

# Oxford Women's Leadership Symposium

## **The Experience of Women in Senior Positions in Organisations in Kenya and South Africa: Contributions to Decision Making, Knowledge and Leadership**

*Njeri Mwangi, Coordinator, Global Short Academic Programmes, University of Cape Town, South Africa*

The focus of the research to be discussed is the experience of women in senior and leadership positions in organisations in Kenya and South Africa, and organisational facilitators and obstacles that respectively support or constrict women at these levels.

The driving question is how women's contributions to knowledge and leadership, particularly referring to decision making capacity at senior and leadership levels, is facilitated or impeded by their work organisations.

Findings indicate that persistence of structural/tangible and cultural/intangible restraints compromise women's meaningful participation in knowledge and leadership processes at senior levels in organisations. In response, women in leadership utilise strategies of coping and negotiating organisational contexts to minimise challenges presented and to optimise their positioning. Strategies of women in leadership are clustered broadly as: behaviour, communication, information, planning, situational leadership.

The research process followed a qualitative and dual methodological approach, applying Grounded theory and Feminist methodology, and was informed by an integral process of self-reflexivity. Research findings present data from strategic interviews and focus group discussions with women senior managers and leaders within business and education sector organisations in Kenya and South Africa.

Recommendations of the research suggest mechanisms and approaches to ameliorate/strengthen organisational obstacles/facilitators, and better support women in senior and leadership positions within organisations, towards addressing underrepresentation of women at these levels. Findings discuss the value of institutional and policy support structures and mechanisms including mentoring and capacity building, networks, gender and diversity policies, innovative technology platforms.

The research contributes to literature and studies in leadership and management; organisational studies and organisational performance; diversity, innovation and creativity, and knowledge management in organisations; feminist/women's/gender studies. A commitment to promote diversity, equity and sustainability, is a core motivation of the inquiry, underscored by need to investigate characteristics of persistent gender bias that may perpetuate women's continued low representation at leadership levels in organisations.

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## **Under Silence: Women, Rape and International Humanitarian Law**

*Sarah Gendron, Associate Professor, Marquette University, US*

Prior to the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, there were few linguistic or legal mechanisms in place for addressing the specificity of women's experience in war. Just War

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theories from Aristotle to St. Thomas Aquinas treated the subject of women in conflict only parenthetically, and only to highlight their status as the legitimate spoils of war. Although several nations later adopted laws labeling rape in wartime as a capital offense, it was not until The Hague Conventions that rape became codified as an international criminal offense. Despite this, throughout most of the twentieth century, the idea that women were fair game in military conflict remained much unchanged from what it had been before. The guiding question of this presentation will be one that is informed by a notion that is at the core of International Humanitarian Law; specifically, what is required for enfranchisement in the nation state? Or, in the context of my essay, when does a woman become “human”? By examining the legal and political narratives surrounding the treatment of women in international conflict since The Hague Conventions, this presentation demonstrates the fundamental bond between the evolution of legal language and that of social change.

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## **Reflections on the Status of Aboriginal Rights in Canada**

*Tanya Harnett, Assistant Professor, University of Alberta, Canada*

As a Nakota First Nations woman from the Great Plains of Canada, and from an autobiographical lens, I reflect on the status of Aboriginal women's rights and the profound failure by the Canadian government. There continues to be a deliberate attack on the psychological and sociological condition of Aboriginal women. Even though Canada is considered a first world country, Indigenous people are confined in isolated pockets of communities living in third world conditions. Some of the ill conditions and government control experienced by First Nations people align with the United Nations definition of genocide. The continuum of Western colonization has never ceased in the building of the Canadian nation state. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission Canada (TRC) has attempted to address such issues, but is simply a bulleted note in the Indian Residential School Settlement Agreement (IRSSA). The IRSSA is a much more complicated document that is largely unexplored and deserves further study. The Canadian TRC and the IRSSA government policy has caused further damaged to communities including the understanding of women's roles and the sacred places they hold. The abuse has not stopped- there are simply a new policy names on the same agenda.

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## **The Future of Leadership: Why Feminism Matters**

*Tim Towler, Major, British Army, UK*

- A reflection on leadership and how we develop our leaders
- The challenges of the future
- What that means for leadership
- The role and feminism within this and its importance

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- And what this means to the Army
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## **Women's Leadership in Oman: A Transnational and Intersectional Perspective**

*Hania Bekdash Muellers, PhD Candidate, Kennesaw State University, US*

*Maia Carter Hallward, Professor, Kennesaw State University, US*

Gender in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) context is often explored using common themes such as the impact of Islam or patriarchal social norms, without accounting for complex transnational histories and economies that shape individual countries and the region more broadly. Additionally, literature related to Arab women's leadership almost exclusively examines the human resource implications, such as a mother's work-life balance, and barriers to advancement in paid labor markets, implying a singular trajectory for all women in a society. Taking Oman as a case study, this article pays special attention to differences among Omani women leaders by employing the lens of intersectionality to specifically assess how these leaders experience gender and agency. Based on interviews conducted in 2016 and 2017 with 32 Omani women who have achieved success in a variety of fields, this study thematically analyzes the ways in which race, class, age, geographic and tribal identities differentiate Omani women leaders and their access and opportunities for leadership. Placed within Oman's unique transnational economic and political context, the article sheds light on the social construction of gender and women's leadership in a way that has been scarcely considered.

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## **Are Smart Girls Empowered Girls? A Feminist Analysis of Empowerment Through Education at an All-Girls Preparatory School in Kisumu County, Kenya**

*Mrs Georgia Naughton-Watt, MSc Graduate, University of Edinburgh, UK*

Empowering girls through formal education is upheld within international development discourse as a catalyst for poverty alleviation and social change. However, the relationship between education and empowerment is insufficiently theorised within the relevant literature, with program interventions commonly underpinned by a narrow, reductionist 'gender' agenda. Espousing a feminist conceptualisation of 'empowerment' centred on subverting internalised and structural misogyny, this paper presents a critical analysis of the empowerment potential of education, grounded in a case study of an all-girls preparatory school (AGPS) run by a grassroots organisation in Kisumu County, Kenya. Drawing on qualitative data collected through semi-structured interviews with students, teachers, parents, and local community members, as well as an analysis of a cocurricular program, 'SMART Girls', implemented with the specific goal of empowering students, this paper investigates how 'empowerment' is imagined and operationalised at AGPS, and its potential to meaningfully empower girls in relation to their gendered realities, and broader socio-cultural context. Findings suggest AGPS embodies a

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narrow envisioning of empowerment, conceived as a process of acquiring knowledge and skills useful for stimulating community development. This overlooks girls' dominant experiences of oppression, notably sexual violence, menstrual stigma, and constrained abilities for self-determination, and is detached from feminist notions of justice, agency, rights, and equity. The paper contends that ensuring girls' access to schools is insufficient for empowerment, rather the process and content of knowledge transfer through education is determinative of its empowerment potential. It argues that education needs to embody pedagogies and curricular underpinned by contextually-relevant feminist epistemologies to enable critical discourse, challenge patriarchal subjectivities, and expand imaginable possibilities for girls' lives in order to work towards producing substantive, liberatory outcomes.

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### **“Thief!” “Justice!”: Women's Struggles Against the Attempted Thievery of Their Authenticity”**

*Jennifer Vanderheyden, Assistant Professor of French/Francophone Studies, Marquette University, US*

The eighteenth-century feminist, author and political activist Olympe de Gouges claims in the Préface to her play *Le Couvent ou les vœux forcés* (1790) (*The Convent or Forced Vows*) that it was illegitimately appropriated by the man who agreed to stage it, surprising De Gouges with his name appearing as a co-author (M. Labreux). In her words, “Je crie au meurtre ! au vol ! au plagiat ! à la Justice !... Oh ! oui, la Justice ! rien n'était organisé.” (“I scream Murderer! Thief! Plagiarizer! To the Court! Yes, Justice! nothing was organized.”) Her friends attempt to calm her down by saying that perhaps it was to her advantage because her enemies might not have allowed the play to be performed. However, for Olympe de Gouges as a writer who prided herself on authenticity, this was a breach in her contract and promise to her reader/spectator. As Audrey Viguier points out in her article on this play, playwrights were constricted by the conventions of Revolutionary theatre to stage a woman in a heroic role, so De Gouges was already making a sacrifice by representing a male figure (the curé) as the voice against forced confinement, so conceding part authorship to a male would have been doubly upsetting. Contrary to many other female writers of her time, De Gouges courageously signed her works and even posted her writings all over Paris, so this appropriation of her work by a man was not only demeaning to her fight for equal rights, it was also an attack on her integrity and personal sacrifice for a greater cause.

In the finals of the 2018 US Open tennis match, Serena Williams becomes outraged when the head umpire penalizes her, claiming that her coach was giving her hand signals. She stands up for her authenticity, stating that she never cheats, and that, as a mother, this accusation is especially demeaning to her integrity. Later in the match, Serena, not playing her best against Naomi Osaka, breaks her racquet in anger and receives another penalty that results in a loss of a point. Still upset at what she interpreted as an attack on her integrity, Serena tells the umpire

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that he owes her an apology, declaring that he has stolen a point from her, that he is a thief. This results in a penalty of one game in the second set, and she is already behind 3-5. Like Olympe de Gouges, she appeals for justice, which in this case requires addressing the head officials. They walk on the court, confer with the head umpire, and deny Serena's appeal. Her opponent appears to provide a sort of justice when she seems to allow Serena to win the next game, but Osaka goes on to win the match and the title, culminating with both women in tears, and the USTA immersed in controversy and accusations of sexism.

Feminist, author and psychoanalyst Julia Kristeva describes the female genius as follows: "you are a genius to the extent that you are able to challenge the socio-historical conditions of your identity." This paper will consider various women, both past and present, who continue to challenge sexism, marginalization and other forms of gender-based bias, while also fighting to maintain their individual authenticity.

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## **Preparation for Political Office Through Pageantry**

*LeNá Powe McDonald, Doctoral Student, The University of Alabama, US*

In light of modern social movements aimed at increasing the number of women in public leadership positions. Activities that allow women to be seen as both competent and feminine could play a unique role in preparing the next generation of women leaders. Pageantry or competitions that promote leadership skills and femininity, while providing a competitive environment, can help women overcome the double-bind that prevents them from being seen as both feminine and competent. Communication skills, leadership opportunities, scholarship funds, notoriety, and community service can all be benefits of participating. This qualitative study outlines how pageant like competition can serve as a training ground for leadership or political office. Through semi-structured interviews and a qualitative survey information was obtained from women who have participated in pageant like competition. Those women all have served or plan on serving in a public or elected leadership positions.

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## **Women Rights vs. Trade Unions: Negligence of Women Participation in the Ex-Officio Positions With Special Reference to the Batticaloa DS Division, Sri Lanka**

*Kennedy Jeevaretnam, Senior Lecturer, Eastern University, Sri Lanka*

Trade Unions are formed to fight for the rights and the common interest of the employees of any individual or corporate institution, where the Trade Union consists of male and female employees. Sri Lanka has its own gender balanced Trade Union Acts and they all speak about giving safe and conducive working environments to the employees.

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Further, women employees face many problems in their working environment throughout the globe, whatever the position they hold. For instance, the women employees do not have any women representative (or rather sufficient) to talk their problems that they face with the co-worker or others or their superiors, etc. These problems need not be sexual or sexual related matters alone, but some other problems such as power disparity, traveling long distances, accommodation facilities outside their working places, etc. Though these are their rights, they do not speak out their problems due to many reasons, and they become huge barriers to have a conducive working environment.

This research aims to check the resistance of the female members to participate actively in holding ex-officio positions in their respective Trade Unions. There are 04 registered Trade Unions in the Batticaloa Divisional Secretary Division of Sri Lanka in the year 2017 with 975 members of which 940 male and 35 female members have registered themselves. Out of these Trade Unions there are 63 ex-officio positions and only 2 female members are holding ex-officio positions. Out of these Trade Unions, 100 male and 30 female memberships have been interviewed and a structured questionnaire has been developed to check the objectives qualitatively and quantitatively respectively.

Accordingly, some of the following results have been received:

- Many women do not want to get themselves involved into any kind of trade union activities since they feel that the trade unions are politically motivated and time consuming,
- Male domination is seen in many trade union members since they think that it is maleness,
- Many male members do not want their wives (those who are holding memberships in trade unions) since they prefer their wives should be at home to look after many things, and
- Some female members feel that their existence in the trade union is not recognized.

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## **Resiliency and Strength of Women Leaders Around the Globe**

*Margaret Weber, Dean and Professor Emeritus, Pepperdine University, US*

*Gayle Colston Barge, Vice President of Institutional Advancement, Bellevue College, US*

*Kerri Cissna-Heath, Adjunct Professor, Pepperdine University, US*

*Lene Martin, Student, Pepperdine University, US*

Women in leadership roles around the world express the increasing expectations for their performance and integration with family. In a study of over 600 interviews of women leaders globally, women express their identity and their motivation for their roles related to purpose and meaningfulness in their lives. Additionally, there is a theme that emerges related to resiliency,

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which differs around the world but has similar underpinnings.

Strength. Resolve. Focus. Courage. Women share their struggles related to the increasingly demanding workforce environment. Organizational dynamics are shifting, in response to political and philosophical uncertainties. Family pressures for presence, support for children and parents, education to name a few are increasing in this 24/7 environment.

Panelist A: Work is a significant domain in the lives of African American women but the combination of how they integrate and conceptualize resilience bears further analysis and discourse. Their life experiences are informed by historical, sociocultural and economic realities that are intrinsically linked to collective and individual journeys. Issues related to resilience will be addressed from its critical importance from a sociocultural and collectivist perspective.

Panelist B: Strategies of women leaders earning income of over \$100,000 a year for implementing work-life balance. An overview of 18 strategies and the number one strategy which was to find “meaning” will be shared. An understanding of the characteristics of self-actualization and of “peak experiences” for living lives of purpose and meaning will be shared.

Panelist C: The Nordic countries believe in collective resiliency and egalitarian individualism. The key to resiliency may be found in Corporate Social Responsibility standards and an interest in the environment, human rights, and core labor policies. Supportive relationships and autonomy are major contributors to Norway's success in gender equality— it is this equality and balance that promotes and provides resilience at work and in the home.

This panel will share findings from women around the world, particularly from Norway and the United States, including African American women. The multifaceted foci of this viewpoint will seek to incorporate new ways of thinking that are sustainable and transformational.

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## Women as Global Drivers of Change

*Alice Bromage, Director, Empowering Success Ltd, UK*

### Background

My life has been spent traveling the globe, working with phenomenal leaders and teams. At each juncture, whilst the majority of leaders and power brokers have been men; there have always been influential women. Female politicians and women nobility have navigated periods of significant political change. At the grass roots level, the women change-makers have often been delineated by a strong moral compass; acting as a galvanising force for disaffected elements of the population. The “glass wall” theory, suggests that women are put into leadership roles during periods of crisis or downturn, when the chance of failure is considered highest. This is exactly what I have experienced in real life, but the women have been in those positions out of choice, or self-determination, not as a scapegoat.

### Methodology

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My synopsis is based on practical experience and exposure; the results achieved by the women studied are empirically proven.

The women considered are involved in:

- a) Nuclear disarmament
- b) Wildlife Crime
- c) Counter Insurgency
- d) Nation state building

## Findings

Women change-makers have a strong patronage, as well as a popular following. They have a strong moral compass, and passion to effect change for the good of the broader community, not just themselves. This enables them to effect change, whilst not threatening the male majority within the upper echelons of power. On the negative side, female leaders also have significant social challenges to face, both from men and women, and often have to balance creating positive global change, with being ostracised by their own communities; a tough call for anyone.

## Conclusion

This is an ongoing piece of work. Whilst the 'glass cliff' phenomena has been proven, I think that in the modern context, this offers an opportunity for women who are driven, have a collaborative mindset and are willing to take on tough challenges: with the rewards being commensurate to the risk. Women have an opportunity to put themselves forward as the perfect "drivers of change."

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## **India's Waste Disposal: A Major Threat to the Lives of Dalit Women**

*Sanchi Jain, Student, University of Oxford, UK*

India's waste generation is one of the fastest in the whole world. Hundreds of waste workers are required to manage the waste produced and these workers come from the most economically and socially backward communities of the country. The poorest risk their lives in achieving aesthetic appeal of the cities by working in dump yards, railway tracks, rag picking, manual scavenging and toilet cleaning. The main objective of this essay is to explore the issue of physical and mental danger involved in the act of waste disposal carried out by the lower caste/Dalit women in India. This is discussed by investigating the working of the formal (state regulated) and informal (unregistered firms) waste sectors in India and their repercussion on the livelihoods of the female waste workers. Society associates waste as the natural occupation of lower caste group and treats them with utmost disrespect. Waste disposal involves a lot of concerns such as lack of laws to protect environment, tax evasion, neglect of health conditions of

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workers. Since the Dalits rank the lowest in terms of caste and class hierarchy in the Indian society, the cultural pollution from the Dalits is considered to be coterminous with the pollution caused by shit, urination, liquid and solid wastes in public places. The work is burdensome and is disgusting. The pay is very meagre and no benefits are provided. The female workers are routinely harassed and abused by the employers. Diseases like TB, asthma, urinary tract problems, sepsis and heart problems are very common in the waste workers because of the enormous toxicity of the dump yards, cleaning of flies infected shit and carrying heavy loads of waste on their shoulders out of the city. Most of the female workers die at a very early age. The essay therefore studies the ways in which India's waste economy and the environment plays a major role in determining the health and living conditions of the lower caste women. It also discusses some of the key solutions to curb the problem of Dalit women's exploitation caused by waste disposal.

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### Women in Vedic Culture

*Reena Sablok, Assistant Professor, Swami Shraddhanand College (D.U.)*

There are many civilisations in the world where status and respect for women and their role in society are prominent. Yet the level of civility along with moral, social and spiritual standard in a society can often be perceived by the respect and regard it gives for its women, not that glorifies their sexuality but gives them freedom, honour and protection in the society. There is no doubt that we are in the midst of a great revolution in the history of feminism. The evidences are everywhere. The voice for women reservation is mountaineering globally in general and particularly in Indian Parliament also. Since Pre-Vedic era the Indian women witnessed a high stature. They were great Orator, logically argumentative debater, Conquerors not in term of politics or wars but with the sense of administrator, wife, mother and instructor. They were treated as Goddess, the reflection of Laksmi, Annapurna, and as an ordinary human being, they were a loveable companion, a determined mother and a dutiful daughter-in-law. But from enjoying free and esteemed position in the Post-Rigvedic society, women started being discriminated. The egalitarian era evaporates leaving the signs in term of Polygamy, Manipulation, Sexual harassment and deterioration. Child marriage, Widow burning(Sati), Purdaha Pratha has undergone some drastic changes due to commercialisation and Consumerization of the society: keeping in view the present paper has the objectives-

1. To study the status and role of Indian women in Vedic period.
  2. Why a goddess needs laws for protection and agitation for rights and equal status? By whom and Why her status was deteriorated?
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## **The Woman Leaders Tend to the Women**

*Elly Nurlia, Lecturer, Indonesian Endowment Fund for Education, Indonesia*

Women's leadership in the world has existed since the leadership of Margaret Thatcher, and gave birth to other women's leadership throughout the World, women took part in leadership to produce policies for the progress of a country, among the policies made and decided by women, whether woman leaders have a special concentration to make / decide policies that concern women themselves. For example, a woman-friendly environmental policy such as women's-friendly public facilities, places that are comfortable for women, such as nursing rooms, comfortable public transportation for women which are free of sexual abuse. Protection of women not only in facilities but the need for special policies, namely women are free from acts of psychological and physical violence both in the domestic environment or the family because women are very vulnerable to domestic violence and the environment in which they live. Another policy regarding women is for women who work outside the home who must get attention because they leave their children whom are still breastfeeding.

The study uses qualitative methods and through field research on female leaders namely female mayors in Indonesia in Tangerang Banten City, with policy recipient informants namely women in one village, namely Saruni Indah village (Community). They were asked questions related to the policies of women leaders (mayors). Do they feel the policy of female leaders to accommodate the interests of women that are detailed? From the results of the research and the results of interviews with several informants, the female leaders in the area were very concerned about women's needs, including some answers that the female mayor like a mother would embrace, listen to women for various things, such as concern for mothers of integrated service post cadres by providing financial incentives that are of great value, cadres for integrated service centers are tasked with providing health services to pregnant women, mothers who have children under five by providing additional vitamins and nutritional intake and providing knowledge regarding maternal and child health. Based on the research and interview results, the female leaders in the Saruni Indah Village (Community) managed to form a complaints post if the women and children experienced violence at home and around the area where they lived.

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## **Nordic Intelligence (NQ): A Qualitative Life Course Study of Norwegian Women and Leading with Corporate Social Responsibility**

*Lene Martin, Student, Pepperdine University, US*

Norway is one of the world's leading countries in gender equality and work-life balance and proves to be an exceptional model for study to improve gender diversity and work-life balance around the world. Norway continues to rank top three in the Global Gender Gap Index in addition to being the happiest country, best country to live, leading country in gender equality and work-life balance, best country for motherhood, and one of the top three countries for

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business. Data collected from the interviews of 22 Norwegian women are used to understand the relationship between gender equality and work-life balance, that this relationship enables more women to work and be leaders, and that gender equality leads to financially successful organizations and societies. This phenomenological doctoral study uses a life story method and theoretical framework to explore Norwegian women's experiences through the dimensions of identity, relational style, motivation, and adaptive style as shaped by Norway's culture, laws, and Corporate Social Responsibility initiatives (CSR) to gain further insight and understanding. Findings from this study suggested that support systems, individualism, and good health were the top three contributors to Norway's success in gender equality and work-life balance. Furthermore, 20 work-life balance strategies were revealed, in addition to a new leadership competency framework: Nordic Intelligence (NQ). The NQ model aligns with Norway's Corporate Social Responsibility values in the environment, human rights, and core labor standards. This presentation will share strategies towards creating "whole-life balance," including gender diversity guidelines for leaders and corporations. As modeled by NQ and CSR, egalitarianism and gender diversity is good for the economy and for work-life balance. The findings from this study may help to create happier people, more satisfied employees, better and effective leaders, successful organizations, and stronger nations and economies worldwide.

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### **Commercial Decision-Making Practices of Female Startups**

*Muhammad Rahatullah Khan, Associate Professor, Effat University, Saudi Arabia*

*Samar Saber Khan, Dean, College of Business, Effat University, Saudi Arabia*

The financial decision-making is the central pillar for business leading to direct consequences and affect the survival of the firm. This paper identifies the factors that play a role in financial decision-making process for female startups utilizing a quantitative research of 13 startups. Study sought to identify the decision-making factors and processes of a startup as a measure to improve any business. Research concluded that the decision-making processes for female startups identify the leadership skills of the women entrepreneurs. It begins at the nascent stages of the firm lifecycle revealing its importance for business growth and progression. As the maturity sets in the decision-making becomes more rigorous and based on detailed analysis. The nascent stage acts as the determining level of success and perseverance. The role of financial feasibility, business planning and key employees play a major role in the startups decision-making process.

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## Islamic Feminism: A Critical Overview

*Mawahib Bakr, Research Program Manager, Hamad Bin Khalifa University, Qatar*

There is already a wide range of theories of feminism world-wide: the definition of the boundaries of what can be considered as “feminist” is still debatable. The questioning of “global sisterhood” and ideas of sameness of operation, and gender as the sole reason for women’s subordination have now been widely interrogated and produced different groupings of women such as “black women,” “Third World women,” “women of color,” “womanists,” “African women,” “Muslim women,” etc. All these groups approach women’s various forms of oppression using different strategies, but all work towards challenging women’s oppression.

With Islamic Feminism; the complex factor of religion is added. Islamic Feminism is launched by Muslim women scholars from different countries who are committed to their religious faith and who are working towards the production of alternative, gender-sensitive religious knowledge. Islamic feminists’ writings started in the beginning of the 1990s and mainly argue that Islam has guaranteed many rights for Muslim women, but that they were denied those rights by the dominant patriarchal man-made readings of the Quran—the holy book of Muslims—that are irrelevant to the current time and distort the basic principles and the spirit of Islam.

Some scholars look at Islamic feminism positively like for example Moallem (1999) argues that Islamic feminism is a transnational resistance project formed against the “subjugation” of Islamic fundamentalism and Western global feminism and unsettles the dichotomies of secular/religious, tradition/modernity, and Islam/West (176). Others reject Islamic feminism because it is grounded in a religious framework that rests on foundational and absolute notions of religious truth and doctrines (Moghissi 1999, Tohidi 2003).

This essay is a critical overview of some of the contribution of Muslim feminists. Those feminists strive to take part in the production of knowledge about Islam. However, their initiative is challenged internally by some Muslim religious scholars who may not accept women’s entry in their field of authority and Internationally, by the hostility of those who conflates them with supporting or justifying fundamentalists and the resentment of those who believe in an anti-religious frame for approaching women’s rights. I argue that; those women’s experiences as Muslims at the cross roads of the religious text and actual contexts of their lives deserve to be rethought, their right to imagine their nation should be reconsidered and the assumed oppositional relationship between Islam and feminism needs to be revisited, especially with reference to current challenges of neoliberalism and globalization.

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## **Exploring the Gender Roles and Their Conditioning in Contemporary Russia**

*Aleena Karim, Lecturer, Forman Christian College University, Lahore, Pakistan*

This paper aims to explore the influence of the conditioning of the gender roles on women's participation in a society. The case studied in this respect is that of the contemporary Russia, that is, since the start of the era of Vladimir Putin. The rationale behind selecting Russia as the case study is the silence Russia has been observing on the international platform regarding hegemonic gender relations, therefore, raising questions on the gender relations in the contemporary Russia.

This research includes a comparative analysis of the roles women performed in the Stalin's era and have been performing in the Putin's era. The case studies show that in the Stalin's era, the Russian women were actively participating in the society being the breadwinners. However, in the Putin's era, the Russian women's "divorced from the state" role marginalizes them to be merely the housewives. This example shows the gender roles are not innate and fixed in nature rather they vary with respect to the varying external factors, in this case the political ones. Recalling Judith Butler's words, gender is 'not a stable and single signifier' for it equally 'intersects with racial, class, ethnic, sexual, and regional (...) identities', the external factors, to produce multiple identities. Nevertheless, the external factors, if powerful, can condition the gender roles to look innate and fixed. In the case of the contemporary Russia, the conditioning of the gender roles, on one hand, marginalizes women's role in the Russian society; on the other hand, pictures the contemporary Russia as a male-dominated society. This research, hence, explores the relational nature of the following: gender roles exercised in the contemporary Russia, their conditioning and the effect of that conditioning on the Russian women's participation in society.

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## **Hiding in Plain Sight: The Marginalization of Female Headed Households in Kakuma Refugee Camp and Turkana County**

*Hannah Abrams, Master of Science, University of Edinburgh, UK*

For the past few decades, gender and development initiatives have intended to address the socially constructed gender relations and disparities that often lead to the subordination of women. Yet there has been a lack of understanding regarding the layered subdivisions within the category of 'women,' particularly female-headed households. This dissertation explores gender and development discourse through enhancing the understanding of the distinct, gendered issues faced by female headed households. Using empirical qualitative research via semi-structured interviews and focus groups conducted during eight weeks of fieldwork in Kenya, it argues that development organizations' current neglect of the differences that exist between female-headed households and non-female headed households is a liability to the success of their programming. The findings suggest that gender norms in Kakuma Refugee Camp and Turkana County have contributed to specific challenges and adverse perceptions faced by female-headed households.

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The issues of time poverty and a lack of social networks are especially predominant among these households. By identifying the individual characteristics of female-headed households through both empirical findings and insights derived from secondary research, this paper will provide the reader with an understanding of why they must be targeted and engaged separately from male-headed households.

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## **Rumaysa The Dauntless: An Analysis of Jungian<sup>1</sup> Individuation**

*Asma Hussain Khan, Postgrad, University of Essex, UK*

Oppressed, subservient, discriminated— are few stereotypes that naturally come to mind when we think about Muslim women. However, the early Islamic history tells us a different tale. Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) came upon the nation whose most respectable women were trading and participating in the important decisions of clan. For the case-study, I take the example of Rumaysa bint Milhan, who is known in history for her resolute nature and remarkable wisdom. Twice married, Rumaysa had two sons from each marriage. She had an autonomous approach, which was reinforced as she accepted Islam. Her decision to accept Islam was made without the consent of her then-husband, Mālik Ibn an-Nadr. Distressed at her decision, Malik threatened to divorce her. Nevertheless, Rumaysa decided to stand for the truth and live by her rights. and Islam<sup>2</sup> empowered her.

Recognized for her intellectual and powerful personality, she set out on various military campaigns and played great role at the battles like Uhud and Hunayn. Pregnant with a child, Rumaysa was amongst the few who sheltered Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) with a dagger during the sudden attack in Battle of Hunayn. From household to the battlefields, her life is a living example of *individuation*. She was independent, stoic, rational,<sup>3</sup> the *sovereign lady* of her own life, as we all are.

<sup>1</sup> The term 'Jungian' refers to Jung's central ideas.

<sup>1</sup> I take Islam not only as a set system of laws i.e. religion, but a *Dīn* (Arabic) that deals with a *wholesome frame of everything, adherent to consilience*.

<sup>1</sup> Few of the traits that are taken as typical masculine (Ogrodniczuk, 2006).

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## **Psychobiography and the Creative Arts: Lessons from Judy Chicago and Caryl Churchill**

*Mark Hager, Professor of Psychology, Menlo College, US*

This paper presents the culmination of a longitudinal case study examining the evolution and outcomes of a course on the Psychology of Women in Organizations. Hager (2016) explored the course as a context for integrating feminist artist Judy Chicago's "Dinner Party" installation (1979) with research on women's psychosocial experiences in organizations. Participants at the

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2017 OWLS meeting (Hager, 2017) questioned how students were guided to create a conversation among these random influential women based on a psychobiography of their guests and an artistic representation of their lives.

Appropriately, the lens of Caryl Churchill's (1982) play "Top Girls" provides for this synthesis. Bringing the analysis full-circle, this session examines how the theoretical foundation coheres into the conversational exercise integrating visual art with scholarly writing via a "dinner party" akin to Marlene's gathering of "top girls." The author elaborates and critiques the structure necessary to move the conversation from static reports about guests' lives to dialogues among them. Highlighting gender issues the guests bring to our own Dinner Party, we recognize how "their gender has dictated the outcomes of their lives" (Hoklas, 2018). Celebrating each woman's achievements, as Marlene and her guests did, faculty and students have come to a nuanced understanding of women's stories of embodiment of historical and contemporary sociocultural gender roles and expectations. Churchill's play and Chicago's art remain relevant as models to promote individual and collective awakening to our positions and privileges – or their lack – as we nurture multiple student voices at complex intersections of identities.

This assessment of pedagogy and outcomes provides for:

- Crafting an intersection of psychological research and creative expression.
- Prioritizing contemporary students' voices to engage and challenge gender issues that have been present across time, certainly since Churchill's and Chicago's guests first appeared.
- Framing delicate conversations among academic staff about our own biases.

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## **Stolen Babies in Spain: Mediated Stories for Recovery Mother's Voices Transformation**

*Carolina Escudero, Director Barcelona Program, University of Columbia, Missouri, US*

Stolen Babies researches in Spain have tended to study the cases through a legal/historical perspective. Given that the topic of stolen babies has recently been introduced in the media, there are no previous analyzes on the treatment, effects and / or impacts of the news on this subject. This document aims to provide an overview of a Media Psychology approach towards the recovery effects obtained through the media campaign "Te Estamos Buscando" (We Are Looking for You) known as TEB. This media action, based on a traumatic event and the resilient process of families as survivors of stolen babies was the first raised by the result of group dynamics workshops held in the organizations. We argue that an approach based on media psychology and group dynamics workshops can generate two types of positive results in the surviving families and in the audience. First, groups of survivors feeling heard/observed by society and published by the media feel recognized (they are not afraid or embarrassed by sharing their experiences, they are empowered); second, the survivors, by telling their experiences they collaborate in a guarantee of non-repetition, this action has positive effects for the recovery process and also for the society. On the other hand, the results in the audience

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would have to do first with the fact that the campaign allows individuals to acknowledge what happened through the survivors stories (who are contemporaries to them) and empathize with them; second the individuals develop a certain engagement with the people and/or the organizations since no one can ensure that these events do not happen again. The media effects observed are positive for the survivors and also for the society, represented in this study through the audience reactions.

The theft of babies in Spain (1940-1999) has been systematic (medical doctors, nurses, catholic priests and nuns) and based on the concept of eugenics by doctor Antonio Vallejo Nágera used, during Franco period, as an argument for appropriation of descent. After the dictatorship, 1975, these practices presented an economic motivation. For 5 decades, around 300,000 babies were stolen. In this sense, the media campaign TEB, based on the Identifiable Victim Effect theory and group dynamics (resilient communication and empowerment) introduce a topic (rooted in politics, history, eugenics) in the Spanish society: the stolen babies during the dictatorship and after, and how is the present families search. One of the main goals of the campaign was to first inform about the cases and reunite the families with a powerful message based on Ubuntu philosophy: "I am Looking for You, We are Looking for You". TEB became the first campaign launched in the Spain humanizing the cases and telling the stories in first-person as a part of a recovery action. The effects achieved by this campaign, also present in social media networks, in the Spain and abroad (Argentina, Mexico, Germany and Russia) showed that an action with these characteristics evokes specific behaviors as empathy, altruism and in some occasions engagement. Moreover, these effects strengthen, empower and accelerate the recovery process of the survivors of the trauma also promoted the restoration of the social fabric.

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### **New Perspectives in Reception Studies**

*Julie Whiteman, PhD Researcher, University of Birmingham, UK*

This paper sets out to examine contemporary sexualization of culture debates and postfeminist understandings of sexuality which have framed the feminine as sexual, taking contemporary mainstream music video and social media as a case study. This paper argues that these texts present a version of sexuality that is heteronormative; that reinforces a view of heterosexuality as 'the' normative sexuality; and, that normalises a hegemonic heterosexuality which legitimises existing power relations and is frequently linked with (sexual) violence against women.

This paper further presents Mediated Discourse Analysis (MDA) as an innovative methodological approach for reception studies. By focussing on 'discourse in action' it provides a vehicle to understanding how texts are read and interpreted when appropriated by the audience. The paper sets this methodology within a feminist framework of reception studies drawing on literature from feminist theory, media, and cultural studies; it demonstrates how this methodology is being employed in the author's own ethnographic research to explore reading

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and interpretation of sexual scripts within contemporary music video and social media and the significance of this intertextual relationship. This paper explores the relationship between ideas and action to understand how sexual scripts are communicated within the current postfeminist sexualised media culture landscape.

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## **Edgar Allan Poe: The White Master Who Still Lives On**

*Amanda Malandrino, Graduate Student, University College London, UK*

My research intends to trace epistemologies created and sustained for violence against women as I will delineate what I refer to as, literature's finest misogynist, Edgar Allan Poe alongside contemporary art-based narratives of femicide (The Hunting Ground, 2015). I will use Poe as a genealogical framework to begin tracing violence against women through literature that draws on assault, murder, death, and haunting that I argue began ways of normalizing femicide that leaves a trace onto today's murders and beatings of women. If we continue to ignore these genealogies and discussions of violence against women, it condones the bleeding histories women continue to remain the casualty of. Instead of staying with misogyny's pent-up histories, my work intends to "dismantle the master's house," as I will disrupt and call for new ways we can create "temporal strategies for our survivals" where we can "sit down together" with men (Lorde, 1984) and re-write the house with feminist intervention and close reading.

I will read Poe anew for the first time since femicide is at an all-time high, since across the United States alone, nearly six hundred thousand women are beaten by an intimate partner every year—that is a little more than one woman per minute. I will use short stories such as, "Ligeia", "The Black Cat", and "The Tell-Tale Heart" as a way to open discussion about the violence women endure and the way "women who stand outside of the circle" are portrayed as monstrous and deserve to suffer not only in his works, but in real life as well (Lorde, 1984). Perhaps by using intersectional frameworks (Crenshaw, 1991) when analyzing the white master, we can begin writing, speaking, and analyzing violence against women within contemporary art-based narratives and begin thinking about new ways to write the female body thus calling for change in contemporary society.

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## **Shaping the Woman Identity: a Study of Indigenous Women Translators in Early Twentieth-Century China**

*Shuhui Yin, PhD Candidate, The University of Hong Kong*

The early twentieth century is a time of upheaval and transition for China. For the purpose of "saving China", Chinese gentlemen officials and scholars from various academic and social backgrounds introduced and translated many great thoughts from the West, including proposals of shaping a "modern" woman identity by establishing woman academies and urging women to work referring to European and American societies.

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However, the subjectivity of women has been barely accepted during this identity reconstruction. Woman translators' participation and involvement regarding to the identity issues like woman's role aroused fierce controversies on publications. Taking a key journal *La Jeunesse* as an example, the publications of woman translators Xue Qiying(?~?) and Shen Xingren (1896~1943)'s versions of Oscar Wilde (1854~1900) received serious criticisms by mainstream gentleman scholars like Hu Shi (1891~1962) and Chen Duxiu(1879~1942). These woman translators' concerns about the change of family roles and relationships were considered inappropriate under the age's theme "saving China" which was defined by men.

This research would conduct an in-depth examination and analysis of these indigenous women translators' versions on key journals like *La Jeunesse*. By revealing these marginalised woman translators' voices, from the perspective of translation studies, this research would reconstruct the woman subjectivity and leadership at the time of early twentieth-century China.

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### **The Reincarnation of Scheherazade as a Leader and a Figure for Fictional Narrative in *Saturn Ladies***

*Bushra Juhi Jani, Lecturer, Mustansiriyah University, Iraq*

Lutfiya al-Dulaimi is a well-known Iraqi prolific author, who emphasizes socio-political issues of women in Iraq, showing her female characters trying to subdue the pressure on their lives and survive the war imposed on their country. Al-Dulaimi is highly influenced by Scheherazade, stating this clearly in many of her articles and interviews. In her short story, "Shahrazad and Her Narrators," Scheherazade travels from the past to the present reconnecting history and cultural customs. Al-Dulaimi considers herself to be a contemporary Scheherazade. She sees herself in a politicized version of Scheherazade. The modern Iraqi author has lived in exile since 2006 after receiving death threats from extremists. In spite of that, the modern-day Scheherazade challenges the threats and continues to write. This presentation examines how Scheherazade is incarnated in both Al-Dulaimi and her work, particularly her novel, *Saturn Ladies*. The novel emphasizes the role of story-telling as a strategy for survival. The protagonist, Hayat, who is a storyteller, compiles the stories of the people around her, especially a group of women, whose tragic stories are put in a section called "The Book of Girls." The link between narrating the stories of these women and their survival is main focus of the novel. In the conclusion, Al-Dulaimi and her female characters show that Scheherazade's desperate battle to survive is still fought.

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