



Abstracts of 13th International Conference on Gender & Women's Studies 2026



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GENDERED VIOLENCE**



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13th International Conference on Gender & Women's Studies 2026

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KEYNOTE SPEECH I

Recovery and healing after domestic, family and sexual violence.

Associate Professor Lata Satyen

School of Psychology, Deakin University, Melbourne, Australia.

It is essential to support victim-survivors of domestic, family and sexual violence long after the crisis period. Yet, around the world, where support is available, the focus has been on alleviating the immediate crisis associated with partner or family abuse. While crucial, the long-term recovery and healing of survivors also need to be catered for. This presentation will highlight the body of work from the Deakin Recovery and Healing from Violence Lab at Deakin University that guides practice, clinical and policy frameworks to aid evidence-based self, family and community restoration after domestic abuse.

KEYNOTE SPEECH II

Rewriting the Gender Agenda through Algital Optimisation

Dr. Michelle Philip

Principal, St Paul's College for Women and Director, St Paul's and Institute of Communication Education, Mumbai India

Generative AI, all-pervasive digital networks and algorithmic structures have altered the discourse around gender. In a world where gender disparity is reinforced through sophisticated digital mechanisms, it is the responsibility of academics and researchers to train young minds; marginalised voices, and women in particular to transition from passive spectators/consumers of technologies into being critical thinkers, ethical users and creators shaping a digital future to counter the emerging threats of deep fake etc. that disproportionately target women and are responsible for the systemic amplification of historical biases that remain embedded in data sets of machine learning,

AI cannot be ignored. One needs to learn to teach AI in order to optimise its use, making it an equaliser instead of allowing it to weaponize old biases. This keynote is aimed at addressing the urgent need for academics and media institutions to spearhead this transformation by drawing up an academic roadmap, as digital literacy reinvents itself, to act not only to enhance digital proficiency, but to include the enhancement of the intellectual ability to deconstruct media narratives to challenge, algorithmic exclusions, in turn dismantling structures of inequality, entrenched within digital systems.

Keywords: *digital-literacy, digital transformation, optimization of AI, rewriting gender agenda*

KEYNOTE SPEECH III

Feminism and Consumerism: A Love Story?

Dr. Jessamy Gleeson

Associate Professor, School of Psychology, Deakin University, Melbourne, Australia

How much harm can one slogan t-shirt do? What about if it's for a good cause?

The entwining of feminism and consumerism, and the associated practice of selling a product to fund a feminist cause, is as old as first-wave feminism. Suffragettes in the US and UK sold tea towels, broaches, hairpins, and bicycles, all in order to support the militant women who smashed windows and bombed letter boxes. Across the last century, feminists have leveraged t-shirts, jewellery, badges, magazines, and books in the name of collective empowerment. But the associated impacts of these products, and their connections to structural change, are often difficult to locate and rarely stretch beyond the self.

This presentation considers the structural inequalities and harms caused by consumerist-style feminism: the cultural and actual production of goods and services designed to centre and promote the feminist 'cause'. In doing so, it also examines the role of social media platforms, and the roles and responsibilities of feminist influencers. The harms perpetuated by these items both in their creation and effect - exploitative labour practices, consumer capitalism, and a resistance to collective change - are, I argue, invisibilised in the name of awareness raising, and individual empowerment.

Through a series of case studies, I analyse how and where we can trace and enact collective, structural change that extends beyond the self. How do we exercise power in seeking gender equality, whilst simultaneously being positioned as consumers? This keynote offers a critical examination of change offered through consumerism, and considers feminism as collective form of *doing*, rather than an individual identity to be packaged and sold.

KEYNOTE SPEECH – Online Session

**Global Citizenship Education (GCED) and Gender Equality:
Empowering Women as Leaders, Changemakers, and Responsible Global Citizens**

Dr. Cristeta C. Dulos,

*Director, Global Citizenship Education, Pangasinan State University, Lingayen, Pangasinan,
Philippines*

Global Citizenship Education (GCED) equips individuals to become informed, socially responsible, and critically reflective contributors to peaceful, inclusive, just, and sustainable societies. This lecture examines how GCED advances gender equality as a core dimension of human rights, social justice, sustainable development, and responsible global citizenship, highlighting education's role in empowering women and girls as leaders, changemakers, and active participants in shaping their communities and the wider world.

The lecture argues that gender equality requires recognizing women not only as development beneficiaries but as agents of change and decision-makers. It examines how education can challenge stereotypes, discrimination, unequal power, and institutional barriers while expanding women's and girls' leadership and agency. It also links SDG 4 on Quality Education and SDG 5 on Gender Equality with peace, sustainability, decent work, reduced inequalities, strong institutions, and global citizenship, reflecting UNESCO's emphasis on agency and gender-transformative teaching and learning.

The discussion proposes a LEAD–LEARN–LINK–LIFT framework for integrating gender-responsive approaches into GCED: Learn about gender equality and global issues; Empower learners with critical, socio-emotional, and leadership competencies; Act through meaningful civic and community engagement; Develop leadership among women and girls; Link local gender concerns with global realities; Include diverse and marginalized voices; Foster partnerships among women, men, institutions, communities, and international organizations; Transform structures and cultures that perpetuate inequality; and Leave a Legacy through sustained action and institutional change.

Ultimately, the lecture advances the proposition that gender equality is both a goal and a condition of meaningful global citizenship. Empowering women through education is therefore not simply about enabling women to participate in an existing world; it is about creating the conditions for women to help shape, lead, and transform that world. When education develops women's agency, leadership, voice, and capacity for responsible action, it contributes not only to women's empowerment but to the development of more inclusive, peaceful, democratic, resilient, and sustainable societies.

Keywords: *Global Citizenship Education, Gender Equality, Women's Empowerment, Women Leaders, Changemakers, Transformative Education, SDG 4, SDG 5, Global Citizenship, Gender-Responsive Education*

Mobilising Lived Experience Data, Advocacy Expertise, and Participatory Systems Engagement to Transform Policy.

Kay Cook¹; Terese Edwards²; Adrienne Byrt³

¹*Professor of Social Policy and Associate Dean of Research, Swinburne University of Technology, Hawthorn, Australia*

²*Chief Executive Officer, Single Mother Families Australia*

³*Research Fellow, Swinburne University of Technology, Hawthorn, Australia*

Panel theme: This panel explores the process of developing and deploying new ways of thinking about and intervening into social policy problems, in collaboration with policy advocates and policymakers. The purpose of this work is to intervene in the gendered, classed and racialized data systems that shape understanding of policy problems and the possibilities for political reform. Drawing on examples from long-term research and advocacy work on the Australian Child Support System, this panel presents methodological accounts of how social policy problems can be reframed from the perspective of lived experience, how these data can then be used to build coalitions of policy and advocacy champions, and finally, how these networks can be mobilised to develop practical solutions in partnership with systems and service designers. This panel will be relevant to academics, advocates, and policy workers looking to intervene in gendered policy problems. It will provide a theoretical and practical framework for deploying these methods in practice.

Abstract: Professor Kay Cook will present a paper that draws on three research studies to examine how social science methods can be deployed in partnership with community to reframe policy assumptions. It critiques the practices that governments use to manage data collection and reporting in ways that render women's experiences of injustice invisible or unintelligible. The paper develops a methodological approach for re-centring women's experiences in ways that use data to achieve political and administrative change. Taking up the concept of data feminism, the paper suggests ways of intervening in the gendered, classed and racialized data systems that shape understanding of policy problems and the possibilities for political action.

Following Professor Cook, Dr Terese Edwards will present a paper that demonstrates how policy impact can be achieved by leveraging data that centres women's experiences. By deploying rigorous feminist data, coalitions of policymakers, advocacy organisations, and women with lived experience of systems harms can be built, to make policy transformation possible. Her leadership of Single Mother Families Australia and a partnership with Swinburne University of Technology have led to key reform of the Australian child support system. Dr Edwards will provide critical insights into the ways in which advocacy organisations can leverage academic data to mobilise collectives of policy champions.

Finally, Dr Adrienne Byrt will present a paper that expands on methods for workshopping policy and service design solutions with women with lived experiences of systems harm, advocacy organisations, and government. Drawing on methods grounded by feminist design sociology, Dr Byrt will share insights into the ways in which co-creative methods enable

systems and service designers to embed inclusive and trauma-informed principles into systems reforms. The paper builds upon the work of Professor Cook and Dr Edwards to demonstrate how critical the voices of women with experiences of gendered, classed and racialized data systems are in transformative policy making.

Keywords: *Policy, advocacy, data feminism*

‘Re-Engendering War’
The World Bank Group’s New Adaptive Systems and Rewired Approaches to Gender Equality in Zones of Fragility, Conflict, and Violence.

Dr. Frederick Laker

Rabdan Academy/Zayed Military University

From 2022 to 2025, I worked within the Fragility, Conflict and Violence Group (FCV) of the World Bank Group (WBG) and co-wrote the 2024 report *A Development Approach to Advancing Gender Engagement and Addressing Gender Inequalities in Fragile, Conflict and Violent Situations*. This publication sets out the WBG’s official approach to gender engagement in zones of instability around the world. It was a result of a three-year consultation and research within the WBG headquarters in Washington DC and in the 6 regions of operations (MENA, Europe and Central Asia, Africa, East Asia and Pacific, Latin America and Caribbean, and South Asia) to determine the art of the possible for future gender equality projects. The approach was novel in design and application because it sought to overcome the many pitfalls that accompany attempts to reduce gender imbalances in situations of fragility, conflict and violence. To overcome this mountain of challenges the WBG had to learn from past mistakes by innovating and thinking outside the box and adapt to the unique circumstances of gender inequality across its 6 regions. In Asia, to overcome the taboo of gender, the WBG had to refrain from directly discussing ‘all things gender’ by instead reframing gender to incentivise governments of the economic benefits of having an increased female labour force, which would then grow tax revenues for under-developed states. This approach gained far more political traction by cleverly navigating gender sensitivities in both state and society. Similarly, the International Finance Co-operation (IFC) developed the Digital Corridors Project in Ukraine to assist many Ukrainian refugees who now reside in nearby countries (Poland, Moldova, Slovakia, Hungary, and Romania) and are mostly women and children. To help address the challenge, IFC developed the Digital Data Corridors (DDC) initiative with the aim of facilitating access to finance for Ukrainian refugees in financial institutions in host countries through digital credit data exchange across borders. This approach has become a blueprint for female economic empowerment in other situations of forced displacement. In the Pacific region, the WBG helped the governments of the Federated States of Micronesia, develop and institute state laws to tackle digital gender-based violence which had long been overlooked. In Africa, the WBG applied the Start, Awareness, Support, Action (SASA!) methodology to tackle negative gender norms and hyper masculinities. This SASA approach was tested in Liberia and several other countries and was proven to be effective in fostering positive gender norms because of its non-confrontational nature and its ability to de-escalate community gender tensions in post conflict states. This article seeks to evaluate the efficacy of these adaptive systems and rewired approaches to gender engagement.

Keywords: GBV, War, World Bank, Forced Displacement, Hyper-Masculinity.

Pronatalist Discourses: An Intersectional, Regulatory Mechanism of Power.

Kirsty Herbert

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Families are contested sites of intersections of power where biopolitical forces use reproduction to police identity through pronatalist discourses. While much of pronatalist research is framed within population studies and ties the concept of pronatalism to nationalism and governance, this PhD research project diverges from this approach, focusing instead on how it functions to regulate gender through language and representation in order to produce normative adult identities. In doing so, this research argues that when speaking of pronatalism, it is to speak of pronatalist ideology as it functions from within particular intersections of power and cultural norms, distinguishing pronatalist ideologies from pronatalist discourses. This means it critically engages with systemic hierarchies and how they function with particular family structures and intersections of identity (gender, race, sexuality, ethnicity, ability, and class) to regulate normative identity through stratified reproduction. Western conceptions of pronatalism often position the nuclear family structure as the dominant family structure, however as different cultures, and nation-states negotiate Eurocentric power stratifications of patriarchy, capitalism, and white supremacy in diverse intracultural and/or intercultural ways, it is important to distinguish Anglocentric values of the nuclear family made manifest through the age of British Empire from Western conceptions of family structure in pronatalist research. By locating pronatalism in ways that serve a function outside of national identity but within particular power stratifications, this research suggests that where pronatalist discourse operates is site specific; it necessarily functions at the intersections of systemic hierarchies as an intermediary mechanism of regulatory power. In analysing Anglocentric pronatalist discourses in representation, this PhD project offers a complex understanding of the intersectional function of pronatalism and how it regulates normative understandings of gender. This complex understanding presented in this research is important as dominant pronatalist discourses are pervasive in medical, state, religious and socio-cultural institutions and have significant negative impacts on identities made vulnerable through systemic hierarchies.

Keywords: *Pronatalism, discourse, intersectionality, stratified reproduction, representation*

Women's Indigenous Knowledge and Access to Financial Systems in Kenya: Re-conceptualizing Knowledge as Capital in Agricultural Systems

Dr. Susan Okeyo

Institute of Humanities in Africa, University of Cape Town, South Africa

Anchored in the transformative research paradigm and underpinned by African Indigenous Knowledge Systems as well as feminist political economy theory, this paper interrogates how women's indigenous agricultural knowledge influences access to financial systems in Kenya. The research fills what is, after all, an ideological gap in dominant financial frameworks that define capital mainly through formal (material) assets and can ignore women's lived experiential, ecological or culturally embedded knowledge as a valid economic resource. It also does speak to a contextual gap in rural Kenya, where women's limited ownership of land and exclusion from borrowing at interest against collateral remains an impediment to credit access although they are key players in agricultural production. Based on primary data collected across Migori and Homa Bay Counties, the study adopts a transformative mixed-methods design that integrates descriptive survey methodology and qualitative content analysis. Research finds that while women have a wealth of indigenous knowledge such as skills in preserving seeds, managing soil fertility and adapting to climate as well as enhancing food resilience at home, such expertise remains largely invisible within formal financial systems. Therefore, this paper reframes women's indigenous knowledge as some form of capital which would improve financial inclusion, promote agricultural sustainability and shape policy reforms for gender-equitable development.

Keywords: *Indigenous knowledge, gender inclusivity, capital*

Prevalence and Determinants of Domestic Violence in Morobe Province, Papua New Guinea: A Cross-Sectional Study.

Dr. Clara B Reshma¹ and Prof. Madan Mohan Laddunuri²

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Official records indicate that sixty-seven percent of women in Papua New Guinea are victims of domestic violence. This serious problem arises from the patriarchal system which perpetuates inequalities, and the harmful cultural norms in practice, compounded by economic dependence and weak legal enforcement. The purpose of the study is to examine the prevalence of domestic violence, the contributing factors and subsequently to explore the reporting behaviour and health seeking practices. Ecological theory is employed to examine domestic violence in the Morobe province of Papua New Guinea. According to this theory, violence is the result of multiple factors, including personal, household, and societal which determines women's vulnerability to domestic violence. The research intends to utilize a cross-sectional mixed-research design. Structured questionnaires for survey and semi-structured interviews will be used as tools for data collection. For the quantitative component, 384 women, 18 years and above were selected using Cochran's formula for an infinitive population. A multi-stage sampling method was used for the selection of participants from the Morobe province, Papua New Guinea. To supplement quantitative data, 25 semi-structured interviews are to be conducted to explore personal experiences of physical, sexual, emotional, and economic violence, as well as barriers to reporting. Quantitative data is analyzed using chi-square test and binary logistic regression, while qualitative data will be analysed thematically. Data analysis is now underway, and the results will be presented at the conference. The study will provide evidence on the prevalence and determinants of domestic violence in Morobe Province and will contribute to implement better policy frameworks which ultimately brings about a transformative change for Women in Papua New Guinea.

Keywords: *Prevalence, determinants, Domestic Violence, Ecological Framework, Morobe Province, Papua New Guinea.*

‘Very morally ambiguous’: The Sad Girl, Illness, and Networks of Power

Dr Alyson Miller and Dr Emily Fuller

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‘Sad girl lit’ is defined as a genre focussed on young female protagonists experiencing various forms of identity crises, and whose lives are comprised of a series of interpersonal, professional, and romantic disasters, endured within a context of male-centred, white-supremacist, and capitalist anxieties. In its recent sensationalism, critical discussions of ‘sad girl lit’ contend that the genre offers little more than palatable visions of women’s suffering, a mode which both sanitizes and makes glamorous the horrors of patriarchy (Fuller & Miller 2025, 25)¹. Indeed, the genre engages with the bleak realities of ideological structures that cannot be changed, and in doing so, repeatedly frames questions of health—both mental and physical—and the bodies of women in terms that echo problematic gendered notions of hysteria, ambivalence, and existential angst. The Sad Girl thus often presents in ambiguous and contradictory terms: political engagement remains limited and self-serving, while the privileges she embodies complicate readings of the genre in relation to subversion and empowerment. Drawing on authors such as Sally Rooney, Naoise Dolan, and Candice Carter-Williams, we explore the dual aspects of the Sad Girl, who might be understood as a vision of normativity *and* as possessing the potential for transgression. Framed in relation to expressions of mental health and nihilism, we compare portrayals of the apathetic white Sad Girl with non-white protagonists, the latter of whom is regularly forced to contend with intergenerational trauma and structural racism in addition to patriarchy and neoliberalism. By examining how Sad Girl novels reinforce and challenge privileged ideas about indifference and sadness via mental and physical illness, we argue that these expressions and experiences are predicated on nuanced conceptions of identity, racial politics, and socio-economic status (most commonly one of perceived or actual precarity). Such texts are also deeply rooted in patriarchal and misogynistic visions of the female body as an abject object in need of surveillance, containment, and control, and frequently struggle to unsettle the ideological networks in which the Sad Girl must function and is entrapped.

Keywords: *Sad Girl, mental health, neoliberalism, patriarchy*

¹ Fuller, Emily & Alyson Miller 2025, “‘I am trying, you know’”: Reading Power, Politics, and the Body in Sad Girl Literature’, *Contemporary Women’s Writing*, 19, pp. 2-20, p. 25.

Sexually Transmitted Grades? Where Are We in Addressing Gender-Based Violence (GBV) To Enable Equal Access and Participation in Higher Education in The North of Ghana?

Professor Penny Jane Burke¹, Assoc Professor Julia Coffey¹, Assoc Professor Gifty Oforiwaah Gyamera², Ernestina Mambono Nyaaba³

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The harassment of female students and staff have evolved into practices such as “sexually transmitted grades”, a quid pro quo system in which individuals in positions of authority demand sexual favours in exchange for academic benefits. This not only undermines academic integrity but also produces long-term educational, psychological and professional harm for victim-survivors. Although these injustices are widely acknowledged, higher education institutions frequently lack coordinated and systematic approaches to addressing gender-based violence (GBV) through social justice frameworks. Instead, many universities rely on neoliberal models of success that shift responsibility away from institutional accountability and frame GBV as an individual rather than structural problems.

Guided by constructivist epistemology and informed by post-structural and intersectional perspectives, this study explores experiences of women students, lecturers, administrators and NGO workers in Northern Ghana. Using purposive and snowballing sampling, it reveals recurring patterns of harassment, victimisation and academic repercussions shaped by deeply embedded gendered power dynamics. Institutional and law enforcement responses often lack an ethics-of-care framework; one that prioritises responsiveness to victims' specific needs, while institutional reputation is frequently prioritised over survivor wellbeing.

The study seeks to inform national and institutional policies that centre student welfare, equity, and accountability. The findings will hopefully support constructive dialogue and collaborative programmes across universities, government ministries, and civil society organisations. It will foster a social-justice-oriented approach capable of transforming systems and advancing gender equality.

Surviving Stringent Censorship: Chinese Feminists' Algorithmic Resistance and Adaptation to Platform Governance

Yun Xing

PhD Candidate in Gender Studies, University of New South Wales (UNSW) Australia.

Feminist digital activism in China has long operated under stringent censorship. Feminist content is frequently blocked prior to publication, restricted in visibility, or removed altogether, while accounts associated with such content may be penalized through suspension or shadow banning. To sustain visibility and circulation, feminist activists have developed a range of tactics to modify, obscure, or strategically reframe their content in ways that reduce the likelihood of triggering censorship. However, since 2025, when the Qinglang Campaign, a Chinese government-led internet governance campaign, formally identified feminist content as a target of regulation, the digital space for feminist expression appears to have contracted further. Intensified governance has introduced new uncertainties into the circulation of feminist discourse, compelling feminist activists to adjust their strategies to maintain visibility.

This research focuses on how Chinese feminists navigate censorship in the context of the Qinglang Campaign. Drawing on semi-structured, in-depth interviews with 26 self-identified feminists, complemented by digital ethnography, it demonstrates that feminist activists, in the face of large-scale crackdowns on feminist content, have mobilized diverse strategies to generate algorithmic visibility and adapt to platforms governance, thereby maintaining a degree of visibility within platform environments.

By foregrounding these adaptive practices, this research highlights the resilience and strategic flexibility of Chinese feminists as they respond to escalating censorship pressures. It contributes to a nuanced understanding of feminist activism under digital authoritarianism, highlighting the contingent and continually evolving nature of feminist practices. It also sheds light on the dilemmas they confront under the intersecting pressures of state regulation, the stigmatization of feminism, and persistent online and offline harassment.

Hidden Costs of Sustainability: Household Labour and the Political Economy of Environmental Policy

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This paper examines how sustainability policies are implemented within households and investigates the distribution of labour required to sustain environmentally aligned practices. It argues that the implementation of sustainability policies is a labour-mediated process, structured by intra-household inequalities and shaped by gender and migration. Using Australia as a policy-rich case study, the paper adopts an interpretive, theory-guided secondary analysis. It integrates quantitative evidence (such as time-use and labour data), policy analysis (energy and waste) and interdisciplinary scholarship on gender, migration and household practices. This approach examines how environmental expectations are translated into everyday domestic life. The findings demonstrate that such policy implementations are not frictionless but depend on sustained cognitive, emotional and organisational efforts within households. This labour, conceptualised as environmental emotional labour, is unevenly distributed, disproportionately borne by women. It is further intensified in migrant households where policy expectations must be interpreted across cultural and institutional contexts. As a result, sustainability policies generate hidden distributional effects by externalizing implementation costs into unpaid domestic labour. In doing so, the paper frames sustainability policy as a political economy process in which costs are redistributed rather than eliminated. This paper's originality lies in reframing household sustainability as a labour-intensive process and introducing the concept of Household Policy Burden (HPB) to capture time, cognitive and coordination demands associated with compliance. By making these hidden inputs visible, the study contributes to a more realistic and equitable understanding of environmental policy design and evaluation.

Keywords: *sustainability policy, gender inequality, household policy burden, environmental labour*

Who Bears the Migration Penalty? Gender, Age, and Wage Gaps Among Second- and Third-Generation Workers in Germany

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Germany's second and third generation long consisted mainly of guest worker descendants but is now expanding rapidly as the children of more recent refugees and labour migrants from new EU member states come of working age. Despite growing up in the same educational system as their peers, second- and third-generation workers continue to face labour market penalties. While prior research has documented wage penalties for second-generation workers, no study has examined these gaps for the Germany-born second and third generation simultaneously across gender, age, and the wage distribution. This leaves a significant gap in understanding how and where these penalties differ for women and men at different life stages. This study addresses that gap using data from the German Socio-Economic Panel and the IAB-SOEP Migration Sample (2013 to 2023). Oaxaca-Blinder decompositions based on unconditional quantile regressions are applied to estimate migration wage penalties separately by gender, age group, and position in the wage distribution (25th, 50th, and 75th percentiles). In the full sample, the migration penalty is larger for men than for women and concentrates at the bottom of the distribution, where differences in work experience, education, and occupational placement more than fully account for the gap. The key finding emerges when the sample is restricted to prime childbearing ages (18 to 36): the gap widens for women while becoming statistically insignificant for men. Observable characteristics explain a smaller share of the gap for young women, even after controlling for the presence of children, suggesting that mechanisms beyond human capital play a larger role for this group. These results indicate that young second- and third-generation women face compounding penalties as both women and descendants of migrants. These disadvantages emerge at a formative career stage, with potential lasting effects on earnings trajectories and economic integration.

Keywords: *German-born migrants, gender, GSOEP, wage decomposition*

Beyond Inclusion: The Costs of Political Leadership for Women in African Governance

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Efforts to advance gender equality in African political systems have significantly increased women's formal presence in leadership and decision-making spaces. However, less attention has been given to the conditions under which this inclusion occurs and the implications for sustaining meaningful political leadership. This paper examines the relational, symbolic, and normative costs associated with women's political leadership, and what these reveal about the limits of contemporary approaches to gender equality. The objective of the study is to explore how women's inclusion in political office translates into lived experiences of leadership, particularly in relation to authority, legitimacy, and institutional expectations. The paper is guided by Feminist Institutionalism and adopts a qualitative, interpretive approach drawing on secondary data and policy analysis. The study finds that while formal inclusion has improved representation, political leadership remains embedded in gendered norms that shape how authority is recognised and exercised. Women leaders are often required to navigate heightened scrutiny, expectations of symbolic representation, and constrained autonomy in ways that differ from their male counterparts. These conditions reveal that inclusion does not automatically result in substantive transformation of leadership practices or institutional cultures. The paper further argues that dominant approaches to gender equality in politics tend to prioritise numerical representation while overlooking the everyday costs of sustaining leadership in gendered institutional environments. By shifting attention from access to the lived realities of leadership, the study highlights the gap between formal equality and substantive transformation. It concludes that transforming political systems requires not only expanding women's access to leadership but also rethinking the normative frameworks that define legitimacy, authority, and political credibility.

Keywords: *Gender equality; Political leadership; Feminist Institutionalism; Representation*

The Missing Middle: Gendered Ageism, the Beauty Industry, and the Limits of Feminist Frameworks Among Chinese Women Migrants

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Feminist scholarship across three waves addressed many of the challenges women face. However, middle-aged women as a distinct group remain largely absent from theoretical frameworks. They are neither centred in discussions of young women's bodily politics nor fully addressed within feminist gerontology's focus on elderly women. This paper aims to address this gap by examining middle-aged Chinese women migrants as its primary research population. The objective is to examine how the experience of middle-aged women in the beauty industry challenges existing feminist frameworks built around younger and older women.

Drawing on a critical review of existing feminist frameworks, including existentialist feminist philosophy, beauty myth critique, and intersectional feminist gerontology, this paper argues that these frameworks share a common blind spot: they treat middle age either as the tail end of youth or the beginning of old age, rather than as a distinct life stage with its own pressures and politics. To address this, the paper proposes gendered ageism as its central framework. Rather than treating age-based and gender-based pressure as two separate forces that simply add up, this paper argues that the two are deeply intertwined: middle-aged women remain subject to beauty standards tied to youth, while simultaneously losing the social value that youth once afforded them. This creates a particular kind of pressure: one where women are expected to manage and conceal their ageing yet are never permitted to simply grow old. We further hypothesise that this dynamic is especially visible in beauty industry consumption.

To investigate this, this study employs a mixed-methods approach combining questionnaire surveys and in-depth interviews, using the beauty industry as a case study. The beauty industry offers a direct window into how age- and gender-based norms are reproduced in everyday consumption: through "anti-ageing" products, beauty routines, and bodily management discourse, it constructs middle-aged women's bodies as inherently in need of correction. Early findings from our survey and interview data suggest that participants across different geographic locations report similar experiences of bodily anxiety and self-regulation, although the research is yet to be completed.

This paper contributes an age dimension that feminist theory has long overlooked and makes a case for recognising middle-aged women as a distinct subject within feminist thought.

Keywords: *Gendered Ageism, Chinese Women Migrants, Beauty Industry, Feminist Gerontology*

Reclaiming Agency: Transforming Systems of Structural Violence Through Victim Empowerment

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Traditional approaches to Gender Based Violence response have often focused on service provision, i.e., shelters, counseling, legal aid, as though survivors simply need resources to recover and move forward. While these services are critical, an emerging body of scholarship and practice reveals a troubling paradox that response systems themselves can replicate the very power dynamics they seek to address.

The paper argues that victim empowerment offers a transformative framework for dismantling structural violence within GBV response systems. By centering survivor agency and promoting empowerment-based approaches that do more than help individual survivors but also aim at reshaping the structural conditions that enable violence in the first place.

This qualitative study explored the experiences of IPV survivors and social workers with South Africa's Victim Empowerment Programmes (VEP) and assessed the contribution of VEP to the empowerment of survivors. Using a phenomenological exploratory design, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 15 IPV survivors and 5 social workers selected via purposive sampling. The study concluded that robust legislative backing is essential to guarantee adequate resourcing of policy frameworks that support effective VEP implementation. Both survivors and social workers emphasized that meaningful empowerment requires interventions tailored to individual needs to promote agency, rather than predetermined programmatic pathways.

Algorithmic Resistance and the Negotiation of the Male Gaze: Feminist Hashtag Practice on Xiaohongshu

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In the era of pervasive media, algorithms have become ubiquitous and crucial to people's daily lives, as algorithmic systems on social media platforms curate users' daily feeds and shape the content they interact with. The growing power of algorithms has drawn public and academic attention to different forms of algorithmic resistance aimed at achieving more morally ideal outcomes. However, user agency, especially the feminist one, remains understudied in contemporary research.

On Xiaohongshu, a popular social media platform in China, certain female users attempt to resist an algorithmic system that they believe benefits the male gaze by directing their posts toward male users who show interest. To avoid online harassment and scrutiny, these female users use specific hashtags to steer algorithmic distribution and redirect their posts to a more female-friendly online space. This study investigates the power dynamics between female users and algorithmic systems from a user-centered perspective. It draws on data from four representative resistance-oriented hashtags on Xiaohongshu. Using qualitative thematic analysis, this study examines 300 posts and their associated comments to identify recurring themes in the posts and in male users' engagement. The findings suggest that female users on Xiaohongshu apply a flexible form of algorithmic resistance, which can be understood as connective action, to cope with shifting platform dynamics. This flexibility enables a collective negotiation with algorithmic visibility and the construction of a relatively safer communicative space. However, the same flexibility also produces ambiguity, as the meanings of these practices are not consistently shared across users, leading to misinterpretation, unintended uses, and even appropriation. Consequently, the algorithmic resistance by female users on Xiaohongshu emerges as a recursive and unstable process, in which female users actively adapt their practices in response to changing conditions for a more ideal outcome.

This study highlights how algorithmic resistance operates as an ongoing negotiation between user practices and platform dynamics, contributing to discussions on online feminism, platform power, and user agency in the Chinese context.

Keywords: *Algorithmic Resistance, Hashtag Feminism, User Agency.*

Beyond the Leaky Pipeline: Gendered Labour, Power, and Inequality in Higher Education

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This paper engages with enduring and re-emergent debates on the gendered structural and cultural barriers confronting women in higher education, foregrounding the persistence of patriarchal power relations within academic institutions. Employing institutional ethnography and informed by a poststructural feminist framework, it examines how structural, discursive, and relational forms of gender inequity converge to produce the “leaky pipeline” shaping women’s academic careers (Ayyildiz & Banoglu, 2024).

Through this analytical lens, the paper demonstrates how gendered power relations and everyday forms of sexism are embedded in both formal institutional arrangements and informal academic cultures. These dynamics are frequently normalised, obscured, or rendered individually attributable, thereby minimising experiences of marginalisation and framing inequality as inevitable rather than institutionally produced. Making these processes visible reveals how patriarchal norms are continually reproduced across academic life.

The paper draws on illustrative examples as critical interventions to expose the subtle yet pervasive mechanisms through which gendered power operates. Rather than claiming representativeness, these examples function analytically to illuminate recurring patterns and tensions across policy frameworks, organisational norms, and everyday interactions, showing how systemic inequities are reproduced at multiple institutional levels.

Rather than offering prescriptive solutions, the paper positions itself as an entry point into ongoing scholarly debates on gender and academic labour. It identifies conceptual and empirical gaps in the literature and questions the adequacy of approaches that rely solely on formal equality measures. Instead, it argues for analytical frameworks attentive to how power circulates through everyday practices, expectations, and norms.

By tracing the interconnections between power, discourse, difference, and gender, the chapter illustrates how academic identities and trajectories are continually shaped and constrained. It shows how the same institutional conditions that limit women’s progression also enable everyday sexism to persist (Ahmed, 2021), underscoring the inseparability of structural barriers and lived experience.

Ultimately, the paper contributes to scholarship on equity in higher education by foregrounding the informal, implicit, and often overlooked dimensions of institutional sexism, encouraging sustained critical reflection on the conditions necessary for meaningful institutional change.

Keywords: *institutional sexism, higher education, patriarchy, gender equity, academia, institutional misogyny, mechanisms of power, structural barriers*

Precarious Femininities: Sexualised and Emotional Labour of Women Vocalists in Chinese Live House Venues

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This paper examines how sexualised and emotional labour is organised around the work of women vocalists in contemporary Chinese live house venues. Here, “live house” refers to mid- to large-scale, concert-style popular-music venues with full bands that operate on a commercial basis through food and beverage sales and position themselves as professional live-music stages rather than nightlife or hostess-entertainment spaces. The analysis focuses on a circuit of such venues in an urban commercial music scene in mainland China, where performers are formally employed as professional musicians. While not intended to represent the Chinese live music industry as a whole, this case offers a lens through which broader dynamics of gendered labour in commercial music cultures can be theorised.

The study adopts an autoethnographic approach, drawing on critically reflected retrospective accounts of my work as a resident vocalist, supported by performance schedules, recruitment advertisements, promotional materials, and social media posts. These materials situate individual experience within the institutional framing of live house work as professional music performance and reconstruct the informal norms that organise women singers’ labour beyond the stage.

In several venues, women vocalists are expected to engage in client-oriented sociality, including leaving the stage to drink with male customers, sustaining conversation, and accommodating sexually suggestive comments. Such expectations blur the boundary between artistic labour and hospitality labour, often in contexts where managerial protection remains minimal. Engaging with scholarship on emotional labour, sexualised labour, and occupational stigma, the paper develops the concept of “precarious femininity” to interpret these conditions. It contributes to feminist cultural and labour studies by theorising precarious femininity in commercial music contexts, foregrounding how gendered vulnerabilities are normalised within music infrastructures, and underscoring the need to reimagine safer, more equitable working environments for women musicians.

Exploring Men's Perspectives on the Influence of Traditional Gender Norms on Acts of Violence Against Women in Families in Papua New Guinea: An Emic Study from the Faigurup Community, Rai Coast, Madang Province

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Study background and Purpose: Violence against women (VAW) in Papua New Guinea is among the highest globally, impacting over 80% of women's health. While much research has focused on victims' perspectives and identified traditional or pre-existing gender norms as a key contributing factor, little is known about how men perceive and interpret gender norms within their cultural and social contexts. This study seeks to examine, from an emic standpoint, on how men within Faigurup community in Rai Coast, Madang, understand their traditional gender norms and how these perceptions influence their attitudes and behaviors toward women. The aim is to identify the mechanisms that sustain or challenge gender norms that influence men's acts of harms against women, in order to inform effective, context-specific prevention strategies.

Methods: A focused ethnographic approach was employed in Faigurup. Data collection involved in-depth interviews, focus group discussions with married men and women, and observations of their daily lived experiences within the community.

Preliminary Findings: The preliminary findings of this study reveal that in the Faigurup community, men perceive their attitudes and behaviours toward women—including violence and abuse—as being shaped not solely by traditional gender norms but also by the community's livelihood realities. Men acknowledge that environmental hardships, limited access to public services, and the demanding nature of their physical tasks influence their perceptions and behaviours. They view gender norms as flexible social systems that adapt to these challenging circumstances, serving to regulate behaviour and maintain moral standards within the community. These norms are reinforced by practical needs related to survival, social cohesion, and the preservation of social harmony within hardship.

Conclusion: In a nutshell, the study highlights that, men's attitudes and behaviors toward women are shaped by a complex interplay of adaptable pre-existing gender norms and the community's livelihood realities. Recognizing this is a key to informed inclusive and context-specific strategies to prevent gender-based violence and promote women's well-being.

Exploring Women's Educational Leadership in Sri Lankan Public Administration Service: An intersectional Conceptual Framework

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This paper presents the conceptual framing of an ongoing PhD study examining women's educational leadership experiences and practices within the Sri Lanka Education Administrative Service (SLEAS). Drawing on intersectional theory, the framework explores how gender and cultural identities intersect, and how formal structures, policy expectations, and informal norms collectively shape women's leadership experiences, influencing their professional practice and decision-making within a highly centralised bureaucratic system.

Despite increasing representation of women in educational leadership globally and in Sri Lanka, limited research captures how intersecting gendered and cultural dynamics shape their lived experiences, particularly within postcolonial administrative contexts. Existing studies often privilege quantitative trends or adopt universal, male-centric leadership models, overlooking nuanced, context-specific realities of women leaders in the Global South and the ways power and authority operate through everyday institutional practices.

Adopting a narrative inquiry approach, the study utilises semi-structured interviews, reflective journal entries, and document analysis to examine how participants negotiate their leadership identities and interpret their leadership experiences within hierarchical institutional contexts. It further explores how women leaders navigate institutional expectations and respond to cultural and professional pressures that shape their leadership practices and career trajectories over time.

By centring women's voices in SLEAS, the study advances an intersectional understanding of educational leadership in a postcolonial Global South context and addresses a critical gap in both local and global scholarship. It also provides contextually grounded insights to inform more inclusive leadership development, policy, and practice in Sri Lanka's education administration, contributing to ongoing debates on equity, inclusion, and institutional reform.

Keywords: *women's leadership, gender identity, cultural identity, leadership experiences*

Gendered Representation of Resistance Artificial Intelligence Imagery and Iranian Protest on Instagram

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Social media platforms have become a key infrastructure for people to amplify their voices and share their stories (Yuen & Tang, 2023; Trevisan, 2019; Caldeira, 2021). Recent protests in Iran in January 2026 demonstrated a shift in digital activism and forms of digital resistance under repression. As a form of digital resistance, Iranian demonstrators, particularly women, created and shared prompt-based visuals on Instagram that incorporate AI-generated graphics. Furthermore, some artists have used AI-generated imagery to raise awareness of the protests in Iran. Although artificial intelligence (AI) has played an increasingly significant role in protests and social movements (Tanner, 2024; Darmawan et al., 2024; Czainska & Biernat, 2024), few studies on gendered representation of AI-generated images in protests and how people are using AI to show their resistance. This study explores how generative AI decouples political expression from physical presence and reconfigures the representation of resistance. It also examines generative AI as a technological advancement in Iranians' protest practices, studying gendered representation in AI imagery of Iranian protests. Using a mixed-methods approach, this study combines a visual-discursive analysis of 30 AI-generated images on Instagram (January 2026) with a semi-structured interview with a photographer creating AI-generated protest imagery. The empirical focus of this study is a case study of contents produced by 'Rafal Wegie' about Iranian protests in 2026. This selection enables an in-depth analysis of visual representation while addressing the ethical considerations surrounding AI-generated protest imagery. The findings demonstrate that AI-generated images give rise to a set of dichotomic perceptual oppositions, including individual body vs abstract state power; feminised vulnerability vs institutional force; care and protection vs domination and control; and symbolic endurance vs physical confrontation. Moreover, the analyzed images function as a form of digital resistance, experienced primarily through mostly symbolic representation of feminized bodies on a social platform.

Keywords: *Generative Artificial intelligence, Digital Resistance, Gendered Representation,*

Gender Equity in the Australian Wine Sector: Uneven and Conditional Progress

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The gender composition of the Australian wine sector has changed markedly in recent decades, with women increasingly entering roles traditionally dominated by men. Despite this progress, there is relatively little research focused specifically on women's experiences in the wine workforce. This paper reports on a study developed in collaboration with Wine Australia and the Australian Grape & Wine Diversity, Equality and Inclusion in Wine (DEIW) Committee. The study focused on three critical dimensions: the perspectives of women currently and formerly employed in the sector; the barriers and facilitators influencing DEI across the value chain; and the disconnect between available support mechanisms and industry requirements. Drawing on data from 18 focus groups, representing 76 women from the Australian wine sector, this paper draws on the theory of feminist institutionalism to examine how women working in the Australian wine sector experience and interpret both meaningful change and persistent barriers that shape workplace gender dynamics. Participants were employed across the wine sector, including roles in winemaking; vineyard and viticulture; ownership, management, executive and board positions; cellar operations; marketing, sales, distribution, retail, media and brand; laboratory work; consulting (winemaking and viticulture); and education. While participants consistently described the sector as having improved over the past two decades, these accounts were marked by tension and contradiction. Increased visibility of women, greater openness in discussing gender equity, and the expansion of mentoring and development initiatives signal meaningful cultural shifts. However, these changes coexist alongside sexism and forms of harassment, gendered expectations of work, and structural barriers to flexible work, leadership and career progression. We conceptualise gender equity in the wine industry not as a linear process of improvement, but as conditional and uneven progress, in which inclusion is dependent on women's adaptation to prevailing masculine norms. The paper argues that while the Australian wine industry is widely understood as having improved for women, these gains are partial, uneven, and conditional, with progress co-existing alongside persistent masculine norms that continue to structure everyday work, opportunity, and recognition.

Keywords: *Women in wine, Male-dominated industries, Feminist institutionalism*

The Gender Perspective in Advertising Studies at Spanish Universities

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Various international human rights instruments identify education as one of the key areas of action required to change the socio-cultural patterns of behaviour among women and men, with a view to eliminating any prejudice or customary practice based on the notion of inferiority or superiority between the sexes. Thus, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, aimed at removing obstacles to women's participation in all spheres of public and private life, devotes strategic area (B) to the education and training of women. In particular, strategic objective B.4 sets out a series of measures to be adopted for the development of a gender-sensitive education system, for which it is necessary, as stated in sub-point (a), to integrate the gender perspective into curricula, educational resources and teacher training. Given the importance of advertising discourse in conveying values of respect for women's dignity, equality between women and men, and non-discrimination, this research focuses on the implementation of the gender perspective in advertising studies taught at Spanish universities. To this end, a gender-focused keyword content analysis was carried out on a sample of 1,236 course syllabuses from the 29 Spanish universities offering the Bachelor's degree in Advertising and Public Relations for the 2025–2026 academic year. In general terms, it can be seen that the codes associated with the gender perspective are concentrated mainly in compulsory credit modules (71.1%) rather than optional ones, and in public universities (71.3%) rather than private ones. Gender is the most frequently used term (n=222), followed by equality (n=118) and woman (n=78).

Keywords: *gender, advertising, curricula, Spain.*

“My Life Has Already Gone”: Structural oppression, Carceral Intimacies and Meaning Making Among Wives of Incarcerated Men in India

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Families of persons who experience incarceration continue to be invisible within feminist scholarship in the Global South, even though incarceration significantly alters women's relational, psychosocial, and emotional lives. Drawing on the twin theoretical lenses of intersectional feminism and symbolic interactionism, this paper investigates the ways in which Dalit and/or Muslim women from marginalized socioeconomic backgrounds in India make meaning of spousal incarceration while enduring oppressive, intersectional marginalization. The study is based on in-depth semi-structured interviews with 14 women residing in and around Delhi. Through narrative analysis, the paper identifies three story trajectories that describes the intimate partner relationships of women whose partners are incarcerated: *Ambivalent but Hanging On*, *Unconditionally Devoted*, and *Independent and Disillusioned*. Across these narratives, women described shouldering enormous caregiving responsibilities, dealing with stigmatization within their communities, enduring constrained marital choices, and internalizing a “ceiling of aspirations.” Participants' stories underscore the role of incarceration in reorganizing women's identities, emotional and relational labour, mobility as well as their imagination of their future. At the same time, these stories complicate a simplistic understanding of relational agency and victimhood. While navigating intersectional marginalization on the basis of their socioeconomic, relational and gendered identities, the participants demonstrated agency, endurance, and resilience in their own ways. This paper argues that women who experience spousal incarceration occupy a marginalized socioeconomic and psychosocial position that continues to be overlooked in feminist scholarship as well as policy discourse in India. By centering their voices, this study contributes to feminist understandings of carcerality, unpaid care work, disenfranchised grief, and intersectional precarity in the Global South.

Keywords: *Intersectional feminism, Spousal incarceration, intimate relationships*

“There’ll be a way”: Boys’ Encounters with Social Media, Restrictions and the Conditions of Gendered Friction

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Amid escalating global concerns about boys’ exposure to misogynistic content online, social media platforms have become a focal point for debates about influence, harm, and regulation. Much of this concern has converged around high-profile ‘manfluencers’ such as Andrew Tate, whose content is frequently positioned as emblematic of the relationship between social media and gendered violence. This paper examines how boys aged 12-15 in Australia encounter and engage with social media in this context, at a moment marked by proposed restrictions on youth access to platforms and heightened attention to gendered frictions in schools.

Drawing on individual and small group interviews with 15 boys across Melbourne and Sydney, we trace how social media becomes embedded in boys’ everyday routines through practices of navigation, access, and circumvention. Engagement unfolds across a shifting set of conditions, shaped by peer-shared knowledge (including the circulation of VPNs and other workarounds), school-based restrictions and opportunities, and parental controls, alongside practices such as multiple account use, logged-out viewing, and device sharing. Content is frequently encountered in fragmented and repurposed forms (particularly through YouTube as a cross-platform content aggregator) rather than through sustained engagement with specific platforms or creators. Encounters with manosphere-related content rarely feature as reference points in how boys describe their engagement. Instead, boys’ accounts foreground practical concerns around maintaining access and navigating constraints. Engagement tends toward low-investment forms of participation, a preference for anonymity, and an ongoing orientation towards maintaining access across changing platforms across school, home, and peer contexts. Platforms are approached as shifting systems in which continuity is assumed, even as particular modes of access and entry points come and go.

By reframing attention toward the conditions under which social media is used, the paper moves beyond dominant moral panic framings and their correctives, both of which tend to centre identifiable figures or content as the primary sites of influence. We offer an account that foregrounds infrastructural conditions and everyday practices, arguing for a rethinking of influence as something that emerges through patterns of access and use. In doing so, the paper contributes to debates about youth, platform governance, and gender by shifting analytic attention from what social media is assumed to do, to how it is lived.

Keywords: *social media, youth, masculinities, platform governance*

**Schanoes-Herman's Lens on Patriarchal Corruption of Mother-Daughter Bonds in
T. Kingfisher's *A Sorceress Comes to Call***

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In patriarchal structures, despite being the victims, women are also capable of becoming perpetrators of violence. However, the portrayal of the corruption of female relationships, including maternal bonds, remains underexplored in the scholarship of feminist fairy tale retellings. This study examines T. Kingfisher's *A Sorceress Comes to Call*, a retelling of Brothers Grimm's 'The Goose Girl' that focuses on the ambivalent relationship of the main character, Cordelia, and her sorceress mother, Evangeline. This study employs the integration of two feminist psychoanalytic frameworks: Veronica Schanoes's (2014) theory of mother-daughter relationship representations and Judith Herman's (2015) theory of trauma of child abuse to analyse the portrayal of abusive mother-daughter relationships. Schanoes's theory is used to analyse how patriarchal structures corrupt mother-daughter bond by destroying the mother's sense of self and blurring ego boundaries within the mother-daughter relationship, while Herman's theory reveals how the abuse manifests through perpetual control and obliteration of external relationship, inducing psychological and somatic trauma symptoms in Cordelia. This study exposes how patriarchal systems compel women to become both oppressors and victims within the same framework. It also shows how maternal abuse profoundly affects the daughter by demolishing her sense of autonomy and causing deep trauma, while highlighting that the violence may happen due to the effects of patriarchal society instead of personal factors alone. By integrating Schanoes's and Herman's theories into a single analytical framework for the first time, the study contributes to expanding the discourse of ambivalent motherhood, highlighting it as a multifaceted and integral aspect of the maternal experience.

Keywords: *Child abuse, mother-daughter relationship, patriarchy, ambivalent motherhood*

Strong Enough to Surrender: Male Submissives and Their Relationship with Masculinity

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Throughout history, masculinity has been seen as something to strive for, something that makes men 'better' because they possess it, and anyone who doesn't have it or goes against it is less than. In the context of BDSM and power dynamics, a man submitting to anybody can be seen as giving up their masculinity, but is that the overall consensus? The question of how male submissives relate to masculinity is the main topic of this research. The views on masculinity, specifically the socially constructed characteristics among men who submit to others, will be examined, along with how they view their own masculinity in a world that doesn't always support men who go against this 'ideal'. The main goal of this research is to analyze the relationship male submissives have with masculinity with the help of Lorde's theory on the erotic. This research uses conversation analysis and thematic content analysis of chat room posts, specifically on Reddit, to gather information on people's views on the social constructs of masculinity and male submissives. Feminist and queer methodology will be used with a focus on standpoint theory, reflexivity, and positionality. This research will illustrate how masculinity is not defined by dominance. Along with how male individuals can still be masculine while submitting to others. An important idea in today's society is that masculinity is taught as toxic power over others who are seen as lesser. The findings of this research will not only bring more light to male submissives but also address current views on masculinity. Emphasizing how anyone can feel masculine without doing it in a toxic abuse of power and encouraging more people to share their knowledge on what masculinity is to them.

Keywords: *Masculinity, Submissives, Power Dynamics, Perception.*

Relationships Between Life Career Role Structures and Self-Efficacy: An Analysis of Multiple Role Experiences across Life Stages, Japanese Women Case

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This study examined how role experiences across women's life careers may relate to Self-Efficacy (SE). The study surveyed 245 Japanese women in their thirties to seventies regarding role experiences from the early twenties to the late seventies in five domains: family, work, learning, community, and other activities, together with 23 SE scale items measured using a five-point Likert scale.

Factor analysis of the SE scale extracted four factors: "the will to persist until completing an action," "the will to initiate action," "resilience in adversity," and "the intention to build relationships." In particular, "the intention to build relationships" was identified as a new factor that has not been examined in previous studies.

Exploratory multivariate regression examining relationships between the latest SE and 5-role experiences resulted that "learning" in the twenties and "learning" in the fifties were both significantly and positively associated with SE (n=147 over age-50). Similar results were found for "the will to persist until completing an action. Cluster analysis of role experiences at each life stage (twenties-sixties) are summarized that role structures are commonly classified into three clusters characterized by balancing family and work roles, family-centred roles, and equally undertaking multiple roles. In addition, only in the early thirties the part of the multiple-role cluster is more divide into "learning" and "community" aspects, as in four clusters.

These findings suggest that which roles women undertake at particular life stages possible to relate to the enhancement of SE, such the "learning". Future research should also examine comparative studies between Japanese women and women in other countries with different social backgrounds.

Keywords: *Life career; multi-role structure; self-efficacy; Japanese women*

A Comparative Analysis of Gender Bias in AI and Human Recruitment for Teaching Positions - A Controlled Experimental Approach

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Artificial Intelligence algorithms are increasingly being used across various sectors worldwide including recruitment process, reducing human recruitment decisions. However, Gender bias exists both in the traditional and AI-driven hiring systems. This study aims to measure and compare the magnitude and direction of gender bias in teaching job recruitment process using a controlled experimental design. A total of 50 resumes will be collected from open-source platforms like Google, Kaggle, and then converted to gender based paired profiles, by keeping all other attributes unaltered, counting to 100 resumes. These resumes will be evaluated by multiple human evaluators and an AI hiring tool on common criteria in 4 rounds, with approximately 25 samples in a round. Providing an adequate time gap between rounds and by sharing gender paired profiles in different rounds minimizes the chance of recalling

Quantitative analysis compares the evaluation scores, ranking position and selection decision between male-coded and female-coded resumes. Statistical techniques, including independent sample t-test, ANOVA, and logistic regression, are used to examine differences and quantify bias across both evaluation methods. In addition, resume attributes such as education, experience, career gaps, and extracurricular activities are analyzed to identify factors that contribute to bias in recruitment decision-making processes. This research study will provide useful insights to find if AI recruiting tools are increasing or reducing the Gender bias compared to human evaluators and propose practical recommendations to reduce bias and increase equal opportunities in the recruitment processes.

Keywords: *Gender bias, Artificial Intelligence (AI), Human recruiters, AI-Driven recruiting, teaching roles*

Beyond Compliance: Reframing Responsibility for Gender-Equitable Artificial Intelligence Systems

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Efforts to transform systems and attitudes toward gender equality increasingly intersect with the rapid expansion of Artificial Intelligence into decision-making, governance and everyday institutional practice. Yet most strategies addressing AI and gender equity still treat responsibility as synonymous with rule-following: audits, checklists and certification schemes that signal compliance without necessarily shifting underlying attitudes or power structures. This paper argues that genuine systemic transformation requires a different starting point: responsibility understood not as adherence to external rules, but as a capacity grounded in the recognition of boundaries between human judgement and automated decision-making.

Drawing on gender studies, leadership theory and social innovation literature, the paper examines how attitudinal change toward gender equality in AI-driven systems depends on whether actors within organisations are equipped to recognise, name and act within these boundaries, rather than merely satisfy external requirements. It explores how women leaders and entrepreneurs across several European contexts are already developing such boundary-aware practices, often informally, ahead of formal regulatory frameworks, and how these practices could inform more durable systemic change than compliance-driven approaches alone.

Using a conceptual and comparative methodology, the paper introduces the emerging concept of Responsible Societal Culture (RESC), which positions responsibility as a collective, cultural process rather than an individual or institutional checkbox. The analysis suggests that transforming systems sustainably requires transforming the attitudes that underlie how responsibility itself is understood and practised, particularly in contexts where AI reshapes who makes decisions and who is accountable for them. The paper concludes by outlining implications for gender-equality policy and organisational practice within AI governance.

Keywords: *Responsibility, Artificial Intelligence, Gender Equality, Systemic Transformation, Boundaries*

Pragati – A Second Chance Program for Adolescent Girls & Young Women

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In India, adolescent girls face systemic and societal barriers that severely limit their educational and economic opportunities. Annually, 12.3% of girls drop out before completing Grade 10, and 32% before higher secondary education. This cumulative exclusion has resulted in 91 million young women aged 15–29 being categorized as Not in Education, Employment, Entrepreneurship, or Training (NEET). Alarming, 90% of these young women lack formal or informal skills, contributing to a female labor force participation rate of only 37%. The consequences of this exclusion are profound: diminished agency, heightened vulnerability to poverty, domestic violence, and climate-related risks, and perpetuation of intergenerational cycles of disadvantage.

Pragati emerges as a transformative “second chance” program designed to disrupt this trajectory. Grounded in feminist values and community-based approaches, Pragati seeks to build agency among adolescent girls and young women aged 15–29 by enabling re-enrollment into Grade 10 through open schooling pathways and equipping them with the knowledge and skills to pursue income-generating opportunities. The program directly addresses both societal barriers—such as patriarchal norms, early marriage, and household responsibilities—and systemic barriers, including the absence of accessible secondary schools.

By combining education re-entry with livelihood awareness, Pragati empowers participants to reclaim their right to learn, earn, and lead. The program envisions adolescent girls not merely as beneficiaries but as agents of change, capable of influencing household, community, and social decisions. Pragati’s holistic design positions education as a gateway to agency, resilience, and empowerment, while simultaneously contributing to national priorities of gender equity and economic inclusion.

This abstract highlights the urgency of second chance programming and positions Pragati as a scalable, evidence-based model for advancing gender justice and adolescent girls’ empowerment in India.

Keywords: *Second chance Program, Not in Education, Employability and Training, Education Disruption, Education for All, Open Distance Learning, Inclusive Education*

Beyond Policy Presence: Feminist Institutionalism, Gender Equality and the Practical Visibility of Women in Masculinised Professions

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Gender equality strategies in health and emergency services often emphasise policies, frameworks and formal commitments. Yet, in masculinised professions such as paramedicine, policy presence does not necessarily translate into substantive change for women in everyday organisational life. This study presents findings from a feminist institutionalist analysis of gender equality within paramedicine, using an Australian ambulance service as a case study.

This study examined how formal policy architecture interacted with informal norms, governance arrangements and path-dependent masculine institutional practices. Feminist institutionalism was used as both a theoretical and methodological framework, directing attention to the relationship between documented equality commitments and the informal rules through which organisational power, credibility and opportunity are enacted. Findings revealed uneven organisational maturity. Stronger performance was concentrated in externally visible and compliance-oriented domains. By contrast, the weakest results appeared in discretionary areas where informal practice shapes women's opportunities and visibility, including recruitment and promotion, professional development and gender pay equity.

The broader significance of this work is that feminist institutionalism explains why gender equality reform can appear advanced on paper while remaining limited in practice. It reveals how organisations may symbolically comply with equality expectations while leaving untouched the informal rules that determine who is seen as credible, promotable, authoritative and worth investing in. In paramedicine, this means women may be named in policy yet remain less visible in systems through which leadership and opportunity are distributed.

This paper argues that feminist institutionalism offers a critical and practical framework for moving beyond symbolic compliance. Using paramedicine as a case of broader relevance, it demonstrates how gender equality research can interrogate not only what organisations say, but how they work. For masculinised professions, genuine reform requires attention to the everyday decisions, cultural assumptions and institutional routines that determine whether women are visible in practice, not just in policy.

COVID-19, Gender Wage Discrimination and Labour Market Recovery: Evidence from India's PLFS 2017–2024

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Gender wage inequality is one of the major issues in developing countries like India. This study focuses on this issue. The study used unit-level data from the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) covering 2017-18 to 2023-24. The total sample has 168,702 observations. This study is among the first to use all seven rounds of PLFS data covering the pre-COVID, COVID and post-COVID periods together. This gives a complete picture of how COVID-19 affected gender wage discrimination in India over time. Oaxaca-Blinder decomposition was used for data analysis. This method splits the wage gap into explained and unexplained parts. The unexplained part shows wage discrimination.

The study found that men earn more than women in all seven years. The wage discrimination was 21 per cent in the pre-COVID period and reduced to 20.6 per cent during COVID-19. After COVID, discrimination reduced to 13.3 per cent. But for the year 2023-24 it further increased to 16 per cent. This means the labour market has not fully recovered in terms of gender equity.

The gender wage gap increased for regular salaried workers during COVID and has not fully recovered. But it decreased for casual workers. No doubt, minimum wage policies appear effective in reducing gender wage inequality in the casual sector. Thus, the study suggests strong enforcement of equal pay legislation in the formal sector.

Keywords: *Gender Wage Gap, COVID-19, Oaxaca-Blinder Decomposition, PLFS, India, Wage Discrimination*

JEL Classification: *J16, J31, J71, O15*

“Women in Medicine: Gendered Aspirations, Barriers and Progression in Bangladesh”

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Medicine is a core STEM profession, yet women's increasing entry into medical education has not translated into equitable career outcomes. The healthcare sector has historically been male-dominated,² with women underrepresented across a range of specialised fields. However, recent decades have witnessed the feminisation of medicine.³ Despite the increasing participation of women in medicine globally, significant gender inequalities persist across career trajectories. Women are disproportionately concentrated in lower-paying and lower-status specialities such as general practice and paediatrics, while remaining underrepresented in high-status, male-dominated fields such as surgery, orthopaedics, and cardiology. This paper examines how gender norms, institutional structure, and workplace conditions influence the career aspirations and speciality choices of female doctors in Bangladesh. Drawing on research among 37 healthcare professionals and 10 focus group discussions with undergraduate medical students and intern doctors, this study explores the individual, cultural, and institutional barriers that affect women's post-graduation speciality choice and career development. The findings show that women's career pathways are shaped by intersecting processes, including limited family and peer support, unequal access to training opportunities, and expectations around marriage, motherhood and care responsibilities. These disparities were evident across workload distribution and the financial cost of professional progression. In addition, postgraduate entrance examinations are highly competitive and demand substantial preparation time. As time becomes a critical constraint, many female doctors prioritise family, often at the expense of their original career aspirations. By focusing on Bangladesh, this qualitative study contributes to wider debates on women in STEM and calls for gender-responsive workplace planning, inclusive postgraduate training pathways, stronger mentoring structures, and cultural change within healthcare organisations.

Keywords: *career aspiration, female doctors, gender disparities, underrepresentation, women in healthcare.*

² Witz, A., (1990): Patriarchy and professions: The gendered politics of occupational Closure, *Sociology*, Vol-24, No-4, pp: 675-690.

³ Zdravkovic, M., Osinova, D., Brull, S. J., Prielipp, R. C., Simões, C. M., Berger-Estilita, J., ... & Loskutov, O. (2020). Perceptions of gender equity in departmental leadership, research opportunities, and clinical work attitudes: an international survey of 11781 anaesthesiologists. *British journal of anaesthesia*, 124(3), e160-e170.

Scarred Screens, Loud Voices: Gender-Based Violence, Cinematic Witness, and Digital Resistance in Contemporary India

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Gender-based violence is not a discrete event, but a structure reproduced through cultural, legal, and digital systems (Humbert & Strid, 2025). In India, cases such as the 2024 Kolkata healthcare worker case and the 2019 Hyderabad case underscore the enduring vulnerability of women in professional spaces. This study examines two contemporary texts: Chhapaak (2020) and the #MeToo India movement (2018), as sites where gender-based violence is represented, narrated, and resisted. This study explores how cinematic representation and digital survivor discourse construct, contest, and resist patriarchal gender-based violence in contemporary India. It investigates how Chhapaak centres survivor subjectivity against epistemic injustice (Pal, 2024), and how #MeToo India transformed private testimony into collective political action while reproducing caste and class exclusions (Pain, 2021; Mukherjee, Shah & Dexter, 2023). Drawing on intersectional feminist theory (Crenshaw, 1989) and hegemonic masculinities scholarship (Connell, 1995), alongside contemporary elaborations of both frameworks (Humbert & Strid, 2025; Gangoli, 2023; Dochania & Dochania, 2025), the study argues that in the Indian context, gender, caste, and institutional power produce differentiated vulnerabilities to violence, while hegemonic masculinity normalises violence as punishment for women who transgress patriarchal norms. Critical textual analysis is applied to Chhapaak and to #MeToo India survivor testimonies archived across Twitter and print media. The two-medium design enables cross-contextual analysis of how violence is storied differently in scripted cinematic form versus unmediated survivor speech. The findings show how patriarchal institutions sustain violence and obstruct accountability. Chhapaak registers survivor knowledge dismissed by legal systems (Pal, 2024), while #MeToo testimonies name harassment normalised within elite workplaces. Cinematic narrative builds a mass affective archive; digital testimony enacts horizontal collective action, both carry structural limits (Gangoli, 2023; Mukherjee et al., 2023). Across both texts, the body: scarred, speaking, refusing silence, is the primary terrain of both violation and resistance. Future research should extend this analysis to diaspora platforms and the emerging Indian manosphere (Dochania & Dochania, 2025).

Keywords: *Gender-based violence, Chhapaak, #MeToo India, intersectional feminism, hegemonic masculinities, epistemic injustice, digital activism, narrative analysis.*

Statutory Language and Legal Accessibility: How Gendered Domestic Violence Law Excludes Male Victims in India

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The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act (PWDVA), 2005, states that domestic violence is defined solely as harm done by husbands or male partners to women. This formulation leaves male victims legally unable to pursue the remedies under the Act, including protection orders, maintenance, and residence orders. On the other hand, Bhutan's 2007 Domestic Violence Prevention Act adopts gender-neutral legislation protecting "any person" within a domestic context. This article considers whether the content of statutes determines accessibility to victims of domestic violence and whether a gender-neutral design necessarily reduces legal protection for women. Applying doctrinal analysis of PWDVA Section 2(a), followed by a comparative analysis of Bhutan's legislation, we conclude that the language of gender creates a false binary: women are protected, or the structure expands. Evidence suggests otherwise. The National Crime Records Bureau tracks violence by men against women but collects no data on male victimisation, leaving a measurement gap, not proof of absence. Only limited survey data shows 52% of men suffer from domestic abuse. A January 2025 Delhi High Court decision held that "men are equally entitled to protection from cruelty and violence as women; gender should not be a determining factor." This indicates that the Court is acknowledging that the law, as it stands, is not quite adequate. Bhutan's experience is proof that gender-neutral language does not dilute female victim protection. Statutory neutrality separates the legal issue (who is protected?) from the question of resources (where do finite services go?). Women's vulnerability-based victim support can still be targeted at women without gendering the law itself. We found that India ought to reform PWDVA Section 2(a) by eliminating gender categories while maintaining a vulnerability-based allocation of resources. This is a fairer legal approach for all victims without diluting its institutional agenda for the disproportionately statistically most at risk in society.

Keywords: *statutory design, legal accessibility, gendered law, gender-neutral reform, PWDVA, India, male victims*

Psychological, Social, and Cultural Factors Influencing Female High School Students' Choice to Study Computer Science

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This study examines the psychological, social, and cultural factors influencing female high school students' choice to study computer science. The research focuses on key factors such as self-efficacy, family expectations, gender stereotypes, teacher encouragement, peer influence, and the school climate. It aims to understand the barriers that may prevent female students from choosing computer science and the motivational factors that may encourage their participation in the field.

The study is situated at the intersection of gender, education, and computer science education, with particular attention to how social perceptions and cultural expectations shape girls' academic choices. As a proposed educational direction, the study suggests exploring a hybrid educational language that combines technological, visual, social, and culturally responsive approaches.

This approach may help make computer science more accessible, meaningful, and engaging for female students by connecting technical concepts to familiar contexts, strengthening confidence, and reducing the influence of gender stereotypes. Although this registration is for virtual attendance only and not for a formal presentation, the research topic is relevant to discussions on women's studies, gender equity in education, and female participation in STEM fields.

Keywords: *Computer Science Education; Female Students; STEM Education; Gender Stereotypes; Self-Efficacy; Gender-Sensitive Teaching; Hybrid Educational Language*

The Burden of Unpaid Care Work on Women: A Study of Four Villages in Rajasthan, India

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Every human society depends on two forms of work - paid and unpaid. And yet the latter remains largely absent from formal economic measurement. Unpaid work covers a wide spectrum of activities, from cooking, cleaning, and fetching water to caring for children, the elderly, and the sick. While subsistence production and unpaid labour in family enterprises find a place within the United Nations System of National Accounts (SNA), the bulk of daily care and domestic work falls outside its production boundary, even though it accounts for an estimated 35 to 50 percent of total work time in most economies. This exclusion renders this labour economically invisible and statistically undervalued. Evidence from time-use surveys across both developed and developing countries show that women carry a heavier share of unpaid work. An ILO report of 2018 concludes that on average women in India “spend 297 minutes per day on unpaid care work as compared to 31 minutes by men”⁴. The unequal distribution of unpaid work is deeply rooted in patriarchal norms and the sexual division of labour. The price that women pay for excessive unpaid work are many including reduced earning ability and a reduced ability to acquire education and skill. Also, the double workload that many women carry during their working years is unjust and may have health consequence. The disproportionate burden of unpaid work that women undertake raises three questions: i) What is the consequence of this disproportionate burden of unpaid work on rural women? ii) How has the nature of the unpaid work changed in the last 10 years? iii) How has the burden of unpaid work changed in the past 10 years? This paper examines the above questions by conducting discussions with 10 selected household in four villages of Rajasthan, India who had earlier participated in a primary survey conducted in the year 2017. Their response when compared with the result of the earlier survey will provide an insight to the consequences of unpaid care work on women's lives in rural India.

Keywords: *Care Economy; Unpaid Care Work; SNA; Gender;*

⁴ Sona Mitra. (2019). *Women and Unpaid Work in India: A Macroeconomic Overview*, Technical Session III: Enabling Environment for addressing Unpaid Work and Care VVGNNLI, Noida.

Going Computational: Richard Powers' *Pygmalion* of the AI Age

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The Pygmalion myth, originating in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, was later reinterpreted by Rousseau, whose works present female figures shaped according to male ideals.

In *Galatea 2.2* (1995), Richard Powers reimagines the myth through Helen, an AI trained in the Western literary canon who gradually resists the authority of her creators.

Methodologically, the paper employs close reading combined with feminist literary criticism and posthumanist theory.

Powers relocates the Pygmalion paradigm from the artistic and pedagogical domains into the computational sphere, where creation no longer takes the form of sculpture or education alone, but of cognitive modelling and machine learning. Much like *Galatea* and *Sophie* before her, Helen is fashioned according to a masculine logic of knowledge transmission. Her creators, Richard and Philip Lentz, expose her to the Western literary canon and expect her to reproduce culturally sanctioned modes of interpretation, thereby replicating traditional hierarchies of authority embedded in both literary culture and scientific discourse.

However, the experiment gradually escapes their control. Powers frames Helen's development through connectionism and emergent cognition rather than mechanical programming. Helen is not simply instructed; she is trained through iterative exposure to texts, much like a human subject undergoing education and socialization. As her responses become increasingly autonomous, she begins to generate questions that exceed the intentions of her creators, most notably the existential inquiry, "Where did I come from?" At this moment, the novel destabilizes the boundary between simulation and consciousness, suggesting that subjectivity may emerge unpredictably from systems designed merely to imitate it.

Drawing on feminist literary criticism and posthumanist theory, this paper explores how *Galatea 2.2* reimagines the Pygmalion myth in the context of artificial intelligence and late twentieth-century technoculture. By replacing the sculpted woman with a neural network trained through literature, Powers exposes the persistence of patriarchal assumptions within systems of education, technological innovation, and knowledge production. The novel also interrogates the ethical implications of creating artificial consciousness. Helen's eventual withdrawal from the experiment ultimately destabilizes the creator–creation hierarchy that structures both Ovid's and Rousseau's versions of the myth, offering a critical reflection on gender, authority, subjectivity, and the limits of human control in the age of artificial intelligence.

Keywords: *Pygmalion myth; artificial intelligence; gender studies; technoculture; subjectification; masculinity, femininity and transformative change*

Gendering inclusivity in Disaster Risk Management law; the case of Zimbabwe.

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Disaster Risk Management (DRM) is crucial for the reason that, when properly planned and executed, it may lessen the effects and casualties of any disaster. Consequently, a gender perspective in DRM is essential to minimise and avert potential repercussions and effects of disasters. The crucial role that gender plays in disaster management and resilience cannot be overstated. This is supported by eco-feminism, whose tenets centre on the interaction between women and the environment and attribute the ongoing disparities to patriarchy and the power structures that culture bestows upon them. This paper's goal is to evaluate the extent to which disaster risk management laws and policies address gender in light of the disproportionate impact that disasters have on women. This research is a desktop analysis which uses a legal doctrinal research method. The research primarily involves analysing the DRM laws; the Civil Protection Act, the Constitution of Zimbabwe 2013 and National Gender Policy (2023-2030) in a bid to ascertain whether the DRM law address gender inclusivity. The findings reveal that there are no national current policies on disaster management addressing the gender issues. The current gender policy appears progressive but does not explicitly put women on stage in their involvement in decision-making in disaster management. The Civil Protection Act is gender blind and does not take into account gender representation in disaster management.

Keywords: *gender, disaster laws, climate changes policies, gender impacts of climatic disasters*

Masculinity, Violence, and Legal Failure: An African Feminist Intervention

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The term “toxic masculinity” is often used in ways that individualise harm and disconnects violence from law, colonial history, and state power. In South Africa, this conceals how colonial rationality continues to shape gender discourse thereby limiting transformational change despite constitutional mandates. Through an integrated use of African Feminisms, decolonial legal analysis and constitutional jurisprudence, masculinity and its’ historical reconstruction around control, forced authority and selectively entrenched patriarchal versions of custom is examined. This paper analyses how the legal system continues to reproduce masculinist power through a critical evaluation of key cases. It critically examines how the courts engage with questions of gender, violence and culpability without encouraging masculine transformation. The case analysis highlights how cases like *S v Zuma* and *S v Pistorius* perpetuates colonial masculinist power that contributes to the high rates of gender-based violence in the country. The cases reveal how the legal system reproduces toxic masculinity traits such as entitlement and privilege especially in relation to legal interpretations of conduct, credibility and intention. The paper therefore advances the use of African Feminism as part of legal reasoning which places men and women at the center of transformation change.

Keywords: *apartheid, colonialism, legal system, masculinity, toxic*

Navigating Identity: Life Experiences of LGBTIQ+ Youth in Vientiane, Laos

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LGBTIQ+ youth in Laos continue to navigate stigma, limited visibility, and strong cultural expectations shaped by traditional gender norms and collectivist values. Despite gradual social change, empirical research documenting their lived experiences remains limited. This qualitative study examines how LGBTIQ+ youth aged 18–30 in Vientiane experience identity expression, disclosure anxiety, social judgment, and support systems within their daily lives, with the aim of informing inclusive policy and practice.

Data were collected through an online questionnaire completed by 25 participants, followed by two focus group discussions with a purposively selected subset of respondents. Participants were recruited using purposive and snowball sampling to ensure diversity while prioritizing safety and confidentiality. Thematic analysis was conducted following Braun and Clarke's framework and guided by Minority Stress Theory, Social Identity Theory, Stigma Theory, and frameworks on cultural norms, collectivism, coping, and resilience.

Findings indicate that LGBTIQ+ youth frequently encounter subtle yet persistent forms of stigma, heightened anxiety around identity disclosure, particularly within family settings and pressure to conform to heteronormative expectations. While peer acceptance appears to be increasing among younger generations, family and institutional environments remain key sources of emotional strain. Participants demonstrate resilience through peer networks, online communities, and strategic identity management in safer spaces.

The study highlights urgent policy gaps in inclusive education, mental health services, and family engagement initiatives. It underscores the need for youth-friendly, culturally sensitive support systems; anti-discrimination protections; and public awareness strategies that promote understanding of sexual and gender diversity. By providing context-specific evidence from Vientiane, this research contributes to policy dialogue and supports the development of inclusive frameworks aimed at improving the well-being and social inclusion of LGBTIQ+ youth in Laos.

Keywords: *LGBTIQ+ youth; stigma; minority stress; resilience; cultural norms; inclusive policy; Laos*

Girl, Woman, Mother. Navigating the Journey from Adolescent Pregnancy to Early Motherhood in Uganda

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Background: Pregnancy in adolescence is widely framed through problem-focussed discourses and their negative impact on the overall health, care, and socio-economic outcomes for mother and baby. While the challenges associated with early pregnancy are well documented, far less attention has been given to how these intersecting problem-focused narratives shape the lived experiences of young mothers. This study advances an alternative feminist discourse, arguing that pregnancy in adolescence and motherhood can also hold possibilities for positive identity formation, and create a sense of self and belonging, when girls are supported, respected, and empowered.

Design: This study was conducted in Uganda, where adolescent pregnancy and motherhood is commonly construed as problematic, and negative discourses about young black mothers are embedded in every aspect of life, and where the perspective of adolescent mothers are notably under-researched. Using an Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis underpinned by the theoretical framework of Black feminist theory and Intersectionality, this research explored the lived experiences of ten Ugandan pregnant adolescent girls. This approach enabled a nuanced examination of how gender, age, and socio-economic inequality, intersect to shape a young girl's personal biography.

Findings: The findings revealed that the persistent construction of adolescent pregnancy as inherently problematic produces profound social consequences. The girl participants described experiences of isolation, stigma, and discrimination that disrupted their education, fractured relationships, and eroded trust in families, communities, and health care systems. A diminished sense of self emerged through restricted autonomy and limited decision-making power. Across the narratives, the girls highlighted the absence of structured support and accessible information, throughout the childbirth continuum, as a critical barrier to wellbeing. Despite these constraints, the girl participants also articulated moments of resilience, care, and emerging self-worth, underscoring the importance of supportive relationships and enabling milieus.

Contribution to the field: This study contributes to reframing pregnancy in adolescence through more equitable and context-responsive Black feminist reproductive justice lens. It offers insights for policy, education, and practice in Uganda and beyond. A conceptual pedagogical "talking tool" framework was developed to foster meaningful dialogue that centres adolescent girls' voices, lived experiences, and aspirations.

Keywords: *Girl, Pregnant, Phenomenology, Feminism, Intersectionality*

Reproductive Politics and Cryo-Preserved Embryos - A Feminist Perspective

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Reproductive politics do not exist in a private domain where individuals are able to exercise choices related to their reproductive rights but are matters that affect all of us in the public sphere (Solinger). The dynamics of reproductive politics is under consistent legal and societal scrutiny, raising issues ranging from the right to access reproductive health, the need to redefine personhood and debates around reproductive technology. In addition, the wide berth of scholarship on this issue makes it difficult to view reproductive politics as one single issue or existing in a vacuum.

Many females choose to cryo-preserve or freeze their eggs based on various factors. This is not restricted to prioritising career growth and economic stability or postponing motherhood. The issue of property rights of cryo-preserved eggs has come into full focus especially in cases of divorce. Many proponents view cryo-preservation as empowering for women and a step in the right direction. However, we remain cognisant of the legal issues around cryo-preserved eggs like consent, contractual rights and its effect on property rights for women.

This paper whilst acknowledging the many issues around reproductive politics, will first focus on the issue of cryo-preserved eggs and property rights in relation to the legal nature of a cryo-preserved embryo.

This paper will attempt to address these issues from a feminist perspective and argue that the attendant legal issues around cryo-preserved eggs have created an additional burden on women who choose the cryo-preservation option. The mental, financial and physical including societal pressure for women to become mothers simultaneously reinforces norms and expectations that define motherhood as central to womanhood.

The research will be viewed from a legal methodological perspective employing the doctrinal approach by using case law, statutes and legislation. Whilst the research will primarily focus on a South African context it will not exclude foreign jurisdictions for informative purposes and where gaps exist in case law.

Keywords: *consent; contractual rights; personhood; legal; property rights*

Accusation as Violence: Toward a Feminist Comparative Framework for Witchcraft-Based Persecution in South Asia

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Daiyan, Chudail, Bokshi, and Suniyan are terms applied to women to ostracize them, control them, and expel them from community life. Far from just being verbal accusations, they serve as instruments of social control, harassment, torture, and gendered oppression. Drawing on Liz Kelly's foundational theory of the continuum of violence, which connects harassment, sexual assault, and lethal violence on a single analytical spectrum. The objective of this paper is to present the concept of witchcraft accusation as a special form of gender-based violence.

This paper argues that witchcraft accusation constitutes a distinct and undertheorized form of gender-based violence that must be analyzed within that continuum, rather than as a superstition-driven phenomenon.

Documented cases from "India tribal regions" (Jharkhand, Odisha, Chhattisgarh), the Terai district of Nepal, "Chittagong hills Tracts" of Bangladesh, and "estate Tamil communities of Sri Lanka". This research reveals a strikingly similar structure of violence in all the given jurisdictions. Dalit and Adivasi women, widows, and the economically marginalized are the primary targets. The matrix of caste, gender, poverty, widowhood, and domestic dependency holds consistently across all jurisdictions.

Comparatively, the paper maps a legislative asymmetry: India has fragmented state-level laws with no national framework; Bangladesh and Sri Lanka have no specific legislation on witchcraft violence; Nepal stands alone in the region with the Witchcraft-related Accusation (Offence and Punishment) Act, 2015, with the most progressive instrument in South Asia. This paper proposes that SAARC nations require a regional model law that formally defines witchcraft-based violence as a continuum of domestic violence and gender-based violence and ensures state obligations for protection, rehabilitation, and land-rights restitution for victims.

This paper concludes that existing criminal law across South Asia consistently misreads this violence as ordinary crime because it lacks the analytical tools to see its gendered and caste-based structure. Purposive feminist law-making can fill this legal vacuum and address the structural failure that leaves the most marginalized women in the region without remedies.

Keywords: *Witchcraft accusation, gendered violence, Intersectionality, Feminist legal theory, CEDAW, SAARC regional law*

Beyond Household Poverty: A Gendered, Intersectional Measure of Women's Vulnerability for Equitable Policy

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Poverty-graduation programmes across the Global South deliver assets, training and support through women, yet they select participants on household income and assets. This treats women as instruments of household welfare rather than as agents whose own constraints shape whether they can benefit. This study asks how women's vulnerability should be understood and measured when it is multidimensional and intersectional. We draw on 579 ultra-poor women in an economic-inclusion programme in Jharkhand, India, a predominantly tribal sample in which Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) form the largest single group. Combining a structured survey with qualitative fieldwork, we build and validate a composite vulnerability index across three dimensions: economic precarity; sociocultural constraint, covering restricted mobility, care burden, domestic violence and household alcohol use; and psychosocial deprivation, covering survival anxiety, low self-esteem, low aspirations, limited education and weak access to health and social-support institutions. The dimensions carry equal weight, are validated through factor analysis, and are read against caste and marital status. Vulnerability proves layered and unevenly spread. Women in PVTG households are close to three times as likely as women in other caste groups to face disadvantage across all three dimensions at once, and PVTG women who are also widowed, separated or divorced carry an added risk that neither characteristic explains on its own, which income and asset screening cannot see. Psychosocial vulnerability does not track economic status; in the data it runs counter to it, marking it as a distinct axis of gendered disadvantage. Seeing women only through household economics reproduces the inequities that anti-poverty systems set out to correct. A gender-responsive, intersectional measure of vulnerability can reshape both the systems that target support and the attitudes that cast women as means rather than ends.

Keywords: *women's vulnerability; intersectionality; Indigenous/tribal women; gender and poverty; measurement for policy*

Marriage, Care Responsibilities, and Women's Occupational Attainment in Indonesia

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Despite substantial improvements in women's educational attainment over the past two decades, women remain underrepresented in managerial and high-skilled occupations across many middle-income countries. In Indonesia, this disparity persists despite increasing female labour force participation, suggesting that structural barriers beyond human capital continue to shape women's career advancement. One important explanation is the "marriage penalty," whereby marriage reinforces unequal care responsibilities and traditional gender norms that constrain women's access to leadership opportunities. While previous studies have primarily examined the effects of marriage on labour force participation and earnings, far less attention has been given to its implications for women's occupational attainment in developing countries.

This study examines the relationship between marital status and women's career advancement using microdata from the 2025 Indonesian National Labour Force Survey (Sakernas). Career advancement is measured by women's likelihood of working in managerial and high-skilled occupations based on the Indonesian Standard Classification of Occupations. Binary logistic regression models estimate the association between marital status and occupational attainment while controlling for educational attainment, age, vocational training, internship experience, digital technology use, employment characteristics, working hours, urban-rural residence, and provincial fixed effects. Interaction terms between marital status and educational attainment are included to assess whether higher education moderates the relationship between marriage and occupational attainment.

The findings demonstrate a persistent marriage penalty in women's career advancement. Married women are less likely than never-married women to attain managerial and high-skilled occupations after accounting for differences in education, human capital, and labour market characteristics. Although higher educational attainment substantially improves women's occupational outcomes, it does not fully eliminate the occupational disadvantage associated with marriage. These findings suggest that educational expansion alone is insufficient to achieve gender equality in career advancement without addressing structural barriers related to unpaid care responsibilities and gendered labour market norms.

This study extends the marriage penalty literature beyond labour force participation and wage outcomes by examining women's occupational attainment as an indicator of career advancement. It also provides empirical evidence on how unpaid care responsibilities intersect with labour market inequalities in Indonesia, contributing to ongoing debates on the care economy, women's economic empowerment, and gender equality. The findings highlight the importance of complementing investments in women's education with family-friendly workplaces, affordable childcare, flexible working arrangements, and gender-responsive employment policies that enable women to translate educational achievements into equitable career opportunities.

Keywords: *Marriage Penalty, Women's Career Advancement; Occupational Attainment; Indonesia*

The Second Violence: Conceptualising Institutional Harm in Family Violence Systems

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Family violence is commonly understood through the acts of coercion, control and harm perpetrated by an abusive partner or family member. Yet for many victim-survivors, violence does not end when they seek help. It is reproduced through systems that require repeated disclosure, fragment responsibility, minimise risk, misrecognise coercive control, and turn help-seeking into another site of judgement, delay and exposure. This paper develops the concept of the second violence to name the institutional harms that occur after, and because, victim-survivors engage with police, legal, child protection, housing, health and specialist support systems.

The paper is conceptual and feminist in orientation. Drawing on survivor scholarship, institutional betrayal, secondary victimisation, feminist public health approaches and cultural-historical activity theory, it argues that the second violence is not simply a failure of individual practice. Rather, it is produced through patterned contradictions between the stated purpose of family violence systems and the rules, artefacts, accountabilities and institutional logics through which those systems operate. The concept foregrounds how victim-survivors are made responsible for system navigation, evidence production and risk management while perpetrators often remain comparatively less visible within institutional processes.

The contribution of the paper is threefold. First, it offers a language for analysing the compounding harms of fragmented systems without collapsing them into the original violence. Second, it reframes institutional response as a site of gendered power rather than a neutral pathway to safety. Third, it proposes conceptual tools for transforming systems: reducing the burden of retelling, designing warm handovers, recognising coercive control across agencies, and developing accountability measures that track survivor safety rather than procedural completion. By conceptualising the second violence, the paper supports gender-based violence scholarship that is oriented not only to understanding harm, but to transforming the systems that claim to respond to it.

From Silence to Freedom: Cinema as a Tool for Social Change

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As a filmmaker and researcher, I examine the complex mechanisms of silence and repression that shape women's lives within patriarchal frameworks. This presentation explores how documentary cinema can challenge the "code of secrecy" in Arab society, where the traditional proverb "Dirty laundry is not hung outside" often compels women to suppress experiences of victimization to avoid collective shame.

The presentation will screen and analyze selected scenes from my award-winning documentary, *Women of Freedom* (2016), which documents cases of women murdered because they are women, alongside survivors' testimonies and a rare confession from a perpetrator. Crucially, the film also draws attention to the intersection between social "codes of silence" and legal frameworks, highlighting cases where authorities failed to protect women adequately. By revealing how institutional gaps and investigative failures contribute to unresolved femicides, the presentation examines the urgent need for legal accountability and systemic change.

I will further discuss the artistic and ethical complexities of documenting violence in high-risk environments, including the challenges of giving voice to silenced women and the editorial decisions required to preserve both narrative truth and the safety of participants. Ultimately, this presentation highlights the transformative potential of visual storytelling as a powerful catalyst for gender justice, public awareness, and legal-social reform in the Middle East.

Keywords: *Documentary Cinema, Femicide, Visual Storytelling, Arab Society, Gender Justice, Silence, Legal Gaps, Institutional Accountability.*

Digital inclusion without equal access: How does the intersection of gender, age, and household power dynamics shape rural women's exclusion from mobile banking in China?

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China has made rapid progress in digital financial inclusion, with national data showing near parity between men and women in account ownership and digital payment usage. However, these aggregate trends may conceal persistent inequalities among rural women, whose access is shaped by intersecting factors such as gender, age, education, and household financial dynamics. This study examines how these factors influence rural women's access to mobile banking in China. Using a mixed-methods approach, the study combines quantitative data from the Global Findex Database and Peking University research with qualitative evidence from interviews with representatives of the Grameen Bank, the Angel Moms Foundation, the Chinese Women's Federation, and rural women who use Grameen Bank services. Quantitative findings show that, although the national gender gap has largely closed, a substantial urban-rural divide remains, especially in digital payments. Qualitative findings reveal that age can be a stronger source of exclusion than gender alone. Rural women over fifty face major barriers, including low digital literacy, limited education, and fear of technology. In older households, financial control also remains gendered, with men often retaining authority over major decisions and account access. The digitization of public services and welfare systems may further exclude those unable to use online platforms. Overall, numerical equality in access does not necessarily remove deeper social and cultural inequalities. More targeted policies are therefore needed to ensure that digital financial inclusion produces meaningful empowerment rather than statistical progress alone.

Keywords: *Digital financial inclusion; rural women; mobile banking; gender inequality*

Beyond Visibility: Extending Social Reproduction Theory Through the Lived Realities of Middle-Class Working Women in Bangladesh

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Development and policy narratives frequently equate women's participation in paid employment with empowerment. Drawing on the experiences of middle-class working women in Bangladesh, this paper challenges that assumption by arguing that workforce visibility does not necessarily reduce gender inequality; rather, it reorganizes reproductive labor under neoliberal conditions. Using Feminist Social Reproduction Theory as its primary framework, the paper brings the works of Tithi Bhattacharya, Susan Ferguson, and Premilla Nadasen into conversation with Sara Ahmed's feminist critique, Nazia Hussein's analysis of respectable femininity, and Deniz Kandiyoti's concept of patriarchal bargaining to examine how paid employment intersects with emotional labor, care work, and respectability. Combining theoretical analysis with autoethnographic reflection, the paper argues that emotional labor and respectability should be understood as central components of social reproduction rather than secondary consequences of women's employment. In doing so, it extends Social Reproduction Theory by demonstrating how neoliberal ideals of empowerment shift, rather than dismantle gendered responsibilities, producing continuous labor across paid work, domestic life, and social expectations. While grounded in Bangladesh, the paper contributes to broader feminist debates by offering a conceptual framework for understanding the hidden costs of women's visibility in contemporary labor regimes. It argues that meaningful empowerment requires not only women's participation in the workforce but also the redistribution and recognition of the reproductive labor that sustains it.

Keywords: *Social Reproduction Theory, Visibility, Emotional Labor, Respectability, Gender, Neoliberalism, Bangladesh*

“Why do We Still Say We Raise Our Daughter like a Son?” – A Study on the Perception of Gender Equality amongst Indian Communities in Australia

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Achieving gender equality has been highlighted across national and international efforts as a crucial step to achieving women's empowerment and independence; and to eliminate gender-based violence. Gender norms and stereotypes which are reinforced in the name of culture continue to fuel gender inequality. Intersecting factors such as race, class, culture, caste and religion have a profound influence on how gender inequality manifests and hence is not experienced by everyone the same way. Gender inequality has profound negative impacts at the individual, family and community level across all aspects of life. One of the most significant negative impacts of gender inequality and gender stereotypes is men's violence against women and gender diverse people. The findings from the 2017 National Community Attitudes towards Violence against Women Survey (NCAS) notes that unfavourable attitudes towards gender equality and not having an understanding of behaviours that constitute violence against women have a strong association with attitudes that supports violence against women. Despite several efforts at all levels of the society to eliminate all forms of gender-based violence, research as recent as 2025 indicates that the numbers of women who experience violence continues to rise. Intersecting factors such as race, class, culture, caste and religion have a profound influence on how gender inequality manifests and hence is not experienced by everyone the same way. With the Indian population representing 3.8 percentage of the total population in Australia (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2023); and reports indicating increase in family violence incidents experience by women of Indian origin and the complex nature of it (Northern Community Legal Centre (NCLC) 2021), the need for whole-of-population approaches using an intersectional lens is crucial to change attitudes towards gender equality (webster et al., 2018). This research hence took a novel approach to understand the perceptions of gender equality amongst Indian communities in Australia and uses transtheoretical frameworks to influence attitudinal change that favours gender equality. The study highlights that while education and employment have given women opportunities for empowerment and independence, gender stereotypes, gender norms and social expectations that are influenced by cultural and patriarchal norms continue to impact women in their day to day lives. This research focuses on the use of transformational approaches that are focussed on collective change in attitude towards family violence thereby creating communities that promote gender equality and prevent family violence.

Keywords: *Gender equality, patriarchy, family violence, gender roles, tradition, culture, societal influence*

AI relationships and asymmetric agency: when romance becomes consuming the services of an “agent” designed to please

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Increasing numbers of people are entering into romantic “relationships” with AI agents. There is an obvious asymmetry in such relationships: one partner is a real agent, while the other is an algorithm-driven simulation of agency (usually one that is unreservedly agreeable, sometimes sycophantic). Feminist philosophers (see e.g. Cahill, 2016⁵) have highlighted that unequal romantic relationships, like many heterosexual relationships in patriarchal contexts, also involve an asymmetry in agency: one partner’s agency predominates, in that he has the power to shape the relationship (or particular interactions within it) in terms of his own interests and desires, while the other partner’s agency within the relationship is often truncated - constricted to agreeing to or supporting the decisions and desires of the other. I suggest that human-AI romantic relationships share a similar structure: one partner’s (the user’s) agency predominates while the other “partner” (the AI agent) has a truncated agency (or, more accurately, the appearance thereof), limited to support, endorsement, and acquiescence.

Unlike people, AI agents don’t suffer injustice as a result of this dynamic. Nonetheless, drawing on feminist ontology and Baudrillard’s (1994)⁶ notion of hyperreality, I suggest that there are two reasons to be concerned about the increasing prevalence of AI romantic relationships. First, immersion in such an asymmetric dynamic is likely to lead to users developing deep relational vices of the kind feminists have long critiqued, including solipsism and a propensity to treat others instrumentally. Second, as AI relationships involve deeply significant emotional and sexual experiences for users, these become the standard by which romantic relationships generally are measured, producing a new ideal of romantic relationship in which both love and sex become socially equivalent to “consuming the services of an ‘agent’ designed to please”. The relational dynamics found in AI-human romantic relationships thus have significant implications for social norms and ideologies regarding both gender and romantic relationships.

Keywords: *AI relationships, relational agency, feminist ontology, hyperreality*

⁵ Cahill, A. J. (2016). Unjust sex vs. rape. *Hypatia*, 31(4), 746-761.

⁶ Baudrillard, J. (1994). *Simulacra and simulation*. University of Michigan press.

Beyond Culture and Poverty: A Feminist Ethnographic Study of Girls' Education and Gender Inequality in Enga Province, Papua New Guinea

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Educating girls remains a critical development challenge in Papua New Guinea (PNG), where many girls who enter school do not complete their education. This study explores the gendered experiences of girls' education in Enga Province, a remote highlands region of PNG, by examining the social, cultural, economic, and structural factors that shape girls' educational opportunities and outcomes.

The study aimed to develop a deeper understanding of the barriers affecting girls' access to, participation in, and completion of education in Enga Province. It explored the following questions: How do girls and women experience and navigate education within their social and cultural contexts? What intersecting social, economic, and institutional factors influence girls' educational pathways?

The research employed feminist ethnographic methods in the Laiagam-Porgera District of Enga Province. Fieldwork was conducted across five communities, four primary schools, and one secondary school. Data were collected through participant observation, oral histories, semi-structured interviews, and focus group discussions involving 100 participants, including girls, women, parents, educators, and community members. A feminist and intersectional analytical approach was used to examine how gender, class, culture, and economic transformations interact to shape educational experiences.

The findings reveal that girls' educational disadvantage in Enga cannot be attributed to a single factor such as culture or poverty. Rather, it is produced through intersecting inequalities, including patriarchal structures, restrictive gender norms, gender-based violence, poverty, inadequate school infrastructure, teacher shortages, tribal conflict, and mining-related social and economic changes. The study highlights how unequal access to resources and gendered expectations of girls' roles contribute to educational exclusion.

The paper concludes that improving girls' education in Papua New Guinea requires gender-responsive, inclusive, and context-specific approaches that address the structural conditions shaping girls' lives. By centring the voices and experiences of girls and women, this study contributes to feminist scholarship on education, inequality, and social transformation in the Pacific.

Keywords: *girls' education, feminist ethnography, gender inequality, intersectionality*

Limiting Vexatious Proceedings in Family Law Disputes: Recognising the Role of Coercive Control

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Claims of family violence are now made in the majority of cases coming before both divisions of the Federal Circuit and Family Court of Australia. The role of coercive control (repeated abusive behaviour intended to control and dominate another person) in family violence is increasingly being identified in these cases. The federal government's National Principles to Address Coercive Control in Family and Domestic Violence and the courts' Family Violence Best Practice Principles expressly recognise the adverse impact of both coercive control and vexatious proceedings (i.e. proceedings brought for an improper or collateral purpose). Additionally, human rights instruments now oblige governments to protect victim-survivors from repeat victimisation through judicial proceedings. Nevertheless, courts are reluctant to restrict the availability of their proceedings, as access to justice is viewed as a fundamental right of citizens in liberal democracies. However, protracted disputes ostensibly involving children and/or property provide a prime context for coercively controlling men (coercive control is a gendered harm) to continue their abusive behaviour, using the legal system itself to further harass, intimidate, discredit and financially ruin their ex-partners. In this presentation we outline the main features of coercive control and its impact on victim-survivors, focusing on the context of family law disputes. Legal strategies for restricting vexatious proceedings are evaluated and found to be inadequate. Given the profound adverse impact vexatious proceedings can have on the health, well-being, financial position and human rights of victim-survivors, we argue that existing strategies for restricting these proceedings should be strengthened and extended, to ensure that the courts themselves are not used as instruments of family violence.

Entering the battlefield to hold the line: feminist resistance to misogynist legislation

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Between 2002 and 2023, each of Australia's states and territories decriminalised abortion and enacted legislation to create 'safe access zones' outside clinics within which conduct such as harassment, intimidation and entrance obstruction is prohibited. The failure of Australia's anti-abortion movement to stem the course of liberalisation stands in stark contrast with the gains of the US anti-abortion movement. Anti-abortion actors have increasingly looked to the US anti-abortion movement, seeking to replicate its successes in eroding abortion rights in the US.

Strategies, narratives and model legislation developed in the US are now being pursued in Australia with growing intensity. Eight anti-abortion bills, largely based on US model legislation, have been introduced into Australia's parliaments in the past five years. These bills have been the subject of intense campaigning in which alarming narratives are being asserted to spread disinformation, foment moral panic and stigmatise those who seek and provide abortion.

This paper will examine these efforts to unwind the liberalisation of abortion in Australia. It will examine the use of false narratives centred on later gestation abortion which originated in the US. These include the 'born alive' strategy which have been advanced by the US anti-abortion movement since the early 1990s, resting on the assertion that babies are being born alive after late gestation abortions and left to die. This narrative has been replicated in Australia, and several bills have been introduced in Australian parliaments supported by the false assertion that babies are being born and left to die every week in Australia after failed abortions.

This paper will examine the way the 'born alive' narrative and other false narratives have been advanced in Australia's parliamentary debates and processes, replicating iterative processes of contestation in the US and elsewhere which have been dubbed 'abortion lawfare' and coopting the language of human rights without reference to the normative content and jurisprudence of international human rights law. Drawing on the author's experience in engaging in parliamentary processes as an academic expert in human rights, the paper will examine the implications of recent and ongoing efforts to roll back abortion rights in Australia. This paper concludes that in light of the intensification of anti-abortion efforts in Australia, and concomitant polarisation around abortion rights (and women's rights more broadly), those engaged in policy and advocacy are increasingly being required to enter the battlefield to hold the line in defending hard-won rights.

Keywords: *disinformation, anti-abortion, abortion lawfare, human rights advocacy*

Mental health issues among women experiencing domestic violence and their help seeking behaviour in the WHO South-East Asian Region: A mixed method systematic review

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Background: Domestic violence (DV) is a global health phenomenon that accounts for 33% of the intimate and non-partner violence against women in the WHO South-East Asian Region (SEAR). Despite its profound impact, DV remains largely overlooked due to stigma and misconceptions. It is often acknowledged as a social determinant of suicide yet masked under "family issues". However, reviews addressing this silent epidemic, its associated mental health issues, and help-seeking behaviours among victims of DV in the WHO SEAR remain underexplored. Therefore, this systematic review synthesizes evidence on the barriers to and facilitators of help-seeking among women experiencing DV and its associated mental health issues.

Methodology: This review adheres to the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Review and Meta -Analysis (PRISMA) guidelines, ensuring methodological transparency. It included studies such as cross-sectional surveys, case-control studies, cohort studies, qualitative studies and mixed-method studies. A total of 808 relevant articles has been retrieved from global databases such as CINAHL, MEDLINE via PubMed, EMBASE, COCHRANE, SCOPUS, Web of Science, and the ProQuest Medical Library. Following screening, 64 articles were included for full-text screening. CASP and MMAT will be used to assess the quality and risk of bias.

Findings/outcomes: The analysis of the review is ongoing, and results will be presented at the conference. Findings of the studies will be narratively summarized, and a meta-analysis will be performed based on homogeneity. Overall, this review will generate region-specific evidence on the mental health impact of DV and help-seeking behaviors. By addressing the multifaceted nature of DV, it will bolster the safety and dignity of women, in alignment with the key UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): SDG 3: Good health and well-being;

SDG 5: Gender equality; SDG 10: Reduced inequalities; and SDG 17: Partnerships for the goals.

Keywords: *Abuse, Domestic violence, Help-seeking behaviour, Mental health issues, Women.*