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Entrepreneurship and gender disparity in the Caribbean

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Abstract

The contribution of entrepreneurship and innovation to national economic growth has been established in economic literature. However, not much emphasis has been placed on gender-based disparity in entrepreneurship in the Caribbean. United Nations statistics highlight that women comprise half of the world's population and perform two thirds of the work, but only a small percentage consider entrepreneurship in the informal sector or in traditional female sectors. In the Caribbean, education is viewed as the main way of empowering women to be independent, and entrepreneurship comes a close second. From an entrepreneurship perspective, gender disparities remain the reason that female entrepreneurs continue to lag behind male entrepreneurs. The purpose of this paper is to identify areas of gender disparity among entrepreneurs, as well as to identify the means of empowering female entrepreneurs, with special reference to the Caribbean.

Keywords

entrepreneurship, women, female, entrepreneurs, gender, disparity, Caribbean

Introduction

Much of the research concerning entrepreneurship has been related to the entrepreneur's ability to innovate and create wealth. The entrepreneur, in his/her capacity as leader, is able to make tactical decisions regarding the allocation of resources and is able to create firms with the potential to generate profits and growth. Female entrepreneurs make an important contribution to the development of Caribbean economies, particularly in rural communities. In the Caribbean, female entrepreneurs face different realities from male entrepreneurs. Some of these realities are deeply rooted and stem from societal issues. Birley (1989) has shown that age, work, status, education, income, social ties, and perceptions are still significant socio-economic factors in a person's decision to start a business. Girvan (1997) emphasizes the Caribbean context by highlighting the challenges of globalization and competitiveness, the information communications revolution, and the thrust towards sustainability. Specifically from the entrepreneurs' perspective, these challenges can be highlighted to include: deprivation of social capital, lack of knowledge of the institutional and entrepreneurial framework, lack of awareness of the existing public or agencies' support, difficulties in raising finance to start a business, and issues with joining and setting up networks. Social net-

works help entrepreneurs to acquire the human, financial and social capital they need to achieve their goals (Jensen, 2001; Ripolles & Blesa, 2005; Welter & Kautonen, 2005). The social capital raised by female entrepreneurs within their communities may be an explanation of the success or failure of some female-owned businesses, although the role of the influence of social capital on entrepreneurial activity is complex and difficult to explain. Given the prominent role of female entrepreneurs in shaping social and economic development, this research sets out to understand said role. Further, this research sets out to gain insights on gender disparities in entrepreneurship, as they have been a topic of concern for social scientists, especially since female entrepreneurs continue to lag behind male entrepreneurs.

In contrast to males, female entrepreneurs in the Caribbean focus their efforts on one venture. They are opposed to continually looking for opportunities in risky markets, and they may even settle instead of looking for growth and opportunities. This places the development of female entrepreneurs at a slight disadvantage, as there is no differentiation for support between male and female groupings of entrepreneurs in the Caribbean. As both groups are percieved to face similar barriers to entry and continuity, female entrepreneurs are therefore not classified as a disadvantaged group, even though they lag behind male entrepreneurs. However, attention needs to be given to this underprivileged group through a broader research agenda, including socio-economic, political, and other institutional issues. This article discusses the unique perspective that a woman in business offers and the challenges that she is likely to encounter as she proceeds to develop her venture.

Caribbean Economies at a Glance

The Caribbean region includes the islands of the Greater Antilles (including Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Haiti, and Jamaica) and the Lesser Antilles and Windward Islands (including Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Dominica, Grenada, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and Grenadines, and Trinidad and Tobago) (CARICOM Secretariat, 2014). The islands are connected by a comparable culture and history. Girvan (1997) states that the Caribbean region has certain features which distinguish it from the rest of the mainland. The numerous islands and cays are scattered over a wide area, strategically located on the main trading routes between South/Central America and Europe/North America. Table 1 highlights some selected economic indicators of the CARICOM Region.

Though the culture and history of the Caribbean region is comparable, the economies of the Caribbean are strikingly diverse. Girvan (1997) indicates that one positive aspect of cultural diversity is that the Caribbean has been a source of survival skills for Caribbean people. These survival skills are linked to the origins of creativity and "new venture creation" of the people. It is also an asset in the tourist industry, in that visitors can sample the Caribbean versions of Latin, African and Asian cultures, all of which represent part of the region's ancestry. The gross domestic product (GDP) per capita of each of the smaller islands (Dominica, Grenada, St. Kitts and Nevis, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines) ranges from $6,500-$17,307* (2012) as indicated by Table 1. In addition, Table 1 shows the largest Caribbean economy—Trinidad and Tobago, with

* Througout this article currency is expressed in U.S. dollars.

Table 1

Caribbean Region: Selected Indicators

Country	GDP (US$, bil.)	Population (mil.)	GDP per Capita (US$)	Real GDP Growth (%)
Anguilla	0.3	0.0	17,307	0.5
Antigua and Barbuda	1.2	0.1	13,401	1.1
Barbados	4.5	0.3	16,307	0.7
Dominica	0.5	0.1	7,022	0.4
Grenada	0.9	0.1	8,133	0.5
Jamaica	15.3	2.8	5,526	0.9
Monserrat	0.1	0.0	12,825	2.0
St. Kitts and Nevis	0.7	0.1	12,869	0.0
St. Lucia	1.3	0.2	7,509	0.7
St. Vincent and the Grenadines	0.7	0.1	6,537	1.2
Trinidad and Tobago	23.8	1.3	17,935	0.7

Sources: World Economic Outlook (Fall 2012), and International Financial Statistics

a population of 1.3 million—is the leading Caribbean producer of oil and gas and has a GDP per capita of approximately $17,935 (2012). Further, Table 1 shows the GDP per capita for Jamaica is the lowest at $5,526. In general, many Caribbean countries have experienced low or periodically negative GDP growth since 2000, with more severe downturns concurrent with the global economic recessions in 2001 and 2009. This economic environment, together with recurring extreme weather events and modest national incomes, has had a particularly adverse impact on some Caribbean economies.

> They are all [Caribbean economies], however, constrained by the relatively small size of their economies and limited natural resources, thus economies of scale are difficult to achieve. In addition, most countries' output and/or exports rely heavily on one or two industries (e.g., tourism in the services sector, energy-related products in the manufacturing sector, and bananas or sugar in the agricultural sector). Despite the relative-

ly high per-capita incomes for most countries, many have substantial social development problems, such as high poverty rates, income inequality, unemployment, underemployment, and susceptibility to external forces (including weather, U.S. economic fluctuations, and changes in global commodity prices)." (U.S. International Trade Commission, 2008)

In the Caribbean, foreign loans represent the major source of funds, while capital and reserves and domestic loans follow accordingly. There are, however, a number of ways in which governments can intervene in their economies, to achieve certain desirable goals. These include taking ownership of development, administration, and regulation of the activities of enterprises and institutions. Many regional institutions perform inadequately because of the weak regulatory and supervisory frameworks within which they operate. The challenge faced by regional governments is to identify suitable mech-

anisms that would promote the objectives of development, without compromising prudent economic and financial management. In summary, though there are differences between countries within the Caribbean with regard to regulatory frameworks and economic development mechanisms, the economy is set up as a bloc called the Caribbean Single Market and Economy (CSME). The CSME is known to be dependent on the rest of the world for capital, markets, supplies, banking, and financial services that can spur internal levels of employment, output, and demand. The dependency, small size, and integration of economies are seen as the dominant features of the structure and functioning of the Caribbean economies (Girvan & Girvan 1973), the latter being where this research is immersed.

Additionally, in most Caribbean countries, because of a common culture and heritage, ethnic divisions are not significant, the only exception being Trinidad and Tobago, where Indian and African heritage exhibit perceived differences. In general, Caribbean people are now mainly African, with a minority of whites and other races maintaining democratic forms of government and acknowledging the need to work together (Toney, 2011).

Importance of Female Entrepreneurship to Social and Economic Development

Businesses owned by female entrepreneurs have a noteworthy impact on social and economic development (Brush, Carter, Gatewood, Greene, & Hart, 2006; Jamali, 2009; Peris-Ortiz, Rueda-Armengot, & Osorio, 2012). From a social perspective, female entrepreneurs are more prone to act as role models for younger females. Their attitudes, behaviors, and actions establish the

desirability and credibility—as a choice—for up and coming females with entrepreneurial orientation and potential. From an economic perspective, female entrepreneurs play an important role in the local economy, both in their ability to create jobs for themselves and to create jobs for others. In this regard, the Caribbean is no exception. Women represent a minority of those individuals who start new ventures, and on average employ up to two persons (Xavier et al., 2012).

However, despite the growing contribution women make to the entrepreneurial sector on a global scale, evidence of gender disparity persists in the areas of networking, capital accumulation/investment, access to economic opportunities, and in the ability to make choices to achieve desired outcomes (Klyver & Grant, 2010; OECD, 2011; Burke, van Stel, Hartog, & Ichou, 2014). The existing discrepancies in these areas have all hindered the progress of female entrepreneurship. Furthermore, Sarfaraz, Faghih and Majd (2014) suggest that "the share of women's contribution to the economic and social development depends on the promotion of gender equality and gender blind support from the institutions" (p. 1). Sarfaraz et al. (2014) also posit that women could play a more significant role in economic development if they were granted the same opportunities and access to resources as men. Despite these challenges, however, female entrepreneurs throughout the informal sector have persevered and thrived in Caribbean communities, especially in rural areas where most of the businesses are small, created for societal niche markets, and are results of entrepreneurial intentions. Thus, ultimately, the full significance of the sector is not recognized and is undervalued, as it commonly functions outside the regulatory framework. Nonetheless, its importance and contribution to the process of social and economic

development and transformation have engaged the attention of governments, international institutions, academics, and other key stakeholders, to the extent that measuring the contribution and understanding the activity has become imperative.

Therefore, this research is an exploratory investigation that is designed to better understand female entrepreneurs, to identify means of empowering them and to create new approaches to stimulating female entrepreneurship and its contribution to the economy, with special reference to the Caribbean.

This paper is also an effort to highlight some of the factors that contribute to gender disparity among entrepreneurs, especially those that lead to gender discrimination. Within the context of this paper, gender discrimination refers to prejudice towards entrepreneurs based on the traditional stereotypical view that one gender is more skillfully achievement-oriented and prone for high-growth success than the other (Gupta, Turban, Wasti, & Sikdar, 2009; Sweida & Reichard, 2013), and thus is perceived and treated accordingly, whereas, as indicated by Ascher (2012), "women are not perceived as entrepreneurs due to prejudice, social networks and family obligations" (pp. 108-109).

Review of Literature on Women Entrepreneurs

Women entrepreneurs, and their significant contribution to the global economy, have led to the increased interest among the general populace and entrepreneurship researchers (Bennett & Dann, 2000; Jennings & Brush, 2013). Over the years, researchers and academics have sought to understand the drastic growth in female entrepreneurship

and the "rapid acceleration" that it took, as well as investigate the sociological and psychological factors unique to women, especially from a feminist perspective (e.g., Stevenson, 1990; Lustgarten, 1995; Kilduff & Mehra, 1997; Walker & Joyner, 1999; Weiler & Bernasek, 2001; Coleman, 2007; Sabarwal & Terrell, 2008; Hughes, Jennings, Brush, Carter, & Welter, 2012; Ukpere, Slabbert, & Ukpere, 2014; Le & Raven, 2015). Lustgarten (1995) conducted a study in the U.S. using a regression methodology that revealed that female-owned businesses appear to be less successful than male-owned businesses in capital acquisition endeavors. However, although this study controlled for characteristics such as the participants' age, experience and marital status, just to name a few, the author did not account for variables such as the age and size of the business, where these limitations had the potential to skew the results (Fasci & Valdez, 1998). Perry (2002) identified deficiencies in the research at the time that were based on traditional measures of entrepreneurial success, which are limited to financial success and growth, measures identified often at traditional venture capital standards, reducing the number of women entrepreneurs in research samples. These shortcomings were remedied with research by Brush et al. (2004), showing that female entrepreneurs tend not be networked in these markets and Alsos, Isaksen, and Ljunggren (2006), highlighting that female entrepreneurs experience lower growth and profitability, due in part to limited access to funding and lower growth aspirations. This is confirmed by other research by Hsu (2007), which states that venture capitalists are more likely to fund entrepreneurs to which they have direct ties. Another U.S. study, Walker and Joyner (1999), examined the public policy aspects of financing female-owned businesses, where their study highlighted that the

implementation of such policies had the propensity to spur gender discrimination, given the preferential treatment women would receive in the process. Weiler and Bernasek (2001) also conducted a study in the U.S. suggesting that women appear to face more economic discrimination in self-employment than in wage employment, while Financial Management (2001), reported an estimated rise of women entrepreneurs of over 22% between 1998 and 2001, consisting of nearly 33% of all new ventures. However, during that period, some authors suggested that the study of female entrepreneurship is still in its early stages and lacks robustness as a research stream (Carter, Anderson, & Shaw, 2001; Terjesen, 2004), while others suggested that the development of women entrepreneurship was "at the early childhood stage" (de Bruin, Brush, & Welter, 2006).

Studies during this period have also shown that women have less access to capital than men (Brush, Carter, Gatewood, Greene, & Hart, 2001; Coleman, 2007; Sabarwal & Terrell, 2008; Gatewood, Brush, Carter, Greene, & Hart, 2009), even though female entrepreneurs do not fail at a higher rate than males (Perry, 2002). Contrarily, Heffernan (2007) highlighted that women, as a group, take on more personal debt to fund their business than men do, and this is in some way linked to their rate of success. Moreover, in response to women's challenges accessing capital due to misconceptions surrounding their entrepreneurial ability, Brush et al. (2001) conducted a study in the U.S. that sought to examine the state of venture capital for capable female entrepreneurs who are pursuing high-growth ventures, with the aim of debunking any pre-conceived myths which may have contributed to the gender disparity that exists in the investment of entrepreneurial ventures, which was further discussed in Gatewood et al. (2009). More recently, theorists have

sought to extend women's entrepreneurship research by exploring new directions (e.g., Hughes, Jennings, Brush, Carter, & Welter, 2012), in an effort to determine means of advancing female entrepreneurs' businesses and also as a source of empowerment. For example, research has been increasing in relation to the rising trend concerning women entrepreneurs' use of social media (Ukpere, Slabbert, & Ukpere, 2014; Ajjan, Beninger, Mostafa, & Crittenden, 2014), while micro-financing and micro-credit has been the topic of interest in developing and emerging economies, as a means of reducing poverty among women and also as a means of empowering them (Mahmood, Hussain, & Matlay, 2014; Biswas & Rao, 2014; Aggarwal, Goodell, & Selleck, 2015; Vong & Song, 2015). Over the years, the theorists conducting these studies have explored these topics extensively, yet not exhaustively, while reinforcing the evidence of gender disparity in the entrepreneurship sector, as well as identifying traces of gender discrimination throughout.

Despite the evidence of gender disparity and traces of gender discrimination from a cross-section of studies, one major limitation that may give a skewed depiction of this particular area of study is the fact that the majority of research has been conducted primarily among large populations, such as in the U.S., as well as other developed countries such as the U.K., Canada, and Australia (Mueller, 2004), with some research conducted in emerging economies such as India, Pakistan, and Indonesia (Mahmood et al., 2014; Biswas & Rao, 2014; Vong & Song, 2015). This occurrence has potentially limited the existing research's ability to fully depict an adequate representation of gender disparity among entrepreneurs on a global scale. Mueller (2004) further suggests that "the relevance of findings [i.e., findings from the aforementioned developed countries] to other countries [i.e.,

findings from the aforementioned developing countries] cultures and economic conditions has not been established" (p. 200). However, there are cross-national empirical studies that report gender disparity within entrepreneurial activity, while highlighting factors that affect small business performance across countries (Tsyganova & Shirokova, 2010). Thus, it is significant to consider that the degree of gender disparity may vary across countries, as a result of their cultural differences, as well as their economic and social environment. For instance, some studies suggest that women's motivations for engaging in entrepreneurial activities, as well as the challenges encountered, may vary across countries (e.g. Das, 2001; Seguino, 2003; Jamali, 2009; Terjesen & Amorós, 2010; Kaushal, Negi, & Singhal, 2014). Seguino (2003) notes that within the Caribbean, there is a higher rate of female-headed households in comparison to other regions, which has contributed to women having a high participation rate in the labour force. Similarly, Kaushal, Negi and Singhal (2014) articulate that "in developing countries, the vast majority of women are engaged in entrepreneurial activity driven by pure survival—out of necessity rather than opportunity—because there are no jobs or any other options for income generation" (p. 158). This occurrence is worth looking into in the Caribbean, which is primarily made up of developing and emerging economies. The occurrence also suggests that there is a need for policies and mechanisms to empower these women, who, in most instances, have limited options and choose to engage in entrepreneurial activities for survival, given their environments.

Across the Caribbean, however, there has been an increase in the number of initiatives aiming at promoting small business and entrepreneurship, as well as a number of agencies and institutions, both regionally and globally, available to provide some measure of support for entrepreneurial initiatives (e.g., United Nations Development Program [UNDP], Caribbean Climate Innovation Centre [CCIC], and European Union [EU]). However, transitioning economies such as Bahamas, Barbados, and Trinidad and Tobago, may experience challenges regarding qualifying for funding and various grants from global agencies out of developed countries, due to their higher level of income per capita in comparison to widely classified developing countries. Unfortunately, though these economies may be considered less impoverished than their sister islands, such as Grenada and Guyana, and as well as larger nations, such as Kenya, Bangladesh, and Pakistan, in most instances these transitioning nations are still not in any economic position to facilitate the advancement of the full complement of their entrepreneurship sector, let alone the advancement and empowerment of women/female entrepreneurs. Further, gender-based differences are also palpably prevalent within ethnic minority groups (Carter & Shaw 2006). According to Jones, McEvoy, and Ram (2010), in the matter of entrepreneurship, ethnic minority women face double disadvantage due to their gender and ethnicity. This is also the view among Caribbean women entrepreneurs.

Outstanding obstacles still faced by Caribbean women entrepreneurs from as far back as the 1990s include being accepted as a woman in business, lack of a role model, lack of professional interaction, difficulties in gaining the confidence of their clients and suppliers, lack of adequate training, and lack of related experience (Belcourt, Burkett, & Lee-Gosselin, 1991; Collerette & Aubry, 1990). This theory is supported by Das (2001) with the Indian experience and Tambunan (2006) with the Indonesian experience. These realities are still very prevalent

today and are closely tied to being operational in a developing region, especially a small island developing state. Hence, the relevance of this study is to gain an understanding of the current state of female entrepreneurship, to seek to highlight the disparities, and to show the need for the establishment of more focussed policies to care for and empower women entrepreneurs.

Research Methodology

This is a descriptive study that serves to organize the findings in order to fit them with explanations, and then validate those explanations through supporting literature (Krathwohl, 2009). Sullivan-Bolyai, Bova, and Harper (2005) explain that the goal of descriptive study research is to give a rich description of the experience depicted in an easily understood manner. Therefore, this method matches the goals of the research undertaken here. The study is micro in nature and data were collected from the Caribbean only. Every effort was taken to make sure that all the areas of the Caribbean were covered. The rationale for this type of study is to describe what is happening in more detail, filling in the missing parts and expanding the understanding of the area of research. Ultimately, the findings of this form of description research can transform existing practices by developing effective and culturally sensitive interventions and can facilitate the making of adequate policy recommendations based on the research (Sullivan-Bolyai et al., 2005).

Objectives of the Study

The study had four objectives. The first objective was to highlight the demographics of entrepreneurship in the Caribbean.

Age, marital status, and education were key areas investigated. The second objective was to identify the obstacles and problems faced by women entrepreneurs in the Caribbean. These obstacles were seen as hindrances or potential barriers to entrepreneurship. The third objective of the study was to emphasize areas where gender disparity among entrepreneurs existed. The main focus was to recognize social factors which influenced behaviors of women entrepreneurs. The forth objective was to determine the scope of policy initiatives for empowering women entrepreneurs. The focus here was to investigate the process for the development of women in entrepreneurship.

Design of the Study

A sample closely representative of the entrepreneurship activity was utilized. One hundred Caribbean entrepreneurs completed questionnaires and were further probed with follow-up emails and face-to-face discussion, where necessary. Random purposeful sampling was administered based on a list of active companies in their respective chambers of commerce. Purposive sampling was used and represented in the following way: Antigua and Barbuda (10), Barbados (28), Dominica (5), Grenada (7), Guyana (5), Jamaica (15), St. Lucia (8), St. Vincent and Grenadines (7), and Trinidad and Tobago (15). This type of sampling technique was rationalized (Thorne, Reimer Kirkham, & MacDonald-Emes, 1997; Thorne, Reimer Kirkham, & O'Flynn-Magee, 2004) and explains that purposeful sampling in qualitative descriptive research seeks research participants whose stories have some elements that are shared—to some degree—by others. Therefore, this design matches the goals of the research undertaken here. The study aims at describing and quantifying the

distribution of certain variables in the study population between 2012 and 2013. These variables cover the socio-economic characteristics of male entrepreneurs and female entrepreneurs on demographics such as age, education, marital status, income, the problems faced by female entrepreneurs, business profile and barriers to entrepreneurship. By using purposeful sampling, the research design was able to hone in on the similarities and differences among the characteristics of the entrepreneurs. The variable N_1 represents the number of female entrepreneurs and the variable N_2 represents the number of male entrepreneurs.

Results

Table 2 shows that most of the entrepreneurs are between ages 20 and 40, and only a few persons pursue entrepreneurship after 50 years of age. There are also more

divorcées/widows (20%) among female entrepreneurs, when compared to men (only 6%). The high percentage of married entrepreneurs is noteworthy; 56% of the women were married, as were 70% of the men. From an education standpoint, the majority of female entrepreneurs (42%) studied at the secondary level and 42% studied at the tertiary level, as compared to male entrepreneurs, where 40% studied to secondary level and 16% had tertiary education.

Table 3 shows that among the male entrepreneurs, there is no one with less than $500 monthly income, whereas 4% of female entrepreneurs are working for less than $500. Similarly, there are only 4 (8%) men with an income between $501-$1,000, while there are 16 (32%) female entrepreneurs in this pay bracket. The statistics show that the majority of female entrepreneurs are paid less than $1,500 a month, while the majority of their male counterparts work for more than

Table 2

Personal, Social and Educational Background of Entrepreneurs

	N_1 (Total = 50)	% of N_1	N_2 (Total = 50)	% of N_2
Age				
< 20	5	10%	5	10%
20-29	20	40%	19	38%
30-39	18	36%	14	28%
40-49	3	6%	8	16%
> 50	4	8%	4	8%
Marital Status				
Married	28	56%	35	70%
Unmarried	12	24%	12	24%
Divorced/Widowed	10	20%	3	6%
Education				
Primary	8	16%	22	44%
Secondary	21	42%	20	40%
Tertiary	21	42%	8	16%

Table 3
Monthly Income of Entrepreneurs

Monthly Income (US$)	N_1 (Total = 50)	% of N_1	N_2 (Total = 50)	% of N_2
<500	2	4%	0	0%
501-1,000	16	32%	4	8%
1,001-1,500	17	34%	16	32%
1,501-2,000	10	20%	16	32%
2,001-2,500	3	6%	10	20%
> 2,500	2	4%	4	8%

Table 4
Number of Years in Business

Years in Business	N_1 (Total = 50)	% of N_1	N_2 (Total = 50)	% of N_2
<5	23	46%	18	36%
6-10	15	30%	15	30%
11-15	8	16%	7	14%
16-20	4	8%	5	10%
21-25	0	0	3	6%
>25	0	0	2	4%

Table 5
Types of Businesses

Type of Business	N_1 (Total = 50)	% of N_1	N_2 (Total = 50)	% of N_2
Construction	1	2%	8	16%
Manufacturing	8	16%	15	30%
Transport	7	14%	5	10%
Wholesale/Retail	15	30%	10	20%
Real Estate	3	6%	5	10%
Restaurant and Bars	6	12%	1	2%
Business Services	10	20%	6	12%

Table 6
Employment

Number of Employees	N_1 (Total = 50)	% of N_1	N_2 (Total = 50)	% of N_2
<5	25	50%	15	30%
6-10	10	20%	8	16%
11-20	8	16%	7	14%
21-30	5	10%	6	12%
30-50	2	4%	10	20%
50-100	0	0%	2	4%
>101	0	0%	2	4%

Table 7
Annual Revenue

Annual Revenue (US$)	N_1 (Total = 50)	% of N_1	N_2 (Total = 50)	% of N_2
< $100,000	22	44%	10	20%
100,000-199,999	18	36%	12	24%
200,000-299,999	8	16%	15	30%
300,000-499,999	2	4%	5	10%
500,000-799,999	0	0%	4	8%
800,000-1 million	0	0%	2	4%
> $1 million	0	0%	2	4%

Table 8
Perceived Barriers to Entrepreneurship

Barriers to Entrepreneurship	N_1 (Total = 50)	% of N_1	N_2 (Total = 50)	% of N_2
Regulatory barriers	8	16%	8	16%
Cultural and social barriers	20	40%	8	16%
Economic and financial obstacles	22	44%	27	54%
No barriers	0	0%	7	14%

$1,500 a month. The average female wage is between $1,001-$1,500, while the average male wage is between $1,501-$2,000.

Table 4, regarding entrepreneurial experience, shows that 46% of females have less than five years of experience in the venture and 30% have 6-10 years of experience. As the number of years of experience increases, the number of female entrepreneurs decreases. Only 36% of men have less than five years of experience, 30% have 6-10 years of experience, 14% have between 11 and 15 years of experience, 10% have 16-20 years of experience, 6% have 21-25 years of experience and 4% have more than 25 years of experience.

Table 5 shows that the majority of the entrepreneurs are in manufacturing (16% female and 30% male) and wholesale/retail (30% female and 20% male) with the overwhelming majority serving national or local markets only. Most male entrepreneurs (80%) stated they were members of a business association or a chamber of commerce, while only a few of the female entrepreneurs (20%) were in any network. Other female dominated sectors were wholesale/retail with 30% and restaurant and bars with 12%, while males only had 10% and 2%, respectively, in these areas. The male-dominated sectors were manufacturing with 30% and construction with 16%, whereas females had only 16% and 2%, respectively.

Table 6 highlights that the majority of the female entrepreneurs had very small employment records. Statistics show that 70% of the female-owned businesses had 10 or fewer employees. Furthermore, regarding number of employees in female businesses, it was found that 16% have 11-20 employees, 10% have 21-30 employees, 4% have 30-50 employees, and none of the female businesses had more than 50 employees. From a male entrepreneurship perspective,

statistics show that 46% of the male-owned businesses had 10 or fewer employees. Additionally, regarding the number of employees of male businesses, 14% have 11-20 employees, 12% have 21-30 employees, 20% have 30-50 employees, and 8% of the male businesses had more than 50 employees.

Table 7 shows that 44% of the female-owned businesses generate less than $100,000 annually, and 36% generate between $100,000-$199,999, compared to male-owned businesses where only 20% generate less than $100,000 per year, and 24% generate between $100,000-$199,999. No female entrepreneurs generate over $500,000. However, 16% of male entrepreneurs generate over $500,000.

Table 8 highlights that cultural/social barriers and economic/financial obstacles account for 84% of perceived barriers to female entrepreneurship and 70% of perceived barriers to male entrepreneurship, while 14% of the male entrepreneurs believed that no barriers existed to hinder their ventures.

Analysis and Discussion

» Personal, Social and Educational Background of Entrepreneurs

As age increases, the number of females pursuing entrepreneurship decreases. Above 40 years of age, women are less likely to pursue careers as entrepreneurs, as they are not willing to take on the risk and are more focussed on family. Minniti and Arenius (2003) showed very similar findings in their research, which stated that participation in entrepreneurial activities does not vary between countries and genders, with respect to age. They stated, further, that among both men and women, the peak years of involvement in such activities are 25-34, while this research shows such peak activity between

ages 20 and 40. Das (2001) showed further support by highlighting that the study sample used stated that women were, for the most part, young, with nearly 70% being under 44 years of age and that those entrepreneurs over 55 had the lowest rate of participation, among both men and women. This research shows that persons over 50 years have the lowest rate of participation. Kelley, Brush, Greene, and Litovsky (2011) suggest that women's entrepreneurial activity is lower than that of their male counterparts, at different stages of development. The high percentage of married entrepreneurs suggests that there is a need for full support from a spouse in order for the venture to be successful or sustainable. This is supported by Bertaux and Crable (2007), who highlight that entrepreneurship often gives women the flexibility to handle their domestic responsibilities at home, while also providing financial support for their families. This research showed that women chose formal tertiary education as a means of growth and development and this would have prepared them for either a job in an organization or would have given them the ability to set up their own enterprise in a specialized area of expertise. This is supported by Cowling and Taylor (2001) and Das (2001), who found that the female entrepreneurs have better education than men, but is contrary to the findings of Wang and Wong (2004), who stated that gender was found to be the most significant factor influencing students' entrepreneurial interest in Singapore, with females being less entrepreneurial. From a male perspective, having 44% of male entrepreneurs with only primary education suggested that they might have had to provide for their families from an early age or that they thought entrepreneurship was a more viable and feasible option than pursuing formal education at an early age.

» Monthly Income of Entrepreneurs

The research shows that some female entrepreneurs operate some basic survival-type businesses, with minimal income for owners. This would suggest that income level and entrepreneurial interest are not related and hence concur with the findings of Wang and Wong (2004). As entrepreneurial income increases, the number of female entrepreneurs decreases. This can be justified by stating that men are willing to pursue more high risk opportunities and therefore reap additional benefits with pay, or it can be stated that there is no pay equity in the world of entrepreneurship, hence the lower female wages. One female entrepreneur admits that "gender bias, in certain businesses, especially male-oriented businesses, remains a real problem." This is supported by Weiler and Bernasek (2001) who suggests that women appear to face more economic discrimination in self-employment than in wage employment. The disparity in average wages for female entrepreneurs can partly be attributed to sheer necessity. Increasingly, families must rely on a dual-income household and the female income can be viewed as part of the family income and not independently. Following increased unemployment rates and a higher cost of living, women, through entrepreneurship, stepped in to supplement household income. Seguino (2003) reflects the view of females being family-oriented and income generators and suggests that within the Caribbean, there is a higher rate of matriarchal households in comparison to other regions. Further support in the literature comes from Cadieux, Lorrain, and Hugron (2002), who recognize that women can successfully hold roles as mothers and entrepreneurs, allowing them to act, simultaneously, as female business owners working full-time and as homemakers responsible for household tasks and bringing up children.

» Number of Years in Business

Regarding job title, male entrepreneurs in society are referred to as "businessmen," which is a status position, regardless of the type of business, while female entrepreneurs are classified by their activities. *Male entrepreneurs* tend to start their businesses with the intention of high growth and as such, their businesses can draw on the vision of the male to help their venture succeed over a longer period of time. Females, on the other hand, often switch focus throughout their lives to make time for a family, reducing their workload for a number of years until their children are no longer dependent on regular care, before they consider starting a meaningful business venture or resuming their career. However, Stuart and Abetti (1990) contended that experience factors such as age, years of business, management and technical experience were not significantly related to performance—and hence, success—of women entrepreneurs. Though the insignificance of experience factors is proposed by Stuart and Abetti (1990), it is relevant to note that women in developed countries enjoy more equal opportunities than women in developing countries (Sarfaraz, Faghih, & Majd, 2014), with the Caribbean nations being good examples of developing countries. This occurrence supports the fact that a large number (76%) of Caribbean female entrepreneurs are only in business for fewer than 10 years, as they do not enjoy equal opportunities (U.S. International Trade Commission, 2008; Sarfaraz et al., 2014).

» Types of Businesses

There is a noticeable dominance in the business services sector for female entrepreneurs. This may be attributed to the high tertiary levels of education, which allowed females to set up advisory-type business services, in areas such as marketing, accounting and law. One female stated, "We are frowned upon when we attend meetings for potential bidders". The type of business break-down does show that society still views some businesses as male-oriented and others as female-oriented. Bardasi (2008), in a World Bank Report, highlights results from the Enterprise Survey data on gender, entrepreneurship, and competitiveness, which state that unlike men, women tend to concentrate on a few industrial sectors, with the majority of the women (76%) in the micro sector, operating in retail, which is consistent with the majority of women operating in retail in the Caribbean. This is supported by Das (2001), who shows that women are mainly operating in the micro industries. However, this research shows that 54% of women operating in manufacturing. The next two most popular areas in entrepreneurial enterprise in the Bardasi report were hotels and restaurants, followed by garment manufacturing. These two areas carry high representation in this study at 12% and 16%, respectively. The area of business services, which is also high in this study, was not differentiated in the Bardasi report. Recognition is also given to the fact that these social and cultural barriers are also difficult to break down.

» Employment

The results found that male entrepreneurs are more willing to start a business that grows and employs more persons to expand into new revenue streams. Furthermore, male entrepreneurs have higher expectations for their businesses as they perceive themselves as "breadwinners" within the household. On the contrary, females are more likely to prioritize their business and personal lives, so that they work in harmo-

ny and, by extension, they control growth patterns and employee rates. This is supported by Brush (1992), who highlights that women are "different," as it relates to caring and relational issues. Brush (1992) also suggests that women are more focussed on relationships and view their businesses as interconnected systems of relationships, rather than as separate economic units in the social world. Ascher (2012) further supports the challenges faced by the female's dual role and states that women face "the double burden" syndrome, which is currently inherent in our model of society, in efforts to balance work and domestic responsibilities.

» Annual Revenue

One female respondent indicated that "sometimes your gender can prohibit you from showing your ability because a potential client doesn't believe you are capable." A significant reason for the lower revenues is that women tend to run businesses in different industries from men and these fields don't garner the same level of financial support from banks and investors, hence the prospect of lower revenues. This lower revenue stream supports Mitchell (2011) in a Kauffman Firm survey, which stated that the percentage of firms with more than $100,000 annual revenue, three years after starting, was 33% for males and 20% for females. It is important to note that the revenues of female-owned businesses in real estate and transportation stand toe-to-toe with those of male-owned companies in the same fields. The rationale here is believed to be linked to fixed pricing and a reduction in asymmetric information. One female respondent stated: "We are in a very competitive sector, and you have to show that you've been successful at delivering for other clients. How can we do this if we have never been given a chance in the first place? We fight for every dollar."

» Perceived Barriers to Entrepreneurship

One female respondent declared: "We face adversity when lining up relationships with vendors." This is an issue highlighted by cultural and social barriers. Another female entrepreneur stated: "Successful female entrepreneurs believe they were perceived as 'riskier' loan prospects, and less credit-worthy than their male counterparts, despite having a business track record of solid sales and profits." This is an issue highlighted by economic and financial barriers. Compared to their male entrepreneur counterparts, female entrepreneurs perceive themselves as less likely to obtain a bank loan. This was consistent with other works that illustrated the influence of specific cultural, legislative and economic frameworks on women's entrepreneurial endeavors in emerging economies (Manolova, Varter, Manev, & Gyoshev, 2007; Javadian & Singh, 2012). In addition, female entrepreneurs believe they are charged higher interest rates when loan requests are approved. Gender discrimination against women in entrepreneurial ventures is prevalent, as women are often subjected to greater scrutiny, and inherent male bias is exhibited by gender-insensitive loan officers.

Conclusion

This study throws light on several barriers to entrepreneurship and issues with gender disparity. The findings of the study show that in the Caribbean, many female entrepreneurs are literate, married, accept lower salaries, and generate smaller revenues when compared to male entrepreneurs. This article provides evidence on entrepreneurship and gender disparity in the Caribbean. It is one of the few studies in this realm, and it differs from others in that the author presents evidence from small, developing economies,

as compared with the immensely explored first-world countries and larger developing economies. The results of the analysis, which makes use of data from 100 entrepreneurs located in the Caribbean, are largely consistent with the hypothesis of disparity against female entrepreneurs. The gender-based differences in salaries, revenue, employees, and barriers to entrepreneurship are prevalent and worth further observation for policy formulation. This form of policy intervention geared towards empowering female entrepreneurs is supported by Sullivan-Bolyai et al. (2005), who highlighted developing effective and culturally sensitive interventions, in order to make adequate policy recommendations based on the research.

Recent literature ascribes entrepreneurship as an essential role in fostering economic growth (Audretsch, Keilbach, & Lehmann, 2006). The literature further points to huge potential gains from promoting female entrepreneurial activity on to the world stage, as stipulated by Kelly, Brush, Greene, and Litovsky (2011) in an executive report, which reinforced this statement by emphasizing that in recent years a significant number of women entered entrepreneurial activities and thus contributed significantly to entrepreneurship in all economies worldwide. It also highlights the important role of access to adequate technical assistance and financing for the creation and subsequent enhancement of new venture creation. This study provides some evidence of gender-based disparity against female entrepreneurs in the Caribbean, and suggests a scope for policy intervention. The research highlighted that challenges faced by these women seem similar to those faced by women in other developing countries, while women in the developed world face different problems. However, Caribbean female entrepreneurs are facing distinctively higher levels of barriers that are socially, culturally and economically challenging to overcome, and this seems to differ in their reasons for types of businesses started and their continuity in the business. In such circumstances, it was women with high levels of education and risk-taking who succeeded in their entrepreneurial endeavors.

Across the Caribbean, governments need to be committed, in principle, to the full participation of females in the development process. Governments need to recognize that the upgrading of female entrepreneurial skills is paramount in promoting new employment, stimulating entrepreneurial opportunities for females, and encouraging increased involvement of females in new business ventures. Formal economic and social development policies and programs need to be developed to encourage entrepreneurship and they should focus on addressing the disadvantages experienced by females, as supported by Sullivan-Bolyai et al. (2005).

Policy Implications

The research highlights the importance of mainstreaming and incentivizing against gender disparity in the entrepreneurial environment. It is envisioned that by promoting entrepreneurship among women there is a perceived benefit of improving the position of women in society. The research also points out that there is a need for a regional framework whereby gender disparity can be assessed, and best practices shared. Each country's aim should be to monitor and evaluate the impact of entrepreneurship policies on the success of female-owned businesses and the extent to which such businesses take advantage of them. Much work is needed in the socio-economic policy framework. For instance, there is a need to promote the de-

velopment of female entrepreneur networks. Such networks can be viewed as key sources of information about women's entrepreneurship that are of great importance for its development and promotion. The recommendation is for making policies that fit specific contexts and are geared to particular goals, as supported by Sullivan-Bolyai et al. (2005).

Limitations

A limitation in the research is based on the fact that the Caribbean economies remain highly heterogeneous. It is noted that policies vary from country to country, and this affects potential outcomes. The research also recognizes that within the diversity of the countries lie some clear and consistent patterns that establish evidence of gender disparity. Future research can investigate the level of disparity, its origins, and the necessary changes required for the right combination of policies. Finally, the focus of the research is based on regional-level data, therefore, it becomes difficult to represent changes in policy with the specific program interventions of any organization. Further research should correlate data at the national level and engage discussion with specific program interventions. ■

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Paid leaves as buffer zones: Social policies and work-life balance among Canadian mothers

Karen Christopher

Abstract

In this article, I use in-depth interviews with 26 Canadian mothers to explore their accounts of paid leaves and work-life balance. Drawing from a theoretical framework that emphasizes the structural, cultural, and interactional influences on mothers' experiences, I find that among higher-income mothers, paid leaves serve as "buffer zones" in two ways: they postpone the typical conflict between paid and unpaid work, and they assuage the guilt associated with employment under an intensive mothering ideology. However, low-income and non-citizen mothers have less access to the "buffer zones" of paid leaves, and mothers' reports of work-life balance vary considerably by social class after paid leaves end. Among this non-representative sample, higher-income mothers report the most work-life balance. The paper ends with the implications of this research for the policy and work-life balance literatures.

Keywords

paid leave, work-life balance, motherhood, employment, social policy, intensive mothering

Introduction

Since 2001, most employed Canadian mothers have been eligible for 50 weeks of paid leave from employment. Quantitative research shows the benefits of paid leaves on infants' health outcomes (Rossin, 2011; Ruhn, 2000) and the positive effects of Canadian paid leaves on women's employment (Baker & Mulligan, 2005). Yet scant research asks how mothers themselves discuss paid leaves, and how leaves influence mothers' lived experiences of work-life balance. This study attempts to fill this gap.

While "work-life balance" has become a catch-phrase in business, academic and policy circles, clear definitions of this concept are often hard to find. Wattis, Standing, and Yerkes (2013) suggest in women's lived experiences, work-life balance is a fluid, intangible process, one that may lend itself to qualitative analyses. Some criticize the "work-life balance" literature because it recommends part-time jobs or flex-time policies for women workers, which leaves in place the "lockstep career regime" (Moen & Roehling, 2005, p. 22) typically associated with male workers. In addition, many criticize the concept of work-life balance for its focus on individual people (typically

mothers) and their personal achievements, rather than institutions and policies that influence work-life balance (Caproni, 2004). However, recent quantitative work suggests that supportive policies and flexible work schedules increase workers' satisfaction with work-life balance (Abendroth & den Dulk, 2011; Hayman, 2009).

Drawing from this literature, this study analyses 26 in-depth interviews to uncover nuances in mothers' discussions of work-life balance. Here I explore work-life balance by asking mothers to what extent their actual work-life arrangements resemble those they desire. This study goes beyond an individual-level analysis, drawing from the theoretical framework of Pfau-Effinger (2004) to explore how social policies, cultural beliefs, and partners influence mothers' accounts of work-life balance. I find that in this sample of mothers, paid leaves act as "buffer zones" in two ways: as expected, the nearly year-long paid leave assuages work-family conflict during that time. In addition, for many higher-income mothers in this sample, the year-long paid leave serves as a cultural buffer zone in which mothers are automatically intensive mothers and therefore protected from the guilt associated with employment under an intensive mothering ideology. However, once paid leaves end, mothers' negotiation of these cultural demands varies by social class.

Literature Review

Drawing from the theoretical frame of Pfau-Effinger (2004), this paper explores how mothers' work-life accounts are influenced by larger social/political contexts: the "gender order" of welfare states and labor markets, the "gender arrangements" in families, and the predominant "gender culture"

regarding motherhood in North America. Prior research suggests that these structural, interactional, and cultural factors intersect to influence mothers' employment and caregiving arrangements (Hays, 1996; Stone, 2007; Walzer, 1997; Williams, 2012).

» The Gender Order of Social Policies

Over the past few decades, many nations created a more egalitarian gender order by expanding paid leaves and state-subsidized child care; Canada has done the former, but very little concerning the latter. Under Misra, Budig, and Moller's (2007) classification of welfare states according to their support for care work, Canada falls into the liberal primary earner/secondary career regime: state policies support women's equal access to employment (de jure), but the state provides little support for child care. Mahon and Phillips (2002) describe the child care system as "a system of income support and subsidies targeted at very poor families" (p. 210). In 2006, the Canadian government instituted the Universal Child Care Benefit (UCCB), under which every family receives $100 per month for each child under age six, ostensibly to help assuage the high cost of child care. However, there were no provisions in the UCCB to increase state provision of child care.

With its implementation of approximately year-long paid leaves for caregiving, Canada departed from the liberal welfare state model that limits state provision of benefits. In 2001, paid leaves under the Employment Insurance (EI) program in Canada were extended from 10 weeks of parental leave to 35 weeks that could be split between partners. When combined with the 15-week maternity leave, mothers who had worked 600 insurable hours were thus eligible for 50 weeks of paid leave, at the replacement rate

of 55% of one's previous earnings. About 60% of Canadian mothers qualify for paid leave benefits (Doucet, McKay, & Tremblay, 2009). While government benefits are capped at "a maximum weekly benefit of $413" (Evans, 2007, p. 121), which has not changed since 1997, employers can "top up" mothers' leaves to supplement the amount mothers receive. Marshall (2010) found that throughout Canada, fewer than one-fifth of mothers received a "top up" to their EI benefits. Mothers who received "top-ups" were more likely to work in the public sector and were more likely to return to their jobs (Marshall, 2010) than mothers who did not receive "top ups."

For all Canadian mothers, the 2001 extension to paid leave increased the average length of leave, as well as mothers' attachment to the labor force (Baker & Mulligan, 2005). After implementation of the longer leave, Canadian mothers were more likely to take longer leaves, less likely to quit their jobs, and more likely to return to their pre-birth employers than before 2001 (Baker & Mulligan, 2005).

However, the receipt of paid leave benefits varies by social class and by gender. Higher-income Canadian women can afford to take longer leaves than lower-income women (Evans, 2007). In addition, more disadvantaged mothers—those with the lowest levels of education, single parents, and minorities—worked fewer hours, and so were less often eligible for paid leave. Because men's average earnings remain considerably higher than women's, the latter are more likely to take leave, particularly under the relatively low wage replacement rate of 55% (Evans, 2007). Consequently, only about 23% of men took leave in 2006 (Doucet, McKay, & Tremblay, 2009).

In terms of other social policies, over the 1990s the province of Ontario increasingly required work-related activities for receipt of social assistance. Gough (2001) refined an earlier classification of welfare state regimes to make Canada's social assistance program less generous and more similar to that of the U.S., the least generous program among Western, affluent nations.

All of these social policies—paid leave, child care and social assistance—influence mothers' work-life balance. Paid leaves are only available for the first year of a child's life, and given that they only cover 55% of a parent's salary, single mothers and lower-income mothers should be less able to afford taking paid leaves. All (Canadian citizen) families with pre-school aged children receive the UCCB. Social assistance programs are only available to lower-income families, so they should be most relevant in lower-income mothers' narratives. Therefore, the access to and uptake of these social policies is likely to differ based on women's social class backgrounds.

Other structural components of the "gender order"—such as education and labor markets—certainly affect mothers' work-life balance (Damaske, 2011; Garey, 1999; Gerson, 1985; Walzer, 1997; Williams, 2012). Damaske (2011) shows how more privileged women tend to get higher-paying, more flexible, and more enjoyable jobs, all of which foster more steady employment (compared to less privileged women). She illustrates how women's work pathways vary by social class: "steady workers" (most commonly higher-earning women) maintain a strong commitment to paid work over time, and "pulled-back" workers leave the workforce or significantly reduce their employment after childbearing. "Interrupted" workers (most commonly low-earning women) had an unstable employment past and could not maintain steady work (Damaske, 2011). Moreover, Stone (2007) clearly

shows how inflexible workplaces (and the demands of family life, including the unrelenting demands of husbands' professional jobs) can push even the most qualified, educated women out of professional jobs. Drawing from these studies, I explore how the jobs of mothers and their partners influence mothers' accounts of work-life balance.

As detailed below, this research also includes a small sample of seven immigrant mothers; while this is not a large enough number to infer any patterns, particularly as these immigrants come from different countries of origin, this data can suggest potential areas of study for future research. Immigrants face particular disadvantages under Canadian social policies. While they were just as likely as non-immigrants to find jobs under work-first social assistance programs, their wage levels were significantly below those of non-immigrants, particularly when they received their education outside of Canada (Mitchell, Lightman, & Herd, 2007). Some of the root causes of these differences are "discrimination and the discounting of education and experience earned abroad" (Mitchell et al, 2007, p.304). Many immigrant women face other challenges in finding jobs, such as traditional gender ideologies from countries of origin that prioritize women's unpaid work as mothers and wives over their paid work. Past research suggests that traditional beliefs can compel immigrant women to stay at home with children (Moon, 2003; Read & Cohen, 2007). In addition, many immigrant women arrive in new countries without the extended family networks that contributed child care and household labor in their countries of origin, so are less able to engage in paid work (Man, 2001). Below I explore a small sample of immigrant mothers and their (very limited) experiences with paid leaves.

» Gender Arrangements and Gender Culture

While two-thirds of Canadian mothers work for pay (Almey, 2010), they still perform the lion share of child care and domestic work in most families. In 2010, women did twice as much unpaid child care as men (about 50 weekly hours compared to men's 24.4) and 13.8 hours of weekly domestic work compared to men's 8.3 hours (Milan, Keown, & Robles Urquijo, 2011). This discrepancy in domestic labor helps explain why mothers are more likely to take paid leave than fathers.

Predominant cultural beliefs undoubtedly influence mothers' accounts about caregiving and paid work (Arendell, 2000; Damaske, 2011; Hays, 1996). Hays (1996) identified the "intensive mothering" ideology, which holds that mothers should be primary caregivers of children and that ideal childrearing is guided by experts, time-intensive, and emotionally engrossing. Under intensive mothering, when mothers must work for pay, they justify their employment by stressing its benefits for their children (not for themselves). Research generally supports the predominance of an intensive mothering script in North America (Arendell, 2000), while also identifying important challenges to intensive mothering, particularly among employed mothers (Blair-Loy, 2003; Author, 2012) and mothers of color (Christopher, 2013; Collins, 2000; Damaske, 2011; Dean, Marsh, & Landry, 2013).

In her analysis of women's work-family decisions, Damaske (2011) argues that women use accounts to explain behaviors that are likely to be scrutinized by others: "accounts allow women to emphasize behavior they believe will be more socially acceptable, such as decisions made to care for family, and to minimize behavior that might be seen in a negative light, such as decisions made for

themselves" (p. 149). Below I explore how women in this sample use accounts of intensive mothering in their discussions of paid leaves—and how social class mediates these processes.

To this body of research, this article contributes a focus on mothers' accounts of paid leaves and work-life balance, exploring the intersections of the policies women receive, their jobs (and those of their partners), and the predominant cultural scripts that emphasize intensive mothering. The paper also explores how mothers' accounts vary by social class.

Methods

From 2007 to 2009 I conducted in-depth interviews with 59 mothers of young children—26 in two cities in Ontario, Canada and 33 in two U.S. cities. In this article I focus on the 26 Canadian mothers who lived in Toronto and Hamilton, a smaller, more industrial city in Ontario. Given the lack of a federal paid leave policy in the U.S., few U.S. mothers received any substantial paid leave, which meant their discussions of paid leaves were quite limited. For these reasons, I focus on Canadian mothers in this article.

I recruited Canadian respondents with flyers advertising the studies in public places in high-, middle-, and low-income areas, and by snowball sampling, through which personal contacts and other respondents gave me names of other mothers. I limited the number of contacts recruited by snowball sampling in order to ensure a diverse sample. Interviews were semi-structured. I worked from an interview guide, but gave mothers substantial leeway to discuss the experiences most important to them. I conducted interviews in either public places or in the respondents' homes. Interviews lasted

between 45 minutes and two hours, most in the hour to 90 minute range.

I asked all mothers about their experiences of and opinions about paid leave (and any other social policies they had received). I also asked about mothers' work experiences and caregiving arrangements, that of their partners (when present), as well as their preferences for paid and unpaid work and how these preferences have changed over time, particularly after having children. I did not consistently use the term "work-life balance" in interviews, because women in early interviews expressed confusion over what the term meant; here I operationalize "work-life balance" by how closely women's actual work-life arrangements matched those they said they desired. Figure 1 describes mothers' work-life balance as high, moderate, or low. However, mothers' narratives show that work-life balance is indeed a fluid concept: some mothers had the work-life arrangements they preferred at the time of the interview, but worried they would not when children were older; others did not have their preferred work-life arrangements at the time of the interview but expected to soon. Therefore, these descriptions of work-life balance in Figure 1 are intended as general descriptions that may change over time, rather than fixed categories.

The sample consists of 26 mothers who had at least one child under age six. I gave all mothers pseudonyms. Only three of the women self-identified as women of color (Celeste, Cecilia, and Sitina). In this article I do not explore variations in mothers' narratives by race. However, another paper from this study (Christopher, 2013) focuses on the racial/ethnic differences in mothers' employment narratives. As seen in Figure 1, there is substantial variation in respondents' social class background. The social class categories in Figure 1 reflect respondents' family income

and education: upper-income mothers all had post-graduate degrees, and all had annual family incomes above $175,000 (in Canadian dollars). The upper-middle class mothers had at least university degrees and family incomes between $75,000 and $174,999. (One exception is Betsy, whose income was lower than $75,000; she had a Ph.D., so I considered her upper-middle class.) The lower-middle class mothers had family incomes between $30,000 and $74,999, and most did not complete university. None of the low-income mothers had a university degree from Canada, and all had annual family incomes under $29,999. All but one of the mothers (Salma) were either married or cohabiting with a partner at the time of the interview, and all were heterosexual except Betsy, who had recently moved in with her female partner. Most respondents had two children; seven had one child; five had three children; and one had four children. These mothers had children slightly later than the average age of first birth in Canada (28.5 in 2011). Most mothers were in their 30s, one was 44, a few were in their 20s, and one was 19.

This sample is limited because it includes mostly partnered mothers; in 2010, about 24% of Canadian births were to unmarried mothers. Therefore, these mothers' narratives should include fewer hardships than a sample with more single mothers.

After student assistants transcribed tape-recorded interviews, I coded them first using literal coding based on the main questions of interest in the study (Hesse-Biber, 2007). I then moved on to more "focused coding" (Charmaz, 1995) in which I compared respondents' narratives to one another, and compared respondents' narratives to themes from the literatures on mothering, social policy, and work-life balance. Through focused coding I developed the themes on which this article is based.

Findings

» Ontario Mothers' Paid Leave Narratives

Fifteen of the 26 mothers (about 58%) received paid leaves for at least one of their children (and most received leaves for all children). However, as Evans (2007) suggests, higher-income mothers were much more likely to receive paid leaves: 82% of upper- and upper-middle income mothers received leaves, compared to 47% of low- and lower-middle income mothers.

Every mother in this sample—regardless of whether she received the paid leave herself—expressed support for the nearly year-long paid leave. The only criticism was that the policy should cover all mothers, including self-employed mothers and those who had not worked enough hours to qualify under the current policy. But few mothers leveled this criticism. Across the board, mothers praised the paid leave policy as "amazing," "a blessing," "wonderful," and "great." While the mothers were consistent in their strong support of "mat leave" (the lay term for paid leave), their experiences varied by social class.

» Paid Leaves among Upper and Upper-Middle Income Mothers

As seen in Figure 1, of the 11 upper- and upper-middle income mothers, all but two received paid leaves for their children, and all but two worked for pay or were on leave at the time of the interview. Most were steady workers and returned to work full-time after paid leaves (or planned to), but a few pulled back from work after having children.

Rachel was one of five upper-income mothers. She worked part-time as an attorney for the Canadian government, and with both children received paid leaves that were

Figure 1

Mothers' Social Class Background, Employment/Caregiving Status, and Work-life Balance (WLB)

Social Class	Employment / Caregiving Status	Received Any Paid Leave?	WLB
Upper Income			
Rachel	Attorney, Part-time	Yes	High
Leah	At Home	Yes	High
Sarah	Attorney, Full-time	Yes	High
Dana	Recruiter, Full-time	Yes	Moderate
Cara	Therapist, Part-time	No	High
Upper-middle Income			
Jessica	Consultant, On Leave, return Full-time	Yes	High
Melissa	Policy analyst, On Leave, return Full-time	Yes	Moderate
Serena	Writer, On Leave, return Part-time	Yes	High
Megan	Engineer, On Leave, return Full-time	Yes	High
Alissa	At Home	Yes	Moderate
Betsy	Adjunct Professor, Full-time	No	High
Lower-Middle Income			
Shanna	At Home	Yes	Moderate
Callie	Child Care Provider, Part-time	Yes	Moderate
Kathy	At Home	No	High
Harriet	At Home	Yes	Low
Salma	Cook, Part-time	No	High
Lisa	At Home	Yes	Low
Immigrant			
Carma (Burma)	Nurse, Full-time	Yes	High
Low Income			
Kelly	At Home, about to work Full-time	Yes	Moderate
Melody	At Home, Attending School	Yes	Moderate
Immigrants			
Azra (Palestine)	At Home	No	Moderate
Sitina (Sudan)	At Home	No	Moderate
Jasmin (Burma)	At Home	No	Moderate
Cecilia (Jamaica)	Cashier, Part-time	No	Moderate
Neema (Algeria)	At Home	No	Moderate
Ana (Brazil)	Personal Trainer, On Leave, return Part-time	No	High

"topped up" to 93% of her salary by her employer. After having her first child, she left the extremely long work hours in a private firm for her current job—which she "loved." After having her daughter, she said that "working in private practice wouldn't allow me to be the kind of parent I wanted to be."

Describing her paid leaves and her part-time job, Rachel said:

> I am so proud of my employers for offering these benefits.... I think I am the luckiest person to have this job. I really don't think that I could have the life-work balance that

I do anywhere else. I feel tremendously supported by my employer as a working mother.

She went on to say that the "year leave is amazing." She found the paid leaves "amazing" because they helped her be an involved mother, while also keeping a job she loves. She said, "I strongly identify as a lawyer. I also strongly identify as a mother, but I wouldn't be happy staying at home. I enjoyed the year off that I had, but by the end I was itching to get back." Rachel was content being an intensive mother when her children were infants but was ready to return to her job thereafter. When I asked if she felt any guilt about returning to work, she said no because she had "plenty" of time with her children given her part-time work schedule. Thus, the year-long paid leave bolstered Rachel's "strong" identity as a mother, helped her maintain a steady worker status over time, and helped Rachel feel no guilt about returning to work (though the fact that she worked part-time also helped). The "amazing" year-long paid leave, then, served as "buffer zone" for any guilt Rachel would feel over working for pay with an infant at home.

Rachel's husband earned a very high salary as a corporate attorney. With their high family income, Rachel hired a "wonderful" full-time nanny, a housecleaner, and a gardener. Ultimately Rachel's strong commitment to her job, her part-time work schedule and her high-quality child care made her quite happy with work-life arrangements after her paid leaves ended.

Most of the other upper-income mothers remained steady workers after childbearing, though Cara pulled back to low part-time hours. All five of these mothers employed nannies and housecleaners, which helped the employed mothers remain committed to paid work (and lessened the household labor of Leah, the one upper-income, stay-at-home mother).

All but one of the six upper-middle income Canadian mothers received paid leaves. A few of these mothers were on leave at the time of the interview, and all planned to return to work at the end of their leaves. However, there was also one "pulled-back" upper-middle income mother, Alissa, who at the time of the interview was staying at home with her three children, ages 14, eight, and two. After having her first child, she took only three months off and went back to teach elementary school full-time. After having her second child, she returned to teaching once this child was four (she had accrued enough work time to have the full leaves with both of her children). After the leave with her third child, Alissa stayed home. She drew from an intensive mothering narrative at the time of the interview, saying, "I really wanted to have those firsts: the first steps, the first walk, you know, taking them to school the first day. They're only small once…so for me it was very important to say I raised my children. Not somebody else." Thus, the paid leave afforded her a "buffer zone," during which time she could be the hands-on mother she wanted to be.

However, she planned on going back to work full-time once her youngest son entered Junior Kindergarten (in about two years).Yet whether Alissa would regain her status as a full-time worker was in question, because her husband's job as a steel worker was very difficult to plan around; he worked "12 hour shifts on a rotating schedule…with three days off, three days working nights, two days off, then two days working days." Needless to say, it was hard to arrange child care around this schedule. Unlike the mothers from higher-income households, Alissa did not have money to pay additional caregivers or housecleaners.

Alissa said she was happy with her work-life arrangement at the time of the interview, though she was worried about achieving balance when she went back to work. She complained about the lack of child care assistance from the government, saying that she "didn't think it was fair" that so many assistance programs were not available to her family because they earned too much. Alissa's husband earned about $95,000/year as a steelworker, which she said might seem like a lot, but amounted to less than one would expect with a family of five. She even said she did not want to receive the $100/month UCCB, because it pushed her family into a higher tax bracket. She had called the government to see if she could decline the payment but found out she could not.

As described above, she foresaw substantial work-life conflict trying to return to full-time work given her husband's difficult schedule. Alissa shows that while paid leaves can serve as "buffer zones" to help mothers balance work/family demands during the first year of a child's life, mothers who prefer to spend several years at home—and with husbands who work long, unpredictable hours—may use the leaves as a springboard into longer leaves from the workforce. In addition, without subsidized child care for middle class families, Alissa may struggle to attain work-life balance when she returns to her teaching job. Alissa's account shows how social policies, cultural demands, and husbands' jobs can intersect to complicate work-life balance.

However, all of the other upper-middle income mothers were more work-identified and used leaves as temporary breaks from employment. At the time of the interview, Jessica was a government consultant on paid leave with her 10-month old. Describing her leave, she said she had "loved every minute" (though later in the interview admitted the very beginning was hard due to "isolation" and "not getting out enough").

Jessica was preparing to return to work full-time and had mixed feelings about putting her son in daycare. On one hand, she said she felt guilty about returning to work: "you know, he's my baby, I should be taking care of him." At the same time, she was "excited to go back" to work, because she was happy with the on-site daycare he would attend and looked forward to returning to her job: She said, "I like working. I like using my brain…. I like the culture of the company, and I like the work that I do. I feel like I'm making a difference." While Jessica's comments seem contradictory, one can see how she uses her year-long paid leave to account for her being a good, intensive mother (during which time she felt she "should be taking care of him"). Here again, the paid leave provided a year-long buffer zone in which Jessica could be an intensive mother and not feel guilt because she was at home.

As Jessica prepared to go back to her job, she resolved the dilemma between intensive mothering and full-time work by emphasizing that she had to work in order to help pay her family's mortgage and bills; she said that not returning to work was "a non-reality." She also planned to ask her boss if she could return to work for four days a week rather than five. When I asked if she thought this was possible, she described a few women who had arranged similar four-day schedules at her workplace, but also said the "culture of the workplace" generally did not support part-time work. At the time of the interview, it was unclear whether Jessica would achieve her ideal of working four days a week. How Jessica would manage the guilt associated with going back to work depended in part on whether she could work four days a week instead of five.

Melissa, an analyst for provincial social services on paid leave with her second child at the time of the interview, was one of the only mothers who said she would prefer to work for pay over spending the first year with her child. Nonetheless, she took six months of paid leave with both of her infants because she felt "it's really important that kids, especially early on, get a lot of time with their parents." Regarding her work-life preferences, she said: "Truthfully, I would love to be back at my job. (Laughs.) A lot of people ask me 'do you love being at home with your kids?' And the answer is not really. The more breaks, the better." Thus, while Melissa did not have her desired work-life balance at the time of the interview, she would soon achieve her desired work-life balance by splitting her year-long paid leave with her partner (an architect). She was looking forward to going back to work, though she did worry that her long work days would mean a long time away from her young children. Melissa said her family could not afford a nanny, and she did not want to put her infant in a daycare, so she and her partner split the paid leave. While she adopted some aspects of intensive mothering, she also stressed that working provided her with important benefits. As shown above, said that her parenting improved when she had time *away* from her children. Melissa's negotiation of social policies and cultural demands—splitting the paid leaves equally with her husband and posing clear challenges to the intensive mothering ideology—was unique among this sample of mothers. In her case, the six months of paid leave would provide a "buffer zone" for her to be the intensive mother she felt she should be; but she was also very much looking forward to returning to work thereafter.

Overall, several patterns emerge from the upper-middle and upper-income mothers' paid leaves narratives. Paid leave serve as "buffer zones" for mothers in terms of the cultural expectations of intensive mothering: several mothers used the paid leaves to justify their status as "good mothers," while also staying committed to their careers as steady workers. The year-long paid leave also provides a buffer zone that assuages work-life conflict during the first year of a child's life, and the mothers with more resources, more family-friendly employers, and more involved husbands had an easier time managing work-family conflict in the subsequent years of a child's life. In the absence of these benefits, mothers (like Alissa, and possibly Jessica) would struggle to return to work, a pattern also seen in the narratives of many lower-middle and low-income women.

» Paid Leaves among Lower-Middle and Lower Income Mothers

As stated above, fewer than half of the lower-middle and low-income mothers received paid leaves. They were ineligible for a number of reasons: Cecilia was self-employed as a nanny, so she was not eligible. Salma, Ana, and Kathy did not work enough hours at work to qualify for leaves. Three immigrant mothers (Azra, Jasmin, and Neema) had not worked at all since moving to Ontario; immigration interrupted their status as workers. All three of these immigrant women said they preferred to be at home with their young children. However, all also said they preferred to work at least part-time in the future, though none of them was certain that they would be allowed to work given their immigration status (and none had any specific plans in mind for child care). Compared to the upper- and upper-middle income mothers, more lower-earning mothers were staying at home with young children, a decision all but one of them (Lisa) said they preferred.

A common pattern for lower-middle income and low-income mothers was receiving paid leave and then pulling back from work; this describes six of the seven mothers who received leaves. For example, Harriet was one of the most conflicted mothers in the sample when it came to paid work:

> I had planned to go back but I…when it came down to it, I just did not have the heart to go back. It was the toughest choice of my life, really…the agony over that decision, yeah…it affected my identity really, 'cause…the self-esteem of not going back and actually bringing in a paycheck…and I was kind of letting my employer down and we were a team…so I was letting down the team. But on the other hand I just didn't want to miss those first steps…and they [her children] needed to have somebody that was there constantly, their source of security.

As one can see in this quote, Harriet drew from an intensive mothering script. Later in the interview, when I asked whether she liked her job, she said, "off and on, but no, near the end I wasn't happy with it, because you couldn't turn down overtime without them throwing a fit…it was stressful there." When explaining why she did not return to work, she added "the money wouldn't have been enough either, it'd be basically working for somebody else to raise my children. And with hardly any benefit." Thus, for Harriet, there were multiple reasons for her not to return to work after her paid leave; as Damaske (2011) would suggest, her account stressed the needs of her children, the most culturally appropriate explanation for mothers' decisions to stay home. But Harriet also had a low-wage job that she did not enjoy, and her husband worked long hours. A year-long paid leave was simply not enough to assuage the work-family conflict brought on by all these factors, so Harriet stayed home

after the year-long "buffer zone" of her paid leave. One can clearly see the difficulty in Harriet's decision to stay at home—the "toughest choice" of her life. At the time of the interview, she said she would prefer to be working part-time, but did not see how she could arrange that given her husband's long work hours.

Only one immigrant mother, Carma, received any paid leave. Carma immigrated to a large city in Canada from Burma (also known as Myanmar) in 1998. Carma worked at a nursing home for 40 hours a week, and was also attending nursing school to attain her BSN, or four-year nursing degree. She had two daughters and hired a caregiver for them during her work hours. While Carma and her husband both worked full-time, their family income was modest—the four family members shared a one-bedroom apartment.

Carma spoke passionately about her nursing job, and about nursing school: she said, "For me, I spend so much effort and so much hard work in my nursing school, and that was my calling. That's my job. I love it; I love what I do…. I have all this skill, I don't want to lose it." Carma invested a great deal in her education, and did not want to give up those skills to stay at home full-time with children. She also described the confidence and independence conferred by her job: "If my husband would say, 'you stay at home,' like traditionally back home, I would feel unfulfilled. I would feel unproductive…. I love to work and be productive." Carma also talked about how being a mother made her more compassionate person, and a better nurse: "I feel rejuvenated [when] I come back from work. I'm energized because I love what I do…. I'm happy to see them [her children]." While Carma clearly valued motherhood and was glad she had paid leaves with her two children, she also

strongly valued her paid work and expressed no guilt about working for pay (and instead stressed the benefits of her children gaining independence from her).

With her first daughter, Carma split the paid leave with her husband, and with her second daughter, Carma took the full year of paid-leave. Like Rachel, Carma used the paid leaves as short-term strategies to be able to care for her infants, and she preferred to work full-time once they were older. She (somewhat jokingly) said, "I'm strong like an ox, I can take it!" Thus, Carma had achieved her ideal work-life balance during her paid leaves, and thereafter.

Carma's relationship with her husband (who worked full-time as a carpenter) was complex; he was one of only two fathers in this sample who split the paid leave with his wife. However, Carma said she had to push him to contribute housework and child care. While she seemed happy in the relationship and said he supported her work and schooling, she did not want to rely solely on him for income.

Carma stressed the importance of a strong work ethic more than any other mother in this sample. She said she inherited this work ethic from her mother, who taught her that "all the good things people have are their education, and…compassion, and you have to be productive." She also said her mother taught her "survival skills." When I asked whether most immigrant Burmese women in her city worked for pay, she said, "women are equally hard-working as their husbands…they're immigrants, and they have to work hard more, to prove to Canada that they are productive members of society."

Only one other immigrant woman (Cecilia, from Jamaica) worked for pay, and she too said she worked because she did not want to "depend on anybody" like her husband.

Because this is such a small sample size of immigrant women, in particular those who work outside of the home, we cannot draw any inferences from this similarity. However, Carma's case suggests that a strong desire to work might be more necessary for employment for immigrant mothers, particularly if they face barriers to work under immigration law or because of husbands' traditional attitudes.

Kelly's work-life arrangements provide an interesting contrast to those of Carma. Kelly had two children, age seven and two, at the time of the interview. She had not worked for pay since having her older child. She drew heavily from intensive mothering: "I've always thought that a mom should be at home with their children, and I love babies, I never had a problem with being home. It was just always the money that was the problem." Consequently, she was about to start a full-time job cleaning houses. She did not want to work for pay—certainly not full-time—but said she had no choice, because she and her long-term partner could no longer afford the rent on their townhouse.

Before having children, Kelly worked full-time as a supervisor of office cleaners, and she received paid leave after the birth of her child. After the leave ended, she did not want to return to work; she said, "I really wasn't comfortable sticking my new baby in a daycare that, you know, he didn't know. And I knew he would cry, which would probably make me cry, because I am an emotional person, and I just couldn't do it." After receiving social assistance for a short time period, she met her current partner, who supported her financially. They had a child a few years later.

Like Carma, Kelly was living in a relatively low-income household, could not afford to hire help for housework, and was frustrat-

ed that her partner did not contribute more housework and child care. Kelly hoped that starting full-time work would push him to help more around the house. However, unlike Carma, Kelly preferred not to work for pay when having young children, and Kelly was fine depending on her husband for finanacial support. She said, "I'm probably a little bit more old school, I'm comfortable with a man going to work, and me staying at home doing more of the home job, the mom job." Both Carma and Kelly used paid leaves with at least one of their children, but they used them in different ways: Carma used her paid leave as a brief time away from paid work, whereas Kelly used her paid leave as a segue into several years out of the work force (like Alissa). Kelly was more comfortable with traditional "gender arrangements," but Carma was not.

Kelly and Melody were the only low-income mothers who received any paid leave; Shanna, Callie, Kathy, and Cecilia also brought up fears about low-quality daycare. In contrast, Lisa wanted to work, but could not find a job. Given multiple bouts of unemployment, Lisa's work pathway was interrupted.

Overall, the lower-middle and lower-income mothers were less likely to receive paid leaves, and when they did, they often used paid leaves as segues into longer periods of staying at home with children. Many drew from intensive mothering, but as Harriet's narrative shows, some also had jobs that were not rewarding, and several expressed fear over putting their children in low-quality daycares. With the exception of Carma, many of these mothers expressed work-life preferences they could not attain: preferring to work part-time (Harriet), preferring not to work for pay (Kelly), or preferring to work for pay (Lisa). Most of the immigrant mothers were glad to be home with young

children, but expressed reservations about being able to work for pay when children were older, which all said they wanted to do. Thus, while paid leaves still served as "buffer zones" against work-life conflict (for those who received them), work-life balance was often harder to attain once leaves ended.

Conclusion

As Pfau-Effinger (2004) suggests, the "gender order" of welfare states and labor markets, "gender arrangements" in households, and the "gender culture" in societies all affect women's lived experiences. On one hand, the "gender order" of paid leaves benefits these Ontario mothers. The year-long paid leaves were "buffer zones" that helped higher-income mothers remain steady workers: paid leaves postponed work-family conflict for a year, and mothers were automatically "intensive mothers" during this time, which allowed them more freedom to focus on employment after paid leaves ended. As Damaske (2011) would suggest, many of these women framed their use of paid leaves by pointing to their families' (particularly their children's) needs. This study adds that the higher-income mothers were typically able to negotiate the "gender order" of paid leaves, their desires for steady employment, and the "gender culture" of intensive motherhood to attain their work-life preferences. Two mothers (Melissa and Carma) even posed direct challenges to an intensive mothering ideology. They split paid leaves with their partners, fostering a more egalitarian "gender arrangement" in their households, and attaining the work-life balance they desired.

However, attaining work-life balance was typically harder for lower-middle and low-income mothers, who were less likely

to receive paid leaves, wary of low-quality child care outside of the home, and generally more invested in intensive mothering. Lower-income mothers were less likely to receive the "buffer zones" of paid leaves. Among the few that did receive paid leaves, most did not return to their jobs after leaves ended. However, one lower-earning mother with a strong orientation to paid work (Carma) used leaves as temporary breaks from employment, similar to the higher-income mothers. Among the other lower-income mothers, living under a liberal welfare state providing paid leave but not child care left them with few options once leaves ended. Some of these women (like Harriet) would prefer to work, though many others did not; in any case, their employment options were constrained. Harriet's narrative shows how unappealing and low-paying jobs can push mothers into stay-at-home motherhood. Harriet and Alissa's narratives also show how husbands' long work hours constrain married women's employment. Thus, this sample of mothers suggests that in addition to class differences in access to paid leaves (Evans, 2007), other aspects of the "gender order" of the Ontario welfare state and labor market—the nature of mothers' former jobs, the demands of their husbands' jobs, and the ability to afford quality childcare—all influence mothers' work-life balance. Mothers' social class background mediated their employment options and their access to social policies, leaving mothers with different experiences of the "gender order."

As Harriet's comments suggest, mothers in lower-paying jobs also need better working conditions, which would provide greater incentives for them to return to paid work. The experiences of mothers in this sample suggest that until countries have policies that subsidize high-quality child care and improve the working conditions of low-in-come jobs, mothers' pathways from paid leave to employment will likely vary by social class.

This study raised important questions for further research on the work-life arrangements of immigrant women. Only one immigrant woman in this sample received any paid leave at all; the other immigrant mothers were not eligible for paid leaves to help them attain work-life balance. Carma's narrative suggests an extremely strong work ethic may be necessary to overcome the structural factors impeding employment found in past research. In any case, more research is needed on immigrant women and their experience of policies and work-life balance.

These mothers' experiences of work-life balance changed over time, and many mothers expressed different expectations for their employment in the near future. These mothers' narratives confirm prior research claiming that work-life balance is fluid, not fixed. This study adds that the gender order, gender culture, and gender arrangements women live in—their access to social policies, their jobs and those of their partners, and their beliefs about motherhood—all influenced mothers' work-life balance. This study also suggests that a complex intersection of structural, cultural, and interpersonal factors uniquely affected each mother's experience of paid leaves and work-life balance; nonetheless, within income groups, common patterns emerged. ■

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Still a man's art world: The gendered experiences of women artists

Marybeth Stalp

Abstract

The social organization of art and artistic reputation are imperative to one's success as an artist—but how does the current art world allow for women? Self-employed women pursuing artistic careers in the U.S. encounter gendered barriers both in the education/work world and from the family. I analyze interviews with 21 women artists, noting how as women became and began working as artists, they had to balance and negotiate constraints in these areas. Thus, gendered expectations appear in both personal and professional sectors of women's lives as they pursue artistic careers in contemporary society.

Keywords

gendered careers, women's studies, art, women artists, family

Introduction

Women are not often thought (by themselves or by others) to be legitimate cultural creators (Nochlin, 1989; Wolff, 1984), and women who have broken through the glass ceiling in the art world have also paid particularly dear and gendered prices through the life course. For example, in the documentary film, *Who Does She Think She Is?,* Pamela Tanner Boll (2008) notes that successful women artists across various mediums experience difficulty as they negotiate their artistic careers with the gendered expectations of becoming coupled and having children.

Historically, in the Western world, women pursuing artistic careers were often criticized as "bad women" for answering the creative call instead of devoting their full time and attention to more traditional roles of tending to family (see Charlotte Perkins Gilman's story, "The Yellow Wallpaper" [Schwartz, 1989]; also see Nochlin, 1989; Woolf, 1929). Most women who are engaged in creative endeavors in a paid work

situation face the divided consciousness brought about by frequent interruptions within the home (e.g., family and childcare demands) and the struggle to find time and other resources needed for their paid creative work.

Becoming and working as a woman artist remains a gendered issue. The social world of art is a gendered one, and can be understood as a gendered organization with multiple layers of intentional and unintentional inequality (Acker, 1990). As Christine Williams (1995b) finds that men benefit more than women, even when working in stereotypical feminine professions, I study how women fare in a career that in appearance is seemingly both woman- and family-friendly. Artistic careers are quite flexible, providing many freedoms to its workers including flexible schedules and workplaces, allowing some artists to work at home in a studio (see Bain, 2004, 2005, 2007). However, the family, as well as gendered expectations of women as primary caretakers of others, get in the way of women pursuing cultural production.

For example, women's writing is one of the most frequently studied forms of women's cultural production, and women writers emphasize their difficulties in gaining time, support and legitimacy to write (Aptheker, 1989; Bateson, 1990; Olsen, 1978; Russ, 1983; Wreyford, 2015), particularly in the face of familial duties. Olsen (1978, p.13) documents the centuries of loss in cultural production by women writers, what she terms the *silences* resulting from the missed opportunities to express themselves through creative acts. Women called to write often could pursue their passion only part-time. Ferriss (1999, p.55) supports this position, observing, "I have no time! It is the writer's—especially the women writer's—most frequent complaint." Women writers' reflec-

tions lend insight to other forms of women's cultural production. Most face the divided consciousness brought about by frequent interruptions within the home and the struggle to find time and other resources needed for their creative work. Do women face similar barriers as "women artists" in various mediums?

This paper is part of a larger body of research focused on the everyday life of men and women artists in two regions in the U.S., and I focus here on the twenty-one women in the larger study. The purpose of this research is to understand the gendered artistic career process for women artists, and in doing so, I center on the experience of the woman artist, regardless of her particular medium. I examine the gendered pathways toward artistic careers, and discuss potential barriers that women face as they pursue artistic careers (like family, education, and lack of career opportunity). My research questions include: Do gendered expectations affect career choice and success in "independent careers" such as artist? Does gender limit career choice and success for self-employed women artists?

The contribution of this work is threefold. First, I study the artistic career in a qualitative way, and center on the artists' experiences in an exploratory fashion. Second, this research is designed intentionally to include a variety of artistic mediums, to encourage the conceptualization of "artist" to have more commonalities within the career choice. Third, I focus only on women's experiences here, and I use qualitative methods. Others may have used large scale quantitative datasets from government and economic sources muddying the gendered experiences that I am interested in capturing. Therefore, I keep the woman artist at the center, allowing her to reveal both the positive and negative elements of becoming

a woman artist in contemporary U.S. society through interviews and participant observation. In other words, I conceptualize the process of becoming an artist to be a gendered one for all women (and men) pursuing this career choice.

Literature Review

» Gendered Cultural Production

Culture scholars continue to imply that the production of culture is gender-neutral, rather than gender-laden. That is, scholars discuss artists' lives (Fine, 2004), or study art communities or the art world (Becker, 1982) using generic terms, and often defaulting to men's experiences but not explicitly stating so (Lingo & Tepper, 2013). This "men-as-default" language and analysis effectively clouds the possible gender benefits and inequalities that may exist in choosing an artistic career.

This gender-neutral trend is starting to change, with the earlier work of Lang and Lang (1988, 1990, 1993), who center on differences between men's and women's experiences in building and maintaining successful artistic reputations, and Tuchman (1984) and Tuchman and Fortin (1980, 1989), who explore the gendered patterns present historically in opportunities provided to men and women in the novel publishing industry. Bain (2007) studies heterosexual men who are negotiating fatherhood as visual artists, the importance of a private studio space to women artists (Bain, 2004), and the development of an artistic identity as it relates to their professional selves (Bain, 2005). Flisbäck (2013) notes in a census-level study of 20,000 Swedish artists that the artistic lifestyle burdens women in terms of work-life balance; Wreyford (2015) studies the gendered structure facing women

screenwriters in the UK; and Tamboukou's (2010) narrative analysis of UK women artists reveals that women are presented various "lines of flight" in order to leave an artistic career. Gendered expectations shape entry into the profession, training, (choice of) medium, and response by audiences (Dickie, 1996; Peterson, 1997). Recent work continues to examine the intersection between gender and culture, with an important focus on non-economic aspects of the culture industry (Schippers, 2002; Taylor & Littleton, 2008).

When scholars study privatized domains or leisure activities as sites of non-economic cultural production, the emphasis is typically on male-dominated activities, with women viewed as supporters of their families' sports and leisure interests (Chafetz & Kotarba, 1995; Thompson, 1999). Moreover, even more marginalized forms of cultural production, (e.g., "women's art" or non-economic cultural production) typically take place outside the public eye, through routine, everyday activities (Parker, 1984; Stalp, 2007, 2015; Stalp & Winge, 2008). While traditional women's work provides key sites for studying cultural production, little research centers on women as cultural producers in their own right, or men as cultural producers who create their art work through subjective rather than professional careers.

» Gendered Careers

The predominant focus of most gender and work scholars centers on how men and women fare comparatively within the workplace, and work/family balance issues (Moran, 2004; Stalp, 2015). As work is one of the most important social institutions in which both men and women interact, this research is crucial to identifying patterns of inequity and discrimination, both inten-

tional and unintentional (Acker, 1990). For example, Patricia Martin (2003) notes that the workplace is a gendered one. In her qualitative exploration of the corporate office, Martin (2003) reveals how both overt and covert sexism works to privilege men and disadvantage women, and how both men and women are somewhat unaware of the power of covert inequality. In Louise Roth's (2003) qualitative examination of women working on Wall Street, she finds that even when women are in the same positions as men, that the gendered workplace influences client base and salary compensation negatively for women; and that sex segregation prevents women from moving up the corporate ladder at the same rates as their male counterparts (Roth, 2004).

Careers have long been thought to benefit one gender or another, but men continue to out-earn women in the U.S. (American Association of University Women, 2015), even though women outnumber men in college and university (National Bureau of Economic Research, 2015). In the workplace, men advance faster than women even in traditionally female professions (C. Williams, 1992, 1995a, 1995b). Conversely, women entering the profession of male-dominated construction/carpentry do not feel as welcomed, having to deal with hostile climates and sometimes dangerous workplaces (Jurik & Halemba, 1984; Latack et al., 1987). Local, everyday practices in a corporate workplace often benefit men's life choices over women's life choices in sometimes very explicit, but most often in rather subtle ways (Acker, 1990; Martin, 2003). Sexism and sexist practices in the workplace are moving over time from overt to covert, and becoming even harder to see and to measure (Lorber, 2010; Martin, 2003; Moe & Shandy, 2010; Ridgeway, 2011; Tichenor, 2005; J. Williams, 2000). Despite Sheryl Sandberg

(2013) encouraging women to "lean in" to the workplace to take on more leadership opportunities, her individual-level approach to resolving hostile workplaces for women may mostly work for elite women like her. In practical terms, Sandberg's (2013) recommendations for women pursuing leadership in corporate America are not likely to trickle down to the U.S. arts communities in which I conducted my research.

Methods and Data

After securing IRB approval for the study, I spent the summer months of 2008 and 2010 in the field, conducting unstructured qualitative interviews with artists in the Midwestern and Southeastern U.S., engaging in participant observation, writing fieldnotes, and documenting artists' creative works and working spaces (e.g., studio space). As it works well with an inductive and feminist research approach, I used unstructured interviews to encourage participants to share with me what they felt was important about their artistic careers.

When I set up interviews with artists, they suggested meeting at their place of creative work, (studio space or home), and I was often given a tour before or after the interview. Interviews ranged from 45 minutes to three hours. Spending time in the studio/creative space offered a view into artists' process and inspirations, as well as the opportunity to see, to an extent, how their work lives got interrupted by phone calls, and family and friends stopping by. Often the case with intensive unstructured interviews, participants discussed their creative work lives episodically rather than according to linear time (Stalp, 2007). I use pseudonyms for all study participants, as well as for the specific location of the research sites in the study.

Upon conducting an interview, and within 24 hours of it, I took elaborate field-notes to document the interview content, as well as any other observations made during the interview, including making connections to previous interview work. This "constant comparative method," also known as grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), helped me to build the study from the ground up, and keeping the artist (and her interests) central to the study. After all the interviews were conducted, and fieldnotes taken, I returned to my university and began transcribing interviews verbatim. As I analyzed each transcript, I kept in mind my field notes observations, and I began the coding process of both individual interview transcripts, and making connections between interviews.

As I analyzed the transcripts, I noted how the process of becoming an artist was important to these women artists. Women artists highlighted how they became involved in making art as a career, the importance of freedom over one's work, and also the larger economic pressures they faced as they worked creatively and somewhat independently. Repeatedly women discussed their impressions about how gender "mattered" in their line of work and throughout their lives. They noted difficulties in becoming and living as an artist, as well as negotiating career choice with family. Some women altered their career choices to include family, like teaching art while raising their children, while their spouses sought more extant and professional artistic (or other) careers. Overall, women artists stressed that trying to negotiate making art and having a family was a huge challenge.

I focus on meaning-making within the career process, so self-definition as an artist (regardless of medium) was the primary criteria for inclusion in the study. I am less concerned about differences between and within artistic media, and more interested in what artists have in common in relation to the larger definitions of career success. Some participants are currently making a living from the sale of their artwork, some are not, and some are in transition. I interviewed artists who work in the mediums of clay, fiber, glass, metal, painting, paper, photography, wood, and those supporting the industry in other ways (teaching, and store/gallery owners). In the group of 21 women interviewed (Table 1), the majority were white, heterosexual, and ranged in age from late 30s to late 70s. There were a small number of women of color, as well as bisexual and lesbian women. As my research already identifies artists by their medium, I do not reveal the race/ethnicity or sexual orientation of individuals to protect their identity and to ensure the confidentiality I promised study participants.

Findings

I conceptualize an artist to be someone who receives payment for his/her creative work (definition is not limited by medium), but may or may not rely on it as a primary source of income (Mishler, 1999). This broad definition permits the inclusion of different kinds of artists in this study, like those who may not be selling artwork right now, but have done so in the past, as well as those working part-time, and all experiences can lend insight into the working life of artists, regardless of medium. The National Endowment for the Arts estimates that there are two million artists in the U.S. (NEA, 2008a). However, this definition of artist would exclude most if not all of the participants in my study, for the NEA only consider full-time artists (with no other sup-

Table 1
Women Artist Demographic Information (N=21)

Artist	Medium	Marital Status	Full Time/ Part Time	Kids	Some Art School
Patricia	Photography	Divorced	FT	Y	Y
Elizabeth	Fiber	Married	FT	Y	Y
Susan	Fiber	Single	FT	N	Y
Margaret	Clay	Married	PT	N	Y
Dorothy	Wood	Married	FT	N	Y
Lisa	Paper and Fiber	Single	FT	N	Y
Karen	Fiber	Married	PT	N	Y
Helen	Clay	Single	PT	N	Y
Sandra	Painting	Married	FT	N	Y
Donna	Metal	Single	FT	N	Y
Ruth	Clay	Married	FT	Y	Y
Sharon	Clay	Married	FT	Y	Y
Michelle	Painting	Married	FT	Y	Y
Trisha	Fiber	Married	PT	Y	Y
Gina	Painting	Single	PT	N	Y
Diane	Gallery Owner	Married	FT	N	Y
Carol	Fiber	Married	PT	N	Y
Jane	Metal	Married	PT	Y	Y
Audrey	Fiber	Married	PT	Y	Y
Laura	Metal	Married	PT	N	Y
Sarah	Fiber	Married	PT	N	Y

plementary income) as part of the two million. This conceptualization of artist neglects to understand how many artists actually live and work in the U.S.

To continue to focus only on the "success" stories in art, or one type of artwork, neglects to understand fully the complexity of the art world, including barriers to success. Some artists define creative work on their own terms outside the measures of economic or reputational success, focusing on what are often termed "subjective careers" in the sociological literature (Evetts, 1996; Stalp, 2006).

Some define artists more narrowly, focusing on one art medium or a particular region of the country or world (Adams, 2006; Causey, 2003; Chibnik, 2003; Taylor, 2004), noting the art/craft divide in the greater art world (Racz, 2009), driven by both consumer and producer (Becker, 1982; Peterson, 1976). I highlight the commonalities within artistic careers, rather than the differences.

Out of the 21 women interviewed, 15 (71%) were married/partnered/coupled at time of interview, with seven (53%) of these married women also having step/children.

These women were more coupled than the national trends demonstrated in a recent NEA report, indicating, "In 2003-2005, 54 percent of women artists and 53 percent of all women workers were married" (2008b, p.2). The NEA report suggests that most U.S. women artists do not have children under the age of 18: "Twenty-nine percent of women artists had children under age 18, almost six percentage points lower than for women workers in general" (NEA, 2008b, p.2). Participants negotiated the demands of paid work and having a family at rates above the national level for U.S. women artists. Despite this apparent "success" of having both work and family, participants discuss the difficulties of becoming and working as artists, and blending paid work with family demands.

» Gender and Artistic Careers

Women live gendered lives as artists. All but one woman in the study indicated that she had fallen prey to the simultaneously confining and empowering moniker of "woman artist." The standard, or default gender for the career of artist seems to be male, although the noted feminist artist awareness group, the Guerilla Girls, indicate:

> There have been lots of women artists throughout Western history…. But even after overcoming incredible obstacles, women artists were usually ignored by critics and art historians—who claimed that art made by white women and people of color didn't meet their "impartial" criteria for "quality." These impartial standards place a high value on art that expresses white male experience and a low value on everything else. (Guerilla Girls, 1998, p. 8-9)

As is the case within a patriarchal society, men's experiences are considered normal, and women's not of the norm. Donna (in her 40s) is a metalworker who makes indus-

trial furniture from scrap metal, recounts a typical interaction with a less-than-ideal client based on such stereotypical gendered assumptions:

> When I first got started I heard it commonly all the time. I would see people in front of my booth, they would scan my work, they would look for the artist, and they would pass over me four or five times and then finally when they ran out of options, unless they glommed on to a person that was a man in my booth, they would say, "Well, are you the artist? I was expecting a big man!" So my patent response was that, "Well there must be a big man trapped on the inside" (laughter).

Donna's glib comment reveals her coping mechanism for constantly being overlooked as an artist, for two reasons: first, she is a woman, and women are not always thought to be artists; and second, her work in industrial furniture is not thought to be a "girly" medium. Even though Donna has succeeded as an artist, as she participates in national and regional juried shows, and enjoys regular commissions, she is still reduced to being invisible based on consumers' gendered biases about what an artist should look like.

Much in line with gender research on various social institutions, women are more likely than men to see gender disparities in everyday life and in the workplace. This research was no different, for women participants repeatedly (and without prompting from me as I used an unstructured interviewing format) noticed gender differences, and pointed out both perceived (and real) gender inequality more often than men. From my fieldnotes, Helen, a woman artist in her 30s, shared that:

> As a woman, she feels that people believe she is wasting her time, that she isn't doing anything important, that this isn't "real" work, and that she has to constantly prove herself

through her work to others. Her family is worried/nervous that she is an artist, but more worried that she is not married and not having babies. When I asked her what her art life would look like with a spouse and kids, she said that it scared her to even think about not having time to spend in the studio, and that although she might have insurance and benefits from a spouse's job if she were married, that not making art would be awful. She has to make art. If she works regularly, she is fine, when she is out of town it gets into her head and bothers her. (Fieldnotes, 2008)

These comments reveal a number of concerns, including the "artist is not a career" discussion that many artists have faced and continue to encounter. Helen's family considers her a potential wage earner, which is certainly a sign of progress from the early to mid-20th century notions regarding women's paid work. Yet, her family also envisions her as a potential mother—their concerns center on her perhaps not having children *because* she is an artist.

This implies an inherent incongruity between these two roles. It seems that there is an assumption that one cannot be both an artist and part of a family, as a partner and/or a mother—are these roles incompatible? For example, in the documentary film *Who Does She Think She Is?*, Boll (2008) juxtaposes women artists within the tangible double constraints of artistic career and family obligations, noting that putting one's career in a place of importance challenges the family. Despite the presumed flexibility, the artistic career demands time and attention that might be devoted to family, putting a woman artist in a difficult position.

» Choosing Art as a Career

Choosing art as a career is daunting, especially for those who are presented limited choices to begin with (most often women

and the working-class), and who are not advised that higher education is realistic option. Dorothy, a woodworker now in her 60s, discusses the guidance she received in high school regarding her career:

I wasn't encouraged in school. I just thought I was an ordinary person, nothing that special, so up to like 12th year of school, I was thinking I would have to choose between hairdresser, waitress and what else was there—secretary. Any one of them I could not have survived and so it was just really lucky for me that the world starting opening up. It was this older looking woman who was the guidance counselor who asked me about half-way through my senior year, "Are you going to school? Are you going to college?" And I said, "College? Y'know I'm poor." We didn't go to college when you were poor and I just thought, "Oh if I could only go to college, she says you can!" And she talked me into it and from then on it was like lifting a house off your shoulder. Wow, I don't have to fight so much. I can actually do what I want to do, and be what I want to be.

Fortunately, Dorothy eventually received encouragement to attend college from an influential guidance counselor. Support for becoming an artist can also come from other social institutions, like family. And, family, like other social institutions, has gendered biases present. Here Dorothy shares that her older brother, an artist, was encouraged constantly by her family to be an artist, but she was not:

My older brother is an artist. Yeah, I did sort of have a model, of course it was a guy, it was easy for him, everybody accepted it, he could swim downstream, and I had to swim upstream, and I had to fight for everything I could get. My brother is very unique, he was not supportive of me, like a lot of artists he was incredibly self-absorbed and I just admired him.

Dorothy points out some very clear gendered differences within her family regarding the career choice of artist. Although her family members readily accepted her brother for pursuing art, she was not supported in her choice to become an artist. Dorothy states that her brother did not support her, either—even though he was pursuing an artistic career himself. As Dorothy indicates, "I had to swim upstream, and I had to fight for everything I could get," she notes the differential and unfair treatment her family placed upon her and her brother in choosing the same career.

Similarly, Helen is in her mid-30s, and she saw her artist uncle as a role model as she worked to become an artist. Helen attended college for ceramics, and after graduation, she began trying to make it as an artist. She started working a few part-time jobs along with making and selling art, and over time, she increased her creative work and reduced the number of side jobs. Although Helen considers herself a successful artist at this point (at time of interview, Helen was "only working one part-time job" in addition to making/selling work full-time), she says this about familial support: "I think they're [family] still nervous because I think it's this thing… I'm not married. They're nervous because I'm unmarried and I'm an artist…. I just laugh…and actually I'm in love with my life." Despite having an artist in the family as an example of a successful career choice, Helen has had to work against her family's gendered expectations of marriage/children, with the career choice of artist coming last.

All respondents found themselves studying art in college, either in formal ways (such as attending an art school), by majoring in art at university (not necessarily matriculating), or taking art classes on the side. The majority of participants faced important decisions: Can I make a living from this career choice, and can I be an artist and have a family too? Additionally, participants note how they faced double pressures. In addition to making a living many were expected to work as teachers, not artists, by their family and friends, in order to make ends meet. Women discussed how their families also expected them to have a traditional life of marriage and family, feeling the traditional gender expectations placed upon them.

According to those participants who received formal instruction (e.g., art school), higher education was a gendered place where women felt they were being treated unequally by their peers and professors. When Lisa studied art in the 1970s, she noticed how unequal things were in terms of women being considered legitimate art students as compared to their male counterparts:

> I just remember when I was in art school, the classes were like 90 percent female but the few guys that were in the class that I was in—you'd go out to the bar and there would be the professor and the male students sitting there having a beer and the professor's like, "I can get you in this gallery out in NYC" and I mean they just figured that was a serious artist because he was a guy and all of us were there for an "M-R-S" and we'd dabble in art while we were doing it and they were just being taken seriously.

Arts communities continue to have different expectations for artists and non-artists, although perhaps not as strictly defined as Lisa experienced in her art school education, the seemingly different tracks for women and men in the same program. However, in his rich ethnographic study of the Chicago Wicker Park artistic neighborhood, Lloyd notes in similar ways that gender can still matter in today's arts communities. For example, Lloyd (2006, p.174) points out that recognized artists in Chicago's Wicker Park neighborhood characterized the not-yet-rec-

ognized artists or non-artists as "artsluts." Artsluts were people who hung around artists in arts communities, willing to do the boring work that artists either did not want to do, or did not have time to do—in other words, wanna-bes or hang-ons or fans. It is unclear whether or not this term is applied to both men and women non-artists, but the term certainly carries with it a power differential, and a gendered connotation, and matches well with Lisa's descriptions of "serious artist" versus those who "dabbled in" art as having some hint of gendered nuance to it.

Importantly, the majority of women in this study engaged in teaching art (usually to children) before or in conjunction with pursuing an artistic career. For example, Lisa is in her 60s and works in paper and fiber. When Lisa pursued art in college, her family was supportive that she was going to college, but not necessarily that she was studying art as they would have preferred she studied something more useful. While in college, Lisa's family strongly suggested she take a "safe" route of studying education so that she could work as a teacher in the K-12 system, and she did so. Lisa began her artistic career teaching children art in the K-12 system, while her peers were pursuing their own art-making careers. Even though Lisa has supported herself as an artist for many years (and not as a teacher as she began her career doing), her family members still continue to evaluate her career solely on economic success:

> I got discouraged from being an artist in my family even though my role model was an uncle, he was a commercial artist and he made good money but they just told me that I would starve (and I kinda did). But they said okay you can take art in college but you've got to get a teaching degree, which is fine because I love teaching and I taught

art for many years. There was no encouragement at all, it was considered a frivolous thing, and not a real thing, and even now if I got a "real job" they'd be a lot more proud of me or something. I think if I told them that I was making $100K a year then they'd be impressed but they know I'm struggling financially so it's not a real job.

Lisa's situation is not unusual if you consider she came from a working-class background. As Morris and Grimes (1996) suggest in their research, working class parents are leery of their children's collegiate pursuits if they veer from "practical."

Sharon's situation is similar to Lisa's in that she began her art career teaching children, then went on to pursue her own interests. Sharon's college training was in art education, and after teaching art in the K-12 education system while raising kids, she retired and began her second career as a ceramicist. With careful negotiation with her husband about how their retirement would include her second career as an artist, Sharon (now in her late 50s) considers his and her family's response to be very positive:

> They were ecstatic. Well, very supportive. My husband could have been ugly about it and he wasn't. He's been extremely supportive. I think we were both a little nervous about how things were going to be, and it was kind of a little rough there initially. But once I got here and I got settled in a routine that was comfortable for me and he saw that I was still coming home when I said I was going to. I think he was relieved. He settled into it.

Sharon was able to have a family and work in art education, then devote her full attention to making artwork upon retirement. As for multiple artists in this study, the development of her artistic career came later in life.

» Negotiating Art with Life

Regarding issues of marriage and family among study participants, marriage/partnership was prevalent with the majority of participants having been coupled at some point in their adult lives. Less than half of the participants had either biological or adopted children, yet this was still higher than what is represented at the national level for the average U.S. woman artist: "Only 29% had children under age 18" (NEA, 2008b, p.2). To the extent that other artists share Helen's belief that women artists are "fine" if they work regularly, then traditional family models that include spouses and children might not be conducive to an artistic lifestyle in regards to time. Helen's fears of how family may interfere with artistic production might be justified. Additionally, Patricia, in her late 70s, describes her long-term artistic career as something she did amongst working additional jobs while raising her family: "I worked off and on in photography, in various ways. But I've also had to do other work in order to support my kids. They are of course grown now and gone and on their own."

Putting the artistic career first (and above other life course choices) is important for many of the women in the study, both for those who have chosen to not have children, and for those who have. Here Ruth suggests that putting career first is important in living as a successful artist:

> I still think our creative…I mean you hear it all the time, you see it in these kinds of magazines, women who are wanting to do their art but maybe they don't. And it does take a passion and a drive. I mean you have to be willing to put it above everything. It's not an hourly thing.

Another factor weighing in on women artists' lives is, of course, the pressure to have a traditional family. Helen discusses how much more difficult working as an artist would be with the addition of family:

> Helen: It's hard when you're married and have kids. If you have no dependents you're like, okay, I can do this. When you get kids and…
>
> *I: So how hard would this be for you to do—have a partner and kids?*
>
> Helen: I don't know. I don't even want to think about it. Scares me to death…and I know that your perspective sort of changes when you become a mother and you know, sort of the myths we think it's going to suck and actually it's not so bad but I do dread it and I guess it depends where you're at.

Helen's fears about complicating her life with a partner and children indicate that she puts her career first, as many other artists do.

Ruth is in her late 50s, and studied ceramics at an expensive art school when she was younger. She dropped out of art school partly because of lack of family support: "It was not okay to do art because you're going to starve…. My family were just not supportive. I mean, 'Go learn to be a receptionist or beautician or secretary.' …I couldn't wait to get out of that environment." In comparison, Audrey is in her 30s and she works in clay and fiber, and is trying to get support for the arts started in her small community. Here Audrey discusses how she feels pulled between working as an artist, and her family:

> It was coming to terms with what I thought I wanted and what I really wanted and realizing that even as a local studio artist it was going to be really hard to have time for my work, and have time for my family, and that there is this part of art that makes you throw your entire being into it that can be really exclusive of thinking about anyone else… but here I am with two little kids, and so I just put it on the back burner again. I tend

to get overwhelmed and I put it on the back burner.

Sharon started her artistic education in similar ways as the other women in the study, but chose to marry and have kids after meeting her husband in art school. Near the end of each interview, I asked participants what advice (if any) they would give to someone considering art as a career. From this interview transcript, Sharon talks about what it was like to be an artist:

> Sharon: It's a real exciting adventure. It's like a whole other life, a whole other face that you know I thought might be possible when I was younger but I was never… because I had a family I could never, I was never comfortable with just cutting loose and just being an artist full time.

> I: What do you think it would have been like to try to do this and raise kids at the same time?

> Sharon: I think it would have been very scary. It was very important for me for my children to feel safe and secure. My husband and I were both working to make you know a comfortable environment for our kids to grow up in. So you know, I did the Scout leader thing here and I was in charge of the arts and the crafts part of it. I mean so it was incorporated into our daily living and my husband and I met in art school. And so for a lot of things that we did, our life was just full of art-related experiences. So it wasn't like I was going to a job where I was you know just doing something mundane just every day and hating it because I feel like I had the best of both worlds really. I feel very, very fortunate. Now I feel even more fortunate.

These women artists' experiences demonstrate the difficulty of negotiating career and family, and they also indicate that even becoming and working as an artist is somewhat difficult. Adding gendered family expectations to these women's lives results in careers that must be measured subjectively. For many women the artistic career is shoved amidst family duties, while for others it is put away and taken back out after they have finished raising their children. Although the workplace is not as traditional for these self-employed women, the traditions of gender remain.

Discussion

Interviewing women artists within and across mediums in two arts communities in the U.S. reveals that they are collectively facing similar barriers in terms of becoming and being considered artists. The artistic career is difficult for women to build and manage regardless of medium and can be understood as a gendered career (Acker, 1990). These women artists in multiple age cohorts universally encountered gendered barriers to becoming artists, including resistance from family members, within formal artistic training, making decisions about marriage and family, and negotiating already-made decisions regarding marriage and family. And for some of these women, all of these gendered barriers were present at some point in their lives. Women at all ages participating in the study easily volunteered information about gender inequality in their paid work lives and were able to point out multiple negative gendered experiences as they pursued artistic careers. Certainly this is not surprising to gender scholars, as those in the lesser position in the gender binary are more likely to "see" gender, to see it as an unequal situation, and perhaps to develop coping strategies.

Women artists deal with the conflict of choosing to make a living in art against the larger definitions of work and success, which are further negotiations with gendered ex-

pectations of women in contemporary society. Gender becomes a notable component to women artists' lives, with women noticing gender differences (i.e., inequalities) in terms of being considered an artist. Women's experiences and perspectives discussed here demonstrate clearly that an art career is still a man's world, for gendered expectations appear in both the personal and professional sectors of women's lives as they pursue artistic careers.

Working as an artist, women who had not yet married or had children experienced significant pressures from family who indicated more comfort with a traditional career and lifestyle. Some talked about their fears regarding living a traditional life, as it would interfere with their artistic career. Highlighting what Helen said earlier about marriage and kids: "I don't even want to think about it. Scares me to death," the artistic career requests a great deal of time, attention, and focus, and as it is not an hourly career, the artist must make art when they can. Women artists also discuss the challenges of balancing work and family life—most participants who do participate in traditional family activities have done so at the expense of their artistic development, for as Audrey stated, "But here I am with two little kids, and so I just put it [my artistic career] on the back burner again."

The career trajectory for all the women in the study included some exposure to formal art education as a way in which to enter the art world on a professional basis, and for some women in the study, this meant majoring in art education instead of art, to prepare for an initial career of teaching children art in schools before pursuing art on one's own. The pervasiveness of gender inequality as these women pursued higher education was noticeable. For example, Lisa felt her professors thought she was in college

not to obtain a degree like a serious artist would, but instead was there to dabble in art to pursue an M-R-S degree. A number of women obtained a more practical degree like arts education so that they could work (or marry and have children) before working successfully as artists. Women are choosing in their younger years to fit family and children into their lives, thus the arts education degree serves such a purpose.

While conceptualizing an art career in a broad context (e.g., including high and low art, as well as full- and part-time workers), it might appear to be a woman-friendly career. The majority of art students in the U.S. are women (as are most college students on campus in the U.S.) (National Bureau of Economic Research, 2015), art can be done in a part-time fashion, and one usually has a great deal of control over work hours, especially if one has continual studio or workspace access (Bain, 2004, 2005, 2007). On paper it seems that one can manage an art career relatively easily along with managing a family. However, women artists revealed a number of barriers and disadvantages, including lacking family support to pursue an artistic career, and experiencing discrimination in education and training. Once identified as artists, women experienced regular dismissal of their work, limiting their professional development, and supporting themselves with (sometimes multiple) better paying jobs as they strove to build a viable client base. Study participants discuss the difficulties of how their seemingly workable choice of artist actually conflicted with family demands, revealing that the artistic career remains a gendered one.

Artistic careers present themselves to workers as providing great freedoms such as flexible schedules, the ability to work from home, and the like. However, in this research study participants reveal that artistic

careers are unfortunately laden with barriers, and these barriers matter especially for women who are trying to "make it work" in what still seems very much to be a man's world. Artistic careers share great similarities to what we consider more traditional careers (e.g., office work) in that there are stages of gendered stops that women must encounter and overcome throughout the course of their careers. ■

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On subalternity and representation: Female and post colonial subjects claiming universal human rights in 1948

Rebecca Adami

Abstract

Recent research has questioned the dominant narrative of human rights as a Western project, by re-reading the drafting of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights (UDHR) in 1948, as rooted in conflicting cultural narratives, rather than stemming from a Western hegemonic consensus. Yet, such readings may consolidate static notions of particularity in which narratives on religion and culture are given greater importance than that of gender. Hence the need to look specifically at the unique non- Western and female subjects who represented their countries in the drafting process, such as Begum Shaista Ikramullah (Pakistan), Mehta Hansa (India) and Minerva Bernardino (Dominican Republic). This paper draws on Gayatri Spivak's work on subalternity by exploring the possibilities and constrains of female representation in relation to change. How did the concept of human rights change due to the participation of these United Nations women delegates? Additionally, how can subalternity be understood in relation to women's history in the aftermath of the social crisis that led to the drafting of the UDHR? The study emphasizes the participation of these women as having been crucial for the political articulation of human rights as an inclusive concept.

Keywords

human rights, universal declaration, women's history, subalternity, Spivak

Introduction

Recent research has questioned the dominant narrative of human rights as a Western project, by re-reading the drafting of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights (UDHR) in 1948, as rooted in conflicting cultural narratives, rather than stemming from a Western hegemonic consensus. Yet such readings may consolidate static notions of particularity in which narratives on religion and culture are given greater importance than that of gender, hence the need to look specifically at the unique non-Western and female subjects who represented their countries in the drafting process. I have elsewhere (Adami, 2015) explored such counter narrative of non-Western female subjects in the drafting of the UDHR, namely the female representatives Begum Shaista Ikramullah (Pakistan), Mehta Hansa (India), and Minerva

Bernardino (Dominican Republic). "The concept of 'counter narratives' makes explicit the hegemony that silences some of the voices that counter conceptions of a universal subject. Reading the UDHR through narratives other than the Western narrative of the origin of human rights enriches human rights studies" (Adami, 2015, p. 15). This paper will focus on the contribution by the Indian representative Hansa Mehta. Drawing on Gayatri Spivak's work on subalternity, this article explores the possibilities and constrains of female representation in relation to change. The article's aim is to introduce neglected voices and open new venues for future research on human rights. How can subalternity be understood in relation to women's history in the aftermath of the social crisis that led to the drafting of the UDHR? The study emphasizes the participation of non-Western women in the drafting process, with the main aim of displaying what has been overseen in earlier research that emphasizes only the male, Western delegates in the drafting process, since such a dominant narrative portrays only one of multiple and conflicting historical narratives.

Gender and Human Rights

Is the notion of human rights a Western and male concept that originated in a milieu that was unaware of the social and political struggles that women, children, and minorities face? Human rights have been alleged to represent a universal subject and inherently exclude marginalized voices and notions of being that may counter the Western morals underlining the universality of human rights. Judith Butler (2001) calls for a reinterpretation of human rights based on local conceptions of what it means to be human

since such conceptualizations are defined under historical and cultural circumstances. Michael Ignatieff (2003) and Mutua Makau (2002) have raised similar arguments on the need to rearticulate human rights against presumed Eurocentrism. Makau (2002) argues that the human rights movement today is imperialistic and that it is problematic that its 1948 inception was spurred by the human rights atrocities during World War II, because human rights in Makau's view originates from Western problems and cultural values. Ignatieff (2003) equally criticizes the idolatry of human rights for being used as political trump cards by Western societies in an international arena in order to "civilize" non-Western societies. Along these lines, Butler (2001) suggests "that an anti-imperialist or at least non-imperialist conception of international human rights must call into question what is meant by human, and learn from the various ways and means by which it is defined across cultural venues" (p. 22). The postmodern and culturally relativistic critique against a universal notion of human rights (as rooted in a specific historical context when the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was drafted in 1948) reifies the dominant historical narrative that connects human rights to Western culture and values.

Rather than arguing for a reinterpretation of human rights today through different and conflicting cultural and particular values, I aim to challenge the dominant historical narrative on the creation of human rights. In particular, I look at the notion of human rights as defined through the thirty articles of the UDHR, lifting silenced accounts from the drafting process.

Whereas Butler (2001) argues that 'we would be making a mistake if we thought we understood already which rights, and which formulation of rights, are and are not universal, which meaning for "universality" we

should agree upon' (p. 22). I claim that the cultural translation of rights that Butler envisions was the very basis for the creation of a universal notion of human rights in 1948. As I have explored elsewhere (Adami, 2012, 2013, 2014), United Nations delegates from non-Western and Western societies met on an international arena and agreed to disagree on the values that underscore the moral justification of the universality of human rights. Human rights were referred to as practical principles, compatible with divergent cultural value systems. What was under critical consideration in the United Nations by the delegates in 1948 was the disrespect of human rights in national legislation around the world, in Western as well as non-Western countries. The wording in the declaration was not directed toward lawyers, government officials, or academics, but rather toward ordinary women and men, with the implicit aim that these people would learn and claim their rights legally.

In the Commission on Human Rights, that met in 1946 to discuss the first drafts of the declaration, delegates argued for the universality of human rights from conflicting ideological grounds, such as Communist, Liberal, Catholic, Islamic, Hindu, Christian, and Secular values. The declaration was stripped of any specific cultural reference to God or natural law in the final text, in order for delegates from conflicting cultural backgrounds to reach a common list of universal human rights, but on conflicting philosophical and ideological grounds.

In 1946, only 11 out of 56 member states to the United Nations who participated in the drafting of the UDHR were European (Moyn, 2014). Johannes Morsink (1999) and Paul Gordon Lauren (2011) have written historical works on the drafting process, and both have highlighted the contributions made by male United Nations delegates.

Morsink (1999) questions Lauren's (2011) focus on the French delegate René Cassin as the "father" of the document and wants to redirect the focus to the Canadian delegate John Humphrey, who collected the earlier international declarations on rights to draft a preliminary version of the declaration.

Notably both Morsink (1999) and Lauren (2011) focus on the influence of male, Western delegates to the United Nations Commission on Human Rights. In light of the fact that the Western delegates were not the majority nor even dominated the debates in the Commission on Human Rights, this historical focus can be seen as a choice of raising a certain male, Western narrative out of a multitude of competing historical narratives.

More recent research has questioned this dominant historical narrative by raising competing historical narratives on cultural and religious diversity amongst the United Nations delegates who were involved in the process of debating and amending the document in different instances in the United Nations in 1946-48 (Hoover, 2013; Liu, 2014; Adami, 2012). Still, the notion of human rights continues to be criticized—especially within feminist and postcolonial research on social justice—for its alleged euro-centrism and male-centrism (Dembour, 2006; Halme, 2008; Ackerly, 2008; Mutua, 2002; Mouffe, 2005). This critique has resulted in a discourse that speaks of "women's rights," "indigenous people's rights" and "collective rights," both to stress the fact that not "all human beings" have the same needs (and hence people should have equal opportunity), and thus different kinds of support to realize their potential, but also as a counter or supplementary discourse against the male-blindness of the universal subject of human rights. The negative side effect of this critique against the universality of human

rights (when seen as conflated with notions of maleness, whiteness, Westernness, and neoliberalism) is that it potentially erodes the political force of individual women today, be they Muslim or Hindu or Secular, who argue against patriarchal practices that hinder the rights and freedoms of women by basing their claims to equal rights on that very same universality of human rights (though not conflated with maleness, whiteness, Westernness, or neoliberalism).

> When the UN conference at Beijing met a few years ago and we heard there a discourse on "women's human rights," the term struck many people as paradoxical. But think about what this term, coined by Charlotte Bunch, actually says. It says that the "human" is contingent, that it has in the past and continues in the present to define a variable and restricted population, which may or may not include women. (Butler, 2001, p. 23)

This feminist critique against the universality of human rights and its subject seems unsurprising considering the dominant narrative reified in earlier research on the history of human rights, which focuses chiefly on its roots in the American Bill of Rights and the French Declaration on the Rights of Man and of the Citizen (Hunt, 2007; Spivak, 2004), historical documents whose drafters neglected the very notion of women as citizens or rights bearers.

Subalternity

The representation of women's voices through my writing is put under critical examination through the work of Gayatri Spivak on the "impossibility" of female representation. I use Spivak's work (1988, 2010, 2004) on subalternity to problematize the fact that women's knowledge has been sub-

jugated in relation to human rights. Spivak (1988) deconstructs this historicization, where she describes the "complicity between subject and object of investigation" (Spivak, 1988, p. 28), between the historian and the subaltern. Spivak (2004) argues that international conferences on human rights use representatives of a collective subaltern more as a tokenization than actual voices who are able to speak for the subaltern. The problem with this theory is that it does not acknowledge that the female representative, although she may not share the social and economic disadvantage of the subaltern, may come from a similar background, and may have the possibility to talk of social and economic injustices that nonetheless bring something new to the international arena that concern the rights of the subaltern.[1] The female, non-Western delegates who participated in the drafting of the UDHR voted for the inclusion of rights for people under colonial rule (in the second part of article two in the declaration) and to include the article on equal rights within marriage and at its dissolution that the female delegate Eleanor Roosevelt held as unnecessary at the time.

I use Spivak's (1988) thoughts on historical deconstruction in order to think along the lines of insurgency and change, and I bring into question those who have been seen as political actors for change and those who have been silenced through the generally dominant narrative of the drafting of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Even Spivak (2004) herself overlooks the involvement of non-Westerners in the drafting. Thinking along the lines of the constraints of female representation, these women were

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[1] Spivak (1999) has in more recent work, *A critique of postcolonial reason: Toward a history of the vanishing present*, challenged her own field and earlier work.

highly educated—some of them in Western universities—hence, according to Spivak, they cannot be seen as representatives of the subaltern, who cannot speak. What Spivak forces us to acknowledge is the political dimension of writing history. Can we really, as European or privileged subjects, re-tell a narrative of social change in which we do not know all the desires behind its impetus?

Women's Suffrage and the All Women Indian Conference

Mary Ann Glendon (2001) revisited the drafting process of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, focusing mainly on Eleanor Roosevelt, the American female delegate. The previously mentioned critique against human rights as originating in Western culture and problems neglects the historical contexts of politics and struggles for social justice in which newly independent non-Western societies participated in the drafting of the UDHR, amongst them many women who had fought for the independence of those countries. Pakistan and India won their independence in 1947, and Hindu and Muslim women had been actively taking part in the disobedience movement against the British rule (Narain, 2008; Forbes, 1996). The All Indian Women Conference (AIWC) had lobbied for women's right to vote and to be eligible for government against the British and the nationalists in their respective countries. The All Indian Women Conference gathered women across religious and cultural groupings, representing a uniting and stabilizing force in India (Basu & Ray, 1990). As women had played a significant role in the movement toward independence in their struggle alongside the nationalists and non-violence movements, they had equally advanced their political

voice through organizing against the colonial occupation. But the struggle for women's rights that aimed at improving women's social and political positions through the Hindu and Muslim personal law was actively combated by Hindu and Muslim men. The All India Women Conference wanted to combat the obstacles to women's suffrage, such as child marriage and purdah, prevalent forms of inequality, as well as to gain rights of women to inherit and own property and to be educated:

> Indian women leaders took the lead in calling for personal law reform, and in 1946 the AIWC formulated an Indian Women's Charter of Rights, calling for gender equality to be basis of citizenship rights in India. Demanding improvements in the status of women, the charter gave the highest priority to personal law reform. (Narain, 2008, p. 60)

The drafting of the UDHR coincided with the window of opportunity that women in many countries—both European and newly independent non-Western countries—faced in the post-war years, after having advanced their positions during World War I and II. Even though women in France had taken active part in the resistance movement against the Nazi occupation, they did not receive historical acknowledgement, but they did win their right to vote, which French women used for the first time April 29, 1945.

> The Ligue Francaise pour le Droit des Femmes (League of Women's Rights) had given itself the job of monitoring the misogyny of the political world and quoted the Socialist newspaper Le Populaire which wrote in 1946: "elections today hardly seem to interest anyone, especially women who, mostly, don't know what it is all about." The League commented "Is Le Popu quite sure that men, 'mostly,' do know what it is about?" (Duchen, 1994, p. 37)

Though women had advanced their positions as political subjects in many countries around the world after both World Wars, they were continuously seen as lacking the necessary qualities to contribute in public politics by nationalists who had argued that it was women's duty to support the resistance movements (be it against British rule, as in India and Pakistan or Nazi occupation as in France) by demanding women's political agency in times of war.

As war is often a disruption of gender roles since men are away at war—for a time replaced by women both in labor and more financial and political decisions—relinquishing these modes of agency when peacetime implied a return to order was not always desired by women, and after World War II, the return to the *status quo* seemed almost impossible after the suffragette movement (Duchen, 1994, p. 11-12).

When the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was being drafted in the postwar years, women advanced their position in the diplomatic international arena—with increased female representation in the United Nations. Women delegates came from India, Pakistan, Venezuela, the Dominican Republic, Denmark, Sweden, the Netherlands, and New Zealand in the Third Committee of the Social and Economic Council, as well as in the General Assembly, in which the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was being debated. In all the instances in which the declaration was discussed, the Committee on the Status of Women had three representatives present to lobby for different issues regarding women's human rights.

From the Archives

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights was discussed and debated in differ-

ent United Nations bodies before it was voted through the General Assembly December 10, 1948. The first draft of the declaration was made in the Drafting Committee in 1946, where Eleanor Roosevelt served as the only female delegate. All articles of the declaration and the wording in the preamble were then debated in the Commission on Human Rights, where Eleanor Roosevelt served as chair, with the Indian delegate Hansa Mehta as the other female representative. The Commission on Human Rights sent the declaration to the Third Committee of the Social and Economic Council, with twelve female delegates, before it was sent to the General Assembly. In all instances, the Committee on the Status of Women had three representatives to oversee the discussions.

Eleanor Roosevelt was initially against the creation of a Committee on the Status of Women. She argued that the Commission on Human Rights would deal with women's human rights, but the female delegate from Dominican Republic, Minerva Bernardino, insisted upon the need for such a committee, and she won the debate. Some of the female delegates were both representatives in the Committee on the Status of Women, as well as delegates to the Third Committee to the Social and Economic Council, such as Hansa Mehta (India), Way Sung New (China), Fryderyka Kalinowski (Poland), Angela Jurdak (Lebanon), Minerva Bernardino (Dominican Republic), Marie Helene Lefaucheux (France), and Bodil Begtrup (Denmark), Chairman of the Committee.

I focus here on the contributions of the female delegate Hansa Mehta in the Commission on Human Rights. In the Commission she was the only female delegate apart from Eleanor Roosevelt. She differed from Roosevelt on some crucial issues, disagreeing with the wording of "men" instead of

"everyone." Hansa Mehta fought for India's independence alongside Mahatma Gandhi in peaceful resistance demonstrations. She was from an Indian ethnic group called Gujarati, as was Gandhi. Hansa Mehta was the third woman from her ethnic group to obtain a college degree in India (her sister had been the second). Mehta got her bachelor's degree in philosophy and then studied journalism in London. She proposed a Charter of Women's Rights in India. In the Bombay Legislative Council, she was involved in the drafting of India's first constitution. When the first draft of the declaration was presented to the Commission, Hansa Mehta wanted the discussion to first center on the definition of human rights, and she proposed that the discussion be focused on her draft resolution, which dealt with the right of equality (Commission on Human Rights, 1947c). When the Declaration of Human Rights was discussed in the Commission, Hansa Mehta said that she did not like the wording "all men" or "and should act towards one another like brothers"; she felt that it might be interpreted to exclude women, and that it was out of date (Commission on Human Rights, 1947c). Eleanor Roosevelt, acting chair, replied that the word "men" used in this sense was generally accepted to include all human beings (Commission on Human Rights, 1947c). The delegate from United Kingdom, Lord Dukeston, proposed that, in order to avoid further discussion on the subject, a note should be included at the beginning of both documents to the effect that the word "men," as used therein, referred to all human beings. Hansa Mehta (India) said that she had no objection to the United Kingdom's suggestion, but Article 1 was the only place in the Declaration where the expression "men" appeared. She wished to have this changed to "human beings" or "persons" (Commission on Human Rights,

1947c). This wording in Article 1 was voted on and Mehta's suggestion was adopted at that stage of the process.

Displaced Voices

Hansa Mehta wanted to define the terms of "discrimination" and "minority" and to ensure safeguards in the declaration against the assimilation of minorities. Remembering the case of Indians, Chinese, Japanese and other peoples scattered in the world, Hansa Mehta said:

> An effort must be made to define in precise, legal and practical language, as to what a minority is, as to what discrimination is. Additional to this, a definition must be made forth with as to what specific safeguards must be incorporated in the proposed bill of human rights against the danger of assimilation of minorities where they exist. (Commission on Human Rights, 1947c)

She described the situation of millions of Indian people who had been displaced during the past hundred years of colonial rule and who faced discrimination and denials of rights and equality in their different locations due to questions of citizenship and nationality. She argued that these questions needed to be addressed in the Commission on Human Rights and discussed in reference to the principles of equal rights already mentioned in the United Nations Charter (Commission on Human Rights, 1947c). According to Hansa Mehta, the freedom of movement was not only the right of migration but also the freedom of movement within a state. She thought it crucial to safeguard people's freedom of movement within states, as this freedom was restricted in many countries for certain groups of people by discriminatory laws and regulations (Commission on Human Rights, 1947b). There was a discussion

in the Commission on race, and Hansa Mehta noted that it was important to mention that race included the notion of color (Commission on Human Rights, 1947c).

Mehta raised her voice in the Commission on Human Rights, both against the apartheid in South Africa and against the United Kingdom's colonial manners of neglecting and disrespecting the United Nations' notion of human rights. In this way, she engaged a strong rhetoric against colonialism and imperialism, representing the newly independent India in 1948:

> Mehta declared that the Government and people of India attached the greatest importance to the Human Rights Commission and considered that its work would profoundly influence the future of the United Nations. She recalled that the Government of South Africa had maintained the position during recent discussions that there had been no violation of human rights in South Africa since there existed no written definition of human rights as such within the framework of the United Nations. The Government of the United Kingdom had taken a similar attitude by suggesting that the dispute between India and South Africa might be referred to the International Court of Justice. Hansa Mehta considered it the justification of the Commission that pleas of this nature should not be allowed to be advanced within the forum of the United Nations in the future. (Commission on Human Rights, 1947a, p. 161)

Hansa Mehta exemplifies something I find absent from Spivak's account of the subaltern; namely, the fact that people's abilities and concerns are not determined by their social circumstances. In lacking an acknowledgement of this, Spivak's theory on change overlooks how some people actually break through barriers of race and privilege and become representatives of change for others, like these women have.

Spivak argues that the postcolonial intellectuals are a "paradigm of the intellectuals," as if these women who were coming from more or less privileged backgrounds—and were among the intellectuals of their time—existed only within a paradigm of intellectuals.

Mehta was critical of how the discussions and debates in the Commission used a legalistic and academic vocabulary that she did not want to see used in the final text of the Declaration. During one of the Commission's sessions, she "wondered whether the Commission should be satisfied with an academic discussion of a Bill of Rights or whether it wished to implement such a Bill" (Commission on Human Rights, 1947a, p. 161). She wanted the declaration to be a binding instrument on all member states or to be complemented with a convention, but not "in the nature of a vague resolution, including mystic and psychological principles" (Commission on Human Rights, 1947a, p. 161).

Conclusion

Since the declaration was not drafted as a binding legal document, its educative aim was made explicit in the preamble of the text: that everyone should learn about his or her human rights. There was an implicit aim with this: for ordinary women and men to claim their human rights legally—in other words, to claim the rights that they may not have had in national legal systems—and to claim these in the newly established framework of human rights.

In my reading of Spivak on the subaltern, there seems to be a lack of acknowledgement of change. The theory on the subaltern is deterministic, essentialistic, and denies agency and the will. Although Spivak's problemati-

zation of historizing by the privileged, white, Western subject brings out the complexity of the problem, there is no shift towards a solution. Deconstruction without affirmation. There is a departure from a Derridarian notion of deconstruction that is always followed by the affirmative. As such, Spivak's theory does not account for notions of *being* as a constant process of *becoming*. Static notions of *being*, as the argument that some are "held from social mobility," suggests that people are determined (kept from development and processes of creative growth) by the social environment in which they are "trapped." Even within a cultural and social context, be it colonial, patriarchal or a territory under siege—one that clearly limits the opportunities of intellectual enrichment and restricts people's freedom through discriminatory social and legal structures—I nevertheless question the validity of the static notion that Spivak describes of the subject as *determined* by her environment. How can we understand the processes of *becoming* as being unique and relationally shaped? By subaltern, Spivak refers to "those removed from lines of social mobility" (Spivak, 2004, p. 531). The language that Spivak uses here, I argue, presupposes a passivity of the subaltern and suggests that the subaltern is not only conditioned and limited by her social environment but ultimately *removed*. There is an implicit reference to agency here—to the one/ones who remove the subaltern.

Spivak's deconstruction is vital for laying down the complexity of the making of the "other," a construction that European thinkers have been preoccupied with in establishing a sense of a European subject. Nonetheless, such a deconstruction leaves us with nothing affirmative in envisaging change on the part of the subaltern. What we are left with are the notions of collective consciousness that Spivak criticizes, but that in a sense

are reified through her deconstruction.

An overemphasis on the collective narrative of the "subaltern" that Spivak defines, as focused on those who are removed from the lines of mobility, neglects the uniqueness of each individual and her life story, which cannot be reduced to the collective narrative of the subaltern. These unique life stories carry with them the potential to change, of insurgence. Spivak herself has started education for the poorest children in rural areas in India, and her own noble actions speak of the affirmation I find absent from her theory of the subaltern, namely a notion of change and agency—that even if the stories have been missing in history, voice can be gained in the constant process of becoming and learning. The female delegate from the Dominican Republic, Minerva Bernardino, was orphaned as a child but managed to educate herself and succeed in creating a political career both nationally and internationally, ultimately becoming a strong lobbyist for women's rights. It was in part due to Minerva's lobbying that the United Nations Charter today includes the notion of non-discrimination based on sex. I find that stories like that of Minerva Bernadino question Spivak's notion of the subaltern who cannot appear without the thought of the elite. It additionally questions her collective notion of the subaltern in that since the will of the subaltern cannot appear, we can only see it through the crisis their resistance produces (Spivak, 2004, p. 12).

Spivak engages the question of whether the subaltern can speak, and with this she endeavors to criticize earlier European intellectuals who write the history of the colonial subject by appropriating the permission to narrate their story. Nevertheless, behind the collective announcements through the media of suffering and human rights violations in Southern countries are unique stories that

subsequently get dispersed into collective narratives.

Even though the theory on the subaltern is written concerning workers—not intellectual colonial subjects, like the women who took part in the drafting of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights—it is nonetheless crucial for understanding how parts of history become silenced in an attempt to define a dominant European subject. Hansa Mehta from India, Minerva Bernardino from Dominican Republic, and Shaista Ikramullah from Pakistan argued (contrary to the Western female delegate Eleanor Roosevelt) that women in their countries were not automatically included in the notion of "men" as Roosevelt held. The history of human rights needs to acknowledge these neglected voices in future research.

Acknowledgements

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The Language of Toys: Gendered Language in Toy Advertisements

Patricia R. Owen and Monica Padron

Abstract

Children are socialized to conform to traditional gender role stereotypes, a developmental process affected by elements of popular culture that associate femininity with passivity, nurturance, and emotional expressivity; and masculinity with power, agency, and aggression. Toys, as one element of popular culture, often reflect these stereotypes through manipulations of design features that signify the gender appropriateness of toy play. Prior research on toys has documented the gender-differentiated use of such overt markers as colors, names, and logos in toy marketing. However, subtler gender markers such as the language used to advertise toys has received little research attention. This is surprising given the evidence of distinctive language styles adopted by females and males that are considered to reflect traditional gender role stereotypes. In this study, the narrative language that accompanied action figures marketed for girls, and action figures marketed for boys was analyzed for the presence of gendered language. It was hypothesized that lexical elements associated with traditional gender role stereotypes would differentiate the narratives as a function of gender. Results showed that female action figure narratives contained more intensive adverbs, more social words, and more adjectival references to physical appearance, fantasy, and triviality, supporting stereotypes of females as emotional, social, and uninvolved with real world concerns. Male narratives contained more second-person plural pronouns, more aggression words, and more adjectival references to power, destructive action, and science and technology, supporting stereotypic masculinity associations to power, aggression, action, and involvement with real-life endeavors. Discussion focuses on potential adverse consequences to children's psychosocial development that is posed by exposure to gender-polarized toys.

Keywords

gendered language, gender role stereotypes, toys, children's marketing, text analytics, children's advertising

Children are socialized from very young ages to conform to traditional gender role stereotypes. Girls learn throughout childhood the social role expectations of nurturance, dependence, and passivity (Eagly, 1987). These expectations are consonant with traditional ideology of femininity, a tradition that holds that a female's primary obligation is to caregiving and domestic tasks. Girls are also socialized at young ages to be emotionally expressive and other-oriented, attributes that facilitate cooperation, social harmony, and affiliation with others (Williams & Best, 1990).

By contrast, boys learn from young ages the social roles consonant with traditional views of masculinity, roles which emphasize dominance, independence, and emotional reserve (Kimmel, 2011). Boys also learn that competition and expressions of aggression are tolerated and even promoted, as these attributes are viewed as aligned with males' agentic role in society (Eagly & Wood, 1991). Extensive research has documented that popular culture has significant impact on children's learning of these traditional gender role stereotypes. Picture books (Crabb & Bielawski, 1994), television cartoons (Leaper, Breed, Hoffman, & Perlman, 2002), and play-things (Klinger, Hamilton, & Cantrell, 2001) are among those socialization agents that impart strong messages about roles deemed appropriate for girls and for boys.

Toys in particular convey powerful messages about female and male roles. Previous research has documented that toys are highly gender-typed. In a content analysis of contemporary toys, Blakemore and Centers (2005) demonstrated clear associations of toy types with traditional gender stereotypes. The toys designed for girls featured themes of nurturance, domesticity, and concern with appearance and attractiveness, while boys' toys focused almost exclusively on themes of aggression, competition, and action, both constructive and destructive. These gender-associated attributes also appear in advertisements for toys. Macklin and Kolbe (1994) found that television commercials aimed at girls invariably involved dolls, fashion, and caring for others. Play for girls takes place in domestic settings while boys' play occurs outside the home (Larson, 2001). Boys' toys featured in television commercials are rated as both more aggressive and more desirable (Klinger et al., 2001). Television commercials show girls and boys interacting with toys in quite different ways. In studies by Browne (1998)

and Kahlenberg and Hein (2010), girls' play with objects was passive (e.g., gentle touching) and involved cooperation with others, while boys' play was competitive and action based, involving manipulation and construction of objects. Even the words in television voice-overs for toy ads differ as a function of gender. Data from a study by Johnson and Young (2002) showed that verbs describing girls' interactions with toys emphasized nurturance, emotional expressivity, and passivity, while boys' verbs emphasized agency, competition, and destruction.

Gendered advertising of toys is also evident in print advertisements. Pennell's (1994) study of toy advertisements in newspapers and catalogues of popular toys showed striking differences between ads targeted to boys and those targeted to girls. Ads for boys' toys were displayed in intense bold colors and featured character names and other product attributes that connoted strength, power, and action. Ads for girls' toys were depicted in soft pastel colors and featured character names and product attributes that signified passivity, triviality, and preoccupation with fashion and physical attractiveness. Thematic content of girls' toys invoked fantasy and pretend worlds, while boys' toys involved complex, real-world endeavors. Toys advertised on the Internet similarly reflect gender stereotyping. A content analysis (Auster & Mansbach, 2012) of toys advertised on the Disney Store website revealed that girls' toys emphasized domesticity, nurturance and the importance of physical attractiveness, while boys' toys emphasized action and power. The Disney ads, color-coded by gender, displayed girls' toys in soft pastels, mostly pink and purple, and boys' toys in bold colors of red, black, and brown.

Although considerable research confirms the association of types of toys and design features of toys with traditional gender role

stereotypes, there is limited empirical research on the language used to describe and market toys. This research neglect is surprising given the evidence of gendered language or distinctive linguistic styles that characterize the communications of females and of males. Proponents of gendered language argue that word choice in communication is not indiscriminate but rather reflects psychological attributes that are informed in large part by understandings of social relationships (Tausczik & Pennebaker, 2010). The significance of the meaning of observed gender differences in language is debated, though some scholars (Lakoff, 1975; Mulac, Bradac, & Gibbons, 2001) contend that word choice is derivative of both early and ongoing socialization experiences that emanate from hierarchal power structures that view males as the dominant class, and females as subordinate. As such, language usage reflects differences in social power and socio-economic status which explains, according to Lakoff (1975), a feminine communication style characterized by linguistic markers signifying tentative, deferential, and trivial attributes.

Gendered language has been studied in a variety of contexts, ranging from informal and formal communications of females and males to the language of advertisers marketing gender-branded products. Evidence from empirical studies (Mulac, 1998; Newman, Groom, Handelman, & Pennebaker, 2008) demonstrates gender-linked tendencies in the use of a number of linguistic elements, including pronouns, imperatives, intensifier adverbs, and adjectives.

» Pronouns

Females appear to use more personal pronouns overall (Newman et al., 2008), and more first-person plural pronouns (*we,*

us, our) than do males in a variety of written contexts, including fiction and nonfiction writing (Argamon, Koppel, Fine, & Shimoni, 2003), text messaging (Newman et al., 2008), Twitter postings (Kivran-Swaine, Brody, & Mor Naaman, 2013*),* and Internet blogs (Schler, Koppel, Argamon, & Pennebaker, 2006). The use of second-person personal pronouns (*you, your*) may also be a gender marker as males have been noted to use second-person pronouns more frequently than females in conversation (Litosseliti, 2006). In marketing, pronouns are also used differentially as a function of gender. In a comparison of women's and men's magazines, Krizkiva (2009) discovered substantially more personal pronouns used in advertisements directed at women. Second-person pronouns were also more frequently used in advertising directed toward males than in advertising of female products (Whissell & McCall, 1997).

The differential use of personal pronouns by gender has been explained as both a reflection and reinforcement of traditional gender stereotypes (Mulac et al., 2001). As noted by Tausczik and Pennebaker (2010), the pronouns used in conversational interactions reveal how people refer to each other, and serves as one indicator of the quality of a relationship. As such, females' more frequent usage of pronouns overall and first-person plural pronouns signifies a more personal and communal relationship with the intended audience, and is in accord with traditional gender stereotypes of females as more relational and socially sensitive. The use of second-person personal pronouns, on the other hand, suggests an authoritative manner of informing or instructing (Simmons, Chambless, & Gordon, 2008) and the more frequent association of these pronouns with males is aligned with traditionally masculine stereotypes of directness and dominance.

» Intensifier Adverbs and Imperatives

Intensifier adverbs and imperatives have been noted to be linguistic features that consistently discriminate the speech of females and males (Mulac & Lundell, 1994). Intensifier adverbs are words that emphasize or embellish the word or phrase they modify (Kivran-Swaine et al., 2013), and they appear to be used more by females than males in spoken communication. In an analysis of American and British English speech, Romero (2012) found that females used the intensifiers *just, very, so, quite, really, real, completely, quite, entirely, absolutely, totally,* and *pretty* more frequently than did males. Sharp (2012) also documented a greater use of the intensifiers *really* and *so* in the scripted dialogue of female television characters. Studies of written communication in a variety of contexts also reveal that intensifier adverbs are used more frequently by females than males (Arias, 1996; Mulac, 1998; Newman et al., 2008; Thomson, Murachver, & Green, 2001). Imperatives (or directives) refer to giving orders and commands, and research is consistent in finding that males use imperatives more than females (Mulac et al., 2001). In studies of children's language, boys use more commanding imperatives than girls, both on the playground (Goodwin, 1980) and in the classroom (Leaper & Smith, 2004). Adult males have been observed to use imperatives more than females in informal discussion groups (Preisler, 1986), in same-gender conversations (Lapadat & Seesahai, 1978), in cross-gender dyadic interactions (Mulac, Wiemann, Widenmann, & Gibson, 1988), and in physician-patient interactions (West, 1993).

Gender differences in the usage of both intensifier adverbs and imperatives have been explained through the association of these linguistic elements with tradition-al gender stereotypic attributes. The use of intensifier adverbs by females has been explained as a facilitation of expressions of emotional topics (Bulgin et al., 2013; Carli, 1990) used to promote empathy and social harmony (Kivran-Swaine et al., 2013) and to capture the attention of the listener (Peters, 1994). This explanation is consistent with traditional female stereotypic characteristics of emotionality connected to social relatedness. The more frequent use of imperatives by males corresponds with traditional male gender stereotypes as imperative usage is associated with competence, power, and dominance (Cheng, Chen, Chandramouli, & Subbalakshmi, 2009; Weintraub, 1989). Imperatives, as Aries (1996) states, are a "face-threatening" speech form.

» Adjectives

Adjectives are words that describe nouns and are often used to embellish language by adding detail. The communication styles of females and males have been observed to differ in semantic properties of adjectives used. Adjectives associated with female communication have been characterized as social, emotional, judgmental (Caskey, 2011; Poynton, 1989), and, more pejoratively, as extravagant (Pei, 1969), appearance-focused (Ivey & Backlund, 2004), and "empty," a term connoting trivialities and what is "unimportant to the world" (Lakoff, 1975). Data from a number of empirical studies support observations that females in contrast to males use different adjectival referents. Investigations of text messaging (Newman et al., 2008), Twitter postings (Kivran-Swaine et al., 2013), blogs (Schler et al., 2006), and fiction and non-fiction writing (Argamon et al., 2003) reveal that the writings of females contain more emotion related words and more relationship references than do the

writings of males. Indeed, one of the largest differences found in Newman et al.'s (2008) meta-analysis of gendered language research was the more frequent use by females of psychological (i.e., inner thoughts and feelings) and social process words. In Rasmussen and Moely's (1986) study of perceptions of gendered language, femininity attributes were ascribed to speakers when language samples contained adjectives judged as "empty" and trivial. In contrast to a female language style described as emotional, social, and trivial male language style has been characterized as instrumental, technological, and informational (Newman et al., 2008). Adjectival references to masculinity are associated with action, power, independence, and logic (Rasmussen & Moely, 1986). Empirical studies of both spoken and written communications find that males make more frequent references to objects, and use more quantity, size, and number words than do females (Argamon et al., 2003; Caskey, 2011; Mehl & Pennebaker, 2003; Mulac, 1998). Although male language is noted to contain less emotional content than female language (Newman et al., 2008), data from at least one study indicates that the use of anger words may be associated more with males (Mehl & Pennebaker, 2003).

Adjectives not only distinguish the spoken and written communication of females and males, but are used differentially in materials targeted to female and male audiences. Willemsen's (1998) study of magazines marketed for teens revealed that text material in girls' magazines contained a greater number of emotion-related adjectives and more references to fashion, beauty, and relationships than did boys' magazines. Krizkova (2009) noted similar adjectival semantic differences in advertisements placed in women's and men's magazines. Advertisements in women's magazines contained a high frequency of adjectives that emphasized positive emotion, relationships, and brightness, whereas advertisements in men's magazines referenced attributes of superiority, adventure, achievement, and strength.

» Research Question and Hypotheses

Evidence from studies of language styles in adult communication indicates that some linguistic features are gendered, and that gender differences in usage reflect and reinforce traditional gender role divisions. These divisions are also found in advertising and marketing domains as advertisers engage in selective marketing strategies based on associations of gender with traditional gender attributes. Products targeted to females are branded to stereotypic notions of femininity as compliant and nurturing, and products targeted to males are branded as unemotional and work-oriented (Alreck, 1994; Fugate & Phillips, 2010). Products are even ascribed with distinctive personality traits based on their gender association. According to Grohmann (2009), feminine branded products are typed as *fragile, graceful, sensitive, sweet,* and *tender,* and masculine-branded products are *brave, adventurous, daring, aggressive,* and *dominant.* Gender branding begins in early childhood with gendered division of toys evident in a toy's name, color, logo, and packaging (Grohmann, 2009), and in segregated product placement in retail stores. While these more overt aspects of gender-branding in toy type and design have been investigated (Jadva, Golombok, & Hines, 2010), little research has been paid to subtler features such as the language used to describe toys. As action figures and their accessories represent a high volume growth industry, generating sales in 2014 of over one billion U.S dollars (NPD Group, 2013), this study examines the descriptive language of

action figures marketed for girls, and action figures marketed for boys. Consistent with prior research on gendered language and on traditional gender stereotypes associated with toy type and design, it is hypothesized that lexical elements found in the narratives accompanying action figures will differ as a function of the gender of the intended consumer. It should be noted that throughout this study, the terms "female" and "male" are defined as binary constructs to conform with marketing industry gender divisions. The following hypotheses are generated with reference to boy-oriented action figures and girl-oriented action figures.

H1: The narrative language accompanying boy-oriented action figures in contrast to girl-oriented action figures will contain more references to (a) power, (b) action, (c) aggression, and (d) science and technology

H2: The narrative language accompanying girl-oriented action figures in contrast to boy-oriented action figures will contain more references to (a) physical appearance, (b) fantasy, (c) triviality, and (d) social relatedness.

Method

» Sample

The sample consisted of action figures that featured textual narratives about the figure on the packaging. An action figure was defined as a human-like figure that was poseable with at least two points of articulation, and thus included those figures conventionally classified as action figures and fashion dolls. The figures were categorized as boy-oriented or girl-oriented based on the name of the figure, its physical characteristics, and/or use of a gendered pronoun (e.g., *he, she*) in the accompanying narrative description. To assess the validity of action

figures' categorization as boy-oriented or girl-oriented, each was cross-checked with the Toys "R" Us online toy catalogue to insure that the figure matched the catalogue's gender classification of toys. Action figures included in the sample were available in national chain stores, targeted to age ranges corresponding to preschool or early elementary ages, and contained descriptive text ranging from 20 to 90 words on the packaging. Over a six-month period during the summer and fall of 2013, action figures were sampled from two national discount retail stores and one national chain toy store. The stores were selected based on their extensive toy inventory and consistency as to the availability of similar toy brands. The researchers entered each store at prescheduled intervals throughout the observation period, and photographed the narratives on the packages of all new action figures that met criteria. For product lines that had multiple figures available (e.g., the Disney Princess product line featured 10 princesses), only the first figure displayed that met criteria was included in the sample. The initial sample included 37 girl-oriented action figures, and 34 boy-oriented action figures. Preliminary data analysis revealed a discrepancy on the measure of total word count in that the girl action figures had significantly more words, attributable to the greater number of girl action figures. To achieve parity in the number of action figures analyzed, three additional boy-oriented action figures were added to the sample.

» Coding

The photographed narratives accompanying each action figure were converted into text files, and coded for seven language features. The Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count (LIWC; Pennebaker, Booth, & Fran-

cis, 2007) program was used to tabulate frequencies and percentages of six of the language features, and included first-person plural pronouns, second-person pronouns, imperatives, adverbs, words associated with aggression, and words associated with social relatedness. LIWC is a computerized text analytic program which counts frequencies of words in a text document, and, based on its extensive internal dictionary, categorizes these words into a number of linguistic dimensions such as parts of speech (e.g., pronouns, imperatives, and adverbs) and psychological and interpersonal processes (e.g., anger, social processes). In accord with this study's hypotheses, words in action figure narratives connoting aggression were counted in LIWC's anger dimension, which is subsumed under the negative emotions domain and includes words related to aggression (e.g., *hate, kill, annoyed*). Words in action figure narratives connoting social relatedness were counted in LIWC's text analysis of first-person plural pronouns, adverbs, and the social process dimension, which includes words related to family, friends, and humans (e.g., *mate, talk, buddy, baby*). LIWC is reported to be psychometrically sound with satisfactory inter-rater reliabilities for its word categorizations (Pennebaker et al., 2007). Numerous empirical studies have demonstrated LIWC's utility in linking linguistic dimensions to psychological and social processes (Alpers et al., 2005; Bantum & Owen, 2009; Kahn, Tobin, Massey, & Anderson, 2007; Kivran-Swaine et al., 2013; Pennebaker, Mayne, & Francis, 1997; Schultheiss, 2013).

As the LIWC does not categorize adjectives into linguistic domains, the frequencies of descriptive common adjectives identified in each action figure narrative were manually tabulated. Based on prior research classifying adjectives as to their semantic attri-

butes and gender associations (Blakemore & Centers, 2005; Johnson & Young, 2002; Lakoff, 1975; Pennell, 1994; Poynton, 1989; Rasmussen & Moely, 1986; Turner-Bowkar, 1996), adjectives were placed into one of the following six categories: (a) power, to include words with connotations of strength, might, authority, dominance ; (b) action, to include both constructive and destructive words related to purpose or activity, physical movement, object manipulation, doing, achievement; (c) science/technology, to include words referring to technological and scientific-sounding jargon; (d) physical appearance, to include words associated with the outward aspect of a person or thing that appeals to senses through physical attractiveness or brightness; (e) fantasy, to include words suggesting events beyond reality with connotations of dreaminess, otherworldliness, magic, and mysticism; and (f) triviality, to include words suggesting words that are non-serious, nonsensical, frivolous, innocuous, unimportant, or childlike. For the purpose of inter-rater reliability, a second person (an undergraduate college student trained in the classification of adjectives) independently classified all adjectives. Disagreements in classifications were discussed and resolved. Inter-rater reliabilities (alphas) were all at or above .89.

Results

A total of 37 girls' action figure toys and 37 boys' action figure toys comprised the sample. The total number of narrative words (N=1718) for the girl action figures did not differ significantly from the total number of narrative words for the boy action figures (N=1704). To examine differences of the six narrative language features of boy and girl action figures analyzed with the LIWC pro-

Table 1
Mean Levels of Language Features of Boy and Girl Action Figure (AF) Narratives

Language Dimension	Boy AF		Girl AF		
	M	SD	M	SD	t(72)
Power					
Second-Person Pronoun	1.84	2.65	0.38	1.44	2.92**
Imperatives	0.27	0.76	0.59	0.93	1.63**
Aggression	3.91	4.14	0.44	1.12	-4.92**
Social Relatedness					
First-Person Plural Pronouns	0.04	0.22	0.57	1.96	ns
Intensive Adverbs	1.71	1.59	3.42	3.25	2.88**
Social Process Words	7.33	4.90	10.43	5.75	2.49*

*$p<.01$. **$p<.001$.

Table 2
Cross Tabulation of Adjective Referents and Boy and Girl Action Figure (AF) Narratives

Adjective Referents	Boy AF		Girl AF		
	%	n	%	n	X2
Power	13	28	1	2	16.00*
Action	8	17	4	7	17.00*
Science/ Technology	5	10	0	0	
Physical Appearance	0	0	13	25	
Fantasy	2	4	5	10	6.00*
Triviality	0	0	8	15	

Note: Percentages were computed on 209 boy AF adjectives and 197 girl AF adjectives. *$p<.001$.

gram, t-tests were conducted with an alpha of *.01* selected to adjust for the large number of comparisons. These results are found in Table 1. Chi-square tests were conducted to examine differences in the frequencies of adjectival referents identified in girl and boy action figure narratives. A total of 197 adjectives were identified in girl action figure narratives, and 209 adjectives were identified in boy action figure narratives. These results are found in Table 2.

The first hypothesis (H1a), predicting that the language used to describe boy-oriented action figures in contrast to girl-oriented action figures would contain more references to power, was tested by counting frequencies of power-related adjectives, second-person pronouns, and imperatives in the boy and girl narratives. This hypothesis was partially supported. Analysis of the frequency of power-related adjectives yielded a significant difference, $x2(5, N=90) = 16.00$,

$p < .001$, with a greater number of power-related adjectives identified in boy narratives. There were 28 (13%) power-related adjectives in boy narratives and two power-related adjectives (*strong-willed, superhuman*) in girl narratives. The most frequent adjectives in boys' narratives were *might, super,* and *power.* The use of second-person pronouns also differed significantly by gender $(t(72)= 2.92, p < .001)$, with boys' narratives containing more second-person pronouns (M=1.84, SD=2.65) than girls' narratives (M=0.38, SD=1.44). There was a significant difference ($t(72)= 1.63, p < .001$) in the use of imperatives though not in the predicted direction, as girls' (M=0.59, SD=.93) action figure narratives contained more imperatives ($n= 22$) than did boys' (M=0.27, SD=.76; n=10) narratives.

Hypothesis 1b, predicting that the narratives of boy-oriented action figures in contrast to girl-oriented action figures would contain more references to action, was supported. Boys' narratives contained significantly more action-related adjectives than did girls' narratives $x2(5, N=90) = 17.00, p < .001$. There were 17 (8%) action-related adjectives in boys' narratives and seven (4%) in girls' narratives. Almost all of the girl action adjectives were judged as constructive or neutral (e.g., *sewing, designing, talking*), and nearly half (n=8) of the boy action-related adjectives were judged as destructive (e.g., *battling, ramming*). Only one girl adjective was judged as destructive (*ravaged*).

An association was found between gender of action figure and words associated with aggression and words associated with science and technology, supporting Hypothesis 1c and 1d. The boys' narratives contained a greater number of anger/aggression words than did girls' narratives, $t(72)= -4.92, p < .001$ (boys M=3.91, SD=4.14, girls M=0.44, SD=1.12). Aggression words found in boys'

narratives included such words as *evil, ruthless, terrifying,* and *vile.* Girls' narratives contained two aggression-related words: *malicious* and *super-villain.* The narratives of boys' action figures contained 10 (5%) references to science and technology (e.g., *supersonic, radioactive, electronic,* and *genetic*). There were no science or technology related adjectives in the girls' narratives.

The hypotheses predicting narrative linguistic differences between girl-oriented action figures and boy-oriented action figures in the constructs of physical appearance, fantasy, triviality, and social relatedness were supported. As predicted in Hypothesis 2a, large differences were found in adjectives associated with physical appearance, with girls' narratives containing significantly more of these adjectives than boys' narratives, $x2(5, N=90) = 13.00, p < .001$. Girls' narratives contained 25 (13%) appearance-related adjectives, with words related to brightness, fashion, and beauty (e.g., *shimmery, trendy, pretty*) occurring most frequently. There were no appearance-related adjectives in boys' narratives. An association between gender of action figure and fantasy-related words was found $x2(5, N=90) = 6.00, p < .001$, supporting Hypothesis 2b. Examination of cell frequencies show that narratives of girl-oriented action figures contained 10 (5%) fantasy-related adjectives (e.g., *magical*), while boys' narratives contained four (2%). As predicted in Hypothesis 2c, girl action figure narratives contained more trivial-related adjectives than did boys' narratives. The girls' narratives contained 15 (8%) words judged as trivial (e.g*., dee-licious, bow-rific, silly*). There were no trivial-related adjectives in boys' narratives.

Hypotheses 2d and 2e, predicting that the narratives of girl-oriented action figures in contrast to boy-oriented action figures would contain more references to social relatedness,

were partially supported. Girls' narratives in contrast to boys' narratives contained significantly more social process words, (t(72)= 2.49 p < .01 (girls M=10.43, SD=5.75; boys M=7.33, SD=4.90). Social process words related to the word *friends* appeared frequently (n=36) in girls' narratives, but were absent in boys' narratives (girls M=0.97, SD=1.43; boys M=0.00, SD=0.00). Girls' narratives in contrast to boys' narratives contained significantly more intensive adverbs, t(72)= 2.88, p < .005 (girls M=3.42, SD=3.25; boys M=1.71, SD=1.59), but did not contain, as hypothesized, more first-person plural pronouns, t(72)= 1.62, p =.108 (girls M=0.57, SD=1.96; boys M=0.04, SD=0.22).

Discussion

Results of this study's content analysis of the narratives of contemporary action figure toys indicate that linguistic features used to market these figures differ as a function of the gender of the intended consumer. Findings that the narratives of girls' action figures in comparison to boys' action figures contained more intensive adverbs and social words mirrors research on gendered language, and suggests that traditional feminine attributes of emotional expressivity and social relatedness are promoted in girls' toys. Moreover, the stereotype of female non-engagement with substantive, real-world concerns was reinforced by the disproportionately greater number of adjectives associated with physical appearance, fantasy, and triviality found in girls' narratives as compared to boys' narratives. In girl action figures, the language of power, agency, and science does not exist. The narratives of boys' action figures, which contain more second-person pronouns and adjectival references to power, destructive action, and science and technology, reflect-

ed stereotyped gender roles with linguistic associations to masculine attributes of dominance, aggression, and involvement with real-life endeavors.

A particularly striking finding in this content analysis was the extent to which the narratives of action figures were polarized with reference to adjectives associated with traditional gender roles. The boy-oriented action figure Batman, for example, is described as *deductive, unique, focused, mythical, fighting, awesome,* and *crime-fighting* while Bratz, a girl-oriented action figure, is *exotic, sparkling, amazing, fantastical,* and *beautiful.* Indeed, of the 37 boy action figures, there were no feminine-associated gender adjectives identified. Despite tougher, less feminine named toy lines for girls (e.g., Bratz; Monster High), only two masculine-associated gender adjectives were found in the narratives of the 37 girl action figures. One unexpected finding concerned the similar numbers of first-person plural pronouns in girl and boy narratives. First-person plural pronouns, however, were infrequently found in either gender narrative, which could be a function of the relatively few words found overall on toy packaging. Another unexpected finding concerned the more frequent inclusion of imperatives in girl action figure narratives. Perhaps this result reflects a marketing perception that girls, stereotyped as passive, non-imaginative, and technologically inept, require direction and instruction on how to play with their toys.

One limitation of the present study is methodological, as some words counted in the action figure narratives may have been misclassified. As acknowledged by Pennebaker et al. (2001), LIWC is unable to consider the subtle context in which a word is embedded, and therefore cannot disambiguate meanings of words. In addition, as the LIWC dictionary may not contain idio-

syncratic words found in the lexicon of toy marketers and copywriters, some of these words may have been missed in the LIWC analysis. Potential word omissions, however, probably had only a negligible effect on this study's results, as it is unlikely that marketing language is so idiosyncratic as to be missed by LIWC dictionaries, which claim to cover about 80% of vocabulary used in everyday language (Pennebaker et al., 2001).

Language, as advertisers well know, has a powerful effect on perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors, and, as Ghromann (2009) noted, perceptions of gender can be influenced through choice of language. When the language used to market children's toys is gendered, a strong message is conveyed that traditional gender-role stereotypes are appropriate and valued. An important issue concerns the impact of these messages on children. A considerable body of research demonstrates that media depictions of traditional, stereotypic, and rigidly polarized gender roles affect children's perceptions of gender and play behaviors. Children appear to accept gender stereotypic media portrayals without critical evaluation (Henning, Brenick, Killen, O'Connor, & Collins, 2009; Pike & Jennings, 2005), and from young ages engage in gender-typed toy play (Weisgram, Fulcher, & Dinella, 2014) and play behaviors that mimic traditional gender roles (Klinger et al., 2001). Further, acceptance of strong gender-stereotyped beliefs in children has been linked to bullying and ostracism behaviors directed toward gender-nonconforming children (Meyer, 2009). Media and toy reinforcement of stereotyped gender roles also impart lessons about what roles are allowed, and which are not, as based on gender. Boys, bombarded by violence and dominance in media messages, are not afforded socialization experiences that teach nurturance and cooperation, and girls, limited by messages promoting only fashion, grooming, and passivity, are deprived of lessons endorsing power, self-agency, and innovation.

In conclusion, this study is the first to quantitatively demonstrate that linguistic elements associated with traditional gender role stereotypes distinguish the narratives of girl-oriented and boy-oriented toys. Evidence of gendered language in this study supports documentations from other studies of gender-branding in toy design, color-coding, and packaging graphics, and contributes to an aggregated profile of girls as vain and vacuous, absorbed with concerns about physical appearance, and incapable of independent thought or action. Boys, on the other hand, are in the real world and in control with permissible destructive purpose. Recently, there has been a public outcry (Crouch, 2013) against these caricaturized portraits of gender promoted by the toy industry. Public demands for gender-neutral toys featuring egalitarian values have had some success as a few toy companies have revised their marketing strategies to portray more cross-gender interactions with toys that were previously branded to one gender (Dockterman, 2014). Given the nature and extent of differentiated gendered-language found in action figure toy narratives, it is hoped as well that descriptions of toys will be linguistically balanced to indicate that girls too can fight battles, and boys too can comb ponies. ∎

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The role of a gendered policy agenda in closing the mayoral ambition gap: The case of Texas female city council members

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Abstract

This study explores female city council member political ambition to run for mayor. Women who hold mayoral office are potentially more competitive for higher elected office at the state and federal level. This study is based on a survey sent to Texas city council members in cities over 30,000. Forty-one percent of respondents said they would most likely run for mayor at some point, and we do find a gender gap in ambition (50% of men and 36% of women). However, we find that women who advocated a gendered local government political agenda exhibited higher levels of political ambition compared women who do not, and the ambition gap is reduced significantly. This finding holds up, controlling for other factors suggested by the literature that are predictors of political ambition. Two of these other factors—age and personal support—also increase city council member mayoral ambition. The findings are discussed in terms of strategies to increase female mayoral ambition.

Keywords

political science, women's studies, sociology, political ambition, gender, local government

The underrepresentation of women in the United States occurs at the national, state, and local levels of government. Addressing the representational gender gap has received much attention from scholars as well as groups intent on reversing this unfortunate fact. Women's organizations—notably EMILY's List, WISH List, and more recently, Project GROW—have provided assistance to increase female representation at the state and national level, and have been successful to some extent. Women also receive support from a growing number of nonprofit organizations whose mission is to empower women and increase representation through education, leadership training, and networking. However, the barriers women face when considering running for office appear to overwhelm these supportive efforts.

Political ambition is enhanced by past success and having the ability to represent an image of experience and authority. Accordingly, this article posits that one way to address representation gaps at the federal and state levels is to increase the number of female mayors. Women who serve as mayor have demonstrated executive leadership qualities and experience that make them potentially more competitive for higher office.

However, of the 1,351 mayors of U.S. cities with populations over 30,000 in 2014, only 18.4% were women (CAWP, 2013). The purpose of this study is to explore some of the factors that influence female city council member ambition to run for mayor.

Political ambition, specifically the decision to run for office, may be viewed as a strategic response to a political opportunity structure (Schlesinger, 1966). A function of an individual's personal attributes, personalities, and motivations (Fishel, 1971), political ambition consists of two stages or forms: nascent and expressive. Nascent ambition is a potential interest in seeking office and precedes expressive ambition, the actual act of deciding to run for office (Fox & Lawless, 2012, p. 5). Most of the factors involving nascent ambition are psychological, social, and personal. Strategic considerations such as term limits, electoral structure, and the possibility of electoral success are discrete factors that influence candidate ambition (Black, 1972). Ideology and a desire to change public policy are intangibles that often serve as powerful catalysts driving political participation (Burns, Schlozman, & Verba, 2001). Growing up in a political family (Flanigan & Zingale, 2002), having the support of political mentors (Wobrecht & Campbell, 2007) and community organizations (Costantini, 1990), as well as overall social interactions (McClurg, 2003) help cultivate individual political ambition.

Existing research and previous studies of these explanatory variables informed the creation of a survey administered to city council members in Texas cities over 30,000. This study finds that a female city council member's policy priorities are an important predictor of mayoral ambition. In addition to holding gendered policy priorities, perceived levels of personal support predict higher levels of political ambition. These factors close the mayoral ambition gap. Female elected officials should be encouraged to pursue a gendered policy agenda. Such an approach contributes to enhanced ambition and, when framed strategically, resonates positively among voters and results in women holding a higher percentage of mayoral offices.

Literature Review

This study focuses on the political ambition of female city council members—a generally understudied group. The political ambition of city council women to run for mayor is also relevant because the position of mayor often serves as a stepping-stone to higher-level political positions (McGlen et al., 2011). In order to increase the percentage of women holding statewide office and in-state legislatures and Congress, more women are needed in the "pipeline." Women gain experience and hone their skills in local level offices that are more within reach in terms of time and money. The literature on political ambition is adapted to the case of city council members in the remainder of this section and hypotheses are proposed.

» Attitudes and Issues

Some women are motivated to run for office by the desire to increase awareness of policy issues neglected by male candidates and elected officials. *Gendered public policy priorities* emerge in part due to personal experience with a problem or policy matter and efforts to initiate change or improvement (Kathlene, 1989, p. 412). The policy issues that often motivate women to become politically active are traditionally viewed as "women's issues," including: education, health care, environment, consumer protection, helping under-served populations, and

equal rights (Brown, Heighberger, & Shocket, 1993). The desire to change public policy plays a considerably larger role in the decision of women to run for office compared to men. Specifically, women mayors more often rated their concern over specific policy issues as most important in their decision to seek their first municipal office and were more likely than men to have specific policy concerns (Carroll & Sanbonmatsu, 2010).

A campaign focused on traditional "women's issues" targeted at women voters has produced electoral successes for female candidates (Herrndon et al., 2003). Female candidates provide a level of assurance to many female voters that their interests are represented. While men could arguably represent the interests of women, female legislators introduce and vote for legislation that positively affects women and families more often than male legislators (Thomas, 1990). Controlling for party, women legislators also engage in more intense and frequent legislative action reflecting women's experiences and concerns (Swers, 2002). As a result, female candidates can benefit by running "as women" and calling attention to their unique qualities and interests (Stokes-Brown et al., 2008). The role these dynamics play in the nonpartisan local government context where attention to "women's issues" is less common is not clear. To the extent that having a woman on the ballot attracts the attention of more female voters and increases political participation among women (Herrndon et al., 2003) suggests that women candidates help to mobilize women voters at the local level.

Gendered policy priorities are particularly relevant and important at the local level of government. However, while the connection between gendered political views and ambition has been examined at other levels of government, less attention has been paid to local government. There are several reasons for this lower level of attention. First, local elections are often nonpartisan and have very low levels of voter turnout, thereby reducing the visibility of these offices. In addition, in many cities, the council-manager form of government used in most cities reduces the influence of the mayor and city council and vests more power in the hands of the city manager, reducing the perceived relevance of city council members. Finally, some urbanists have observed that local governments have a "unitary interest" in economic growth and therefore are more likely to prefer "apolitical" developmental and allocational policies over redistributive policies that are believed to undermine economic growth (Peterson, 1981; Longoria, 1994).

Gender-role attitudes, as a dimension of political culture, play an important role in the decision of a woman to consider running for mayor. Political culture, defined as "the particular pattern of orientation to political action in which each political system is embedded" (Elazar, 1966, p. 78), is at least as important as the electoral system in predicting the presence and percentage of women city council members and mayors (Smith et al., 2012, p. 315). For example, states with a tradition of gender equity are much more likely to see women succeed in elections (Windett, 2011) and have a higher percentage of women in the legislature (Arceneaux, 2001). Just like states, there are local-level differences in gender-role attitudes. In some localities, voters and elites have been socialized to view politics as a man's world (Carroll & Sanbonmatsu, 2009; Sapiro, 1983), whereas in other communities this is not the case. For these reasons, *past female electoral success* is a potential indicator of a favorable political culture where voters have experienced women as capable political executives, and are more likely to support women can-

didates in the future. Based on the literature review above, the following hypotheses are proposed:

> H1: Advocating gendered policy issues is associated with greater mayoral ambition.

> H2: Serving as a city council member in a city with a previously elected woman mayor is associated with greater mayoral ambition.

» Institutional Characteristics and Outcomes

The "attractiveness" of the office of mayor may influence a female city council member's desire to run for mayor. While women have differing views on various issues, women tend to prefer a style of politics that focuses on people and solving problems cooperatively while avoiding political conflict (Karpowitz & Mendelberg, 2014, p. 19). The nature of the office of mayor varies depending on a city's form of government. For example, the office of mayor is much more politicized in the mayor-council form of government compared to the council-manager form of government. The role of a mayor in the *council-manager form of government* emphasizes ceremonial tasks such as representing the city at dinners and special events, serving as the presiding officer at meetings and acting as the spokesman for the council. Serving as representative and spokesperson, the mayor becomes an important channel for citizen input (Svara, 1987). It is the city council in a council-manager form of government that adopts the city budget, identifies policy priorities, sets the local tax rate, and leaves administration to a professional city manager. Local government is generally depoliticized in a council-manager form of government. In contrast, the office of mayor in a mayor-council local government is more politicized. The mayor in a mayor-council form of government must deal with more

political wrangling and try to pacify various political constituencies inside and outside of city hall (DeNardis & Rodriguez, 2007). Because women are more likely to identify themselves as "public servants" rather than "politicians" (Ford, 2010, p. 142; Flamming, 1984), female city council members may have more ambition to run for mayor in cities with the council-manager form of government.

Female city council members who have won their seats in *at-large (city-wide) elections* have demonstrated that they can win a city-wide office and have a chance to win the mayor's office, which is also elected citywide. In contrast, a female city council member that represents a single-member district has a smaller constituency and has likely built a record focusing on district issues rather than city-wide issues that might give focus to a mayoral campaign. Thus, holding an at-large city council seat bolsters self-assurance, potentially narrows the gender "confidence-gap" (Fox & Lawless, 2012, p. 10), and may enhance mayoral ambition. At-large election victories help to change attitudes of citizens in general, and encourage women to participate politically, and run for office. Based on the literature review above, the following hypotheses are proposed:

> H3: Serving as a city council member with a council-manager form of government is associated with greater mayoral ambition

> H4: Serving as a city council member elected to an at-large seat is associated with greater mayoral ambition.

» Personal Support

In the not-so-distant past, a woman did not seek elected office because politics were viewed as "dirty" and not an "appropriate" public venue for women (Hedlund et al., 1979). While attitudes have changed, to this

day one of the leading factors hindering gender parity in elective office is the fact that women are much less likely than men (60% less) to see themselves as "very qualified" to run for office (Fox & Lawless, 2011). Women are also less likely than men to think they will win their first campaign (Fox & Lawless, 2011). Since an overwhelming majority of potential candidates do not run for office unless they believe they can win, lower self-assessment scores of women directly affect representation levels (Fox & Lawless, 2011). Support from family, friends, political organizations, and civic groups can help boost confidence and nurture a candidate's "inclination to consider a candidacy" (Fox & Lawless, 2005).

Women are not traditionally socialized to take an active role in politics (McGlen et al., 2011), and they face the challenge of overcoming gender stereotypes and traditional attitudes. Because of these barriers, *perceived personal support* is essential to increasing the number of women mayoral candidates. For example, coming from a "political family" increases candidate motivations to run for office. Women who are raised in a family environment where involvement in politics is considered routine are more likely to perceive themselves as viable candidates to run for office (Fox & Lawless, 2005). Friends and family can play an equally influential role. In a study of state legislators, the most influential source of personal encouragement for women was their spouse or partner. Married (or living as married) female legislators were also significantly more likely than men to say their spouse was "very supportive" of their position in office (Carroll & Sanbonmatsu, 2009, p. 12). Female political mentors are especially helpful to newcomers experiencing campaign challenges for the first time. Female candidates running for a seat in the United States House of Representatives were more likely than men to consult with a (female) political mentor when considering running for office (Padgett-Owen, 2010). Women candidates who referenced support and advice of a female mentor reportedly perceived their own performance and likelihood of winning an election in a more positive light (Latu et al., 2013).

Based on the literature review above, the following hypotheses are proposed:

> H5: A city council member's perceived level of personal support is associated with mayoral ambition.

» Data and Methods

This study examines the mayoral ambition of city council members in Texas using online survey research. Texas is a useful research site for a number of reasons. First, the percentage of female mayors in Texas (16.8%) is below, but close to, the national average (18.4%). The state includes many large cities, suburbs, and rural communities where the political and social contexts vary within the broader context of a conservative political environment. The pathway to advancement for women in this politically and socially conservative state deserves special attention in an attempt to better understand the factors that contribute to greater female representation in Texas and across the country. In addition, Texas has an interesting political history with respect to women. Women in Texas have served as governor, including Ma Ferguson in the 1920s and the very celebrated Ann Richards in the 1990s. Other nationally visible Texas women in politics include Oveta Culp Hobby, Barbara Jordan, and Lady Bird Johnson among many others.

The election pitting Ann Richards against Clayton Williams highlighted the clash of the traditional patriarchal culture

and how women can confront it with élan (Tolleson-Rinehart & Stanley, 1994). Ann Richards looms large as a role model for many women in politics. She used her quick wit and toughness to govern effectively as a liberal in a conservative state, and led passage of education finance reform, prison reform, and gun regulation. Despite stereotypes that Texas is anti-woman and anti-feminist, there are currently eight women serving as mayor in the 64 Texas cities larger than 50,000, including Betsy Price (Fort Worth), Ivy Taylor (San Antonio), Nelda Martinez (Corpus Christi), Beth Van Duyne (Irving), Becky Ames (Beaumont), Deloris Prince (Port Arthur), Linda Martin (Euless). Notably Mayor Anise Parker (Houston), is one of the few openly gay mayors of a major U.S. city. However, it is important to note that while strides are being made, women hold only 12.5% of the mayor's offices in Texas cities with populations exceeding 50,000.

To examine mayoral ambition among Texas city council members, 323 city council members serving in Texas cities with a population exceeding 30,000 (U.S. Census, 2013) were sent an online survey. The names and email addresses of city council members were obtained from local government websites. The survey was conducted in two waves. In order to maximize female participation, an initial survey was sent, and frequent reminders were made to encourage responses. The remaining list of city council members received the online survey, and two email reminders were sent to obtain a sample of men. None of the respondents knew the purpose of the study or of focus on mayoral ambition. The descriptive statistics for the sample are summarized in Table 1.

Of the 323 council members who received the survey, 82 returned the survey resulting in a response rate of 24%. Forty-three percent of respondents represent

Table 1
Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Min	Max	Mean[a]	SD
Mayoral Ambition	0	1	41	
Female	0	1	63	
Gendered Policy Agenda	0	1	48	
Former Female Mayor	0	1	64	
Mayor-Council Government	0	1	17	
Hold Single Member Seat	0	1	45	
Personal Support Index	12	20	17.5	1.96
Age	1	6	3.68	1.22
Married	0	1	81	
College Degree	0	1	69	
No children in Home	0	1	79	
N		82		

[a] Values for dichotomous variables are percentages; the modal category for age is 4 (55 to 65)

communities in North Texas, 23% represent communities in East Texas, 17% represent communities in Central Texas, 10% represent communities in West Texas, and seven percent represent communities in South Texas. Sixty percent of respondents represent suburban communities, four percent of respondents represent rural communities, and 36% represent urban areas including major cities in their own metropolitan statistical areas. Respondents under the age of 44 comprise 17% of the sample, over half (55%) of the respondents are age 45-64, and 28% are older than 65. Eighty-one percent of respondents are married. A majority of respondents (69.2%) are college graduates. Age is operationalized as an ordinal variable due to question wording used to maximize the response rate. The majority of respondents (79%) had no children under the age of 16 living in their household.

The dependent variable in this study is mayoral ambition measured by the question: "Please select the statement that you most closely agree with," and the following response categories: "I will most likely not run for mayor" and "I will most likely run for mayor." In the case of the latter option, future time frames were provided: one to four years, five to 10 years, and 11 to 15 years. All respondents indicating an interest in running for mayor at some point in less than 15 years were collapsed into a single category. Forty-one percent of council members indicated that they may run for mayor at some point. There is clearly a mayoral ambition gap as 50 of men have mayoral ambition compared to 36% of women (Chi Square = 1.52; sig. = .16).

The independent variables in this study are questions measuring respondent attitudes and institutional characteristics of each respondent's city. Advocating a gendered policy agenda is operationalized using the open-ended responses to the following question: Please list your top three policy priority areas. We consider both the literature on local government policy and women and politics to code the responses. Responses that focused on "traditional" local government issues—also known as developmental and allocational policies (Peterson, 1981)—such as taxes, economic development, protective services, and infrastructure were coded 0. Responses that focused on redistributive issues (Peterson, 1981), such as housing, education, environment, health and poverty, were considered gendered policy issues and coded 1. In addition, self-reported policy priorities to improve collaboration and cooperation were coded 1 given the relative emphasis women place on collaboration and cooperation compared to men. The categorization of policy issues described above coincides with policy issues considered to be "women's issues" that emphasize and address the needs of women and their families, such as healthcare, education, and safe living conditions for children (Swers & Larson, 2005). Based on this coding, 48% of respondents expressed at least one gendered policy priority.

Gender-role attitudes favorable to electing a woman mayor are operationalized with the question: "Has a woman ever served as mayor in your city?" Sixty-four percent of respondents indicated that there had been at least one woman elected mayor in the past (coded 1). While this number may seem high, recall that the question asks if a woman served as mayor at any point in the past. The actual percentage of women currently serving as mayor in Texas cities is 16.8%.

In order to determine the type of seat the female city council member represents, respondents were asked the following question: "Do you represent an at-large seat, or a single-member district?" Forty-five percent of women hold a single member district seat. Form of Government was determined using the following question: "What is the form of government in your city?" Based on this question, 17% of women served in a mayor-council city. This finding is not surprising given that 15% of home-rule Texas cities use the mayor-council form of government (Texas State Historical Association, http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/moc02).

Perceived personal support is operationalized using a four-question additive index. Respondents were asked to indicate on a five-point Likert scale (1=strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree) their level of agreement with the statements listed. The four questions include: (1) My spouse/partner supports my political career; (2) My immediate family supports my political career; (3) My extended family supports my political career; and

(4) I have effective, meaningful mentoring relationships who support me and my political career. The mean index score is 17.5 (Std. Dev. = 1.96) and the range is 12 to 20. If the respondent indicates having a spouse or partner, the spousal support variable was coded 0.

Findings

Table 2 presents two logistic regressions. In the first column, we regress gender, advocacy of gendered policy agenda, and the interaction between these two variables. In the interaction term, the women who also advocate a gendered policy agenda are contrasted with women who do not and the men in the sample. The model successfully predicts 63% of the cases. The model Chi-Square is statistically significant (Chi Square = 8.62; sig. = .03), and the Hosmer and Lemeshow Test (Chi Square = .0001; Sig. = .99) is not statistically significant, indicating that the model is a good fit for the data.

As noted above, women are less likely to have mayoral ambition (b = -1.79; sig. = .01). Having a gendered policy agenda has no impact on mayoral ambition for all respondents (male and female). It is noteworthy that the coefficient for a gendered policy agenda is in the negative direction, suggesting that candidates who are outside of the policy mainstream of developmental and allocational policies are less likely to have mayoral ambition (b = -.98; sig. = .24). However, women who also have a gendered policy agenda are more likely to have mayoral ambition compared to women and men who do not (b = 2.49; sig. = .02). The odds of a man having ambition to run for mayor are 33% higher than a woman having ambition to run for mayor (Exp(b) of the Constant = 1.33). However, the odds of a woman who

advocates a gendered policy agenda is 12% higher (Exp(b) = 12.00). On the other hand, the odds that a woman who does not advocate a gendered policy agenda will have mayoral ambition is 17% lower (Exp(b) = .167). Interestingly, the odds of men who advocate a gendered policy agenda also having mayoral ambition are 50% lower. There is clear and strong support for Hypothesis 1.

Interpreting odds ratios can be cumbersome. In order to clarify these findings, predicted probabilities were calculated. Figure 1 presents a summary of the findings in the Model 1 presented in Table 2 using predicted probabilities. The predicted probability of a male city council member having mayoral ambition is .57, or a 57% chance. On the other hand, men who advocated a gendered policy agenda at the local government level have a .33 predicted probability of having mayoral ambition. Women who do not advocate a gen-

Table 2
Mayoral Ambition Logistic Regression Analysis

	Model 1		Model 2	
Variable	b	Exp(b)	b	Exp (b)
Gender (Female)	-1.79**	.17	-1.56*	.22
Gendered Policy Agenda	-.98	.38	-.59	.56
Gender*Gendered Agenda	2.49*	12.00	1.97+	7.20
Former Female Mayor			-.27	.76
Council Manager Govt.			.82	2.29
Hold At-Large Council Seat			-.60	.55
Personal Support Index			.30+	1.35
Age			-.51*	.60
Married			-.76	.47
College Degree			.14	1.15
No children in Home			-.18	.84
Constant	.29	1.33	-2.53	.08
% Cases Correctly Predicted	62.5		72.7	
Model Chi Square	8.62*		19.11*	
N = 80				

+ = <.10;* = <.05; ** =<.01

Figure 1

Predicted Probabilities for Mayoral Ambition
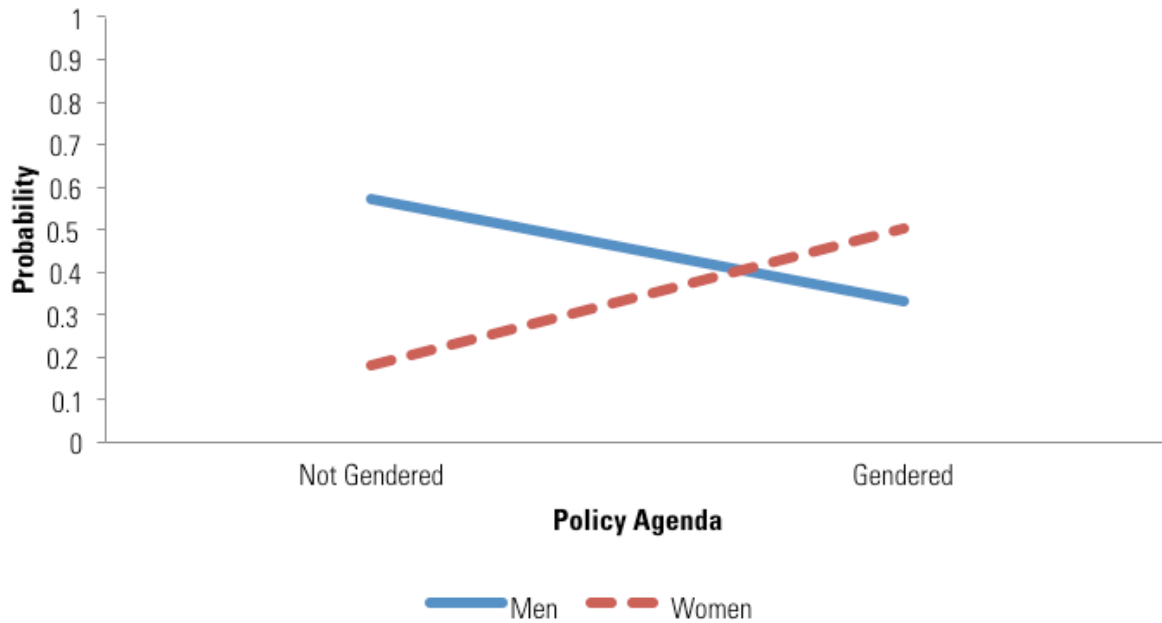
dered policy agenda have a .18 predicted probability of having mayoral ambition. Women who have a gendered policy agenda have a .50 predicted probability of having mayoral ambition. In other words, holding a gendered policy agenda increases the probability of a woman having mayoral ambition by .32. Perhaps more notably from the standpoint of closing the ambition gap, women with a gendered policy agenda are only .07 less likely to have mayoral ambition than men who hold a non-gendered policy agenda. Having a gendered policy agenda closes the gap in mayoral ambition between men with a traditional agenda and women with a gendered agenda and increases ambition to levels greater than men with a gendered political agenda.

The second column in Table 2 presents the full model examining the five hypotheses introduced above and control variables (Model 2). In Model 2, we find that gender and the interaction term between gender and advocating a gendered policy agenda remain statistically significant, controlling for attitudinal and institutional factors as well as individual-level characteristics. The model correctly predicts 74% of the cases, and the model is a good fit for the data (Model Chi Square = 19.98; sig. = .05; Hosmer and Lemeshow Test = 4.32; sig. = .83). There is support for Hypothesis 5, in that stronger perceived personal support for one's political career increases ambition (b = 1.06; sig. = .06). We also find that age is statistically significant and in the expected direction, as older respondents tend to have less mayoral ambition (b = -.57; sig. = .03). For each category increase in age, there is a decrease in the odds that the respondent has mayoral ambition (Exp(b) = .60).

There is no support for the other proposed hypotheses. Women city council members serving in cities where no women have ever been elected mayor are not more likely to have mayoral ambition (Hypothesis 2 not supported). Perhaps, as suggested in the literature review, the fact that these cities have not elected a woman mayor in the past indi-

cates that the voters are not open to female leadership. However, this question alone is likely not a sufficient measure of a city's political culture and orientation toward woman leaders. In addition, Hypotheses 3 and 4 are not supported. The potentially politicized environment associated with mayor-council system does not either encourage or discourage ambition. Forms of government are converging in a number of ways that minimize the differences in politics and the ways that things get done in council-manager and mayor-council cities and where the difference between "traditional" cities and "reformed" cities are decreasing (see, for example, Frederickson, et al., 2003, p. 10). In other words, council-manager cities are becoming more "political," and mayor- council cities are also becoming more "professional" as cities adapt to the expectations of their residents. Hypothesis 4, that city council members elected at-large are more likely to have mayoral ambition, is not supported.

In order to facilitate understanding, a best-case scenario for female political ambition was calculated. A young woman with the maximum amount of personal support and a gendered policy agenda—setting other variables at values to enhance likelihood—has a .65 probability of having mayoral ambition. In comparison, a young man with the maximum amount of personal support and a non-gendered agenda—setting other variables at values to enhance likelihood—has a .69 probability of having mayoral ambition. A gendered policy agenda clearly closes the mayoral ambition gap.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to explore the mayoral ambitions of women city council members in Texas cities. Gaining a better understanding of political attitudes, institutional characteristics, and existing support for potential mayoral candidates will help to better inform the efforts and activities of organizations working to increase female representation at all levels of government. The mayoral ambition gender gap can be closed by focusing on younger women, enhancing personal support of family and mentors, and by encouraging women to advocate a gendered policy agenda.

Advocating a "women's agenda" focused on issues historically salient to women appears to be a stronger motivator than a gender-neutral political agenda that focuses on economic development and infrastructure investments. A gendered policy agenda may lead a woman to see herself as "qualified" and thereby increase mayoral ambition. Confidence of female city council members to actively seek the office of mayor is potentially enhanced when women successfully convey the importance of a gendered approach to local policy and how this benefits the entire community. A policy seen as developmental by one set of interests may be seen as redistributive by others (Stone, 2004) and vice versa. For example, education policy framed as a strategy to attract employers and thus boost economic development will likely promote engagement and support of business interests who might be otherwise be resistant to more "redistributive spending" (Stone, 2004).

Conservative groups—especially at the national level, but increasingly at the local level—recruit women to run for office and champion their traditional gender-role attitudes and conservative public policies. For example, "Feminists for Life" promotes the idea that abortion is "anti-woman," and the "Mama Bear movement" suggests that women should focus on national security and the economy to protect children from

foreign threats and economic insecurity. The rhetoric of conservative women's groups promotes an "anti-feminist identity," ostensibly to fuel the political ambition of conservative women. To date, conservative efforts to support women candidates in primaries and elections has had limited success in part because "female lawmakers on the state level tend to be more moderate […] and even if they are as conservative, women candidates also tend to be less bombastic, making it tough to break through on a rhetorical level" (Newton-Small, 2014). Women running on issues championed traditionally by men may not be an effective strategy to increase female representation.

This study suggests that women should have confidence in a "gendered" policy agenda and not shy away from campaigning on the issues that are proven to make a difference in the quality of life, education, health, and well-being of families and communities. Nor should they feel that they have to move away from women's issues to get support. Encouraging women to campaign on a platform that perpetuates the status quo (i.e., *not* advocating policy issues that will change or enhance the quality of life for women, families, and communities) will not change "politics as usual" and does not appear to increase political ambition. This study's findings in the context of nonpartisan local politics in a conservative state such as Texas suggests the power of "feeling qualified," and those interested in enhancing female representation in executive and higher offices should enhance those feelings in local elected officials (such as female city council members) to increase the pool of qualified candidates for higher office.

It is important to note that efforts to increase mayoral ambition among city council members may not lead to their eventual election. Local government elections have notoriously low turnout, and, as a result, the candidates who win the support of pro-growth and low-tax interests often—but not always—win at the local level. There is an additional complication that voters in Texas are more conservative, while the eligible voters that include many nonvoters are increasingly more liberal. A more gendered policy agenda may produce more successful electoral outcomes in the future. For example, a majority of Texans now support gay marriage, and a growing percentage of residents in urban areas acknowledge the need for sustainable development and smart growth. The fact that women have been elected to the position of mayor in many Texas cities suggests that women can and do win if they run. Identifying the right strategy and remaining committed to that strategy would likely produce more political ambition among women and increased female executive leadership in the long run. ∎

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