

## Oxford Women's Leadership Symposium Online 18-19 March 2022

**Dr. Ash Ermis-Mert**, Assistant Professor, Koç University, Turkey

*Women's Leadership in Practice: The Impact of Mentors, Role Models, and Peers*

Keywords: women's leadership, role models, mentorship, labour market, peer support

Women's representation in leadership positions is one of the most prominent steps towards achieving gender equality. In Turkey, only 3.9% of working women were in managerial positions (their share was 18.2%) in 2020 according to Turkish Statistical Institute, which displays the significance of interventions supporting women for the realisation of their potential as leaders in the job market. This presentation will provide the details of a two-year project titled "Enhancing Women's Leadership Trajectories via Female Role Models", a civic action initiative that also comprised a quantitative research approach, and was the first sectoral leadership project in Turkey with ten main sectors: Academia, Science and Technology, Art, Communication, Retail and Sustainable Textile Production, Architecture and Women-Friendly Sustainable Urban Design, Health, NGO and Social Services, Entrepreneurship, and Business. Eighty-two future role model leader women graduated from the program, during which various training sessions, seminars, workshops, networking events, roundtable discussions, sectoral meetings, and mentoring sessions were held. In addition, questionnaires were implemented at the beginning, during, and at the end of the program to measure the impact of the process. Results have shown that initially, 31.5% of the participants found themselves competent as leaders in practice, which increased to 81.4% on the last day of the project. While peer support was observed to be very important, mentoring sessions, seminars, and workshops were reported to be the most beneficial organisations by the participants, demonstrating that women's leadership in the job market primarily requires transition of knowledge and experience. Based on participants' reporting, this project has shown the importance of "sisterhood" for women in becoming decision-makers. In other words, we have seen that women supporting each other as mentors, role models, and peers, providing encouragement, sharing the difficulties they faced and how they overcome these, and offering know-how in general and sector-wise are key support mechanisms in the way towards increasing the number of women in leadership positions.

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**Mrs. Hania Bekdash-Muellers**, PhD Candidate, Kennesaw State University, USA

*Examining Alliances in the Patriarchal Bargain for Women's Empowerment in Oman*

Keywords: Oman, women, leadership, patriarchy, patriarchal bargain, gender, empowerment, ally, ally-ship

The Patriarchal Bargain, a term coined by Kandiyoti (1988), has been explored in patriarchal contexts throughout the world, with particular focus on the Middle East region (Moghadam 2003, Olmsted 2005). It seeks to explain the negotiated power relationship between women and men wherein women may gain certain perceived benefits in exchange for accepting other seeming limitations. Based on interviews conducted with 34 women of different ages, ethnicities, and races across Oman, this study examines the role of the patriarchal bargain in the context of top-down efforts at "women's empowerment". It takes Oman as a case study because it simultaneously represents a country that has received accolades for its progress in development and women's leadership, but also suffers from a dearth of literature and knowledge creation with regards to gender. Looking holistically at various factors that contribute to women's leadership potential, including transnational factors and

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intersectional identities, the paper asks, what role do male allies play in women's empowerment under the patriarchal bargain. Drawing on the literature of white ally-ship as well as the role of solidarity activism more broadly as well as existing literature on the patriarchal bargain, this study seeks to contribute a new angle on a topic that is understudied in the region.

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**Mrs. Bhanu Jadeja Mahal**, Community Outreach Support, Aarogyam (UK) CIC, UK

*Effectiveness of Culturally Sensitive Approach Addressing Domestic Violence in Community Based Partnership Initiative: Outcome Evaluation Study*

Keywords: domestic violence, community initiative

The Patriarchal Bargain, a term coined by Kandiyoti (1988), has been explored in patriarchal contexts throughout the world, with particular focus on the Middle East region (Moghadam 2003, Olmsted 2005). It seeks to explain the negotiated power relationship between women and men wherein women may gain certain perceived benefits in exchange for accepting other seeming limitations. Based on interviews conducted with 34 women of different ages, ethnicities, and races across Oman, this study examines the role of the patriarchal bargain in the context of top-down efforts at "women's empowerment". It takes Oman as a case study because it simultaneously represents a country that has received accolades for its progress in development and women's leadership, but also suffers from a dearth of literature and knowledge creation with regards to gender. Looking holistically at various factors that contribute to women's leadership potential, including transnational factors and intersectional identities, the paper asks, what role do male allies play in women's empowerment under the patriarchal bargain. Drawing on the literature of white ally-ship as well as the role of solidarity activism more broadly as well as existing literature on the patriarchal bargain, this study seeks to contribute a new angle on a topic that is understudied in the region.

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**Dr. Luz Martin del Campo**, Adjunct Full Professor and Past Co-Chair of Gender Studies, Long Island University, USA

*Words Matter Café: Disrupting the Silos of Learning in Higher Education*

Keywords: feminist, digital learning, equality, inclusion

The Words Matter Café (<https://www.wordsmattercafe.org>) is digital feminist forum that was conceptualized, designed, and executed by students with one question in mind, how do we disrupt hegemonic learning in Higher Education? Collaborating students in an undergraduate Theories of Feminism course embraced going beyond the course intersectional topics and made all knowledge engagement public and holistic. The Words Matter Café as a concept, platform, and creation by students and for all learners lends itself as a digital space where collective understanding and engagement in promoting equity, equality, belonging and empowerment for all can take place on a desktop, laptop, and phone. The space for learning is liberated from any physical and instructional limitations. Our digital platform addresses and frames analytical discussions in the field of gender/feminist studies. We start with examining the theoretical approaches in gender/feminist studies by using "intersectional theory," as a guiding framework. Inclusion of ideas and experiences allows us to look beyond class readings while dismantling hierarchical dimensions of learning in Higher Education, more specifically in a

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classroom. In our discussion, we shall outline the process of creating the Words Matter Café as a vehicle to engendering feminist knowledge production beyond the classroom and creating spaces of inclusivity and belonging for all global learners accessing the website.

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**Dr. Sapna Thwaite**, Associate Dean, University of Michigan-Flint, USA

*Understanding and Supporting Women's Leadership Identity Development in Higher Education*

Keywords: leadership identity, identity work, women in leadership

As we know from past research, successful leadership development is grounded in identity work that focuses on central questions such as “who am I as a leader?” and “what does effective leadership look like for me?” (Clapp-Smith et al., 2019). An identity-based approach to leadership acknowledges each individual's distinctive understandings and assumptions about leadership (Hammond et al., 2017), their specific personal and professional experiences (Sveningsson & Alvesson, 2003), and their unique processes of meaning making within and across many contexts, such as home, work and community. The proposed presentation is based on a research study that seeks to explore female leaders' processes of identity making within a higher education context as well as identify features of a higher education context that best support leadership development. The participants were five higher education administrators from the United States and Germany, working in professional roles ranging from “international center director” to “dean.” A grounded theory methodological approach was used through individual interviews with each participant to explore the following two research questions: R1: What are the core elements that higher education leaders consider to be central to their senses of leadership identity? R2: What do higher education leaders believe are the qualities of an organizational context that stimulate and support identity work and professional development related to leadership? Preliminary findings reveal that supporting and advocating for others, keeping core values and identity at the center of one's work, and embracing vulnerability are key themes in the interviews. Implications for the professional development and training of female leaders in higher education, particularly in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, will be discussed.

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**Dr. Raquel Royo Prieto**, Professor, University of Deusto, Spain

**Dr. María Silvestre Cabrera**, Professor, University of Deusto, Spain

**Dr. Simona Sokolovska**, Postdoctoral Researcher, University of Barcelona, Spain

*Life Histories of the Personal Empowerment of South Asian Migrant Women in the Basque Country*

Keywords: migration, South Asian women, empowerment, Basque Country, life history

The aim of this study is to portray the personal empowerment of women from South Asia in the Basque Country. The study also attempts to present the path towards the empowerment of migrant women. The roles assigned to women, cultural identity and migration as an empowering and transformative tool are discussed. This work is an initial attempt to address the factors that contribute to the construction of gender roles in the culture of origin of the participants, the transformation of cultural identity into personal identity and an attempt

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to understand the role of female networking in the creation of alliances among women. Furthermore, the visualisation of women and the relevance of women's life experiences is being addressed. The empirical part of the study is conducted in the Basque Country with five South Asian migrant women from India, Nepal and Bangladesh. The narrative research approach through life history method is used for this study. The participants are interviewed between two and four times through semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions. First, the data is analysed individually and then, a group analysis is provided. On the basis of the results of this research, it can be concluded that migration has a positive effect on migrant women from South Asia in the Basque Country despite all the obstacles. Some of the empowering features identified in the thesis are: the capacity to express themselves in the local language, decision making capacity, self-reliance, self-sufficiency, self-esteem, financial independence, freedom of choice, strength and the creation of networks among women.

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**Dr. Belinda Du Plooy**, Senior Manager: Engagement, Nelson Mandela University, South Africa

*The Testosterone Games of Higher Education Change Management: A Woman's Experience of Coping with the Dissonance and Challenges of Its Implementation*

Keywords: higher education, change management, gender, chauvinism, patriarchy

The discourse of 'change', 'transformation', 'restructuring', and 'reimagining' is ubiquitous in higher education institutions of today, with various visions, strategies and conceptualisations quickly succeeding one another as larger social, political, and institutional power dynamics constantly shift and impact the higher education landscape. This creates a complex space to be negotiated by all who work in higher education institutions. For many there is then the experience of a slippage or gap between the 'visionary', 'strategic' and 'conceptual' intentions of the leaders of these institutional movements and the actuality and reality of the practical implementation dynamics and practices of universities. Because of the lingering reality of the chauvinistic, patronising, paternalistic and patriarchal historical nature of institutional systems, the persons responsible for practical implementation of new visions, strategies and conceptualisations are often women working at middle management level. This paper uses autoethnographic and discourse analysis techniques to engage with the lived experience female middle managers in higher education institutions. The paper describes a few snapshots and vignettes of moments of dissonance and frustration as typical examples and then apply theoretical and practical knowledge from diverse fields and thought leaders (Michel Foucault, Sara Ahmed, Brene Brown, Philip Zimbardo) to analyse and critique the typical systemic institutional dynamics that give rise to environments that are conducive to these kind of problems.

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**Dr. Adela Balderas-Cejudo**, University of Deusto, Spain, and University of Oxford, UK

*Older Women Travelers Exploring the World: An Overlooked and Misunderstood Market Segment*

Keywords: women, seniors, travellers, tourism, market segment

For the first time in human history, in 2018 persons aged 65 years and older outnumbered children who were under five years of age on a worldwide basis (UN, 2019). The number of over 60s has risen by a third over the last decade, making this the fastest growing consumer segment (Euromonitor, 2017). The United Nations has

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recognized the fact that the numbers of the older population are growing rapidly, and it has estimated that over two billion people will be aged 60 years and over by the year 2050, which will account for 22% (or one out of five) of the world's population, compared to 10% in 2000. Tourism researchers have claimed that women are the primary decision-makers regarding family holidays (Fodness 1992; Smith 1979; Zalatan 1998), but their role in travel consumption is now much broader than this, as women are becoming more prominent in their involvement in other types of travel (Wilson and Harris, 2006). Female travel has become a major phenomenon over the past few years with travel companies dedicated to woman-only clientele increasing by 230%. Still they seem invisible, overlooked and misunderstood. This study examines certain themes related to older women, their preferences and constraints, and it provides an exploration of expectations and needs of silver female travelers regarding tourism and hospitality. It aims to understand and explore how they travel for leisure through in-depth interviews and a revision of the literature. This study outlines (1) an overview of the potential of older women market segment for the tourism and hospitality industry, (2) a better understanding of its this emerging market segment and (3) concludes with a discussion of key considerations.

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**Dr. Maureen Squires**, Associate Professor & MST Department Chair, State University of New York College at Plattsburgh, USA

**Dr. Kerri Zappala-Piemme**, Associate Professor & Department Chair of the Educational Leadership and MST Programs, State University of New York College at Plattsburgh, USA

*Experiences of Women PK-20 Educational Leaders: Reshaping Opportunities and Revising Policies for Equity*

Keywords: women leaders, systemic change, administration, teacher education, PK-20 education, caregivers

The presentation focuses on the experiences of women PK-20 educational leaders during the COVID-19 pandemic. Quantitative and qualitative data were collected via electronic surveys. Findings indicate that the personal and professional lives of participants were significantly affected by the pandemic, with increased demands and limited support in both areas. Implications for practice include reshaping policies for women in leadership and addressing bias affecting women educational leaders.

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**Ms. Fiorela Prenga**, Postgraduate Student, University of Crete, Greece

*Visualization Techniques and Reproductive Freedom*

Keywords: visualization, biotechnology, ultrasound, female body, medicalization

Visualization is a way of knowing about the body and, like any other, it has benefits, but also limitations. While medical images may seem to provide intermediate windows to biological reality, a sociological perspective reveals that they are made up of technology - both machinery and practice - and the social context in which they are embedded. This shifts the analytical focus to how they make sense and to the multiple and competitive reasons that are part of this process. How the multiple meanings of ultrasound images have an effect? What is their role in the discourses about abortion and what is the effect on women's reproductive autonomy? Are fetal images involved in reproductive politics? And where are the limits of the polysemy of fetal sign? These questions will lead my thought during this paper. First, I will make an analysis of how ultrasound operates as a

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grid of accepted forms of knowledge and scientific understanding of 'truth' and then with the use of Kantian notion of autonomy I will show how these regimes of truth have an impact on women's reproductive freedom.

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Ms. **Shreya Sethi**, Student, University of Edinburgh, UK

*Impact of Covid 19 on Mental Health of Female Frontline Workers*

Keywords: covid 19, frontline workers, women, anxiety, depression

The impending coronavirus (COVID-19) disaster in 2020 has created an atmosphere of fear and despair around the world. The uncertainty about physical health and the rise in death rates created a panic situation, especially since this virus was spread via person-to-person socialization. This situation heightened anxiety and mental distress among healthcare workers because the physical and mental labor required of them was unprecedented and the risks were plentiful. In various countries, women make up roughly 70% of the workforce in these health care departments. For example, in the United States, 78 percent of all hospital jobs are held by women (Thibaut and van Wijngaarden-Cremers, 2020), and 64 of the 103 health care workers infected in Wuhan were females, compared to 39 males (Huang et al., 2021). The purpose of this research paper is to focus on the psychological distresses experienced by female healthcare workers during the COVID-19 pandemic crisis. This is accomplished primarily through a focus on secondary literature review. In the paper's conclusion, we see that females were found to be more affected than males in terms of psychological distresses they experienced. The reason for this was determined to be, first and foremost, women outnumber men in the healthcare and frontline worker fields. Second, women expressed their anxiety, depression, and PTSD symptoms more openly than men. Third, the impact on female health and hygiene as a result of biological sex differences made it difficult for women to cope, particularly during menstruation.

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Dr. **Annette Teasdell**, Assistant Professor, Clark Atlanta University, USA

Dr. **Greg Wiggan**, Professor, University of North Carolina Charlotte, USA

*Recentering Women's Studies: Dinkinesh, Queen Makeda, Queen Tiye, Pharaoh Hatshepsut, and Their Implications for Education and Beyond*

Keywords: multiculturalism, gender studies, women, leadership

According to anthropology, archaeology, and historical findings, Africa is recognized as the birthplace of humanity (The Human Genome Institute, 2011; Schlessinger et al., 2020). Over 4.2 million years ago, the oldest humans and the first civilizations appeared in modern-day Ethiopia, where Dinkinesh (also called Lucy), which means "you are marvelous" in Amharic, was later discovered. In the purview of Dinkinesh – one of the world's oldest human fossils, women's studies can be better informed by anthropology and the historical record which suggest that an African woman is key to understanding the history of humanity (Sekayi, 2003; Shava, 2015; Welsh-Asante, 1993). Furthermore, given the scientific evidence which reveals that all humans share 99.9% of the same DNA, women's studies and education in general, can be enhanced by grounding human interconnections as members of the same family tree, which started in Africa (Ash et al., 2021; Foeman, 2009). Using a case study of Dinkinesh and later Ethiopian queens such as Makeda (Ethiopia), Queen Tiye (Ethiopia), and Pharaoh Hatshepsut (Egypt), the article explains the significant role of women in leadership. The research

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supporting this article is grounded in case study, content analysis, and historical detection which creates a tripartite research approach that triangulates the data, and adds quality and rigor to the findings (Krippendorff, 2018; Rhineberger et al., 2005; Yazan, 2015). Methodological triangulation increases the validity of the research process. The findings reveal that Women's Studies can be expanded and enhanced by centering Dinkinesh as the mother of humanity and subsequent women of color who were leaders of great civilizations. These lessons also help enhance multiculturalism in gender studies.

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**Dr. Yeon Jung Yu**, Associate Professor, Western Washington University, USA

*"Improvised Intimacy" in China's Sex Industry*

Keywords: female sex workers, post-socialist China, social networks, social capital

Building upon more than two years of ethnographic fieldwork in red-light districts in post-socialist China, this paper demonstrates that women in the sex trade (xiaojie) are integrated into the fabric of mainstream society in urban China, as opposed to maintaining status as abject figures on its margins. Through symbiotic and dynamic—but often conflicting and fragile—relationships among various social actors, women in this illegal and stigmatized industry make themselves significant urban community members. Through a detailed ethnographic account of xiaojie's interpersonal relationships, this paper illustrates how their social networks emerge, evolve, and shape sex worker communities in southern China. These social networks actively weave these disadvantaged women into expanded networks in urban society. The collaborative nature of the xiaojie's networks is also leading to a rapid increase in the female sex worker population, which now stands at an estimated four to ten million women.

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**Dr. Mohini Vidwans**, Lecturer, Lincoln University, New Zealand

*Nonkululeko Gobodo: First Indigenous Black Female Chartered Accountant in South Africa*

Keywords: Indigenous, Black, inequalities, businesswomen

A case study approach is used to explore the career story of Nonkululeko. This research uses published newspapers, magazine articles, websites, and YouTube videos in which Nonkululeko talks about her career journey and goals. These were transcribed and subsequently thematically analysed using the career crafting matrix. Respondent validation with Nonkululeko was undertaken to enhance validity of the research findings. This paper demonstrates how Nonkululeko Gobodo crafted her career as a CA, despite historic gender and racial inequalities. As an indigenous black woman, her chances of becoming a significant player in apartheid South Africa were slender. Yet, through support from family, expanding educational and business opportunities for Black South Africans in the Transkei, and strategic career crafting, she became SA's first indigenous black female CA in 1987 and a leading figure in the business world. Her individual battle for entry into the profession contributed to wider change for female accountants and for black women in business and helped promote black economic achievement. Nonkululeko overcame the challenges presented by professional, gendered and racist processes by proactively setting new career goals and working strategically to achieve career success. Since she qualified as a CA, the proportion of indigenous black South Africans CAs have risen from less than 1% of all CAs, to 14.8% in 2021. Nonkululeko's career story illustrates not only how individuals can craft careers in

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certain contexts, but how they can work to change those contexts. Nonkululeko's career provides a model of achievement for indigenous black accountants, who are underrepresented in the South African accounting profession.

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**Dr. Kimberly S. Adams**, Professor of Political Science, East Stroudsburg University, USA

*An Epidemic within a Pandemic: Violence Against Women on the Rise*

Keywords: Violence Against Women Act, domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking

Feminist organizations in the U.S., such as The National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, the National Organization for Women, the Feminist Majority Foundation, Emily's List, and others, have devoted a considerable amount of energy and resources to ensuring the safety of women in the United States. Statistics show that on average, nearly 20 people per minute are physically abused by an intimate partner in the United States. Further, 1 in 4 women, and 1 in 7 men have been victims of severe physical violence (e.g. beating, burning, strangling) by an intimate partner in their lifetime. Studies suggest that there is a relationship between intimate partner violence and depression and suicidal behavior. (NCADV website). The impact of COVID-19 has increased the violence exponentially. What are our American politicians doing about this epidemic within a pandemic? This research seeks to examine the specific provisions of the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2021 which passed the House of Representatives in March of that year. Further, this research explores the history of VAWA, statistics on types of violence, and the implications for women if it is reauthorized in 2022. Finally, the research seeks to investigate whether politics or principle is impeding VAWA's passage in the U.S. Senate. Either way, the Senate's inaction on this significant piece of legislation has dire, and often, deadly consequences for women.