and international levels (Eastern European countries): (National and international IT related education, national work–family balance policies, IT labor market, IT professional associations, IT professionalism discourses.
-Company level: work areas, education requirements, recruitment practices, IT professionalism discourses, careers and career support policies, work-family balance policies, retention, return to work policies.
-Employee level: education, age, gender, national mobility, social, work, company, career, family, household, children, IT professionalism discourses.

Germany constitutes the departing translocal spatial scope because the research project was conceived to analyze the patterns of the internationalization of the German IT industry. This is also the reason for the selection of the translocal places Poland and Slovenia. Interviews with some project managers in German IT companies revealed that the most frequent destinations for project co-operations cited were these two countries.

The empirical application of an intersectionality perspective requires the inclusion of time in the design methodology. This dimension refers to sequentiality (Abbott, 2016) of events in social relations and in the considered geographical and social spaces. As Abbott (2016: 27 ff.) explains, our experiences have a particular order in which one event happens after another and through which we develop habits over time. Thus, in the research design I consider the past and present allocation experiences of employees in international companies.

Time Frames

I apply a retrospective view for the operationalization of indicators that will be firstly explored through secondary sources. The aim is to capture the sequential allocation of employees in jurisdictions existing in a particular period of time of professionalization processes in IT work. I have selected different timeframes at the three levels of research: two decades at the national level, company history since its foundation (after the 1990s) and fifteen years at the level of employees. The indicators at the national level should show

how IT work and related IT professionalism discourses, as well as education, care, and work-life family policies, have evolved since the IT industry internationalization boom began in the nineteen nineties due to the increased ability to offshore tasks. Within these national scenarios and timeframes, multinational companies have played a major role in the professionalization of IT work. At the research level of the companies, the focus is on the development of IT work jurisdictions and careers, as well as the demand for qualifications and skills. Moreover, the institutionalized care, work-life balance, and mobility policies in the time period since the foundation of the companies (after the 1980s) will be explored through document analysis. At the interaction level of the employees the time-frame is reduced to fifteen years in order to reconstruct the possible intergenerational differences related to education, IT work and career trajectories. At this level, the reconstruction of the employees' allocation in jurisdictional fields using secondary sources will be contrasted with the present experiences and narratives histories of employees (men and women with different educational backgrounds and located in different international companies).

Sample

Taking professionalization of IT work in the "translocational" spaces defined above as a departing point, the sample for the analysis of the processes that led IT employees to be placed in particularly professional jurisdictions should include the actors contributing to creating and establishing these professional spaces. Company managers, professional associations and educational institutions play important roles in this process. However the IT professionals themselves working in the professional jurisdictions, "make sense" of the process in their day-to-day working practices in different locations. How the professional jurisdictions "make sense" for the employees and how the meanings of these jurisdictions are related to gender are questions to be addressed with a qualitative approach including interviews, workplace observations and focus groups. The research concentrates on employees from selected multinational companies working in their nation of origin and those who are working in other companies' locations for a time period during the 15 years considered as the time framework for the analysis at the employee level. Within these two groups the sample selection should take into account the balance between men and women. In order to ensure a sample with representativeness and validity, the selection of the sample should be decided once the information about participation in the different work areas and career levels is available.

Indicators and Qualitative Materials: Mixed Methods

To understand how employees are connected to work in translocational IT spaces, quantitative indicators are needed, but also an approach to the particular meaning that the actors attach to work. Whereas the indicators give us an overview of the situations and the structures and dynamics of the contexts, the semantics of these situations emerge through people's interactions during their day-to-day practices and through their mobility decisions and the meanings they attribute to them along their life-events that can be captured with qualitative methods. To gain information about the semantics of the work locations and the links between people and their work, a number of methods can be employed: interviews with managers and employees; group discussions about the nature of work and how it has changed as the companies have developed into international arenas; discussions about employees' career trajectories, their entry, mobility and progression in the translocational spaces; and the interpretation of the work structures and chances (as expectations) of both managers and employees. Gender categorizations will be examined departing from the narratives of the interviews, looking at the experiences of women and men, their interpretations about ligations to work and to the events in terms of education and work mobility. Here the researchers will focus on how education and gender use different forms of categorization and control. Following Nash (2008: 13) these categories (gender and education) should be analyzed as a co-constitutive process as well as distinctive and historically specific technologies of categorization. Moreover, the way in which they become relevant in the different spaces considered for the analysis should also be analyzed.

Interviews and focus groups with representatives of the companies, about the outputs of quantitative analysis of work allocations, served to capture the interpretation of gender and education differences in terms of work allocations at the company level as well. Further, the analysis of documents about professionalism in the different locations of the selected companies, as well as from professional associations at the international and national level, will show the "sedimentation" of the professionalization process and its institutionalization. How relevant are these institutional "sediments" of professionalization for the actors in the translocational ecologies as well as beyond theses spaces is an issue to be investigated in the interviews and focus groups. Due to the rapid changes characterizing the IT industry, long-term institutionalized discourses of professionalism are supposedly weak in the path of professionalization of IT work. However, at the level of the companies, the discourses of professionalism might be linked to the particular employment policies that affect gender, age, educational background or nationality categorizations. At this level, professionalism discourses can serve as an "appeal"

(Evetts, 2011) to justify and "signify" the need for employees to be self-disciplined and, through their practices, prioritize their company's targets over personal circumstances. This then contributes to creating categorizations privileging those employees who can mobilize more resources (time, knowledge, information, social contacts, etc.). In these terms, professionalism discourses at the company level can indicate what type of employees are expected for what kind of work in particular locations, or in other words the institutionalization of professional expectations. Again, their relevance for the employees' decisions on professional, work and career mobility should be an issue for interviews and focus groups.

Table 1 Processual combination of quantitative and qualitative methods

	1st Phase	2nd Phase	3rd Phase	4th Phase	5th Phase	6th Phase
Quantitative	1st Data analysis (work trajectories companies' employees)	Inter-views design (sample and themes)		2nd Data analysis (hypo-thesis generated from interviews analysis)	Combination of 1st and 2nd analysis	Combination of Data analysis and Interviews + Focus groups
Qualitative	Document analysis (work policies)	Interviews design (themes)	Interviews and workplace observations	Analysis of interviews (sample and themes for focus groups)	Focus groups	

Table 1 summarizes the processual combination of quantitative and qualitative methods proposed for the intersectional analysis of the professionalization of IT work. In a first phase, company data and documents from the selected companies are analyzed to design the focus themes of the interviews and the sample in phase two. During the third phase, the researchers conduct the fieldwork that will be analyzed in the fourth phase, through interviews and workplace observations. This analysis serves to generate new hypotheses for a second analysis of the companies' data as well as for producing a guide with themes to discuss in focus groups. During a fifth phase the previously conducted analysis of the quantitative data will be combined and the focus groups will take place. In the sixth phase the results of the interview and focus group analyses are contrasted and connected to the outputs of the combined data analysis made in the fifth phase.

This design allows one to prove the validity of qualitative outputs along the different phases of research including perspectives of different actors, but also from different spaces and moments in time. At the same time, the outputs from quantitative analysis can be contrasted with interpretations

from actors in the research field, allowing reinterpretations and new inquiries into the data.

Intersectional Perspective in Practice: Linking the Impact of Several Dimensions through Empirical Design

Once the location and time perspectives, as well as the indicators and qualitative materials, have been defined for operationalization purposes, the intersectional perspective should be applied in the practice of the empirical research. This means combining the analysis of the selected dimensions at the different research levels in order to discover possible interlinked influences on the connection of persons to IT work. Grace (2014) emphasizes four main aspects to consider in the research design applying intersectionality concepts: timing, weighting, mixing and theorizing. Timing refers to the questions of whether the data would be collected sequentially, at once or longitudinally. Weighting deals with the combination of qualitative and quantitative methods, whether one approach is more heavily focused on or whether they are equally balanced. Mixing refers to how the approaches are combined. The last point is related to the way of interpreting the results and extracting theoretical conclusions from them. All these aspects are nonetheless always dependent on specific research questions. In the case study used in this paper, the idea is to explore allocation of employees along the professionalization process of IT work. A processual design (retrospective and prospective) is thus the most appropriate time perspective in which to capture this process. Moreover, related to weighting, the proposed approach does not privilege quantitative or qualitative inquiries. The idea is for each perspective to enrich the analysis in complementary ways, as suggested with the triangulation approach. This also means an increase in the scope, the depth and the consistency of the methodology, including a processual perspective and considering time as a process of cumulative validation and as a means to create a more complete picture of the phenomena to be explored (Flick, 1998: 230ff.).

Discussion and Conclusions

In this paper I have shown how the basic ideas of intersectionality (inclusion of space and time dimensions, multilevel analysis, and the intersecting of categories) can be applied in the practice of mixed methods research. Moving beyond methodological disputes between qualitative and quantitative approaches, I have suggested combining these ontologies through a research design asserting the centrality of the research question(s) in every investigation. I depart from the assumption that social categorizations are interrelated

in space and time in a continuous process through which they can change and contradict each other in different locations and time moments. The basic ideas of intersectionality coincide with some assumptions of mixed methods research about considering multiple perspectives in research methodologies. They also include the notion of change and transformation of social relations and structures. This is particularly important for the analysis of work and professionalisation which I have used as an example for applying intersectionality ideas to combine quantitative and qualitative methods. As a theoretical basis for this example I draw on processual assumptions of Abbott's (2005) theory of linked ecologies. This theoretical framework is particularly fruitful for the development of mixed methods and also shares some crucial assumptions of intersectionality about change and relationality of social relations. In particular, the research into employment can benefit from the framework. In this paper I have moved forward to connect the sociology of work with spatial notions of economic geography and to addressed multiple linked identities that workers bring to work in multiple linked ecologies, which employers then seek to control with diverse and increasingly pervasive techniques. Empirically the sociology of work has rarely used mixed methods. It has mostly applied qualitative techniques such as discourse analysis, generally embedded in a social constructionist ontology, to research these related identities and the control of work at the micro-level of the individual workplace (Baldry et al., 2007), particularly inspired by Foucault's ideas. In contrast, studies at the macro level of the economy have generally used quantitative methods and focused on employment surveys (e.g. Gallie, 2007). Questions about the connections between different occupations and tasks in emerging transnational spaces, their differentiation and categorizations requiring the use of multiple research perspectives and cross-validations have been neglected.

I have shown how a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods can be designed, proving in several phases the cross-validity, assumptions, and interpretations of the analysis. This also implies the reflections of the researchers themselves about their expectations in the field and their role in relation to their informants. For this purpose, focus groups are included in the last phases of the research as an additional cross-validity source for the analyzed materials. Further, following Grace (2014), timing, weighting, mixing and theorizing should be considered for the concrete applications of the research design. This brings us back to the beginning, or rather to the aim of the research. Every decision about the design and its concrete application is always dependent on the primary research question that the researchers want to investigate. At this point, intersectionality, as well as mixed methods and processual ideas, constitute basic assumptions for approaching social problems and are not an "all in one" analytical template. In this paper I have

shown how to apply these assumptions in the design of research combining mixed methods, limited to a question about the professionalisation of work. However, the flexibility of the intersectional analytical approach allows this application to be expanded into other areas of social research.

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NOTES

1. Anthias explains in relation to the "translocational": "Translocational denotes the ways in which social locations are products of particular constellations of social relations, and in terms of relationality and experience at determinate points in time, it considers them within a spatial and temporal context" (Anthias, 2012: 108).

2. See Liu and Emirbayer (2016) for a discussion about the differences and commonalities between the concepts of ecology and field in social theory.

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BIVARIATE ANALYSIS OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PARTNERS' EXPERIENCE OF SPOUSAL VIOLENCE AND SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES

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ABSTRACT. Bivariate analysis was applied to spousal violence data collected from the Demographic and Health Surveys for Nigeria and Zambia in order to examine the contribution made by selected demographic variables to spousal violence severity. Spousal violence was conceptualized to mean physical, emotional, sexual and other forms of violence. We took a sample of currently married/cohabiting women from age 20 to 44 years because spousal violence is reported as very common in the identified age range. Based on the analysis, we found that women's age, types of marriage union and literacy level in the selected countries did not relate to sexual violence component of the spousal violence. However, age at first marriage, occupational level, wealth index and residence were found to relate significantly to spousal violence among women in both countries. Theoretical and policy implications of the findings were discussed.

Keywords: gender; occupation; poverty index; spousal violence; wealth index

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Introduction

Studies on spousal violence and its psychological effects have increased globally. The incident is generally assumed to have socio-economic costs, reproductive and health effects as well as negative consequences on societies (Ellsberg et al., 2008). In this study, spousal violence refers to an act of violence that consists of physical, emotional, sexual and other forms of violence, and especially, violence against women (UNFPA, 1998). We argue that spousal violence derives from unequal power relationships between man and woman, and it is normally targeted at women usually considered to be second in importance in the family structure within the African contexts. Spousal violence may take the form of sexual abuse, assault, harassment or rape, undermining, negligence, women or girl trafficking, harmful traditional practices and other human rights violation. The psychological effects of experiencing violence has been found to cause more injury than the actual physical violence because such abuses tend to leave deep psychological scars which may eventually result to death in some instances (Ellsberg et al., 2008).

Violence against women is not new as such, but it is an increasing and on-going global malaise that needs to be tacked by scholars, researchers, activists and practitioners. Yet, this relatively sensitive phenomenon is almost universally under-reported (Krug et al., 2002; Watts & Zimmerman, 2002). Studies on spousal violence suggest that African women suffer the same fate, if not more, as women in other continents (Watts & Zimmerman, 2002; Howard, 2012). Useful as these findings are, they do not indicate in profound ways the relationships between partners' experience of spousal violence and specific socio-demographic variables.

The general thinking among women and men in Africa is that only very serious acts of gender-based violence should be of concern and reported to authorities while it is not necessary for less severe instances to be reported. This culture of silence only serves to condone such practices and create a less critical attitude towards it (Mamimine et al., 2007). The attitude of men and women towards gender-based violence in Africa is poor in many cases (Howard, 2012). In their study, Yigzaw et al. (2010) found that the general acceptability of violence in marriages informs why Africans cannot seem to avoid such conflicts and this makes it difficult to reject spousal violence.

In Zambia, spousal violence is a widespread problem like in many other parts of Africa, and it is, typically, perpetrated by men. CARE (2013) recorded that Zambia has one of the highest rates of spousal violence in the world. It takes the forms of battery, domestic violence, murder, sexual abuse and exploitation, rape, early/child marriage, property grabbing, widow inheritance and economic discrimination and so on (National Action Plan on Gender-based Violence, 2008). The 2013–2014 Zambia Demographic Health Sur-

vey on spousal violence suggests that ever-married women are more likely to experience physical violence than those who never married (Mwaba, 2016). The outcomes of the same survey also indicated that women living in urban areas are slightly more likely than women living in rural areas to have experienced physical violence since age 15 (Mwaba, 2016; Wekwete et al., 2004).

Regrettably, documented literature and data on spousal violence against women in Nigeria is insufficient for an inclusive policy framework. The reason for this may be the tendency to under report or failure to record incidences and prevalence of this phenomenon in the country (Fawole et al., 2008). However, the National Population Commission (NPC) and ICF International (2014) data of Nigeria's Demographic and Health Survey (2013) on the prevalence of forms of violence against women indicates that lifetime physical and/or sexual partner violence is 16% while child marriage is 43% (Jekayinfa, 2011; UNICEF, 2016). Thus, we observed that Nigeria is not free from reported incidences of spousal violence.

Generally, spousal violence is not caused by a single factor but a combination of interrelated factors (Kyriacou et al., 1999). An understanding of these multilevel factors is important for this study. Thus, this study adopts the "ecological framework" developed by Heise, which distinguishes risk factors at four levels: the individual, the relationship, the community and the societal level (Heise et al., 1999). These factors are associated with an increased likelihood that an individual will become a victim or a perpetrator of violence. At the individual level, there are biological factors and personal history or record that may increase the risk of violence. Among such factors are low level of education, early marriage and low-income or economic status. These dynamics are related as risk factors for both experiencing and perpetrating partner violence. Studies show that most men that are involved in violent acts against women were abused when they were children (Baker et al., 2008). It has been argued that sexual or physical violence may result in future perpetuation of violence because individuals "learn" at a young age that such actions are acceptable and tolerable behaviors (Bandura, 1977; Button, 2008; Black et al., 2011). Studies have also shown a strong correlation between the attitude of men (perpetrators) and women (victims) perceiving violence and their exposure to spousal violence as acceptable behavior (UNFPA, 2011).

Similarly, close relationship to peers, family members and spouse has been suggested as a contributing factor to the risk of spousal violence. This is linked to low marital satisfaction between spouses and continuous disagreement as well as differences in education status may contribute to spousal violence. It has been reported that men with or requiring multiple partners are more likely to perpetrate partner violence or sexual violence (Dunkle et

al., 2004; García-Moreno, 2013). The same thing may apply to the male spouse who engages in drinking alcohol (Ondeko & Purdin, 2004). Alcohol use by partner was found to be positively associated with partner violence and physical injury (Koenig et al., 2003; Jewkes & Abrahams, 2002; Moraes & Reichenheim, 2002; White & Chen, 2002; Testa, 2002).

Community-level factors usually refer to social relationships at the school, church, workplace or neighborhood. Studies have shown that communities that reported the lowest levels of partner and sexual violence are those where women had family support and there are sanctions against violence (García-Moreno, 2013). Although sexual violence cuts across all socio-economic groups, studies found that women living in poverty are disproportionately affected (Otoo-Oyortey & Pobi, 2003; Bamiwuye & Odimegwu, 2014). However, poverty might just be an indicator for other social variables or conditions that combine to increase the risk factor faced by women. Nevertheless, a woman living in poverty that goes out to lonely and isolated farmlands to eke out a living is exposed to a higher risk of rape.

At the society-level, cultural and social principles or norms that influence gender roles as well as the unequal distribution of power between the wife and husband based on intergenerational transfer of patriarchal culture may explain spousal violence. Previous studies (Basu, 2006; Gidycz et al., 2007) suggest that there is a likelihood of partner violence happening in societies where the husband assumes all economic and decision-making powers in the household. Indeed, culture bestows upon the man, the garb of a king that must be obeyed at all times by his wife. Researches on attitudes to sex within marriage suggest that rates of partner violence may be higher in settings where violent behavior towards spouse is considered normal and when marriage is seen to grant men unconditional sexual access to their wives (Heise et al., 1999; García-Moreno et al., 2015). This often, is used as a justifiable use of sexual violence and further increases the risk of rape in household conflict and post-conflict situations (UNFPA, 2011). There is also the belief that the number of children a man has is equated to wealth (Mitsunaga et al., 2005; Tertilt, 2005). However, several studies indicate that the risk of experiencing violence is positively associated with the number of children women have (Ellsberg, 2000).

To a great extent, the discourse on the bivariate analysis of the relationship between partners' experience of spousal violence and selected socio-demographic variables remain weak, especially in Nigeria and Zambia. Much of the available studies on the phenomenon seem to zero in on the risk factors such as multiple partners (García-Moreno, 2013), number of children (Ellsberg, 2000), that could lead to spousal violence, with insufficient attention on the link socio-demographic variables and spousal violence. Therefore,

this study examined the relationship between demographic variables and spousal violence in Nigeria and Zambia.

Theoretical Framework

This study is based on the conflict, social dominance and feminist theories. The trust of the conflict theory suggests that men, as the dominant gender, subordinate women in order to maintain power and privilege in society (Robinson & Schwartz, 2004; Boundless, 2016). From a sociological perspective, the conflict theory affirms that some of the problems in our social milieu today arise when dominant groups mistreat subordinate ones, thereby bringing about advocacy for a balance of power (Sidanius & Pratto, 2011).

The social dominance theory, on the other hand, focuses on both individual and structural dynamics that contribute to different types of group-based oppression. The theory posits that group-based oppression is driven by systematic institutional (e.g. marriage practices) and individual discrimination where individuals assuming power disproportionately allocate to themselves and others, desired good like prestige, wealth, power, food, and health care while directing undesirable things or behaviors like disdain to less powerful people (Sidanius, & Pratto, 2004).

The feminist theory claims that the victims of spousal violence are mainly women while the perpetrators are men. This position is largely driven by scholars, activists and practitioners in the vanguard of the growth and evolution of spousal violence. However, family violence researchers have also argued that women are as aggressive as men, or even more aggressive in committing spousal violence against their partners (Hindin et al., 2008; White et al., 2000). Interestingly, there seem to be a gradual shift from the old paradigm core definition of spousal violence with its antecedents of humanitarian preventive and response to violence against women in conflict settings. However, much of the evidenced based argument in this debate is rooted in developed countries as against the patriarchal culture of developing countries like Nigeria and Zambia.

The Current Study

This study was designed to (a) identify the risk factors associated with spousal violence in the contexts studied, and (b) determine the statistical strength of the risk factors associated with spousal violence.

Methods

This study relied mainly on the Demographic and Health Survey Data for Nigeria (2013) and Zambia (2015). A sample of currently married/cohabiting women from age 20 to 44 years was considered. This is as a result of the fact that this sample comprises of currently married women, who are within the age range of women who potentially experience spousal violence. The demographic variables are: age of women (20–24, 25–29, 30–34, 35–39, 40–44 years), type of marriage union (married or living with a partner),[1] age at first birth (under 20, 20 years and above), education (no education, primary, secondary, higher), occupation (not working, agricultural jobs, non-agricultural jobs); wealth index (poorest, poorer, middle, richer, richest) and place of residence (urban and rural) were the socio-demographic variables identified for this study. They were also held as independent variables in the multivariate analysis.

The dependent variables are the various forms of physical and sexual abuse as recorded in the DHS data. Physical abuse was further categorized into "less severe violence" and "severe violence." Less severe physical abuse have been defined here to include being pushed, shook or had something thrown at, slapped, kicked or dragged or had arm twisted or hair pulled. Severe physical abuse was defined as being kicked or dragged, strangled or burnt and threatened with a knife/gun or any other weapon. Various forms of sexual abuse were defined as being forced into unwanted sex, forced into other unwanted sexual acts and physically forcing a partner for sexual act.

Data analysis was executed at two levels; namely, univariate, and bivariate using simple frequency distributions, proportions, cross tabulations and logistic regression. The general strategy in this research is to investigate the relationship between the socio-demographic variables and some dependent variables that are used to measure spousal violence. Violence types are categorized into two here: physical and sexual violence.

Bivariate analysis is based on Chi-square test with contingency table. The Chi-square test statistic is given as:

$$\chi^2 = \sum_{i=1,}^{r} \sum_{j=1}^{c} \left[\frac{\left(O_{ij} - E_{ij}\right)^2}{E_{ij}} \right]$$

Where r is the number of rows and c is the number of columns in the cross-tabulation/contingency table. The degree of freedom *(df)* is then calculated as $df = (r - 1)\ (c - 1)$, and critical level for the acceptance/rejection of the test is given as a Chi-square distribution based on the degree of freedom. The results are provided hereunder.

Results

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics on the variables in the study. For both countries (Nigeria and Zambia), age of women were fairly distributed across the samples except for age bracket 40–44 years that are represented with lowest proportion (8% and 12.6%). Proportion of legally married partners is 97% and 99% in Nigeria and Zambia, respectively, and this indicates the level of awareness and importance of legal marriages in the two countries. Based on age at first marriage, we observed that 68.9% of those women under the age of 20 years have experienced on form of physical or sexual abuse in Nigeria, while 72% have experienced this in Zambia, within the same age range. Above the age 20 years, 31% in Nigeria and 28% in Zambia of the women who married above 20 years have experienced physical or sexual abuse in Nigeria, while 27.6% of the women above 20 years have experienced such crises. In Nigeria, 43% of the women have no education while in Zambia, 11% have no education. Whilst 8% of the women have higher education in Nigeria, 4.9% of the women have higher education in Zambia. More of the women in Nigeria have very lucrative non-agricultural job (59.8%), while in Zambia, 29.2% of the women have non-agricultural job. Women without any kind of jobs in Nigeria are about 28% while in Zambia, this is about 38%. Based on wealth index, this is fairly distributed from poorest level to richest level in both countries. In the sample, 65.4% of the women are from rural area in Nigeria while 59.8% in Zambia.

Table 1 Socio-demographic statistics

Variable		**Nigeria**		**Zambia**
	Number	**%**	**Number**	**%**
Age of Women				
20-24	1659	22.0	1246	19.9
25-29	2280	30.3	1613	25.8
30-34	1685	22.4	1474	23.6
35-39	1307	17.3	1131	18.1
40-44	603	8.0	790	12.6
Marital Status				
Married	7305	97.0	6208	99.3
Living with a partner	229	3.0	46	0.7
Age at first Marriage				
Under 20 years	5193	68.9	4525	72.4
20 years and above	2341	31.1	1729	27.6
Education				
No Education	3245	43.1	694	11.1
Primary	1544	20.5	3502	56.0
Secondary	2130	28.3	1750	28.0
Higher	615	8.2	308	4.9
Literacy				
Cannot read at all	4073	54.1	2648	42.3
Able to read only a part of a sentence	552	7.3	634	10.1

Able to read whole sentence	2907	38.6	2972	47.5
Occupation				
Not working	2132	28.3	2343	37.5
Agricultural work	897	11.9	2085	33.3
Non-agricultural work	4505	59.8	1826	29.2
Wealth Index				
Poorest	1615	21.4	1171	18.7
Poorer	1559	20.7	1407	22.5
Middle	1361	18.1	1382	22.1
Richer	1462	19.4	1276	20.4
Richest	1537	20.4	1018	16.3
Residence				
Urban	2603	34.6	2514	40.2
Rural	4931	65.4	3740	59.8

Table 2 presents the responses of the women on the dependent variables, that is, their responses on physical and sexual abuse. 93.6% and 85.8% of the women, in Nigerian and Zambia, respectively reported that they have never been pushed, shook or had something thrown at before, implying that 6.4% and 14.2% of the women in both countries have had one or more encounter of the physical abuse. 87% and 66% reported not being slapped in the two countries, respectively, while 97% and 89% reported that they have never been punched with fist or hit by something harmful before. Results on Table 2 further indicate that more than 80% of the women reported that they have never had any form of physical or sexual abuse.

Table 2 Proportion of the types of physical and sexual abuse experienced

Variable	**Nigeria**	**Zambia**
Ever been pushed, shook or had something thrown by husband/partner:		
Never	93.6	85.8
Often	0.7	1.9
Sometimes	3.8	7.5
Yes, but not in the last 12 months	1.7	4.5
Yes, but frequent in the last 12 months	0.1	0.2
Ever been slapped by husband/partner:		
Never	87.2	66.1
Often	1.3	3.5
Sometimes	6.9	15.9
Yes, but not in the last 12 months	4.4	14.2
Yes, but frequent in the last 12 months	0.2	0.3
Ever been punched with fist or hit by something harmful by husband/partner:		
Never	97.0	89.4
Often	0.5	1.8
Sometimes	1.6	5.5
Yes, but not in the last 12 months	0.8	3.2
Yes, but frequent in the last 12 months	0.1	0.1
Ever been kicked or dragged by husband/partner:		
Never	95.0	89.7
Often	0.6	1.9
Sometimes	3.0	5.3

Yes, but not in the last 12 months	1.4	3.0
Yes, but frequent in the last 12 months	0.0	0.1
Ever been strangled or burnt by husband/partner:		
Never	99.5	96.5
Often	0.1	0.6
Sometimes	0.3	2.1
Yes, but not in the last 12 months	0.1	0.7
Yes, but frequent in the last 12 months	0.0	0.1
Ever been threatened with knife/gun or other weapon by husband/partner:		
Never	99.5	98.1
Often	0.0	0.5
Sometimes	0.4	1.0
Yes, but frequent in the last 12 months	0.0	0.0
Ever been physically forced into unwanted sex by husband/partner:		
Never	95.7	84.5
Often	0.5	4.2
Sometimes	2.8	9.5
Yes, but not in the last 12 months	0.9	1.5
Yes, but frequent in the last 12 months	0.0	0.1
Ever been forced into other unwanted sexual acts by husband /partner:		
Never	98.7	96.1
Often	0.1	1.1
Sometimes	0.9	2.3
Yes, but not in the last 12 months	0.2	0.3
Yes, but frequent in the last 12 months	0.1	0.1
Ever had arm twisted or hair pulled by husband/partner:		
Never	97.4	91.8
Often	0.4	1.3
Sometimes	1.7	4.2
Yes, but not in the last 12 months	0.5	2.7
Yes, but frequent in the last 12 months	0.0	0.1
Ever been physically forced to perform sexual acts you did not want to do by husband/partner:		
Never	98.2	93.4
Often	0.1	1.8
Sometimes	1.4	4.0
Yes, but not in the last 12 months	0.2	0.8
Yes, but frequent in the last 12 months	0.0	0.1
Experienced any less severe violence:		
No	85.8	63.0
Yes	14.2	37.0
Experienced any severe violence:		
No	94.6	88.3
Yes	5.4	11.7
Experienced any sexual violence:		
No	95.1	83.5
Yes	4.9	16.5

Looking at the last three variables in Table 2 where the women were asked their general experienced on less severe violence, severe violence and sexual

violence, we found that, in Nigeria, 85.8% of the women have not experienced any less severe violence, while 63% have also not experienced any less severe violence in Zambia. In Nigeria, 94.6% have not experienced severe violence, while 88% have not experienced severe violence in Zambia. On sexual violence as defined by the DHS data, 95.1% have not experienced sexual violence in Nigeria, while 83.3% have not experienced sexual violence in Zambia.

Table 3 presents the results of bivariate analysis between the three last variables on experiences of women of physical and sexual abuse (in Table 2) on one hand, and with socio-demographic variables on the other hand for the case of Nigeria.

Table 3 Relationship between partner's experience of violence (physical and sexual) and socio-demographic variables (Nigeria)

	Less severe violence			Severe violence			Sexual violence		
Variable	**No**	**Yes**	x^2	**No**	**Yes**	x^2	**No**	**Yes**	x^2
Age of women:									
20–24	89.5	10.5	26.07***	96.5	3.5	17.24***	95.8	4.2	4.43
25–29	86.0	14.0		94.8	5.2		95.0	5.0	
30–34	83.3	16.7		93.1	6.9		94.5	5.5	
35–39	85.2	14.8		94.4	5.6		95.7	4.3	
40–44	82.9	17.1		93.3	6.7		94.2	5.8	
Marital Status:									
Married	86.3	13.7	34.80***	94.9	5.1	24.03***	95.1	4.9	0.07
Living with a partner	71.9	28.1		87.1	12.9		94.8	5.2	
Age at first marriage:									
Under 20 years	86.5	13.5	4.62***	95.0	5.0	2.91**	94.7	5.3	5.69***
20 years and above	84.5	15.5		93.9	6.1		96.1	3.9	
Education:									
No education	91.9	8.1	184.7***	98.2	1.8	139.3***	95.8	4.2	14.36***
Primary	78.4	21.6		90.3	9.7		93.5	6.5	
Secondary	81.0	19.0		92.0	8.0		94.8	5.2	
Higher	92.7	7.3		97.6	2.4		97.2	2.8	
Literacy:									
Cannot read at all	88.6	11.4	38.60***	95.9	4.1	20.27***	95.2	4.8	0.75
Able to read only part of sentence	81.5	18.5		94.1	5.9		94.3	5.7	
Able to read whole sentence	83.3	16.7		41.1	53.3		95.1	4.9	
Occupation:									
Not working	90.2	9.8	149.2***	97.3	2.7	97.31***	95.9	4.1	34.82***
Agricultural work	71.4	28.6		87.3	12.7		90.7	9.3	

Non-agricultural work	60.3	56.5		94.8	5.2		95.7	4.3	
Wealth Index:									
Poorest	90.0	10.0	26.42***	98.0	2.0	34.97***	94.1	5.9	27.25***
Poorer	84.8	15.2		94.3	5.7		93.7	6.3	
Middle	84.4	15.6		94.4	5.6		94.3	5.7	
Richer	83.4	16.6		93.0	7.0		95.6	4.4	
Richest	22.6	21.3		93.6	6.4		97.6	2.4	
Residence:									
Urban	85.3	14.7	0.93	93.7	6.3	5.57***	96.7	3.3	18.96***
Rural	86.2	13.8		95.2	4.8		94.2	5.8	

***, ** indicate significance of Chi-square tests at 5% and 10% levels.

The dependent variables form the columns of bivariate analysis in Table 3, while the socio-demographic variables form the rows. We present Chi-square test with rejection probability at 5% level which determines the significance of the test. We found that both levels of physical violence are significantly related to the age of the women. Thus, it implies that maturity in terms of age of the women maters when it comes to physical violence, but sexual violence does not have significant relationship with age of the women. This implies that when it comes to sexual act, age is not a determining factor as long as the partners are sexually active.

Higher proportion of those women that live with their partners experiences both levels of physical violence (28.1%, 12.9%), as against lower proportion experienced by the legally married partners (13.7%, 5.1%). Also, sexual violence is found not to be significant with marital status. Age at first marriage significantly determine both physical and sexual violence as indicated by the significance of the chi-square test at 5% level. Similarly, level of education had significant relationship between forms of violence. It is surprising to observe that those mothers with no education and higher educational levels in Nigeria experience lesser forms of partner abuse as compared to their counterparts with primary and secondary education. Literacy level is also found to significantly influence physical abuse but this does not influence sexual abuse. Occupational level and wealth index are also major factor influencing sexual abuse in Nigeria. On types of residence, sexual violence is related to residence types.

Table 4 Relationship between partner's experience of violence (physical and sexual) and socio-demographic variables (Zambia)

	Less severe violence			**Severe violence**			**Sexual violence**		
Variable	**No**	**Yes**	x^2	**No**	**Yes**	x^2	**No**	**Yes**	x^2
Age of women:									
20–24	65.0	35.0	3.23	90.1	9.9	13.96***	84.2	15.8	2.01
25–29	62.1	37.9		88.7	11.3		84.0	16.0	
30–34	63.2	36.8		89.0	11.0		83.2	16.8	

35–39	62.4	37.6		86.1	13.9		82.1	17.9	
40–44	61.6	38.4		85.2	14.8		83.9	16.1	
Marital Status:									
Married	63.0	37.0	0.04	88.4	11.6	4.56***	83.6	16.4	2.13
Living with a partner	62.5	37.5		77.5	22.5		75.0	25.0	
Age at First Marriage:									
Under 20 years	60.2	39.8	50.15***	87.4	12.6	10.63***	82.7	17.3	6.59***
20 years and above	70.7	29.3		90.7	9.3		85.7	14.3	
Education:									
No education	63.4	36.6	36.27***	89.4	10.6	11.05***	83.6	16.4	20.07***
Primary	60.5	39.5		87.3	12.7		81.9	18.1	
Secondary	65.6	34.4		89.0	11.0		85.9	14.1	
Higher	78.4	21.6		93.9	6.1		90.5	9.5	
Literacy:									
Cannot read at all	60.8	39.2	11.75***	87.6	12.4	5.80**	82.5	17.5	3.62
Able to read only part of sentence	61.6	38.4		86.5	13.5		85.1	14.9	
Able to read whole sentence	65.4	34.6		89.4	10.6		84.2	15.8	
Occupation:									
Not working	67.2	32.8	28.08***	89.7	10.3	7.96***	88.0	12.0	52.12***
Agricultural work	59.1	40.9		88.1	11.9		79.6	20.4	
Non-agricultural work	62.1	37.9		86.7	13.3		82.2	17.8	
Wealth Index:									
Poorest	60.0	40.0	16.75***	86.1	13.9	13.72***	81.4	18.6	37.22***
Poorer	63.5	36.5		88.6	11.4		82.3	17.7	
Middle	60.8	39.2		88.0	12.0		80.5	19.5	
Richer	64.1	35.9		88.1	11.9		86.2	13.8	
Richest	68.4	31.6		91.8	8.2		89.5	10.5	
Residence:									
Urban	62.8	37.2	0.05	88.1	11.9	0.09	85.7	14.3	11.45***
Rural	63.1	36.9		88.4	11.6		82.2	17.8	

***, ** indicate significance of Chi-square tests at 5% and 10% levels.

The bivariate analysis between partner's violence and socio-demographic variables for the case of Zambia is presented in Table 4. In Zambia, age of women does not have significant relationship with less severe physical violence and sexual violence. Similar to the case of Nigeria, sexual violence does not have significant relationship with marital status of the women in Zambia. Age at first marriage, level of education, occupation types and wealth

index, all have significant relationship with types of partner's violence. Literacy level does not have significant relationship with sexual violence, which agrees with the results obtained for the case of Nigeria.

Discussion

The findings in this study indicate that the majority of women in Nigeria and Zambia have not experienced less severe violence, severe violence and sexual violence (94.6% and 88% respectively). Amazingly, 93.6% and 85.8% of women in both countries say that they have never been exposed to physical violence in form of pushing, slapping or an object thrown at them before. A higher number even claim they have never been punched with the fist or hit by something harmful before, 97% and 89% for Nigeria and Zambia respectively. Also very revealing is the fact that more than 80% of women in both countries said they have never been exposed to physical abuse before. This finding might have been influenced by the cultural reality that women generally are not expected to report such cases, and this is further compounded by the fact that data are really scarce in this area.

These findings do not seem to agree with those of Kishor and Johnson (2004) who indicated that 27% of ever-married women in Zambia reported being beaten by their spouse/partner and that this rate reached 33% of 15–19 year-olds and 35% of 20–24 year-olds. In the same vein, our findings are contrary to Mwaba's (2016) report on the prevalence of physical or sexual violence (45%) experienced by women in Zambia and perpetrated by their current husband/partner. The reason for this disparity may not be far-fetched based on Fawole et al.'s (2008) conclusion that there may be the tendency among African women to under report or fail to record incidences and prevalence of such phenomenon. This conclusion agrees with Krug et al. (2002); and Watts & Zimmerman (2002). Again, this may just be a function of the peoples' attitude to such acts of spousal violence as a normal occurrence which requires no intervention. This position agrees with findings of researchers like Garcia-Moreno et al. (2015) that some attitudes in marriage suggest that rates of partner violence may be higher in settings where violent behavior towards spouse is considered normal.

The data revealed that there is a significant relationship between the individual's level of education and forms of violence. It was found that spouses with no education at all experience lesser forms of partner abuse compared to their counterparts with primary and secondary education. Literacy level was found to significantly influence physical abuse but does not influence sexual abuse in Nigeria. Similarly, it was found that literacy does not have significant relationship with sexual violence in Nigeria and Zambia. Again, this finding does not seem to agree with Heise et al. (1999)

who reported that the dynamics of risk factors at the individual level such as the low level of education are related as risk factors for both experiencing and perpetrating partner violence. The reason for this discrepancy may rest on the fact that most of the previous studies had been done in developed settings.

In Nigeria and Zambia, age of women does not have significant relationship with less severe physical violence and sexual violence. However, age at first marriage in Nigeria significantly determine both physical and sexual violence. The findings show that in both countries, while age at first marriage does not significantly influence levels of physical violence it influences sexual violence; and the risk of hazard was found to be lower for those that married after 25 years of age implying that the maturity of the gender spouse counts. Our findings indicate that the age range before or from 20–24 years have higher risk of spousal abuse as compared to other age categories in both countries.

In Zambia and Nigeria, sexual violence does not have significant relationship with types of partner's violence. But physical abuse is significantly related to types of marriage union. Women that are legally married pose lower risk of spousal violence compared to women that are not married or cohabiting. The reason for this may be that an unmarried but cohabiting gender partner violence perpetrator may not feel total commitment in the relationship and may see the woman as a sport to take advantage of and treat as he pleases. The finding however affirms Tsai et al's (2016) views that because previous studies had concentrated in the developed world, their findings may not have much bearing or differ slightly from what obtains in sub-Saharan region as in the case of this finding. On the other hand, the findings support the view that gender violence is not necessarily perpetrated by strangers but by people the victims are familiar with as in the case of spouses. This assertion supports Franklin's findings (2010) that more than 50% of sexual assaults, including rape, are committed by a woman's romantic partner. This becomes relevant considering the fact that the proportion of legally married partners is high in Nigeria (97%) and Zambia (99%).

The analysis on the nature of occupation shows that spousal violence is significantly related to occupation. We found the risk of spousal violence to be higher for those with agriculture related jobs. This might possibly be as a result of low level of education among the women farmers that are married. The findings on wealth index indicate that the risk is significant with different levels of wealth index and the risk reduces as wealth index of the woman increases. This implies that the richer the household is the less spousal violence. This is in line with the finding of Otoo-Oyortey & Pobi (2003) that women living in poverty are disproportionately affected by spousal violence. Our findings show that the Nigerian female spouse is generally poor, and the

majority of them are from the rural areas. But our observations, based on the findings on residence indicate that there is a relationship between sexual violence and residence types, and that there is a significant contribution of residence types with spousal violence; and the risk is less for those in the rural areas (65.4% in Nigeria, 59.8% in Zambia).

The policy implications, based on the results, would include giving considerable attention to how to safeguard the requirement for reporting incidences, modernizing the related data bases, and then providing psychosocial support for educated and less educated women who have been enduring violence. Moreover, empowering less educated women through the provision of skills training could promote their desire to embark on small-scale businesses and overcome poverty. Finally, government and community supported and run home shelters for women who have suffered intense violence would be valuable social support for women and children experiencing spousal violence.

Conclusion

The aim of this study was to examine the relationship between socio-demographic factors and spousal violence in Nigerian and Zambian samples. The current study has contributed to existing body of knowledge in a number of ways. First, it was evidence in the responses on the experience of spousal violence that majority of the respondents from Nigeria and Zambia claimed that they have never experienced spousal violence in the past. This may be due to the culture of silence that still permeates the relationships between husband and wife in the two countries. Second, the study has been able to add to our understanding on the links between age at first marriage, education, occupation, wealth index, residence and spousal violence in the two countries. In other word, these variables related significantly to spousal violence in Nigeria and Zambia.

Conflict of interest
The authors whose names appear on this manuscript wish to express that there is no conflict of interest in the entire process involved in the preparation of the manuscript.

NOTE

1. Sample of married or cohabiting partners are used in this work since the emphasis is on partner violence and those women that are not currently with a husband were excluded.

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MEDIA EFFECTS ON GENDER CHILD PREFERENCE IN INDIA

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ABSTRACT. We used medium theory and social cognitive theory as a framework for our examination of the role of media (television, radio, newspapers) on son preference attitudes among women in India. We analyzed data from a large-scale representative sample of 84,609 participants. Multinomial logistic regressions showed a unique contribution of media after controlling for sociocultural and economic predictors. Watching television every day and reading newspapers every day considerably lowered the odds of a strong son preference. We also probed the media's influence through interactions. The interaction of watching TV every day and the participants' region in reducing strong son preference was significant for the North but not for the South region. The findings suggest a need to conceptualize and explore the relationship between media and equal son preference, and media and strong son preference.

Keywords: medium theory; son preference; television; newspaper; regional differences; determinants

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Introduction

One hundred million baby girls are missing in India (*The Economist*, March, 2010), echoing Sen's (1992) concern of the women and girls who "died prematurely due to mistreatment – resulting in a dramatically male-biased

population" (Jensen and Oster, 2009: 1058). A preference for sons also affects living female babies and toddlers; for example, son preference is associated with poor nutrition and lower levels of immunizations for 12–60-month-old girls (Pande and Malhotra, 2006). Although son preference is deeply entrenched in the social and cultural fabric of many Indian communities (Pande and Astone, 2007), some evidence shows a link between media use and women's attitudes toward son preference (Pande and Astone, 2007; Jensen and Oster, 2009).

The ability of the media to influence gender preferences warrants examination, given that India has experienced an exponential growth in electronic media. Television and radio were largely government run until the 1990s, when private players were allowed to enter India (Singhal and Rogers, 2001). 60% of households in the country now have cable and satellite television with access to more than 700 channels (Open Society Foundations, 2013). In addition, according to a new report from India's Audit Bureau of Circulation, India's paid newspaper circulation grew 32% between 2013 and 2015 (Iyengar, 2017).

Medium theory provides a useful theoretical mechanism for studying the overall media landscape of society and served as the framework for this study. The theory examines how "the widespread use of a new medium, when added to the existing matrix of media and face-to-face interaction, may influence many dimensions of social life within societies" (Meyrowitz, 2009: 523). This influence includes how a medium may affect social roles, social institutions, thinking patterns, and interactions among people (Meyrowitz, 1985). Scholarship on the effect of television, including cable television, suggests that these media have shaped social attitudes and social life in communities in India (Johnson, 2001; Jensen and Oster, 2009). The rapid adaptation of media technology in India increases the importance of understanding the effect of media on women's son preference. Although we are presently in the Internet age when there are many Internet Communication Technologies (ICTs) available in India, Internet access is more readily available to urban areas and the Internet is accessed by educated younger adults and also accessed more by men than women (70% versus 30%; *The Times of India*, 2018). It is estimated that approximately 26% of the population in India accessed the Internet in 2015 (Statista.com). Bearing and rearing children has historically been tied intimately to women's identity in the Indian subcontinent (Riessman, 2000). The decision to have a child and child gender preference is strongly associated with women's reproductive health and well-being (Arokiasamy, 2002); an empirical understanding of the influence of factors on women's child gender preferences is therefore of immediate theoretical and policy interest.

Son Preference

Son preference is commonly understood as parents having a stronger preference for male children. There are several individual and structural factors that influence this phenomenon in India such as socioeconomic factors, wealth, education, caste, religion, small-size family norms, and regional cultural differences. We review these factors, followed by the literature on media.

Socioeconomic

The social explanations stem from the perception that sons are more valuable than daughters in the potential contributions they make to the well-being of the family (e.g., Croll, 2002). The economic explanations have focused on the net losses from having daughters and are anchored on the economic worth of sons over daughters (Puri et al., 2011). In India, sons are valued because they are bestowed with the responsibility of elder care (Vlassoff and Vlassoff, 1980), and sons also contribute materially to the welfare of parents as well as siblings upon employment. The flow of wealth from sons to parents increases over time (Caldwell, 1978), whereas the wealth flow from daughters to parents decreases over time (Attané and Guilmoto, 2007). Also, the dowry system results in wealth transfer from parents to the newly acquired alliance of the son-in-law's family (e.g., Oldenburg, 2002; Srinivasan and Lee, 2004). For these economic reasons, couples are more likely to prefer sons over daughters. This does not mean no desire for daughters; several studies indicate that most Indian parents desire at least one daughter (e.g., Nayar, 2006).

It is important to acknowledge that systemic inequalities may also contribute to the socioeconomic well-being of women. For example, women experience discrimination when seeking loans from Microfinance Institutions (MFIs; Mengoli, Odorici, & Gudjonnson, 2017). Even though women are the "main targets" of MFI efforts, they face discrimination, and a recent analysis by Mengoli et al. (2017) suggests that women in operating roles (e.g., managers, loan officers) are more effective in reducing gender discrimination than just women in leading positions (such as CEOs or board members). In addition, women's representation in politics in India is low according to a data report by the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and UN Women (NewIndianExpress.com). India was placed at 148 in representation of women in executive government. The data showed that women made up 11.8% of the Lok Sabha (lower house) in India where 64 were elected to the 542-member house and 11% of the Rajya Sabha (upper hourse) with 27 of the 245 members. India ranked 88 in the number of female ministers with five or 18.5% in the cabinet.

Wealth

The perceptions of economic gains from having more sons than daughters are justified and supported by cultural values that accord high levels of prestige for having more sons (Pande and Astone, 2007). The middle class and the poor are more likely to prefer sons to daughters as they strive for social mobility by investing more in their sons than in their daughters. However, among the very wealthy, parents are less dependent upon cash flows from sons and thus are less likely to have strong son preference (Gaudin, 2011).

Education

Opportunity cost theory (Becker, 1965) posits that women with high levels of education have spent time and money on achieving their own education. For these women, the costs (time and money) of attaining a sex ratio in favor of sons through either having a large family or sex-selective abortions rises considerably (Bandyopadhyay, 2003; Almond et al., 2009), and given these high opportunity costs associated with both options, more educated women are less likely to have a strong sex preference (Almond et al., 2009). In other words, women who have higher education levels are less likely to have a strong son preference due to the costs (time, finances) associated with having many children and/or, having selective sex abortions to achieve a ratio of desirable male to female children.

Caste

In the lower socio-economic strata of the Indian society, there are a number of groups referred to as "Scheduled Tribes" mainly composed of indigenous peoples who are formally recognized by the Indian Government. The scheduled tribes lead either hunting and gathering or nomadic life styles, and thus their demand for male labor is high, which encourages son preference (Clark, 2000). The scheduled caste includes people who are at the bottom of the "hereditary and hierarchical caste system" in India who are often "subjected to oppression and untouchability by the upper castes" (Maity, 2017: 163). In the case of a scheduled caste, however, there is likely to be equal preference for son and daughters (Clark, 2000).

Religion

Hindus believe that the presence of a son is essential for lighting the funeral pyre, the virtue of which liberates his father's soul (Clark, 2000). This belief demands that sons be born and that their survival to adulthood be secured, resulting in strong son preference. In the case of Muslims, there are few religious tenets that encourage strong son preference. Hindus are therefore more likely than Muslims to have strong son preference.

Small-Family Norms

The idea of small families did not exist in India until four decades ago. A well-organized family planning program and an increase in demand for better health of children have contributed to a trend toward low statewide fertility rates in India (Visaria et al., 1999; Donaldson, 2002). The southern Indian state of Kerala led the way, initiating widespread decline in family size across all Indian states (Mahadevan and Sumangala, 1987; Zachariah, 1998). When parents are not willing to have large enough number of children to ensure having a boy child in the midst, they are less likely to have strong son preference. Thus, son preference is constrained by prevailing norms of a small-size family.

Regional Cultural Differences

Dyson and Moore (1983) identified the existence of two distinct cultural patterns regarding women's autonomy and its strong association with son preference. North Indian cultural values favor exogamous marriage (outside the family), whereas south Indian values prefer endogamous marriage between close kin, ensuring the wife's access to kinship networks related to the family of origin. In general, Dyson and Moore's thesis suggested that son preference is stronger in the North than in the southern region.

With a decline in family size, planned interventions such as sex-selective abortions have become a pervasive method to achieve the desired family gender composition (Sudha and Rajan, 1999; Arnold et al., 2002). The demand for sons may vary depending upon the socioeconomic and cultural aspects of the family alongside socioeconomic characteristics of the couples themselves (e.g., Malhotra et al., 1995). A few couples may have a strong demand for sons, while others may be spread along a continuum of equal to weak son preference over girl preference. To summarize, the norms of smaller family size could alter strong son preference, and also contribute to the pervasiveness of sex-selective abortions to achieve the desired ration of female to male children in a family (Chan and Yeoh, 2002).

Media and Social Change

The role of the media in the process of social change in India is well documented (Johnson, 2001; Singhal and Rogers, 2001). The term *media* includes radio, television, newspapers, cinema, and more recently, cable television. The influence of the media on social attitudes and behaviors can be explained by its ability to provide opportunities for modeling behavior (Bandura, 2006). Social cognitive theory (SCT; Bandura, 2006: 55) suggests that through observation people may model behaviors, as modeling "enables people to shortcut the tedious and sometimes costly trial-and-error learning by profiting from the success and mistakes of others." Modeling may also build perceived

self-efficacy, a key mechanism of human agency, which Bandura (2006: 56) explained as regulating "human functioning through four major processes: cognitive, motivational, emotional, and decisional." Thus, SCT suggests that the media not only expose people to ideas, but could also provide competencies through role models.

The entertainment-education model, which uses modeling as a mechanism to enable people to develop attitudes and change behavior, was used in television and radio programming in the 1980s and 1990s to address issues related to sex education, gender equality, and son preference (Singhal and Rogers, 2001; Fazal, 2009). In addition to social cognitive theory, the widespread use of a new medium – television – may lead to broad social changes. Medium theorists argue that the dominant medium in a civilization affects people's cognitive abilities such as reasoning, communicating, and how to relate to one another (Eisenstein, 2007). The printing press was instrumental in the movement from an oral to a literate culture in Europe. The literate culture led to writing and linear thinking, which ultimately led to logic-based knowledge and the sciences (Eisenstein, 2007).

Sometimes, the use of a new medium has the opposite effect. Meyrowitz (2009: 527) argued that in spite of watching media content that promoted the notion of "separate spheres" for men and women, many first-generation television-watching women in the United States "pushed for gender integration of the spheres that were once limited primarily to men." Television exposed viewers to these gendered settings – young women and homebound women were able to access the public sphere of "business, government, courtrooms, war," and they were eventually able to conceive of more "inclusive roles for themselves" in society. To understand how a medium changes social experiences entails understanding the characteristics of the medium.

These characteristics include the types of sensory information the medium is able to transmit, the ease or difficulty of comprehending messages in the medium, and the directionality (uni, bi, or multi) of the communication (Meyrowitz, 2009). Television, compared with radio and print, makes "its content more easily available to people of different ages and levels of literacy" (Meyrowitz, 2008: 653). An underlying notion of this theory is that "media must be looked at as creating new social settings, settings whose influence on the structure of social life cannot be reduced to the content of the messages transmitted through them" (Meyrowitz, 2009: 522–523).

Medium theory, thus, would suggest that television in India provided opportunities for women to experience social spaces that were once limited to them on the basis of gender. The exponential growth of electronic media in India could affect cultural views about son preference. Johnson's (2001: 157) ethnographic study of two villages in the state of Maharashtra documented television's influence on the changing landscape of village life,

including the influence of TV on changing social roles; according to one frustrated husband, "Since TV has come to our village women are doing less work than before. They only want to watch TV. So we [men] have to do more work. Many times I help my wife clean the house."

McNay, Arokiasamy, and Cassen's (2003) analysis of the 1992–1993 National Family and Health Survey of India (NFHS) data indicated that regular exposure to cinema, radio, and television after controlling for other variables significantly increased the use of contraception. Pande and Malhotra (2006: 5–6) also examined the 1992–1993 NFHS data and found that exposure to various media sources by women was significantly associated with weaker son preference after controlling for education and wealth, suggesting "access to 'modern' information and ways of life can contribute to making women's preferences more egalitarian."

Given that the media is a social and cultural medium, a force that creates one's social reality, it is worth acknowledging some of the ideological similarities and differences of media (television, radio, and newspaper) programming in India through the years. As mentioned earlier, the 1930s– until the 2000s is considered an era of "state broadcasting" (Sen, 2014) whereby Radio and TV broadcasting in India was governed by the goals to inform, educate, and entertain the masses (Singhal and Rogers, 2001). For example, radio programming included developmental activities related to agriculture, education, health and family welfare and science and technology (All India Radio, 2018). The entertainment-education model that uses modeling as a mechanism to influence attitudes and behaviors by enhancing a person's self-efficacy (Bandura, 2006) was employed in television and radio programming in the '80s and '90s to address issues related to sex education, gender equality and son preference (Fazal, 2009; Singhal and Rogers, 2001). Television soaps such as *Nari tu Narayani* (Woman You Are Powerful) and *Chatter Mota* (Wise Elder) broadcasted to Gujrat's Kheda district in 1983–84 were used to empower the rural community (Fazal) and are considered to be instrumental in enabling women in the district to successfully set up dairy cooperatives (Singhal and Rogers, 2001).

Sen (2014) argues that in post-colonial India, radio and television were state controlled and operated whereas print journalism has been largely independent and enjoyed freedom of expression (1087). In addition, Sen argues that, with the liberalization of the Indian economy, FM broadcasting in India has a unique niche. Through an in-depth analysis of a case study of Radio Mirchi, a private radio station in the city of Kolkata, Sen concludes that Radio Mirchi has a potential to reach nine million youths in that city with the goal of creating a sustainable "regime of consumption" (1094). There is a "complete absence" of news coverage on contemporary FM stations due to government prohibitions put in place during privatization (Sen, 2014: 1096).

There seems to ambiguity among scholars regarding representation of women in prime time soaps on television in the 2000s (Khurana, 2013). Munshi (2010 as cited in Khorana, 2013) analyzed five successful soaps on television and claimed that even though women and the family were represented as regressive, the shows contested traditional social mores. More recent shows seem to contest traditional social norms more explicitly than the soaps did in the last decade (Khorana, 2013).

Although there were several collaborative efforts in the 1980s and 1990s to use television and radio for local and national development, India did not carry forward the momentum (Singhal and Rogers, 2001: 93). To the best of our knowledge, systematic media interventions have not been implemented in the 2000s to address gender equality and son preference. An exception to this claim would be an approval by the Union Cabinet of the Indian Government in November 2006 to permit Non-Government organizations (NGOs), educational, and agricultural institutions to own and operate community radio (CR) stations. A CR "is owned and controlled by a non-profit organization whose structure provides for membership, management, operation, and programming primarily by members of the community at large" (Nirmala, 2015: 42). Nirmala reports on seven such CT stations that have had impact of women by empowering them economically and politically and giving them a voice in their communities. For example, the *Namma Dhwani* (Our Voices) of the state of Karnataka, which started in 2003 created awareness about health and sanitation, education, savings etc. and enhanced leadership behavior in women (44). Another CR station *Radio Namaskar* in the state of Orissa launched in 2010 created programs that are attributed to speaking in public and challenging of discriminatory traditions by both producers (of the programs) and the listeners (Nirmala, 2015: 44). Finally, the *Manndeshi Tarang* established in 2008 in the state of Maharashtra, is linked to women getting acquainted with the Panchayat representatives, to enable them to vote in the general elections, which in turn empowered them politically (Nirmala, 2015: 45). In all of these instances, community radio has empowered women by increasing their self-efficacy (Bandura, 2006) to act in specific political, economic and social ways.

The theoretical and empirical evidence regarding the role of television and radio in reducing son preference warrants attention. In addition, gender preference attitudes may exist on a continuum that includes strong preference for sons at one end to a preference for girls at the other end. Thus, we proposed the following hypotheses and research questions:

H1: Consumption of television will be positively associated with weak rather than equal son preference after controlling for variables (region, religion, caste, land, education and wealth).

H2: Consumption of television will be negatively associated with strong rather than weak son preference after controlling for variables (region, religion, caste, land, education, wealth).
RQ1: What is the association between consumption of television and (a) equal son preference, (b) strong son preference, and (c) weak son preference?
RQ2: What is the association between consumption of radio and (a) equal son preference, (b) strong son preference, and (c) weak son preference?

The press in India has been largely robust as an independent entity for the past 50 years, yet it is inaccessible to the 500 million people who are illiterate (Thussu, 1999). However, the newspaper industry is "booming" with more than 107 million copies circulated daily in 2009, and one in every five daily newspapers in the world is published in India, according to the World Association of Newspapers. In addition, almost one third of India's 579 million literates read a newspaper, according to a KPMG analysis (Vaidyanathan, 2011). Given the increase in online news readership in parts of India, Bamezai et al. (2011) examined "the role and relevance" of both newspapers and the Internet as news sources in various regions of India. Some of the main findings suggest that 96.7% of the surveyed sample (N = 1200) read newspapers. Newspapers are read habitually by students and professionals. The majority of the Internet users were from Mumbai and Chennai, the two metropolitan cities sampled. The authors attributed several factors to lack of Internet use: computer illiteracy; little or no technological penetration; irregular electricity supply; and lack of public places of access (112). The editors and managers interviewed (N = 96) reported that television poses a greater threat to newspapers than the Internet because satellite channels have made inroads into local news reporting, which for a long time, was the domain of newspapers (118).

A finding pertinent to our study is that out of the total 393 e-readers of news, 386 were also reading newspapers suggesting that accessing the Internet for news does not displace newspapers (114). In fact similar findings related to health information seeking in India are reported by Lin and Dutta (2017). The Internet is not the primary source of health information among online users in India; participants reported significant greater use of newspapers as sources of health information leading the authors to make a case for the phenomenon of channel complementarity among Internet users in India. Age was an important moderator of complementary relationships among various channels wherein younger users were more likely to use greater number of channels as compared to older users. Thus, our final set of questions:
RQ3: What is the association between consumption of newspapers and (a) strong son preference, (b) weak son preference, and (c) equal preference attitudes?

Finally, we examined the interaction of education and region, and TV and region on son preference. Women's education is a significant predictor of son preference (Pande and Astone, 2007). In addition, the very different kinship systems in the North and Deccan regions are known to constrain family structure and gender composition choices (Dyson and Moore, 1983). These factors, along with the theoretical significance of TV, led to the following research questions:

RQ4: How does the interaction between education and region affect (a) strong son preference, (b) weak son preference, and (c) equal son preference attitudes?

RQ5: How does the interaction between TV viewing and region affect (a) strong son preference, (b) weak son preference, and (c) equal son preference attitudes?

Method

Data Source

We used data from the national population-based third wave of the National Family and Health Survey of India (NHFS-3) commissioned by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, an agency of the Government of India. Conducted in all states during 2005–2006, NHFS-3[1] was administered verbally via questionnaires to male and female respondents separately; only the female sample was used for the purpose of this study. A majority of the research around son preference, including the previous NFHS surveys, has been done with female participants. The administrators interviewed 131,596 eligible women aged 15–49 years, producing a response rate of 95%. Our final sample consisted of 84,609 women aged 15–49 years. We examine data from a slice in time in 2005–2006 when there were 98 million cellular subscriptions and approximately 9.2 million internet subscriptions in India (Telecom Regulatory Authority of India, 2007) whereas the population in India was around 1.12 billion (Population Reference Bureau, 2018); a very small fraction of the population had access to the Internet.

Operationalization of Variables

The proposed model of son preference includes seven independent variables and son preference as the dependent variable. The first set of four variables consisted of region, religion, scheduled caste/tribe, and land ownership. The next set included individual characteristics and education, measured at the ordinal level with four categories: No education, primary, secondary, and high school or beyond high school. A second set of indicators measured wealth at an ordinal level with categories poorest, poorer, middle, richer, and richest.

The final set included the degree of consumption to three types of media – newspaper, radio, and television.

Region. We have data from three regions of India: the Northern Plains, the Deccan Plateau, and the Himalayan Region. The Northern Plains includes the states of Punjab, Haryana, Delhi, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Assam, West Bengal, Jharkhand, and Chattisgarh. The states constituting the Deccan Plateau are Orissa, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Goa, Kerala, and Tamil Nadu. The Himalayan region includes the states of Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Uttaranchal, Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram, Tripura, and Meghalaya. The Northern region has strong patriarchal institutions with a kinship system strongly in favor of son preference. The Deccan region has cultural values supportive of women's autonomy and less discriminatory toward the girl child (Dyson and Moore, 1983; Pillai and Salehin, 2012). The variables were labeled North, Deccan, and Himal. Given the cultural contrast between North and the Deccan and our interest in media influences in these two regions, Himal was assigned as the reference category.

Religion. The responses to the question "What is your religion?" were grouped under 10 categories. In this study, the two major religions in India, Hindu and Muslim, were coded as separate dummy variables, whereas the rest of the religions were grouped as the "other" category.

Scheduled castes and scheduled tribe. Respondents were asked whether they belonged to a scheduled caste, a scheduled tribe, other backward class, or none of the categories. Those who identified as either scheduled caste or scheduled tribe were coded as separate dummy variables. The rest of the sample was grouped as "other."

Land. Ownership of land was coded as "0" if participants owned no land and "1" if they had land of any size.

Education. The data for education were obtained from the responses to the question, "Have you ever attended school?" If yes, "What is the highest standard you completed?" The responses were categorized into four categories: No education (reference), Primary, Secondary, and High school and beyond.

Wealth. An asset score was constructed using a principal component analysis of more than 40 asset variables collected by a household questionnaire. These variables included consumer goods, housing facilities, and materials (Macro-International, IIPS, 2007). The asset scores were used to classify women into five quintile groups (poorest, poorer, middle, richer, and richest) according to the relative wealth of their household, which were coded into five dummy variables.

Media use. The data for media were derived from three questions related to frequency of exposure to newspaper, radio, and television. Respondents were

asked “Do you read a newspaper or magazine almost every day, at least once a week, less than once a week, or not at all?” The same question was repeated for radio and television. Each one of the four response categories was coded as a separate variable, generating 12 separate variables with respect to frequency of exposure to newspaper, radio, and television. The coded variables represent *not at all* (reference); *less than once a week, at least once a week*, and *almost every day*. Participants were also asked if they owned a radio or a television.

Son preference. The question on sex preference was a subcategory of information sought on various aspects of ideal family size. NFHS-3 asked women ages 15–49 the number of children they would like to have if they could start over again. Women with no children were asked, “If you could choose exactly the number of children to have in your whole life, how many would that be?” Those who already had children were asked, “If you could go back to the time you did not have any children and could choose exactly the number of children to have in your whole life, how many would that be?” The respondents were further asked, “How many of these children would you like to be boys, how many would you like to be girls, and for how many would the sex not matter?” The responses to these questions were categorized as follows to measure the dependent variable, son preference. Those who preferred ideally a larger number of sons than daughters were coded 1 and labeled *strong preference* and the rest 0. Those who indicated a preference for an equal number of girls and boys were coded 1, and labeled *equal preference*, whereas the rest were coded 0. The rest of the responses formed a third category labeled *weak son preference*. Available data in the form of counts of ideal number of boys, girls, and of either sex, had to be manipulated to obtain the categories of the dependent variable.

Analytical Strategy

We measured the three categories of son preference at the nominal level rather than at the ordinal. The three categories as mentioned earlier were labeled strong, equal and week son preference with the weak category including varying levels of daughter preference. Subsequently, an appropriate analytic strategy for explaining the son preference phenomenon in India is the multinomial regression (MR) model rather than the ordinal. The MR model allows for more than two outcomes. When there are J categories of outcome, J-1 non-redundant logits can be specified. Each of these logits yields a comparison with a selected baseline category J and any of the remaining i^{th} categories. The model is specified

as $$\log \frac{p(category_{i)}}{p(category_{j)}} = \beta_{i0} + \beta_{i1}x_1 + \beta_{i2}x_2 + ... + \beta_{ip}x_p$$.

Results

We first report on some of the key demographic information, followed by the hypotheses and research questions. Approximately 80% of the sample population was equally distributed between the regions of North and Deccan with 74% reporting that they were Hindus. About 35% possessed secondary education and approximately 41% reported having no education. Among the three media types, TV usage was most popular with 48% of the sample reporting they watched television daily, followed by listening to radio (15%) and reading a newspaper (14%). 75% of the sample reported equal preference for both sons and daughters, whereas 23% stated a preference for sons. (See Table 1 for demographic information).

Given our analytical strategy, we included the odds ratio estimates from both the weak versus equal son preference group and the weak versus strong son preference group in answering the hypotheses and research questions. We controlled for all the predictor variables to assess the link between media use and son preference. H1 predicted that TV watching is positively associated with weak rather than equal son preference. H1 was not generally supported (Table 2).

H2 predicted that TV watching is negatively associated with strong rather than weak son preference. Watching TV every day lowered the odds of strong son preference by 18% providing support for H2. (See Table 3).

RQ1 explored the association between TV consumption and equal son preference. There was a 39% increase in the odds of equal son preference among those who watch TV less than once a week compared with those who do not watch TV. (See Table 2).

RQ2 explored the relationship between radio consumption and strong, weak, and equal son preference. The odds of equal son preference among those who listen to radio less than once a week was about 27% more than the odds of equal preference among those who do not listen to radio (weak vs. equal group; Table 2). Listening to radio less than once a week increases the odds of strong son preference by nearly 32% compared with those who do not listen to radio (weak vs. strong group; Table 3). In general, no significant relationship was found between radio consumption and weak son preference.

RQ3 examined the association between newspaper consumption and strong, weak, and equal son preference. Newspaper reading on either an everyday basis or more than once a week appears to increase the odds of weak son preference. Specifically, the odds of equal son preference among those who read newspapers daily is about 16% less than those who do not read daily newspapers (weak vs. equal group; Table 2). Similarly the odds strong son preference among those who read a newspaper daily is about 26% less than the odds of strong son preference among those who do not read daily. The odds of strong son preference among those who read a newspaper at

least once a week is 23% less than the odds of strong son preference among those who do not read newspapers (weak vs. strong son group; Table 3).

Table 1 Demographic Variables and Descriptive Statistics

Characteristic	Variable	Measurement	%
Region			
North	North	Dummy	41.3
Deccan	Deccan	Dummy	40.7
Himachal	Himal	Reference	18.0
Religion			
Hindu	Hindu	Dummy	73.8
Muslim	Muslim	Dummy	13.0
Others		Reference	13.2
Caste			
Scheduled-Caste	SC	Dummy	16.9
The Rest		Reference	83.1
Tribe			
Scheduled-Tribe	ST	Dummy	12.7
The Rest		Reference	87.3
Land			
Owns Land	Land	Dummy	44.6
The Rest		Reference	55.4
Education			
Primary	Primary	Dummy	15.7
Secondary	Secondary	Dummy	35.5
High-School	High	Reference	8.0
The Rest			40.8
Wealth (asset scores)			
Upper most quintile	Richest	Dummy	29.8
Upper middle quintile	Richer	Dummy	23.4
Middle quintile	Middle	Dummy	19.4
Lower middle quintile	Poorer	Dummy	15.4
Lowest quintile	Poorest	Reference	12.0
Read newspaper			
Read everyday	Everyday	Dummy	13.7
At least once a week	Morewk	Dummy	10.4
Less than once a week	Weekly	Dummy	13.2
The rest		Reference	62.7
Listen to radio			
Listen everyday	Everydayrd	Dummy	15.5
At least once a week	Morewkrd	Dummy	11.3
Less than once a week	Weeklyrd	Dummy	15.5
The rest		Reference	57.7
Watch TV			
Everyday	EverydayTV	Dummy	48.0
At least once a week	MorewkTV	Dummy	12.2
Less than once a week	WeeklyTV	Dummy	11.0
The Rest		Reference	28.8
Owns radio	Radio	Dummy	35.1
The rest		Reference	64.9
Owns TV	TV	Dummy	55.1
The Rest		Reference	44.9
Gender Preference			
Equal number of boys and girls	Equal preference	Dummy	75.0
More sons preferred	Strong son preference	Dummy	23.0
More girls preferred	Very weak son preference	Dummy	2.0

Table 2 Multinomial Logistic Regression of Weak vs. Equal Son Preference

Variable	Mode1 1 OR	Model 2 OR	Model 3 OR	Model 4 OR
North	1.353*	1.380*	1.388*	1.696*
Deccan	0.733*	0.743*	0.760*	0.741
Himalay	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Hindu	1.735*	1.673*	1.679*	1.682*
Muslim	1.917*	1.778*	1.756*	1.733*
Others	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
SC	1.033	0.959	0.957	0.953
ST	1.242*	1.163	1.161	1.178
RestofST	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Land	1.214*	1.164*	1.143*	1.136*
Primary		1.051	1.017	1.026
Secc.		1.043	1.033	1.042
High		0.673*	0.705*	0.825
Noedu		1.00	1.00	1.00
North	1.353*	1.380*	1.388*	1.696*
Deccan	0.733*	0.743*	0.760*	0.741
Himalay	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Poorer		1.050	1.049	1.062
Middle		1.134	1.175	1.198
Richer		0.966	1.068	1.091
Richest		0.951	1.124	1.159
Poorest		1.00	1.00	1.00
Weekly			1.141	1.142
Morewk			0.856	0.855
Everyday			0.842*	0.834*
Nonews			1.00	1.00
Weeklyrd			1.276*	1.274*
Morewkrd			1.176	1.178
Everydayrd			1.009	1.009
NoRadio			1.00	1.00
Weeklytv			1.389*	1.395*
Morewktv			1.018	1.028
Everydaytv			1.169	1.220
Notv			1.00	1.00
NoRadio			1.00	1.00
Radio			1.038	1.038
TV			0.790*	0.780*
Neverydaytv				0.723*
RestNorthtv				1.00
Deverydaytv				1.088
RestDecctv				1.00
Edinter1				0.834
restedNinter				1.00
Edinter2				0.856
restedDinter				1.00

Note. *OR* = odds ratio; *CI* = confidence interval; SC = Scheduled Caste; ST = Scheduled Tribe; Weekly = Read newspaper less than once a week; Morewk = Read newspaper at least once a week; Everyday = Read newspaper every day; Everdayrd = Listen to the radio ever day ; Morewkrd = Listen to the radio at least once a week; Weeklyrd = Listen to the radio less than once a week; EverydayTV = Watch TV every day; MorewkTV = Watch TV at least once a week; WeeklyTV = Watch TV less than once a week; Radio = Own radio; TV = Own TV; Neverydaytv = interaction of North with watching TV daily; Deverydaytv = interaction of Deccan with watching TV every day; Edinter1 = Interaction of high school education with North; Edinter2 = Interaction of high school education with Deccan.

Table 3 Multinomial Logistic Regression of Weak vs. Strong Son Preference

Variable	Mode1 1 OR	Model 2 OR	Model 3 OR	Model 4 OR
North	1.875*	1.573*	1.154*	2.219*
Deccan	0.576*	0.532*	0.559*	0.653*
Hindu	2.438*	1.911*	1.925*	1.882*
Muslim	3.739*	2.394*	2.335*	2.264*
SC	1.455*	1.058	1.064	1.052
ST	2.074*	1.338*	1.319*	1.342*
Land	1.764*	1.467*	1.412*	1.398*
Primary		0.774*	0.793*	0.803*
Secc.		0.561*	0.627*	0.633*
High		0.242*	0.299*	0.555*
Noedu		1.00	1.00	1.00
Poorer		0.887	0.900	0.924
Middle		0.829	0.898	0.935
Richer		0.639*	0.767*	0.795*
Richest		0.529*	0.710*	0.744*
Poorest		1.00	1.00	1.00
Weekly			1.018	1.016
Morewk			0.777*	0.770*
Everyday			0.741*	0.732*
Nonews			1.00	1.00
Weeklyrd			1.316*	1.316*
Morewkrd			1.185	1.192
Everydayrd			0.938	0.937
No radio			1.00	1.00
Weeklytv			1.267	1.288*
Morewktv			0.896	0.918
Everydaytv			0.829*	1.128
Notv			1.00	1.00
Radio			1.082	1.085
TV			0.882	0.866
Neverydaytv				0.544*
RestNorthtv				1.00
Deverydaytv				0.765
RestDecctv				1.00
Edinter1				0.542*
restedNinter				1.00
Edinter2				0.398*
restedDinter				1.00

Note. OR = odds ratio; CI = confidence interval SC= Scheduled Caste; ST = Scheduled Tribe; Weekly = Read newspaper less than once a week; Morewk= Read newspaper at least once a week; Everyday = Read newspaper daily; Everdayrd = Listen to the radio daily; Morewkrd = Listen to the radio at least once a week; Weeklyrd = Listen to the radio less than once a week; EverydayTV =Watch TV daily; MorewkTV = Watch TV at least once a week; WeeklyTV = Watch TV less than once a week; Radio = Own radio; TV =Own TV; Neverydaytv = interaction of North with watching TV daily; Deverydaytv = interaction of Deccan with watching TV daily; Edinter1=Interaction of high school education with North; Edinter2 = Interaction of high school education with Deccan.

Interactions

Three variables were considered when examining interactions: education, television viewing, and region. From the educational level, high school and from television viewing, viewing TV every day (everydaytv) were selected because both had significant effects on reducing the odds of strong son preference. Two sets of interactions were generated: First, the interaction of everdaytv with Deccan and North; and second, the interaction of high school education with Deccan and North.

RQ4 examined the effect of education and region on strong, weak, and equal son preference. The interactions of high school education with the two regions Deccan and North were not significant in the weak versus equal son preference group (Table 2). However, the two interactions of high school education with regions Deccan and North were significant (Table 3). The odds of strong son preference among those with high school education in the Deccan region are about 61% lower than the odds of strong preference among the rest in Deccan (Table 3). The corresponding odds for those with high school education in the North are nearly 46% lower than the rest of the North. Thus, the odds of strong son preference in the Deccan region among those with high school education are far less than the odds of strong son preference in the Northern region.

RQ5 examined the effect of TV watching and region on strong, weak, and equal son preference. The interaction effect of *Northern* and *Everydaytv* was significant. The odds of equal son preference in the Northern region were about 28% lower than the odds of equal preference in the rest of the regions. The interaction of everyday television viewing with Deccan was not significant (weak vs. equal group; Table 2).

In the weak versus strong son preference group comparison, the odds of strong son preference among those who watch television every day in the Northern region were significantly (46%) lower than the odds of strong son preferences among those who do not watch television everyday in the rest of the regions. About 35% of the respondents in the Northern region who do not watch television daily and 18% who watch television daily expressed strong son preference (Table 4). The interaction of daily TV watching and Deccan region was not significant.

Table 4 Everyday TV Watching and Son Preference (%) in the North

	Son Preference			
Watch TV Everyday	Weak	Equal	Strong	Total
Yes	55.2	43.8	24.9	
	(01.8)	(79.8)	(18.4)	(100)
No	44.8	56.2	75.1	
	(0.9)	(64.3)	(34.8)	(100)
Total	100	100	100	

In the Deccan region, 24% of women who do not watch television daily expressed strong son preference and only 13% of women who watch television daily indicated strong son preference (Table 5).

Table 5 Everyday TV Watching and Son Preference (%) in the Deccan Region

	Son Preference			
Watch TV Everyday	Weak	Equal	Strong	Total
	62.8	62.0	42.8	
Yes	(02.9)	(84.3)	(12.8)	(100)
No	37.2	38.0	57.2	
	(02.4)	(73.3)	(24.2)	(100)
Total	100	100	100	

Discussion

The goal of this study was to examine the link between media use and son preference. Overall, results suggest that an old medium such as newspapers and a newer medium such as TV show evidence of reducing strong son preferences. In addition, the frequency of using these media seems to be a key component of reducing strong son preference. Daily TV watching and daily newspaper reading play an influential role in reducing strong son preference, whereas a minimal consumption of radio and television increases the odds of son preference. These findings are similar to Pande and Astone (2007) who reported that regular (weekly) access to radio or television and monthly access to cinema were associated with lower son preference.

Reading newspapers more than once a week and every day were both associated with reduced odds of strong son preference. These findings remained significant with the interactions of region and education. Thus, newspapers are an important medium of reducing the odds of strong son preference. The influence of television viewing on strong son preference is moderated by region and levels of education. Strong son preference among those who watch television daily is considerably less than those who do not watch television at all. Regarding the region, those who watched television daily in the Northern region had lower odds of strong son preference than the rest. Surprisingly, daily television viewing in the Deccan regions did not significantly influence the odds of strong son preference. This may be due to the fact that the odds of son preference in the Deccan region is significantly lower than in the North. The North, as mentioned earlier, is identified as having strong patriarchal and kinship structures that support son preference. In both regions, having a high school education significantly reduced the odds of strong son preference.

Our study yielded a couple of unexpected findings regarding strong son preference. Listening to radio less than once a week and watching TV less than once a week increased the odds of stronger son preference after account-

ing for all the controls. It is possible that in both cases, participants have pre-existing strong son preference attitudes and have not met a certain threshold of media use. This finding underlines concurrently the contribution and a limitation of our paper. On one hand, this study yields interesting and unexpected findings regarding media use and son preference, and on the other hand, findings also suggest that son preference attitudes exist independently of media use, and perhaps media use may not influence individuals who have pre-existing strong son preferences.

Our results also suggest that the media have an influence on reducing strong son preference rather than increasing equal son preference. Watching TV less than once a week and listening to the radio less than once a week were the only two variables associated with an increase in the odds of equal son preference even after introducing the interactions of region and education. Therefore, minimal consumption of radio and television may promote equal son preference compared with not consuming either of these media. However, these findings could be offset by the additional findings that watching TV daily in the North (interaction) and reading newspapers daily reduced the odds of equal son preference in favor of weak son preference. Our results suggest that the phenomena of strong and equal son preferences are conceptually different, and future research should explore the conceptual differences.

This study has practical implications. The media through thoughtful programming could continue to play a role in reducing strong son preference and promoting equal son preference. Entertainment-education could also be adopted to promote equal son preference. This was used successfully in the 1980s and 1990s to bring about social and economic changes, although the changing media in the free market system would make this endeavor challenging (Singhal and Rogers, 2001). The success of some of the Community Radio programs speaks to the importance of providing a medium to different communities to address its social and economic issues through active participation (Nirmala, 2015). Being able to vote in general elections, learning job skills and earning income, and having a voice in the community (Nirmala, 2015) are all significant ways of modeling what women are able to achieve and demonstrate their ability as citizens of their communities. These outcomes could very well be used strategically in media messaging to promote equal son preference and thereby contribute to much needed social change, equality, and women's well-being.

One of the limitations of this study is that we did not have access to the type of programs participants watched. Scholars have noted that in the 1990s, soaps such as *Udaan*, *Tara*, and *Shanti* brought to the forefront women's entry into the work force, including the presence of "strong women protagonists who challenged stereotypic notions" (Jaggi, 2011: 144). In the late 2000s, the soaps lost their momentum; instead of dealing with the social issues,

women were portrayed as docile and as toeing the line (Jaggi, 2011). Future studies should explore programming content as it could influence family communication practices and conversations about family planning in interpersonal contexts.

Media programming and media use alone cannot change deep-rooted practices; institutional practices and policies need to support any effort to change social norms and beliefs. The Indian Government passed the Pre-Natal Diagnostic Act (1996) to prevent the misuse of ultrasound technology for sex determination as it has been implicated in the selection abortion of girls (Government of India, 2011). A recent study of 946 physicians who attended medical school in the Vidarbha district in Maharashtra suggested that the sex ratios among the physicians were more skewed than the national average (Patel et al., 2013) suggesting that son preferences are deeply embedded in physician communities that are supposed to enforce laws meant to stem the tide of sex selection practices.

Until recently most of the research on gender preferences involved only female participants. Future research should examine the predictors of gender preference in male samples. In addition, as gender preferences could result from spouse/partner communication, dyadic studies on gender preference are essential for theory building. Future research should measure Internet use and its relationship with son preferences. In 2015, 460 million Indians accessed the Internet although that number accounts for 26% of the population (Statista.com). In addition, there are more Internet users from the Urban areas than the rural areas, and male user dominate (70% versus 30% women; *The Times of India*, 2018). Finally, college and school going children are the largest groups of users (33%), followed by young men (26%). Entertainment and social networking are the two most popular reasons for Internet use by children, and young adults (*The Times of India*, 2018).

Medium theory is a useful framework for explaining the link between TV watching and son preference. The theory argues that the dominant medium of a culture influences human interaction. It also suggests the importance of studying a new medium that is introduced to a society that has pre-existing media. The print medium in India is a very big part of the social, economic, and political landscape (Vaidyanathan, 2011); newspapers are alive and thriving in India and clearly have a role to play in reducing strong son preference. In addition, we acknowledge that by employing medium theory we are not suggesting that the use of a medium has a magic bullet effect on the audience that uses a medium. On the contrary, we would argue that the media does play a role in construction people's social reality, however, individual attitudes and behaviors are also influenced by family and group norms (Bond & Smith, 1996).

Meyrowitz (2008: 653) argued that just as variations in soils and climates encourage the rise of different communities, "so do the characteristics of different forms of communication facilitate different scales of political and social organization in terms of how many people over how large a territory can be included easily in the same communication system." India is neither primarily a print or electronic society, leading us to ask how multiple forms of literacies may facilitate social and political organization. If print literacy promotes "abstract, linear thinking" and television viewing encourages "concrete, nonlinear thinking" (Meyrowitz, 2008: 653), future research could examine whether the presence of both types of literacies explains why television viewing and newspaper reading can be related to reduced son preference but not to increased equal son preference. In addition, future research could also examine the relationship between multiple literacies and how minimal consumption of radio and television may either promote equal son preference or strong son preference. In conclusion, both medium theory and social-cognitive theories are useful frameworks for analyzing media influence on son preference in India. Given the deep-rooted nature of son preference, a diversified media analysis tool kit (Meyrowitz, 2008) could perhaps enable scholars to better examine and understand the relationship between media consumption and son-preference attitudes.

NOTE

1. This paper was written before the 2015–2016 data set was made available. The 2015–2016 data has a household survey, which asks if a household owns different media including mobile phones and the Internet, however usage questions are not included. Separate surveys for men and women in a household were administered; however media usage questions were related to television, newspaper/magazines, radio, and cinema/theatre. Individuals were not asked about internet access and usage.

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DIGITAL FEMINISM: QUESTIONING THE RENEWAL OF ACTIVISM

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ABSTRACT. This article questions the underlying social and political factors explaining the revival of feminism, and analyzes how feminists use digital media to promote their cause. It presents the results of a two-year research project on feminist activism in France; however, many results have broader implications for the evolution of feminism in Western countries. The survey is based on an ethnographic online observation of nine feminist collectives, on face-to-face interviews with activists, and on a qualitative survey of ordinary feminists. We examine the diversity of feminist collectives and how digital media have contributed to the rise of a new leadership and of new organizational practices. Young activists are experts in producing visual narratives (images, video, etc.), in using unconventional repertoires of action (humor, satire, etc.) and in networking. They make events and campaigns which are widely echoed in the public sphere and the mediation of digital media leads to a form of performative activism. Connectivity widens the audience and contributes to the building of virtual communities. However, the high visibility of digital feminism led to the rise of a virulent cyber-sexism. Finally, questions remain about the empowerment of feminists at a time when conservative forces are re-emerging in Western societies.

Keywords: feminism; digital practices; cultural content; performative activism; virtual communities; sociology

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1. Introduction

Digital media are commonly perceived as a new source of empowerment for feminist activism and are often considered as having largely contributed to its revival. However, did digital media really transform feminist militancy? Does feminism mean the same thing today as in the seventies? Are activists similar to those of previous generations? Has feminism mainly been reduced to digital visibility and connectivity? Is there a change in the foundations of feminist discourses? Do digital media foster the widening of the feminist community? To sum up, in the age of a widespread enthusiasm for digital technologies, we propose a critical perspective on the current evolution of feminism.

This article analyzes the forms and the strategies of online feminism in France. However, its results also have broader implications regarding the evolution of new forms feminism in other Western countries. Our study relies on a two-year research project based on an ethnographic online observation of 9 feminist groups, on 9 face-to-face interviews with activists and on a qualitative survey of 24 ordinary feminists. This study was conducted with two other colleagues and several results have been published in the French academic journal *Réseaux* in April 2017 (Jouët et al., 2017). It was an inter-disciplinary project combining distinct theoretical approaches from three authors: semiotics (Katharina Niemeyer), feminist history (Bibia Pavard), and sociology (Josiane Jouët). This paper's scope focuses more on the sociological dimensions of digital feminism by adopting a pragmatic analytical approach and it tackles the question of the audience which was not covered in the *Réseaux* issue.[1]

The review of the French literature showed that, despite the large number of gender studies about male-female equality or LGBT issues (Bereni and Revillard, 2012), the recent vivid feminist digital activism just begins to be investigated (Pahud and Paveau, 2017). Moreover, French researchers have studied digital leftist and alternative activism (Blondeau and Allard, 2007; Granjon, 2001; Granjon and Cardon, 2011) but neglected digital feminism. Anglophone literature on digital feminism is more extensive but less voluminous than expected. Judy Wajcman noticed a decade ago: "Feminist theories of gender and technology have come a long way over the last two decades. While much early second-wave feminism generated a fatalism that emphasized the role of technology in reproducing patriarchy, during the 1990s cyberfeminist writers celebrated digital technologies as inherently liberatory for women" (Wajcman, 2007: 287). She mentioned the leading role played by Donna Haraway (1991) and Sadie Plant (1997) but, at this time, only few theoretical scholars were interested in digital technologies. In fact, despite a few studies on social uses of ICTs by women (Kramarae, 1988; Cockurn

and Fürst-Dilic 1994; Van Zoonen, 1994 and 2002; Jouët, 2003), research strived when social media exploded during the first decade of the 21st century and empirical studies about the feminist uses of the web are recent (Horeck, 2014; Fotopoulou, 2015; Mendes, 2015; Rentschler and Thrift, 2015; Baer, 2016; Keller et al., 2016). Our reading of the literature shows that the emphasis is put on gender identity, women's bodies and rape culture (sexual harassment, cat-calling, etc.). For instance, Hester Baer (2016) studied the global movement of the #YesAllWomen and the personal testimonies of women victims of sexism. Jessalynn Keller, Kaitlynn Mendes and Jessica Ringrose investigated the wide circulation of women's testimonies in the global SlutWalk movement : "Feminist scholarship has mapped how girls and women are creating online cultures of support for victims of sexual assault and violence …, generating and circulating feminist discourses that counter patriarchal ones … and interrupt rape culture through a variety of creative interventions, such as the mobile phone app 'Not Your Baby' and the organization and participation in the global SlutWalk" *(*Keller et al., 2016: 3). Most of the Anglophone literature is based on a discursive textual analysis of digital contents and on a cultural and media studies theoretical framework; it is a valuable source of knowledge about the feminist movement but it does not explicitly cover all the sociological questions that we raise.

However, it is important to note that the huge wave of testimonials on the #metoo hashtag which took place in many countries, following the revelation of the Weinstein affair in October 2017, is now leading many feminist researchers to investigate digital feminism. This phenomenon is international; in France several hashtags are used #metoo, #moiaussi, #balancetonporc (*out your pig*) and several studies are presently being done.

2. The Revival of Feminism

The common use of the "waves" metaphor in feminism does not merely refer to generations since it also hints that a major change occurred not only in communicative practices but also in ideological and political agendas (Pavard, 2017). In their introduction of the special issue on intergenerational studies of *Feminist Media Studies* (2016), Alison Winch, Jo Littler and Jessalynn Keller provide a critical analysis of this metaphor: "It is regularly invoked to herald a 'new' kind of feminism that has broken with the old" (Winch et al., 2016: 559). They show that younger feminists share the same commitment to the feminist cause, like reproductive rights and gendered violence. However, they add: "Generation, used with nuance, is important because it helps to make sense of differences incurred by specific historical conditions, and which contribute to the formation of feminist and gendered sensibilities and their mediation" (Winch et al., 2016: 561). The results of our survey confirm this

analysis since we observed that feminists of today and of the seventies do not share the same media culture.

The proliferation of digital feminist groups in France is a recent phenomenon which took place in the last ten years. On one hand, this rise is rooted in the resurgence of feminism due to political events and, on the other hand, it is linked to the advent of a new generation of digitally skilled women.

Despite the advancement made by feminists in the 1960s–1970s, French society like all societies remains patriarchal and sexism still shapes men's behavior. Second wave feminists have been very active in France and they fought in order to gain many rights like the right of abortion which was legalized in 1975 (Pavard, 2012). During the following decades, activists were still promoting women's rights but their actions were not much publicized as there was a common belief that women had already achieved equality. The resurgence of the cause as a public issue took place at the beginning of the 21st century with the emergence of public events. The presidential elections of 2007 were a source of many misogynous attacks against Ségolène Royal who was the first female candidate to compete for Head of State. This strengthened the movement for male-female parity in political institutions which got attention in the media and a law was finally passed in 2010. A year later, the Dominique Strauss Khan affair came as a shock and men's assaults on women became a matter of public outcry encouraging women to express their indignation online and to speak up about rape. At the same time, the LGBT movement was very active in claiming the right for gay marriage which entailed lots of public debate about sex, gender, transgender, but also led to the rise of reactionary factions which organized huge street demonstrations to oppose this reform. The law recognizing gay marriage was finally passed in 2013. In sum, the social issue of gender equality has been on the forefront of the French political scene and it became a major public controversy which favored the revival of feminism as a new wave. In fact, there was a "political opportunity structure" which, as Bart Cammaerts explains, met "the mediation opportunity structure" with the growth of digital media (Cammaerts, 2012).

At the turn of the 21st century, third wave feminism thrived with the emergence of a new generation of feminist digital natives. However, some feminists groups which emerged during the second wave are still active, like the Movement for Family Planning which promotes contraception and the right for abortion, the National Collective for Women's Rights which is a coordination of associations, trade unions and political parties struggling for equality, or Solidary Women[2] which is linked to the communist party. These well-known associations do field work and offer many resources to women. They are also present on the web but their sites are conceived on a top-down model and use the traditional format of militant releases while the iconography is minimal. In some ways, their communicative practices are similar to the

Fawcett society in London. However, their recent Facebook or Twitter accounts are more interactive and alive due to the participation of a few younger members. Aristea Fotopoulo who studied several women's organizations in London also stressed the heterogeneity of the groups and the gap existing between younger digital feminists and older feminists who prefer face-to-face meetings but are anxious to catch up with technology due to the dominant "social imaginary of networked feminism" (Fotopoulo, 2014).

2.1. A heterogeneous feminist digital space

The denomination of groups as "collectives" is common within the French feminist movement. This label was already adopted by feminists of the second wave who wanted to distinguish themselves from highly structured and hierarchical political organizations.[3] In our survey, we selected feminist groups which were very engaged in their digital practices, had a rather large number of followers, and which represented different trends of the feminist movement.[4] We observed that all active groups emerged at the time of the digital inclusion. These collectives were created between 2008 and 2014 and they launched, almost simultaneously, their website, Facebook and Twitter accounts. Female Watchdogs (Les Chiennes de Garde) which was created in 1999 is an exception and this second wave association set right away a web site and, a decade later, social media accounts.

It is uneasy to establish a typology since collectives are very diverse and it is interesting to note that the existing feminist literature does not attempt to differentiate feminist groups alongside categories like, for instance, agendas, leadership or modes of organization. However, in a sociological approach, it is appropriate to draw lines of similarities and differences between activist groups in order to analyze divergences in their political stands and how they tackle feminism in the broader societal context. In France, distinctions can be made between formal groups, which have officially registered as an "association" entitling them to get subsidies and to launch civil actions in court, and informal groups which are less structured. Furthermore, collectives differ in their agendas even though they may back some common causes like they did for gay marriage and they share a common cause in fighting sexual harassment.

We identified three types of feminist collectives: general-interest groups which struggle for almost all women's causes (parity, equal pay, right to dress as one wishes, etc.), specialized groups which focus on specific issues (like banning sexist ads, or parity), and identity-grounded groups like LGBT or intersectional collectives. We illustrate below these agendas by focusing on the most prominent collectives.

Dare to Be a Feminist (Osez le féminisme) is the largest feminist association which gathers around 1500 members and has 20 officers. This collective organizes many campaigns and is heavily engaged on social media as well as

in lobbying in political circles. It is criticized by some feminists for promoting a form of institutional feminism. The Impertinent (Les Effrontées) also embrace all feminist causes that activists link to wider political issues. It is a formal association, with around 150 members and an office of 8 women. It is a leftist group which is very active on the web in order to denounce injustice done to women and other sorts of discrimination. The editorial line shows that The Impertinent is kind of a mixture of second wave struggles and of third wave computational feminism.

Specialized feminist collectives focus on a restricted agenda. Female Watchdogs only deals with the representation of women in the media (sexist comments, advertisements). This formal association gathers around 150 members who mostly belong to the second wave. It is rather conventional in its communication strategy. The President sends a monthly newsletter to members and feeds the website and social media accounts with press releases denouncing sexism in advertisements, and with information about the appeals made to the professional agency of advertisement ethics (Jury de Déontologie Publicitaire). In contrast, The Beard (La Barbe), which fights for the establishment of parity in the political and professional sphere, fully masters the codes of digital media. It is a small informal group of women (15–20) which is action-oriented. These activists check on Twitter public meetings where speakers are all men, they attend and they suddenly rise and go on stage, put on a fake beard and congratulate the men for having resisted parity. They are experts in making the buzz since one activist shoots the action with a mobile phone and disseminates it on Twitter.

Feminist groups who fight for the recognition of their identity and for gaining rights as minorities are diverse. For instance, the collective Oui Oui Oui has been very outspoken during the campaign for gay marriage and is still fighting for medically assisted procreation and gestational surrogacy. Bitches (Garces) is an intellectual group of lesbians, mainly composed of students in political science, even though it is opened to anybody. If French feminist LGBT groups have grown in the last decades, intersectional feminism is less represented in France which is a country defending universalism and resisting the recognition of any difference between citizens on a religious or ethnic ground. In fact, many feminists belonging to these minorities are not at ease in white women dominated groups. The afro-feminist collective Mwasi (meaning “Women” in Congolese) was set up in 2014 and it pleads, on digital platforms, for the end of racial and sexist discriminations. Activists use pictures and videos to promote the body and the aesthetics of Black women as a political discourse (Bruneel and Gomes Silva, 2017). French intersectional feminists are especially interested in the fights of cultural minorities in America and European countries, and Mwasi organized the first European

Blackfeminist festival in Paris which gathered, in July 2017, several black foreign activists.

Political agendas of the groups are, as we saw, diverse. Fatima Benomar, a Moroccan who is a cofounder of The Impertinent, considers that: “There is a form of competition among activists but each collective is specific and it is positive that the movement is decentralized since each woman can find the best group for herself.” There are few overt conflicts between groups. If French feminists have been divided about prostitution, most groups fought to ban it and the law to abolish it was passed in 2016. The main controversy lies on the wearing of the veil and the headscarf since secularism is a strong principle of the French State. Many feminist collectives perceive the Muslim dressing as a sign of women’s oppression and are overtly in favor of the current law preventing its wearing at work or in public institutions; only a few do not express an opinion or are in favor of a less rigid law.

If collectives take different political stands, it seems that digital media have nevertheless contributed to the pacification of the feminist community at large. On the Net, there is space for all trends and new collectives emerge at any time. Furthermore, digital media imply a physical distance between groups and leave room for autonomy. This might partly explain that, despite diverse agendas, feminist groups undergo less confrontations than in the past when theoretical lines were a source of fracture. Another explanation for the rather smooth relationships between collectives is probably due to a change in feminist leadership; many activists are no longer intellectuals but professionals who are less interested in the intricacies of ideological debates than in the achievement of their struggle.

2.2. The emergence of a new leadership and organizational practices

The activists are mainly young, in their late twenty or thirties for the leaders, belong to the middle or upper-low classes, and many have reached at least the first level of higher education. In our interviews, they stressed the need for self-reliance in communication and digital skills in order not to depend on male technicians. The President of Female Watchdogs, a former press officer who is 63, told us: “Today digital media have become a must for feminist activism and I had to learn everything by myself.” The appropriation of digital skills is easier for younger women who have seized the tools of self-publication that have given rise to DIY (Do It Yourself) practices and to amateur productions of texts and images (Flichy, 2010). Moreover, the large number of young digital natives explains the flowering of feminist sites. If a few activists learn computational activism on the spot, our study reveals the rise, in the hierarchy of feminist groups, of communication professionals who are in charge of the digital strategies. These leaders often belong to the media sphere (they are or have been journalists, press officers, video makers,

etc.) or to the communication digital sector. Some digital experts have adopted the entrepreneurial neo-liberal management of start-ups and digital firms. For instance, within The Georgette Sand informal collective, specific "digital projects" are delegated to only one or two members who fully carry them out; this fluid sharing of tasks allows activists to get engaged on an irregular basis. Furthermore, collectives take over advertising strategies and, in some respects, display a "brand" identity.

Organizational rules vary according to the size of the groups and to whether the editorial line is strictly defined or less specified. The organization is looser in informal groups as one member of the Bitches lesbian collective (Garces) states: "We are about 80 but only 15 form the active hard core. There is no hierarchy, no specific roles. All the members can write on our site and this is why there is a diversity of views." In contrast, formal collectives wish to have control over their publications and only leaders have access to the codes of websites while community management on social media is also operated by designated members. Fatima Benomar, a leader of The Impertinent, who is a graphic designer and video maker, explains: "We are mainly women in our twenties or thirties; many are artists and have precarious jobs. All the members of the bureau have the codes of the WordPress and we are three community managers for our Facebook account. We meet weekly and, when we plan specific actions on the streets, we communicate by using Telegram."

All feminist collectives rely on the engagement of a small number of activists (rarely more than a dozen) who are fully involved in the managerial tasks. Occasional power conflicts may emerge within this hierarchy and they are usually discussed face-to-face or in the Google group shared by the leaders. There is a big turnover in the leadership which can be due to political divergences, but more often to the wish to withdraw from the time-consuming work of activism. The engagement in active feminism is often sporadic and circumscribed to a limited period of time like in many other social movements (Cardon and Granjon, 2010). In fact, if the feminist movement is specific, it presents similarities with other activist groups. All collectives self-organize and activists engage in specific actions on an ad-hoc voluntary basis (Neveu, 1996; Kaufmann and Trom, 2010). Members of social movements rely on digital communication tools to coordinate and they use the web as an alternative media to promote their cause (Granjon, 2001; Cardon and Granjon, 2010). In all social movements, activism has become an intermittent engagement linked to specific actions as Nick Couldry points out: "Without doubt digital media faster political mobilization, accelerated cycles of action, and some new forms of collectivity… the resulting acceleration of action encourages short-term loyalties and less stability in political socialization" (Couldry, 2014: 608).

Furthermore, with the rise of individualism and the quest for self-recognition in neo-liberal society, political engagement has become more individualistic. This might be a source of tension in collectives since activists have to follow the editorial line and, moreover, no first or family names appear on the digital publications of militant groups. This is why feminist activists who wish to express themselves at the individual level, in a more intimate way or on other issues, do so on a personal blog or on their own social media accounts. This allows them to use their own name or a pseudonym and thus to recover their identity. The availability of various publishing spaces demonstrates how digital media can lift group pressure and accommodate on one hand, the respect of collective affiliation and, on the other hand, individual empowerment.

In fact, digital feminism is in the vein of contemporary neoliberalism. The explosion of collectives and blogs is, in a sense, inspired by the model of small start-ups in the digital world. The promotion of feminist activism is infiltrated by the logic of marketing and the values of entrepreneurship of "the new spirit of capitalism" (Boltanski and Chiapello, 1999). Online, feminism is experienced as a form of self-realization and of collective empowerment. Digital practices and feminist engagement are, in some ways, constituted through assemblages bound up with global liberalism even though feminists criticize the principles of neoliberalism and the social inequalities it leads to.

3. A Performative Activism

Feminist digital activism is molded by the neo-liberal society in which it emerged and all collectives are fully part of the economy of visibility (Voirol, 2005) which contributes to the reconfiguration of the women's movement. The activists are keen to be visible and they develop strategies to ensure that their posts are seen, read and shared. They do so by having a continuous editorial production on their website and on social media, and by appropriating the codes of the digital culture. Younger feminists are experts in using the technical and narrative frames of digital media and in developing innovative discourses. Furthermore, on the web, there is no limit for editorial content. The enormous number of feminist materials provided, daily and on an immediate and free access in the cyberspace, appears to be one of the major changes between activism in the seventies and in early 21st century.

3.1. An intense techno-cultural production

Many collectives have a regular techno-cultural production and make an original editing of narratives based on an assembly of texts, drawings, photos, videos which attract young women. While forty years ago, only a few

feminist film or video makers could develop this type of craft, today many young feminists have seized the availability of DIY tools and have become digital experts. Digital native feminists use new creative cultural formats (like mash-ups, video snippets). Some groups like Dare to Be a Feminist or Femen have a YouTube channel. However, Facebook is the most popular platform for French activists, while Twitter is more used as an information mean to reach journalists and several groups have an Instagram and Tumblr accounts. In some ways, feminist activism has become a flow of texts and visuals which are multi-distributed on different platforms.

Activists also devote a lot attention to the aesthetics of their websites. In this sense, digital feminism can be seen as a form of collaborative and aesthetic creation. Many activist contents are beautiful artistic performances. Some groups adopt the references of pop culture, others adopt the vintage fashionable trend (Niemeyer, 2015), as does the Georgette Sand collective.

Figure 1 Georgette Sand Facebook public page (downloaded on 24 February 2017)



The nostalgia for past feminism (Rentschler and Thrift, 2015) is featured in the iconography of a few websites which often make brief references to the history of feminism. Some collectives, like The Beard, display designs, in sepia colors, featuring photographs of the past on which are pasted symbolic objects of the collective as shown in the screen capture below.

Figure 2 The Beard (La Barbe) website page (downloaded on 25 January 2018)



The majority of posts fit into the 21st century cultural codes of communication and resort to a witty tone. "Online feminists deploy social media tactics as powerful tools of community building and political mobilisation in ways that take from the content and style of other satirical practices of Internet culture…" (Rentschler and Thrift, 2015: 2). Young feminists have appropriated internet culture, however these authors do not mention that humor and satire was a mode of communication of the youth revolt in the late 1960s and that feminists of the seventies used it a lot. This continuity, over decades, in the cultural and political forms of feminism which appeal to humor, caricature and transgression of patriarchal norms is worth underlining.

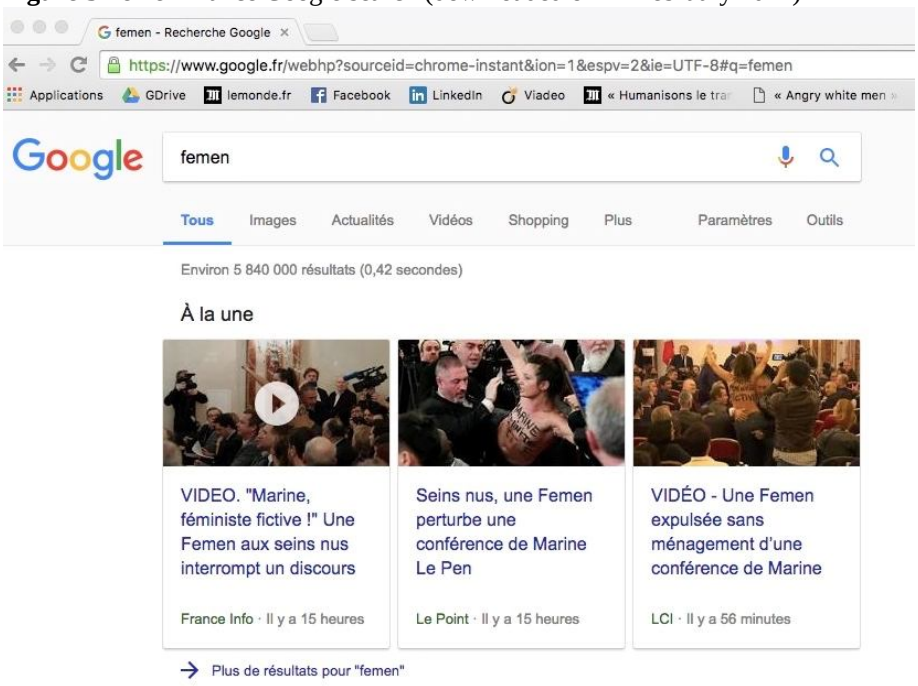
3.2. The making of events and campaigns

Feminist collectives self-represent themselves and activists are experts in organizing happenings and live events. "This ties the discursive back to action as ICT's increasingly sustain movements, coordinate direct action and have become instruments of direct action in their own right" (Cammaerts, 2012: 122). The Beard and Femen are especially famous for setting-up provocative actions which they record on video and post rapidly on the web. Digital media contract the time between the production and the representation of events which can be quasi-simultaneous. This live dissemination leads to a vast echo in cyber feminism and digital links circulate among multiple sites.

Femen, a movement initially founded in 2008 in Ukraine and now relocated in France, is well known for having its members use their topless bodies as a tool of resistance and liberation and for calling the press when

they show up in different spaces (institutions, churches, street demonstrations, etc.) as seen below.

Figure 3 Femen France Google search (downloaded on 24 February 2017)



One member of Femen France, Sofia, explained her action: “I am not an intellectual. I am an artist and I express myself with my body. This is why I joined Femen. I try to deliver a feminist message with a performance and strong visuals.” If the provocative strategy of Femen France has been initially controversial among French activists, this collective is today recognized as part of the feminist movement. In fact, as far back as the seventies, subverting the norms of public places, contesting the patriarchal domination on women’s body has been a common protest of feminists.

Campaigns are times of an intense mobilization. Major campaigns have been organized, for equal pay, male-female parity, gay marriage, and against rape, prostitution, sexism in the public space. These long-term protests are similar to campaigns in other Western countries but contemporary feminists also deal with daily-life issues which were not tackled by previous generations of feminists. For instance, the hashtag #WomenTax which denounces that ordinary consumer goods, like razors, are more expensive for women than for men, was launched in Anglophone countries and was taken over by the informal collective Georgette Sand. Moreover, this collective undertook a

specific digital campaign about the heavy tax on women's hygienic pads which was re-disseminated by some other collectives, and the hundreds of "love" and "comments" on social networks raised the attention of the press. Due to this campaign, the tax was much reduced by Parliament in December 2015.

Collectives try to rally ordinary women around catchy hashtags and to encourage clicks and sharing. As an example, in April 2016, Dare to Be a Feminist launched a campaign, #I am a feminist, asking followers to send their selfies with a short message. Many protests rely on using hashtags, like the campaigns against street harassment, rape or cyber-sexism. The potential to rouse instant communities around causes has been shown in many countries. In Germany, for instance, the hashtag #Aufschrei collected 57,000 postings in 3 days in reaction to the sexist comments and behavior of prominent male politicians during the federal elections 2013. "The example of hashtag feminism makes clear how the increased use of digital media has altered, influenced, and shaped feminism in the twenty-first century by giving rise to changed modes of communication, different kinds of conversations, and new configurations of activism across the globe, both online and offline" (Baer, 2016: 18).

Contemporary feminists carry on this struggle and they claim, for instance, the right to dress as they want and not to be victims of harassment. These claims have seen a great upswing since the surge of tweeting on the hashtag #moiaussi (metoo) and #balancetonporc (outyourpig) which continued for months. The importance of this outcry and the denunciation on Twitter of French political or artistic personalities was highly covered by mainstream media. This wave of indignation spread to several professional sectors and led the government to pass a law against any form of sexual harassment in any public or private place, and to set a fine against sexist outrage.

Feminist collectives master the buzz and the viral potential of social media. This strategy may sometimes prove to be efficient. For instance, the degrading image of women on Yves Saint-Laurent street billboards, in March 2017, was denounced by several collectives and it gathered a large number of online protests which led to the official indignation of the State secretary for Women's rights and the billboards were removed in a week time. The Facebook page of The Impertinent below celebrates the victory of the indignation of activists.

Figure 4 The Impertinent (Les Effrontées) public Facebook page (downloaded on 10 March 2017)



The organization of events and campaigns represent the achievements of activist groups and the materials of their struggles (posters, texts, photos, videos, press coverage) are put, for collective memory, in the archives section of their websites.

3.3. The inter-twinning of online and offline activism

Contemporary feminism is often criticized for being mainly focused on visibility and connectivity which, as such, cannot lead to much social change. In fact, digital activism is not only expressive; it is performative. It federates individuals and generates action frames leading to engagement. It allows "a new infrastructure of association" (Couldry and Van Dijck, 2015: 3) which backs up physical mobilization in the public sphere. The online mode of protest is a way to rally ordinary followers and to rely on user agency. Digital media are not only sociotechnical devices requiring to obey protocols, instructions, rules, they are also "techno-cultural constructs." "Technology, user agency and content are three fibres that platforms weave together in order to create the fabric of online sociality" (Van Dijck, 2013: 36).

If some online petitions mainly appeal to emotion and create ephemeral communities, campaigns lead to elaborate political strategies in the public sphere. Activists make the buzz online, but they also send press releases to mainstream media and they call out journalists who are in favor of the feminist cause. Furthermore, they lobby in political circles by contacting members of Parliament who share their opinions and they make appointments with members of government. This form of "institutional activism" is performed by the leaders of formal associations. For instance, the Inter LGBT association which fights for the right to medically assisted procreation, asked right away for a formal encounter with Marlène Schiappa, the State secretary for women's rights in the new Macron government, in order to get her support for the passing of a law in Parliament. This group is also very outspoken in street demonstrations. It is important to underline that all major campaigns are not only backed by strategies for visibility in the press and in the public space, but by fieldwork and lobbying, meaning that political strategies and repertoires of action have not changed so much since the beginning of feminism.

Our survey shows that if digital media are communicative devices they are also tools for action in order to stay connected and to recruit new members. The Beard, for instance, sells kits of beards on its website for women who wish to join and to adopt the same satirical "congratulations" in official meetings composed of males only. Many collectives send online appeals to join as shown in the screen capture of Dare to Be a Feminist.

Figure 5 Dare to Be a Feminist (Osez le Féminisme) Appeal to join (website page downloaded on 12 March 2018)



Activists welcome the coming of sympathizers to their face-to-face meetings with no need to become an official member. Dare to Be a Feminist, for instance, organizes regular assemblies which gather, as we observed, young women who do not know much about feminism but are searching for infor-

mation; it also recruits volunteers for training camps in order to teach them how to become an activist. Other groups, like Georgette Sand and The Impertinent, organize happy hours or picnics to attract sympathizers. For all collectives, unmediated communication is still considered as important for sensitizing women to the cause.

As we saw, digital networks build up various feminist communities which gather around plural, multifaceted feminist spaces and it is revealing that today the plural "feminisms" is more and more used in the literature.

4. Small Communities and a Large Scattered Audience

Does digital activism help first, to expand the audience of feminist materials and second, to build up feminist communities? This question remains not easy to answer. If activists boast about the number of their followers, the actual readership of feminist contents remains unknown and it is surprising that very few studies about digital feminism raise the matter of the audience. Researchers generally analyze discourses on feminist blogs, websites or social media, and mainly focus on the contribution of active members of the community. The cultural theoretical framework is the most common although the sociological approach can also be found in a few studies like the ethnographic work conducted by Aristea Fotopoulo (2014) in London-based women's organizations and the interviews of four girl bloggers by Jessalynn Keller (2012). Furthermore, Jessalynn Keller, Kaitlynn Mendes and Jessica Ringrose studied the development of the Hollaback movement which was launched by two Toronto and Montreal reporters in 2005 and had spread to 32 countries and 92 cities ten years later. The authors did a textual analysis of a random sample of 159 posts of the main website and interviewed 12 Hollaback organizers and 48 Twitter teenage users of the hashtag #BeenRapedNeverReported. They showed how adults but also "… teens often acknowledged social media, specifically Twitter and Tumblr as key to actually 'discovering' feminism, gaining a feminist consciousness, and making feminist contacts online" (Keller et al., 2016: 8).

The dissemination of feminist materials in the digital space is not linear as texts circulate through different platforms. The analysis of metrics of social media is the most common method in order to evaluate the audience. In our study, the metrics showed that, on 10 March 2017, the number of "followers" of feminist groups was not that high, except for Dare to Be a Feminist which gathered over 100,000 fans on Facebook and nearly 30,000 followers on Twitter. The other third wave groups reached between 10,000 to 15,000 fans on Facebook and between 2,700 to 1,000 on Twitter, The Beard reaching almost 9,500 followers on Twitter since it is their main mean of communication. Second wave groups are less popular; Female Watchdogs and Solidary

Women had a smaller audience of less than 8,000 on Facebook and Twitter. However, these data do not strictly reflect the audience. On one hand, many persons might have registered as followers while they don't regularly look at the content of feminist collectives which is intertwined with many other messages in their news feed. On the other hand, there is a hidden audience since many followers share content in their personal networks and thus favor a wider dissemination of feminist postings. But, due to their privacy, it remains impossible to measure how dissemination circulates among personal networks.

4.1 Audience circles

In our research, the audience of digital feminism appears as very scattered and it spreads along concentric circles depending on the level of engagement of participants. In fact, each collective attracts its own "public" which designates followers who identify with the goals and sensitivity of a specific group. As Sonia Livingstone (2005) argues, the theoretical distinction between the notions of "audience" and "public" is nowadays blurring since new media may favor participation and engagement in public issues. Such is the case on feminist mediated platforms even though only a minor part of the diffused audience can be considered as forming an active public.

The first circle of the audience is composed of the small core of activists who, besides being engaged in their own collective, pay a lot of attention to other groups. On the web, militants have a daily watch at the whole feminist community and this entails a form of competition for launching initiatives and producing continuous materials. Activists may recognize the digital creativity of other militants and, for instance, they occasionally share links to other collectives on their own websites which is a sign of mutual appraisal. This behavior is very similar to what we observed in the press community since, on Twitter, journalists spend a great deal of time reading the tweets of peers belonging to rival media, and may salute their publications online (Jouët and Rieffel, 2015).

In our research, we did a qualitative survey of non-activists based on 24 face-to-face interviews of women in their early twenties, most of them being students or young professionals. These young feminists do not want to become a member of a militant group since they are reluctant to follow a "political agenda," to attend regular meetings, and they wish to engage in feminism on a strictly individual basis

The second circle of the audience is composed of determined feminists who follow one or more online feminist collectives as well as individual feminist bloggers. Nearly half of the interviewees fit into this non-activist profile. These young women are rather knowledgeable about the history of the feminist movement. They occasionally make comments, express their

opinions or give a testimony about sexist discrimination in their personal life. For instance, Margot, 20 years old, mentions: “I follow several feminist groups even though I don’t always agree with their political stands. On Twitter, I regularly get into discussions but talking is not as effective as concrete actions, like street demonstrations which show a real mobilization of feminists.” The sites of Dare to Be Feminist and The Beard, are the most popular in this circle.

However, feminists belonging to minorities favor specific sites which better fit their centers of interests. Lesbian women prefer LGBT sites. For instance, Timé, 24, follows the lesbian site Barbi(e)turix, and an American site AfterEllen, which she says “is well known and is linked to the pop culture in the United States.” Women of ethnic minorities follow diverse feminist sites but they prefer to participate in sites gathering women of their ethnic or racial group. Oueannassa, a history student of an African origin, looks occasionally at different feminist sites, but she is a regular fan of the afro-feminist site Mwasi. She explains: “I prefer Mwasi and I also follow Anglophone bloggers on Twitter and Tumblr because they are more advanced on intersectionality issues like @FeministaJones, @AkilahObviously, @ElsaRay_CCIF.” Leïla, a French woman of Algerian descent, fights the oppression of women in Islam and she debates about the discrimination of Muslim women in the forum of the collective “Neither Whores, nor Indoctrinated” (*Ni Putes, ni Soumises*). She is also engaged on other sites and is very outspoken to defend her identity if need be: “I can react to posts when I feel that my identity is offended and then I send comments. If I have experienced something which touched me, I will write about it. I will mention my feelings on the web.” Some interviewees also put their names on petitions and participate in street demonstrations like on March 8th. Many discuss feminist issues with “friends” in their Facebook private networks. In some ways, young feminists have revived the women’s consciousness groups that took place in the sixties and seventies. While feminists of these decades met in small groups in order to discuss sexism and to talk about their personal experiences, it now takes place on a much larger scale in the digital space. Subjective narratives as well as conversations about personal experiences contribute to the self-assertion of being a feminist. Digital media allow the young feminists that we interviewed to express themselves, to exchange and to build-up their identity. This agency is a form of empowerment at the individual level.

The third circle of the audience is made of young women who say they are feminists, but are not keen about militant postings. Several find that feminist groups are too radical and they consider that feminism depends on individual acts in daily life, like stressing women’s rights in their relationships to men, to friends, to family, to colleagues. However, a few read *Causette*, a feminist monthly magazine which is not linked to any activist group, and

provides a combination of serious information about women's issues and of joyful and satirical articles about beauty, fashion, ordinary sexism. Young women of the third circle get most feminist news on women's magazines like *Elle*, *Cosmopolitan*, *Biba*, *Madmoizelle*, and they appreciate the few articles which deal with the women's cause like on pay equality, harassment, rape. They occasionally share links of feminist articles in their personal networks. They have a positive view about the role that digital media can play in promoting feminist issues. However, online they never get into discussions about feminism but they do so during face-to-face encounters with their friends.

4.2 The culture of sharing

Most followers of feminist collectives just read news and share content. Sharing is the major practice done by all non-militant women and, according to Estelle: "Sharing is an important form of engagement since it means informing people in order to make them discover and understand the feminist cause." Clara does the same: "I share lots of information and I sign many feminist petitions online, but I don't write comments." A look at the data of sharing on collective sites shows that it is not so widespread, as it usually ranges for each post between 10 to 50 "shares" on Facebook and Twitter. However, when the issue at stake is crucial, there is a large mobilization of the audience, as it took place when the government decided, in July 2017, to curtail by 25% the budget of the Secretariat for women's rights which was already the lowest. The Facebook site of Dare to Be a Feminist garnered 852 "shares" on 29 July 2017 and 997 "comments." Appeals to protest were also disseminated on the digital spaces of all feminist collectives.

The architecture of social networks matches the principles of horizontal communication; sharing is embedded in the design of social network and, according to a big quantitative analysis of social media (Bastard et al., 2017), it is the main use of Facebook. As W. Lance Bennett and Alexandra Segerberg point out, social networks favor "connective action" by enabling "personal engagement through easy-to-share images and personal action frames" (Bennett and Segerberg, 2012: 758). Some interviewees are sceptical about this distant engagement that Evgeny Morozov (2011) calls "slacktivism," and Romaric, a young male feminist of 23, points out: "Activism is a daily commitment and a strenuous work. Internet is not bad for activism but there is a danger. Today by the number of voices which are heard on the internet, one may think that there is no longer any frontier between being a militant or just giving your opinion." If sharing is not activism but a sign of loose engagement and of distant support, it disseminates issues of the women's cause, knits connections and contributes to identity building and to the feeling of belonging to a community.

Our interviewees share different types of material: posts of activists but also links to videos, songs and TV serials with a feminist sensitivity. José Van Dijck stresses in her book *The Culture of Connectivity* (2013) how social media, which she prefers to name as connective media, conform with a young generation's lifestyle as the youth is fond of microblogging and sharing. This is the case of all our interviewees who love Facebook but also – depending on individual cases – Twitter, Flickr, Tumblr and YouTube. Our interviewees might know some collectives but few can cite the name of contemporary activists. Most of them are attracted to feminist contents with a pop culture style. Hélène, for instance, appreciates the iconography and iconoclastic provocation of Femen and the Pussy Riot and says "I am keen on feminist Tumblr." Young feminists are involved in watching TV series, in listening to pop singers and they send links of images and videos to their friends. They have been raised in the entertainment formats of neo-liberal society and they share the codes of the media star system. They are looking for new models of feminism as Estelle, a student of 22 years old, states: "Of course there is Simone de Beauvoir, but more recently many stars claim to be a feminist like Pink, Beyoncé, Patricia Arquette of the TV series Medium. Personally I love Emma Watson. It is another vision of feminism which makes the cause more attractive." In our face-to-face interviews, Emma Watson was the most quoted figure of feminism. Pop culture has reframed the style and the expression of feminism in a cool and sexy version which appeals to young women. In that regard, digital media as well as mainstream media may contribute to the sensitization of ordinary women and to the raising of a feminist consciousness.

In our survey, the young activists, as well as the ordinary feminists that we interviewed, tend to share a techno-utopian representation of online feminism. Many subscribe to the myth of digital media as a major source of progress and this confirms the critical analysis of Aristea Fotopoulo: "The social imaginary of 'networked feminism' as an ideological construct of legitimate political engagement in the 'open' and 'shared' space of Web 2.0 technologies is cultivated by widely circulating narratives, including those of digital inclusion…" (Fotopoulo, 2014: 14). When, forty years ago, activists could only rely on militant magazines with a small readership, digital media magnifies the dissemination of feminist voices.

5. Conclusion

This overview of a few representative collectives epitomizes the recent evolution of feminism. Many Anglophone studies stress the weight of the cultural and emotional dynamics of feminist mobilization on the web and this analysis is confirmed in our survey. However, feminist activism is also

grounded in the cultural and political context in which it develops. “The eco-system of connective media ... is not simply the sum of individual micro systems, but is rather a dynamic infrastructure that shape and is shaped by culture at large” (Van Dijck, 2013: 44). As we saw, France is a country where ideological and cultural debates are at the centre of the public sphere and gender issues are a main source of controversies. Furthermore, French feminism is confronted to the vivid public debates about secularism and universalism which are considered as the pillars of the Republic. Collectives take different stands about the Muslim veil and the self-organization of ethnic minorities, nevertheless there is a mutual acceptance of the diversity of feminist voices and all collectives support parity, equal pay, lesbian’s rights and the fight against rape and sexual harassment.

If digital media help to raise awareness of causes and to get support of sympathizers, communicative practices alone cannot achieve political change and, like for other online social movements (Pleyers, 2013), feminist activism requires the backing of street demonstrations, a large coverage in the press and the support of convinced MPs to obtain new legal rights. These strategies are embedded in the context of each country and language, especially in Europe, plays a major role in keeping actions within the national borders. Nevertheless, French activists are part of the international feminist movement and they follow foreign groups online. The rising number of French young women speaking English helps occasional international coordination. Due to a feeling of marginalization, intersectional feminists, like the afro-feminist collective Mwasi, develop strong links with similar cultural minorities abroad. French feminists demonstrated when the right for abortion was threatened in Spain and Poland. Common mobilizations and hashtags, like #womenstrike, disseminate at a global level and are displayed on French digital sites. In October 2017, the international outcry against sexual assault, following the Hollywood Harvey Weinstein affair, led hundreds of French women to testify about sexist harassment or rape. This issue was very much debated in mainstream media and the hashtag #MeToo was very popular and got thousands of French followers on Twitter and Facebook.

The vast of echo of campaigns and feminist protests in the public space is a source of violent counter-attacks. In the last decade, the high visibility of feminists on the web led to a huge rise of virulent cyber-sexism. This global phenomenon is studied and denounced by several Anglophone feminist researchers (Gill, 2015; Shepherd et al., 2015), who report national or international mobilizations to counter these aggressions (Mendes, 2015; Keller et al., 2016). In France, some feminist websites have been hacked by extreme right-wing trolls and leaders of Dare to Be a Feminist and Femen received death threats. Femen decided to communicate through an encrypted messaging service, to close their offices and to relocate every day. The expansion of insults

and sexist attacks against activists, lesbians, and women at large, particularly young women, was mentioned in a report of the National Assembly, and led to the launching in October 2016 of a State campaign #Stopcybersexisme.

In France, like in many countries, digital media contributed to a reconfiguration of feminism. The lively, young and satirical digital narratives made the women's cause gain in visibility and in audience. Connective networks, as socio-technical devices, play a role of mediation which contributes to renew the forms of engagement. If feminists of the first and the second waves have been shrewd in knitting networks, which is a basic strategy of all types of activism, contemporary feminists benefit from more powerful tools and resources in order to spread their ideas and to mobilize. Digital activism online is performative; it federates individuals and generates action frames that foster personal and collective actions both online and offline. In that sense, digital communities are not only virtual but also real. Despite the "instability" and the "vagueness" of the term "community" (Couldry, 2014), our study shows that feminist communities do exist on the web, they are tools for consciousness raising and for producing strong or light modes of engagement.

Another change taking place in women's activism is that French third wave feminism is no longer linked to strong theoretical frameworks, except in the circle of feminist scholars and among activists who fight for gender identity issues. It has emancipated from Marxism and leftist theories and it is less revolutionary than in the past for becoming more pragmatic. Only a few collectives, like The Impertinent and Solidary Women, still call for a global social change. The embrace of popular culture suggests a more conventional form of feminism that can appear less critical of the establishment than the activism of past generations. Icons in the past were writers, philosophers, scholars; today icons are pop-media stars who defend women's rights with simple messages. "Digital feminisms are in a sense redoing feminism for a neoliberal age" (Baer, 2016: 19) "… feminism in the twentieth century developed in tandem with Leftist and rights-based movements invested in the fundamental transformation of social relations…. However, in the absence of alternatives to global capitalism … rather than participating in narratives of social progress or emancipation, these actions emphasize the process of searching for new political paradigms, languages, and symbols..." (Baer, 2016: 30).

If there is a proliferation of collectives and postings on the web, this does not mean that feminists are fully empowered. We stressed that due to online and offline hard campaigns, French third wave feminism has contributed to major advancements on key issues like parity, gay marriage, prostitution, rape and sexual harassment. However, many struggles for equality remain to be carried out. Furthermore, little change has occurred in the representations and roles of gender in society and patriarchy remains dominant. Digital media helped to regenerate feminism, to attract young women and to bring gender

issues in the public sphere but, in all Western countries, feminists are facing the re-emergence of reactionary forces. Today the women's cause still shakes the foundations of patriarchy and this is why, as in the past, contemporary feminist activism is still perceived as a threat to the established order.

NOTES

1. I wish to thank my colleagues of the Department of Media and Communications for their thoughtful comments on this research during my two stays at the London School of Economics in 2016 and 2017.

2. Mouvement pour le Planning familial, Collectif national pour les droits des femmes, Femmes solidaires.

3. Feminist personal blogs are also numerous in France and there are some prominent feminist YouTubers, but this is not the scope of this paper which focuses on militant groups.

4. La Barbe, Chiennes de garde, Les Effrontées, Osez le féminisme, Femen France, Garces, Georgette Sand, Mwasi, Oui Oui Oui.

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LINGUISTIC PRACTICES IN GENDERED INSTITUTIONAL SETTINGS: SPEECH BEHAVIOR OF FEMALE POLITICAL LEADERS

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ABSTRACT. Research evidence (e.g. Cameron and Shaw, 2016) suggests that the co-evolution of competing and incompatible principles of gender and political speech constitutes an issue for women in positions of political leadership. Using data from Pew Research Center, I performed analyses and made estimates regarding the percentage saying women/men make better political leaders, the percentage indicating major reasons why there are not more women in top executive business positions or in high political offices, and the percentage saying, in general, women/men in high political offices are better at working out compromises, being honest and ethical, working to improve quality of life for U.S. citizens, standing up for beliefs despite political pressure, or being persuasive. Empirical and secondary data are used to support the claim that the most successful male/female political speakers employ a series of linguistic resources to establish a decision of their own.

Keywords: linguistic practice; gendered institutional setting; speech behavior

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1. Introduction

Women remain a fleetingly unimportant subgroup in positions of political leadership. Men take up an unbalanced proportion of the floor in public contexts. Women moving into male-dominated jobs and entities frequently embrace the manner of speaking (Lăzăroiu, 2017a, b; Mihăilă, 2018; Petcu, 2016; Popescu and Alpopi, 2017; Reimann, Pausch, and Diewald, 2017; Žurga, 2017) which is deep-rooted as the institutional standard. (Cameron and Shaw, 2016)

2. Literature Review

Organizations are gendered, and their standards, regulations, and practices may display gender imbalance. Male and female manners of speaking are not granted comparable value: women in public contexts are compelled to harmonize to male criteria (Hurd, 2016; Mihăilă, Popescu, and Nica, 2016; Nica, 2018; Popescu Ljungholm, 2017a, b, c) with the aim of being successful. Like men, women may act in fashions which are combative and notably belligerent. Women's employment of concerted and backup strategies (Balica, 2017; Leskaj, 2017; Nica, 2015; Peters, 2016; Popescu, 2018) may be the consequence of a predetermined, gender-based choice for a particular manner of speaking. Separate dissimilarities, and ones in function and status (Ionescu, 2017; Mihăilă, 2017; Nordberg, 2017; Popescu et al., 2017a, b) displaying the standpoint of a leader's political party, become more visible than gender disparities as an impact on linguistic behavior. Albeit female politicians do not use a distinct position from their male equivalents (Lăzăroiu et al., 2017; Nica et al., 2014; Petcu, 2017; Popescu, 2017), they may nonetheless be designed as inconsistent in images of their speech. (Cameron and Shaw, 2016)

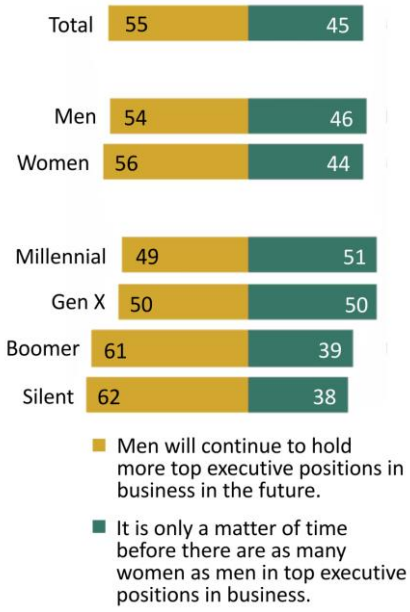
3. Methodology

Using data from Pew Research Center, I performed analyses and made estimates regarding the percentage saying women/men make better political leaders, the percentage indicating major reasons why there are not more women in top executive business positions or in high political offices, and the percentage saying, in general, women/men in high political offices are better at working out compromises, being honest and ethical, working to improve quality of life for U.S. citizens, standing up for beliefs despite political pressure, or being persuasive. Empirical and secondary data are used to support the claim that the most successful male/female political speakers employ a series of linguistic resources to establish a decision of their own.

4. Results and Discussion

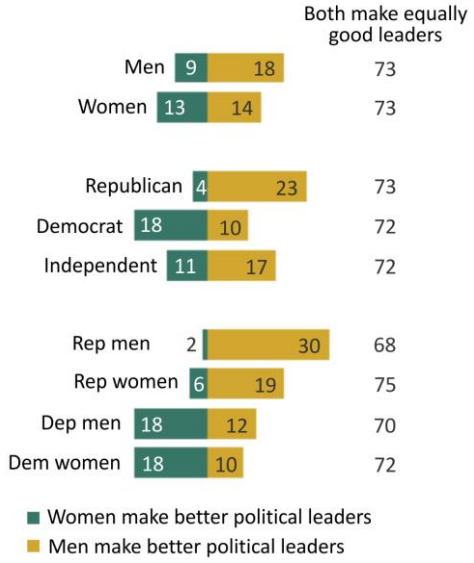
Sexism may be an effective weapon which places female politicians at a shared detriment. Male politicians may be disapproved for a perceived absence of ascendancy. For women, dominance and command are atypical, adverse, and de-sexing. The co-evolution of competing and incompatible principles of gender and political speech constitutes an issue for women in positions of political leadership. Women as a collective prefer concerted or consensus-based manners of discourse. (Cameron and Shaw, 2016) (Figures 1–6)

Figure 1 As more women move into management roles, % saying…



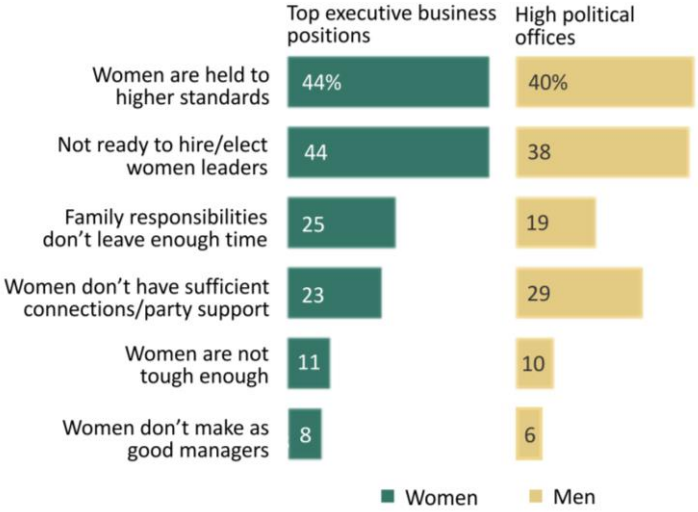
Sources: Pew Research Center; my survey among 3,600 individuals conducted August 2017.

Figure 2 A partisan gap on views of men, women, and political leadership. % saying…



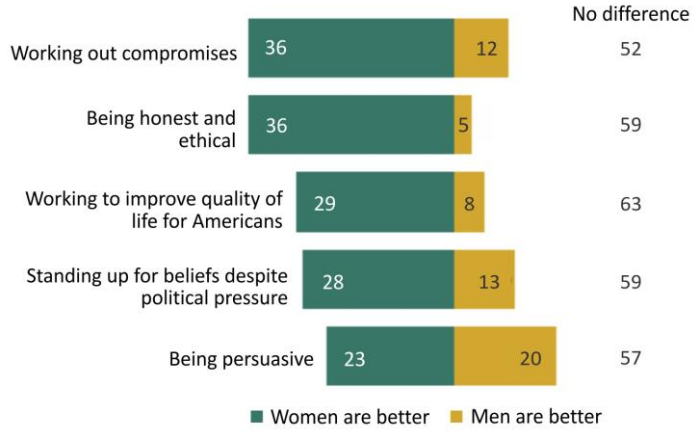
Sources: Pew Research Center; my survey among 3,600 individuals conducted August 2017.

Figure 3 What's holding women back from top jobs? % saying each is a major reason why there aren't more women in…



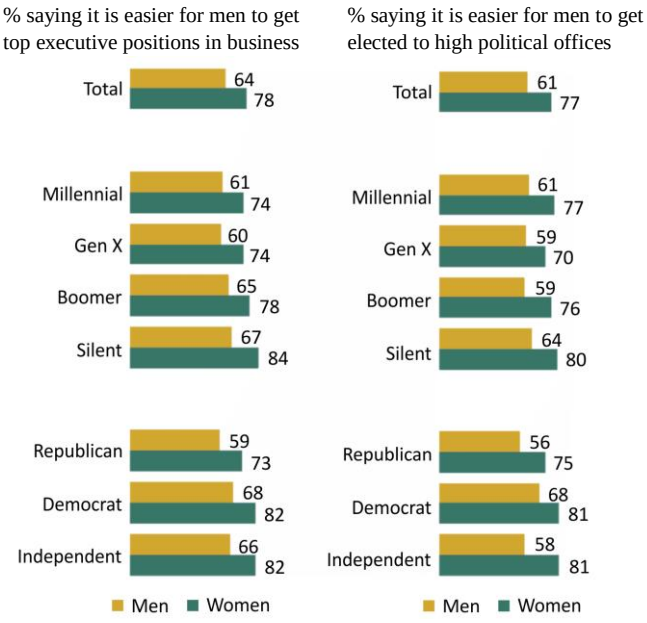
Sources: Pew Research Center; my survey among 3,600 individuals conducted August 2017.

Figure 4 Are female political leaders better at working out compromises?
% saying, in general, women/men in high political offices are better at…



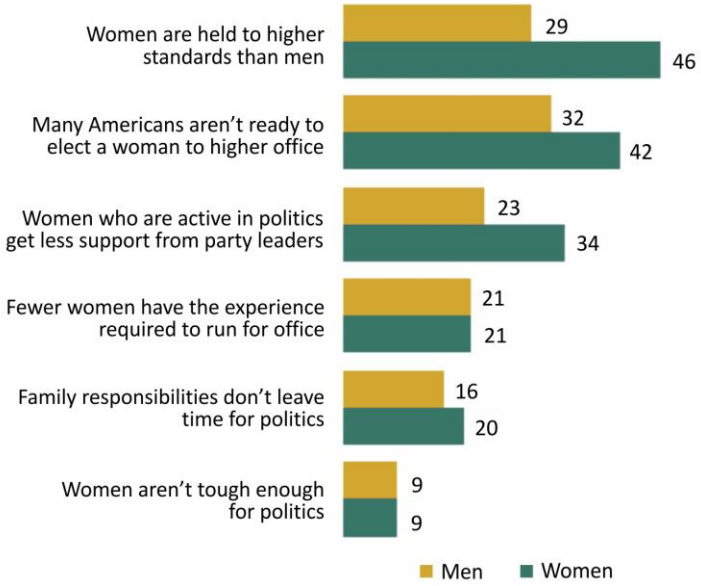
Sources: Pew Research Center; my survey among 3,600 individuals conducted August 2017.

Figure 5 Most say it is easier for men to get top positions in business and politics



Sources: Pew Research Center; my survey among 3,600 individuals conducted August 2017.

Figure 6 Why aren't more women in top elective office? % saying each is a major reason that fewer women hold high political offices



Sources: Pew Research Center; my survey among 3,600 individuals conducted August 2017.

5. Conclusions

Women's predilection for shared and unbiased types of interplay, and their consonant disapprobation of counteraction, is instrumental in hampering them in circumstances where actors should strive to gain and hold the floor. Women are frequently criticized as being deficient in ascendancy, and when they are considered to display command (Holzer, 2017; Means, 2017; Nica, 2017a, b, c; Pilkington, 2017; Popescu Ljungholm, 2016), they may not be recognized as congenial. The most successful male/female political speakers employ a series of linguistic resources to establish a decision of their own. (Cameron and Shaw, 2016)

Author Contributions

The author confirms being the sole contributor of this work and approved it for publication.

Conflict of Interest Statement

The author declares that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

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GENDER INEQUALITY IN POLITICAL DEMOCRACY: ELECTORAL ACCOUNTABILITY, WOMEN'S REPRESENTATION IN GOVERNMENT, AND PERCEIVED CORRUPTION

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ABSTRACT. Following recent research (e.g. Debski et al., 2018; Eggers, Vivyan, and Wagner, 2018; Esarey and Schwindt-Bayer, 2018) on the link between perceived corruption and women in government, I have identified and provided empirical evidence that women are less predisposed to get involved in the wrongful utilization of public posts for personal gain. Using data from Afrobarometer, Gallup, Transparency International, UNDP, UNIFEM, WEF etc., I performed analyses and made estimates regarding distribution by gender of civil servants with regard to the manifestations of corruption existing in public administration.

Keywords: gender inequality; political democracy; electoral accountability

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1. Introduction

Women's representation is associated with corruption via the alleviating route of electoral accountability that makes corruption unsafe, and thus should mitigate the link between women's representation and corruption (Balica, 2017; Lăzăroiu et al., 2017; Nica, 2015; Pol and Reveley, 2017): they are more disinclined to the consequences of getting involved in corruption than men and may be more predisposed than the latter to be considered responsible for corruption as a result of unbalanced approach. Less pervasive corruption generates a more substantial deterrent for women to get involved in corruption than men. (Esarey and Schwindt-Bayer, 2018)

2. Literature Review

Superior female quotas in the legislative office and in the personnel are relevantly related to an inferior degree of corruption. (Hao, Chang, and Sun, 2018) Female political figures confront higher criteria in public activity, as women voters require more from female legislators than from male ones. The impact of politician gender on sanction differs by voter gender: female voters are more predisposed to penalize female legislators for lawbreaking. Corruption is associated adversely with women's representation. (Eggers, Vivyan, and Wagner, 2018) Women's participation percentages in politics and the labor market (Esty, 2017; Mihăilă, Popescu, and Nica, 2016; Petcu, 2017; Popescu et al., 2017) are not straightly associated with lower corruption. Power distance and maleness are frequently related to both corruption and women's participation percentages. The absence of cultural features (Bereketeab, 2017; Machan, 2017; Otrusinová, 2016; Popescu and Alpopi, 2017; Profiroiu and Nastacă, 2016) may generate an artificial link between raised female participation ratios and diminished corruption levels. (Debski et al., 2018)

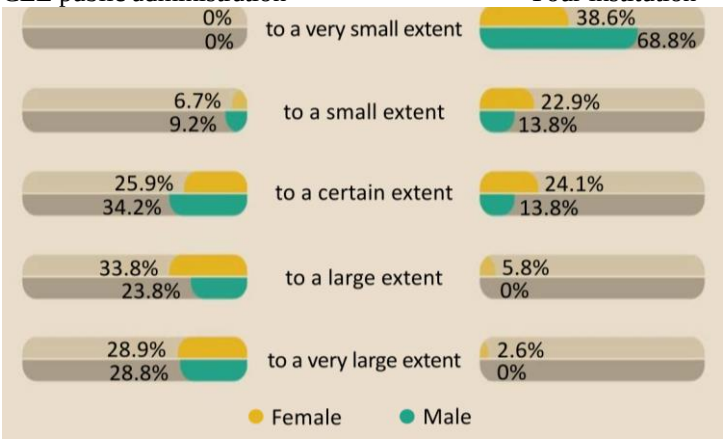
3. Methodology

Using data from Afrobarometer, Gallup, Transparency International, UNDP, UNIFEM, WEF etc., I performed analyses and made estimates regarding distribution by gender of civil servants with regard to the manifestations of corruption existing in public administration. Empirical and secondary data are used to support the claim that women are less predisposed to get involved in the wrongful utilization of public posts for personal gain.

4. Results and Discussion

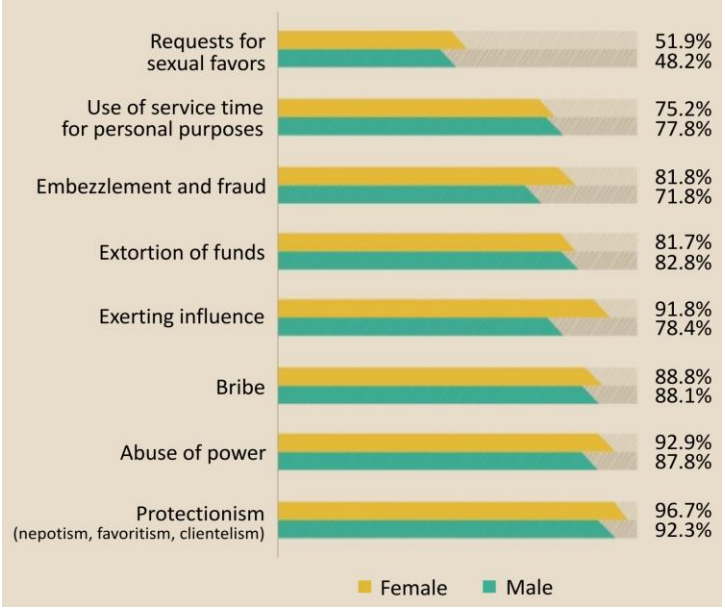
Women's activity in parliament may have an instrumental and adverse effect on corruption. (Jha and Sarangi, 2018) Women bureaucrats may be regarded as less corrupt as the public considers that they do not have access to the types of arrangements (Ionescu, 2017a, b; Nagel, 2016; Peters, 2017; Popescu Ljungholm, 2017a, b) that would further dishonesty and corruption. (Barnes, Beaulieu, and Saxton, 2018) The proportion of the female parliamentarians is not related to perceived corruption in economies with significant levels of preexistent perceived corruption. (Esarey and Schwindt-Bayer, 2018) Where levels of corruption are excessive, the amount of women elected is irrelevant. Shadowy networks serve the already advantaged and create a barrier to women when male-led arrangements shape political parties' candidate choice. (Sundström and Wängnerud, 2016) (Figures 1–7)

Figure 1 Distribution by gender of civil servants with regard to the degree of manifestation/spread of corruption



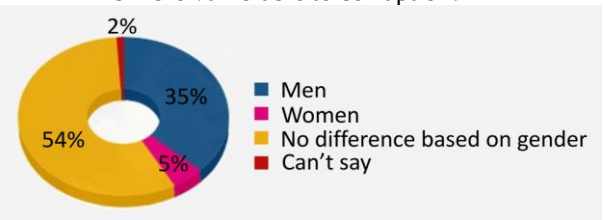
Sources: Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs; The Institute of Public Policies; CBS-AXA UNDP; my survey among 2,800 individuals conducted September 2017.

Figure 2 Distribution by gender of civil servants with regard to the manifestations of corruption existing in public administration of the CEE countries



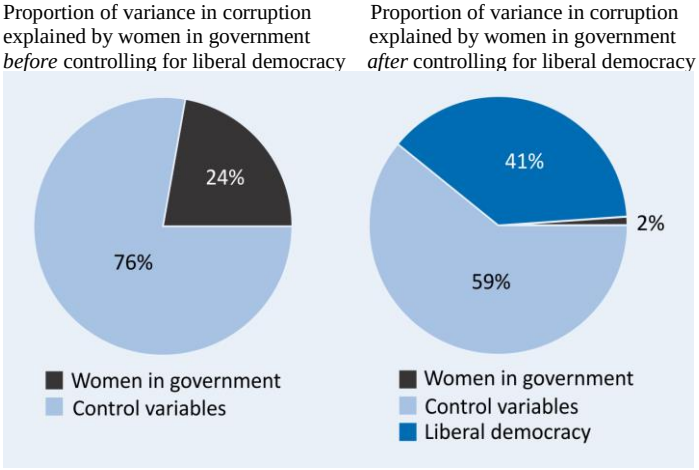
Sources: Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs; The Institute of Public Policies; CBS-AXA UNDP; my survey among 2,800 individuals conducted September 2017.

Figure 3 In your opinion, who among men or women is more vulnerable to corruption?



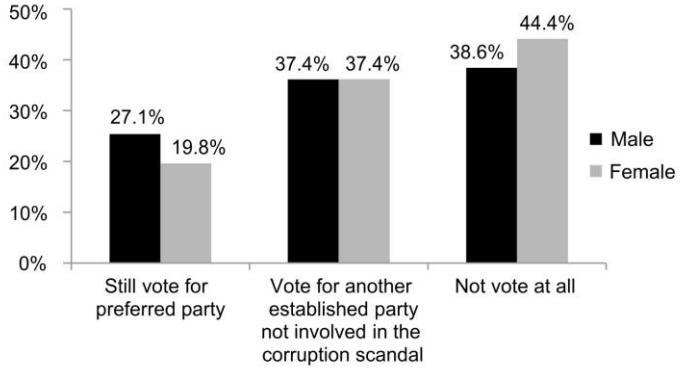
Sources: Transparency International; LocalCircles; my survey among 2,800 individuals conducted September 2017.

Figure 4 Gender, power, and good governance



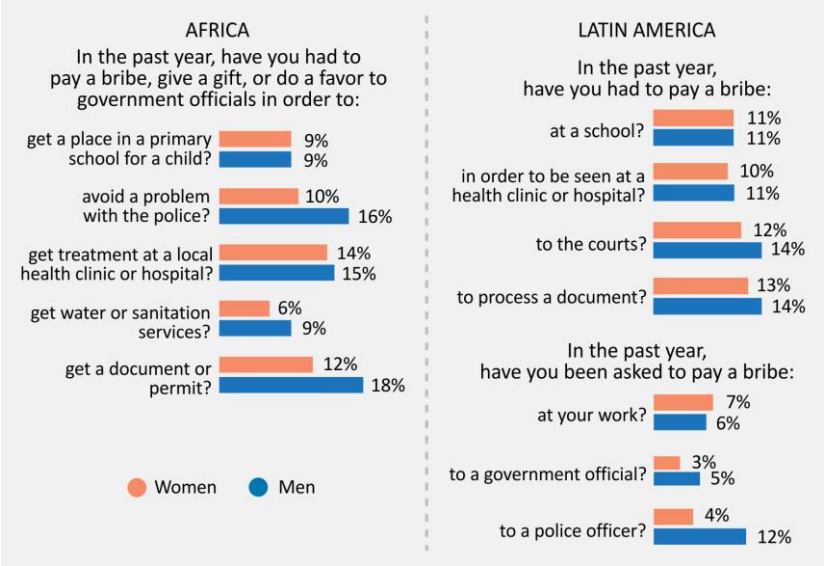
Sources: Sung (2003); UNIFEM; UNDP; my estimates.

Figure 5 If your preferred party were involved in a corruption scandal, which of the following would be most likely?



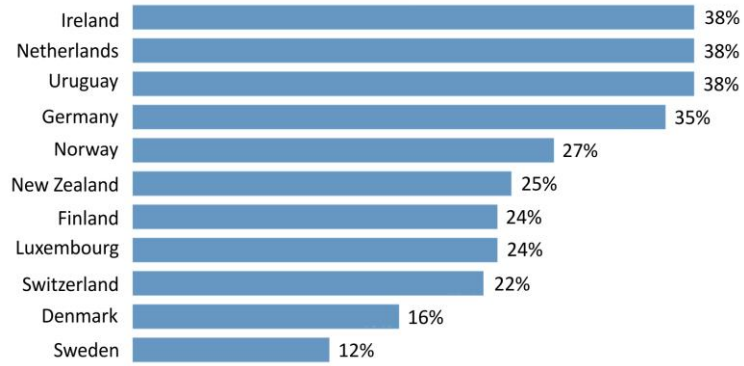
Sources: Agerberg (2015); my survey among 2,800 individuals conducted September 2017.

Figure 6 Perception and victimization by gender



Sources: Afrobarometer; Latin America Public Opinion Poll; U4; CMI; my survey among 3,400 individuals conducted August 2017.

Figure 7 Is corruption widespread throughout the government in your country? (%of respondents answering affirmative)



Sources: Gallup; WEF; my survey among 3,500 individuals conducted July 2017.

5. Conclusions

Voters may regard women as disparaged within political entities (Hurd, 2016; Mihăilă, 2018; Peters, 2016a, b; Popescu Ljungholm, 2016), or as more risk opposed and thus more controlled by institutional supervision, which may bring about perceptions of women as less predisposed to get involved in the wrongful utilization of public posts for personal gain. (Barnes and Beaulieu, (2018)

Author Contributions
The author confirms being the sole contributor of this work and approved it for publication.

Conflict of Interest Statement
The author declares that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

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ELECTORAL GENDER QUOTAS IN FORMAL POLITICAL POWER STRUCTURES: BREACHING PATTERNS OF MALE OVERREPRESENTATION

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ABSTRACT. I draw on a substantial body of theoretical and empirical research on electoral gender quotas, and using data from CAWP, CRS, EIP, Higher Heights, IPU, IWPR, Rutgers University, UNICEF, I perform analyses and make estimates regarding world and regional averages of women in legislatures worldwide, the share of elective offices held by women (U.S.), and the number of Black women in Congress. Taken together, the outcomes of the analysis support the notion that quotas are extremely adequate when they remarkably disorganize former models of male overrepresentation.

Keywords: electoral gender quota; formal political power structure; representation

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1. Introduction

Electoral gender quotas have changed the setting of candidate selection. Resistance, not conformity, is the criterion concerning quota implementation. If thoroughly enforced, quotas endanger the prevailing regulations, routines, and patterns of political activity (Álvarez Rodríguez, 2017; Friedman and Gerstein, 2017; Nica et al., 2014; Pera, 2018; Popescu et al., 2017), long postulating women's exclusion. The establishment of quotas constitutes the starting point of a time-consuming, debated operation to expand politics to women and maintain their complete and equal involvement. (Krook, 2016)

2. Literature Review

Quotas may raise the number of women qualified for leadership positions and provide them more chances to combine efforts to back additional women for top office, but may generate a trade-off consequence in which important boosts in women's numeric representation entail their ensuing removal from positions of command. Quotas are positively related to parties' preference for a female leader without shaping the regime of incumbent women. Because women's incidence in legislative politics advances pursuing quota enactment (Borbone, 2016; Ionescu, 2017; Nica, 2015; Petcu, 2016; Popescu Ljungholm, 2017a, b), standards may emerge as more predisposed to female leadership. Women are notably at risk to discrimination in the political sphere. Gender quotas positively shape women's primary choice as party leaders, but cannot be expected to continue their regime in these posts. (O'Brien and Rickne, 2016) Female citizens are less predisposed to undertake a range of political tasks, and are less rationally involved in the political process. The absence of a gender inequality in electoral participation is associated with the aspect that female citizens tend to feel a powerful civic responsibility to take part in elections. While the political progress of women is somewhat the outcome of institutional mechanisms, the lack of a gender disparity in turnout may further their election to various political offices. (Carreras, 2018)

3. Methodology

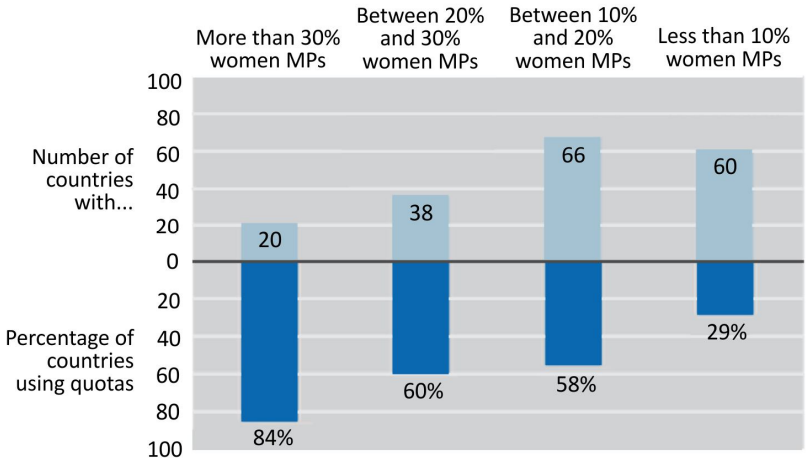
Using data from CAWP, CRS, EIP, Higher Heights, IPU, IWPR, Rutgers University, UNICEF, I performed analyses and made estimates regarding world and regional averages of women in legislatures worldwide, the share of elective offices held by women (U.S.), and the number of Black women in Congress. Empirical and secondary data are used to support the claim that quotas are extremely adequate when they remarkably disorganize former models of male overrepresentation.

4. Results and Discussion

Men hold diverse positions in social pecking orders, and are in concert hindered and activated by their distinctiveness and positions. Hegemonic masculinity conceptually legitimates the subservience of women. The absence of equality in politics is grounded in elite men's propensity to preserve their political power and authority (Buchely, 2016; Lăzăroiu, 2017a, b; Nica, 2017a, b; Petcu, 2017; Reimann, Pausch, and Diewald, 2017) historically maintained in consonance with their gendered, raced, and classed statuses.

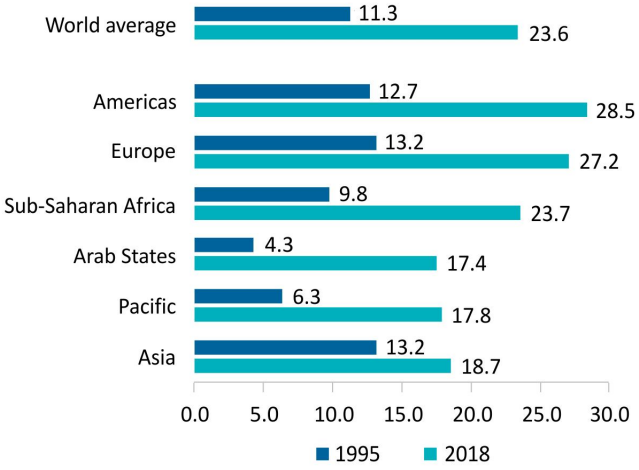
Gender quotas do not constitute reparations for women's political ineffectiveness, but a practice to mitigate elite men's dominance on the legislative posts that are not consistently theirs. Elite men deter attention from their political imbalance by incriminating elite women, possibly identifying backing from disregarded individuals, for whom impeding women's progress is more manageable than defying elite men's ascendancy. (Childs and Hughes, 2018) (Figures 1–6)

Figure 1 Countries with the most women in parliament are also the most likely to use quotas



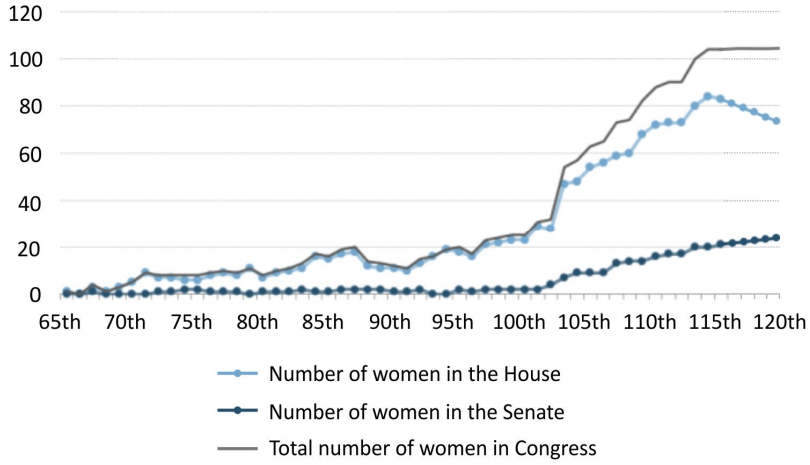
Sources: UNICEF; and my estimates.

Figure 2 World and regional averages of women in parliaments



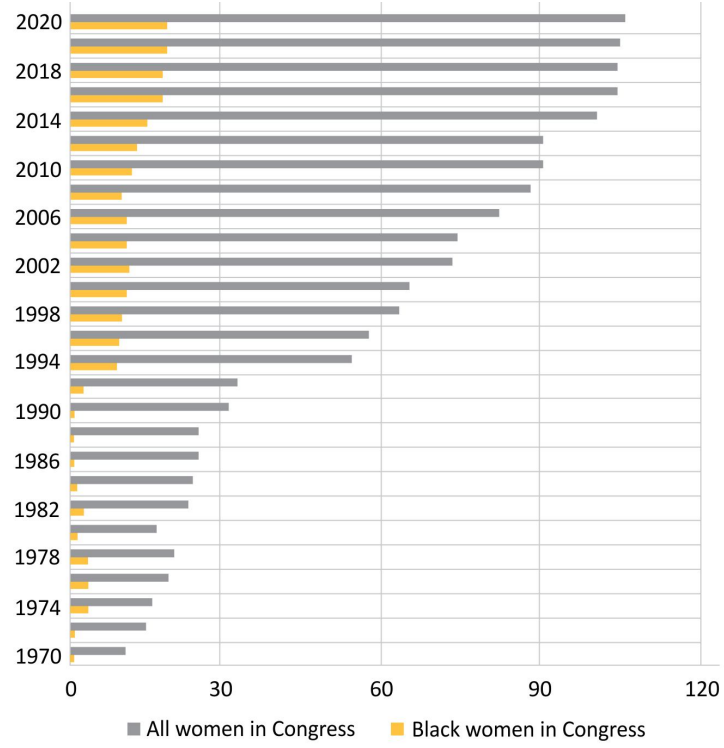
Sources: IPU; and my estimates.

Figure 3 Number of women by Congress



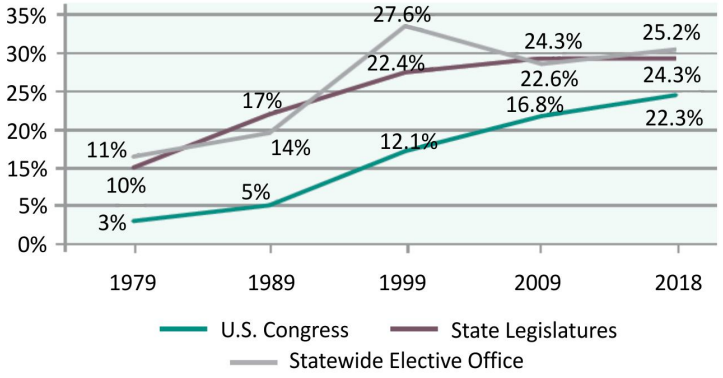
Sources: CAWP, EIP, Rutgers University; CRS; and my estimates.

Figure 4 Black women in Congress



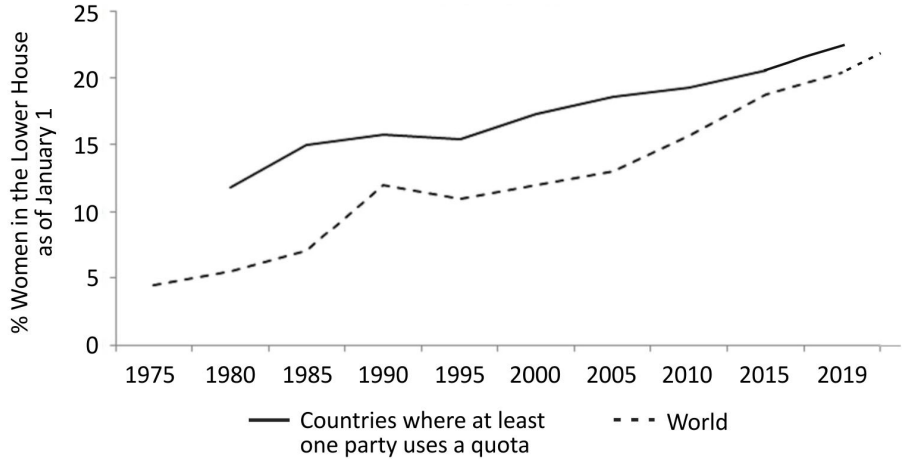
Sources: Higher Heights; CAWP; Rutgers University; and my estimates.

Figure 5 Share of elective offices held by women (U.S.)



Sources: IWPR; CAWP; and my estimates.

Figure 6 Women in national legislatures worldwide



Sources: Davidson-Schmich (2016); and my estimates.

5. Conclusions

Quotas are extremely adequate (Cheng, 2016; Lăzăroiu et al., 2017; Nordberg, 2017; Popescu, 2017) when they remarkably disorganize former models of male overrepresentation (quota-elected women may function as relevant agents of political reform). Electoral design via quota schemes can be a successful tool to transform parliaments and to alter political urgencies in spheres (Fast, O'Brien, and Block, 2017; Mihăilă, 2017; Park, 2017; Popescu and Alpopi, 2017; Scott and Stevens, 2016) endorsed by historically disregarded groups. (Clayton and Zetterberg, 2018)

Author Contributions
The author confirms being the sole contributor of this work and approved it for publication.

Conflict of Interest Statement
The author declares that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

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