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Male Hegemony through Education: Construction of Gendered Identities

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Abstract

The fundamental presupposition of this paper is that 'gender' is a social category, hence a social construction, which can be negotiated and left fluid instead of something fixed and eternal. To examine the gendered social order, this study focuses on how hegemonic masculinity and feminine subordination are naturalized by positioning men as physically strong and women as weak on the ground of biological differences between the sexes. The study is informed by social constructionist understandings of gender. The main focus of the paper is to highlight how gendered discourses in Pakistan inform textbooks as objective and true knowledge. The data for the study comes from 28 educationists (11 females and 17 males). The study's findings revealed that, despite prevailing claims to establishing gender equality and equity in education, educationists are active in the production of gender/sexual identities and hierarchies in a ways that reinforces hegemonic 'masculinity' and a fixed notion of 'femininity'. The paper concludes that what ends up as school knowledge arises from gendered power/knowledge relations.

Keywords: gender, hegemonic masculinity, social constructionism, discourse

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Hegemonía Masculina a través de la Educación: Construcción de las Identidades de Género

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Abstract

El presupuesto fundamental de este articulo es que "género" es una categoria social, por lo tanto es una construcción social, que puede ser negociada y que fluye. No se trata de aglo fijo y eterno. Para examinar el orden social de género, este estudio se centra en cómo la masculinidad hegemónica y la subordinación femenina se han naturalizado posicionando a los hombres como fuertes físicamente y a las mujeres como débiles sobre la base de las diferencias biológicas entre sexos. Este estudio se basa en los planteamientos del constructivismo social sobre género. El tema principal de este artículo es resaltar cómo los discuros de género en Pakistan presentan los libros de texto como objetivos y portadores del conocimiento verdadero. Los datos provienen de 28 profesionales de la educación (11 mujeres y 17 hombres). Los resultados del estudio revelan que, a pesar de existir demandas para establecer igualdad de género y equidad educativa, los profesionales de la educación generan identidades de género/sexuales y jerarquías de forma que refuerzan la "masculinidad" hegemónica y establecen de forma fija la noción de "feminidad". Este articulo concluye que lo que acaba como conocimiento escolar surge de las relaciones de poder/conocimiento de género.

Gender' is causally constructed social category, hence a social construction (Haslanger, 1995; Skelton et. al, 2006). However, the sex/gender debate is not so easily solved enterprise and highly contested from a variety of quarters since its inception (see (Francis, 2006; Paechter, 2007). We assume that sketching out gender theories provides a helpful starting point to the study. In ordinary discourses, men are thought as human males and women as human females. Many feminists endorse the sex/gender distinction to counter biological determinism (Mikkola, 2011). Biological determinists believe and argue that behavioral differences between girls/women and boys/men is the inevitable product of inherent, biologically programmed differences between men and women (Francis, 2006). Geddes and Thompson (1889) argued that social, psychological and behavioral traits were caused by metabolic state: women conserve energy (being anabolic) which makes them conservative, passive, lazy and least interested in the [public domain] and politics. Women therefore should not be involved in the public domain, especially in politics. Men expend their surplus energy (being katabolic) and this makes them variable, energetic, eager, dynamic, passionate, and thereby, interested in [the public sphere] and politics (quoted from Mikkola, 2011). Similarly, corpus callosum is thought to be responsible for various psychological and behavioural differences. On the basis corpus callosum it was claimed that women's thicker corpus callosums could explain what 'women's intuition' is based on and impair women's ability to perform some specialized visual-spatial skills, like reading maps (Gorman 1992). The essentialist and biological differences is argument is found across disciplines, 'including within feminism, some radical and difference feminists have supported this idea and, often maintaining that women's biological differences from men and ensuing behaviour should be celebrated' (Francis, 2006, p 8). It is argued that women/girls and men/boys are 'predestined to gendered expression of behavior, which are fixed and inevitable (Francis, 2006, p 9). Feminists take up a serious argument with biological and evolutionary psychologists' explanation of women nature on multiples grounds: the corpus callosum is a highly variable piece of anatomy; differences in adult human corpus callosums are not found in infants; this may suggest that physical brain differences

actually develop as responses to differential treatment (Fausto-Sterling 2000 b); their infancy and, and no one can yet determine what impact brain differences have, or the ways in which these are manifested (Rose, 2001). de Beauvoir argues that one is not born, but rather *becomes* a woman, and that "social discrimination produces in women moral and intellectual effects is so profound that they appear to be caused by nature" (de Beauvoir 1972 [original 1949]. Feminist also argued that the conclusions about human behaviours are made from primate behaviors because human beings control their natural and social behaviors whereas other primates lack these abilities (Levine and Hole 1973, p 173). Similarly, feminists strongly reject Sigmund Freud's thesis of 'pennies envoy' (Ullah, 2006; Millett, 1970). Criticizing the biological essentialism, Levine and Hole (1973, p 172) argues that

> social unequal position of women throughout the history is not the result of their biology, but rather the result of   the values society has placed, at any given time on the biological differences of the sexes. These values are not natural, they are social judgments, which consign women in the name of natural interpretation of biological on scientific, moral and technological grounds.

Challenging biological and brain differences theories, feminists point out the role of social institutions in producing gendered expression of behaviour. Social learning theorists explains, rather assert, that gender identity is learned by children via social institution such as family, school, mass media, peer and so on. Many first waves feminist pointed the role of socio-economic practices and expectation embedded in the legal system and social conventions and institutions as constraining women's lives and behaviour (Francis, 2006, p 10). This means, Beauvoir would argue, one is not born a woman or man but rather becomes a woman or man through social forces (also see Stanworth, 1981; Millet 1971). It can be argued that gender socialization turns children into feminine and masculine individuals. In other words, femininity and masculinity are the products of socialization (nurture) how individuals are brought up. Gender differences, Haslanger (1995, p 8) would argue, are *causally constructed*:

> social forces either have a causal role in bringing
> gendered individuals into existence or (to some
> substantial sense) shape the way we are *qua*
> women and men.

Kate Millett (1971, p 28-29) argues that

> gender differences are essentially cultural, rather
> than biological bases that result from differential
> treatment.

For Millett, gender is the complex whole of 'parents', the peers', and the culture's notions of what is appropriate to each gender by way of temperament, character, interests, status, worth, gesture, and expression. (Millett 1971, p 31). An alternative views were developed by cognitive development theorists. They (cognitive development theorists) argue that children learn gender identity (and gender stereotypes) through their mental efforts to organize their social world. This perspective 'suggested that children's understanding of their gender identity depended upon their stage of cognitive development (Francis, 2006, p 10). This means that children learn about gender and how to "do gender" because it is central to the way we organize society. They learn culturally appropriate ways of thinking and being as they follow routine rituals and respond to the everyday demands of the world in which they live. This means that socializing forces (family, peer and school etc) inculcate constant and forceful messages about how boys and girls should behave and act shaping us into masculine and feminine individuals.

Sex role/socialisation theories were very useful at first in second wave feminism as these offered the possibility of change. The common feature of this early work was a tendency to gender identities as fixed, and also to treat girls as a homogeneous group, as though their experiences were unified…these readings present a single version of female experience…it ultimately rely on dichotomous sex distinctions (Walkerdine and Ringrose, 2006 p 31). Believing of gender identities as fixed, girl as homogeneous category and feminine and masculine

gender-norms were/are thought problematic as such approach to the understanding of gender fits with and reinforces females' subordination: they learn to be docile, emotional, passive, ignorant (see Millett 1971). It is important to highlight that gender theory was still in process of development and the understandings of how children 'learned' gender started to shift away from socialisation theories to those where child was a more active agent. It was this development in gender theories whereby some feminists (poststructuralist) criticized sex role socialization theories for their inadequate account for change and taking individual as passive recipients of socialization (see Skelton et al, 2006).ed (see Dillabough, 2006). Similarly, it was claim that people don't all share or experience the same construction of gender (Walkerdine and Ringrose, 2006); and the discourse was evoked to gender fluidity, femininities and masculinities in plural (see Skelton et al, 2006). However, the success of this stage was that the concept 'gender' was seen as social category, distinct from 'sex'- biological characteristics that differentiate between men and women. The crux of this body of work was: gender expression of behaviour is socially produced rather than biologically inherited and determined. For detailed critique of this perspective see Connell (1987); Davis (1989); Walkerdine and Ringrose (2006). Thus, the social category of 'gender' (and also gender inequality) for social constructionists arises from interaction. However, there are many social constructionists whop see individual as biologically sexed, with consequences flowing from this bodily difference in term of the ways other interact with them. This mean that individual interact with each other with different expectation depending on the individual's apparent sex which in turn perpetuate gender differences in behaviours (Francis, 2006). There are other social constructionists who go further, seeing biological sex itself as socially constructed (Davies, 1989; Butler 1990; Paechter, 2001 are of great worth in this regard). This group of people is particularly influence by post-structuralism. For feminist poststructuralists, 'gender', 'gender inequality' and sexuality arise from discourse. The emphasis here was the relationship between discourse, subjectivity, and power. Much use of the word discourse was/is influenced by the work of the Michel Foucault, who explained the use of language and other sign systems as a means to control people's actions. Foucault's explanation of power as operating through

discourses was able to clarify the phenomena of resistance and contradiction which had proved problematic for sex role theory [perceiving individuals as passive recipients of socialization via which social relations are reproduced (Francis, 2006, 10). Francis, citing Davies (1989), further writes:

> Foucault's theorization of people as positioned in and produced by discourses can also explain the gendered nature of society as produced by gender discourses that positioned all selves as men or women, and present these categories as relational (p 11).

Taking Foucault into account, Butler (1990) argues that 'maleness' and 'femaleness' are simply produced by discourses; sex itself is socially and discursively constructed. Butler views gender (and sexuality) as performative in acts, gestures and enactments. She further argues 'that the gendered body is performative suggests that it has no ontological status apart from the various acts which constitute its reality' (ibid, 336). Butler describes gender and sexuality as constituted effects of performance or of discourse. According to Butler, 'it is individual actions, gestures, enactments and institutional practice which produce the category of gender, gender identity and sexuality…the political regulations and disciplinary practice produce that ostensibly coherent gender' (Butler, 1990, p, 337). Thus Butler very emphatically argued that gender is socially constructed rather than inherent, gendered traits are not tied to biological sex (Butler, 1990). Girls/ women can act and behave in 'masculine' ways. This mean that gender need to be understood how men and women are portrayed in discourse as well as in relation to existing   social and cultural power structure.. In the light of the above discussion there seem a division between social constructionists and poststructuralists (i.e. in West and Zimmerman's analysis, gender lives in interaction; in Butler, gender lives in discourse). Therefore, some feminists argue that the terms 'women' (MacInnes, 1998; Francis, 2000, Whitehead, 2001 cited in Walkerdine and Ringrose, 2006, p 32). Thus poststructuralist account argues that

language is central to the development of subjectivity. Language is multiple and varied with no guarantees of the transference on intended meanings so, too, subjectivities are multiple, varied, contradictory and fluid. Defining discourse as relationship between language and its real power context, gender and discourse studies, including this study, focus on ways men and women are portrayed in discourse, analyzing how men and women are viewed in public communication (in this study textbooks discourse and educationists' views), how men and women themselves use language and so on.

Methodology and the study

The data for the paper comes from a larger study. 28 (11 female and 17 male) educationists were selected for the study through purposive sampling. The selected respondents were interviewed with the help of unstructured interview guide. It is important to make it clear that we use the concept of educationists in this study encompasses curriculum designers, working in federal ministry of education Islamabad; subject experts and textbooks authors working in the textbooks board KPK; executive education officers; and head teachers in the selected public and private schools. The selection of respondents was made in line with the Glaser and Strauss (1967) model of research process which stresses the selection of respondents for the study in accordance with their relevance to the research topic. So the respondents of this study were not selected to construct a statistically representative sample of the population with the aim of reducing complexity by breaking it down into variables. But the aim was to increase complexity by including context and variety of respondents in the educational bureaucracy. This decision was made with the belief in the relevance and richness of data and less fussy about representativeness of the sampling.

It is reiterated that the study is informed by social constructionist understandings of gender. In particular, the writings of feminist poststructuralists have provided some useful concepts for analysis and discussion. Concepts such as discourses, positioning, and power/knowledge relation, as used by Foucault (1980), Davies and Harre (1990) and Walkerdine (1990), has been engaged for interpretation and analysis of primary data collected from educationists

(who were working in various capacities in the educational bureaucracy. Drawing on insight from feminist poststructuralist, the paper, eemploying discourse analysis, explains how educational movements and reforms are political and frequently functions in favour of powerful groups (males). The study sheds light on how curriculum designers, subject experts, textbooks authors, and teachers working in the educational bureaucracy of act as agents of state/male dominated society by reproducing different and differentially located 'categories' of citizens: for example, girls as 'Other' of boys and essentializing women across space and time. With this in mind, each participant (educationist) in this research has been understood to have been constructed by, as well as constructs, her/his historical legacies (family socialization, educational and career journey, and the type of social capitals and opportunities available to her/him). They were viewed as producers of knowledge based on their experiences from which they claim the only 'real' and 'objective' knowledge. Throughout, the study attempts to highlight the belief systems and social forces which appear to operate as the basis for developing textbooks. It also considers, what are its far reaching implications? Particular attention is given to the stance adopted by female educationists with the aim of explaining how they are constructed and positioned by dominant discourses around gender; and how they act to position children as female or male within the existing male dominated social structures. The aim of highlighting females' responses is to draw attention to the fact that gender power dynamics are not simply a matter of 'males dominate and females suffer' but that some women are also involved in maintaining and naturalizing gender hierarchies so that these continue to reflect male hegemony (Gilbert, 1989a). The paper, therefore, challenges essentialist perspectives using social constructionism as a lens. We contend that 'commonsense assumptions' frequently work in favour of society's powerful groups (males). It is argued that government's attempt of establishing and introducing gender equality in textbooks and to alter the prevailing gender power knowledge relation seem to have failed due to insufficient understanding of the complexity of such relations and to gender blindness of those dealing with curriculum and textbooks. The paper concludes by opening out a space within which Pakistani government official commitment to elimination of all kind of gender bias from

curriculum and school processes may be viewed critically. Following themes emerged and are discussed in the paper.

• Females under representation in curriculum
• Gender based division of labour
• Subject choice and gender
• Women in traditional female careers
• Women and political leadership
• Gender, sports and physical activities

Females under representation in curriculum

As revealed by Hazir Ullah and Christine Skelton's study of *Gender Representation in the Public Sector Schools Textbooks of Pakistan*, male characters out number females throughout the public school textbooks in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (see Ullah and Skelton 2012). Regarding the unequal and stereotypical *representation of males and females in textbooks*, the responses of educationists go in sharp contrast with what we referred above and discussed in the cited article.

> *Chairman textbook board KPK:* There should be equal representation of females and males illustration in the textbooks. But you [the researcher) know there always exist tension between the actual practice and what ought to be. We should know this fact that textbooks development is not one man show but a complex activity played among curriculum wing of the federal ministry of education, provincial textbook board, partner NGOs. Each party and group has its own interest. [Not only this] social threats make it difficult to include certain stuff in textbooks that I think should be the contents of the textbooks.

An almost similar response was given by a senior female educationist from textbook board KPK.

> *A female subject specialist textbook board KPK*: We [textbooks board] are trying to eliminate gender biases from school textbooks. You know it is not an easy task. Just to tell you one example, we

incorporated a picture showing a girl riding bicycle [pause] you know we were [advised] by the Curriculum Wing [Federal Ministry of Education Islamabad] that it is not in accordance with cultural expectation as girls don't ride bicycle in our culture. So it was removed.

Contrary to the above responses some respondents emphatically asserted that females have limited role in society and equal representation of females and males is not necessary. Some of these are quoted as under:

Female subject specialist (Urdu) textbook board KPK: I think underrepresentation of women in the textbooks does not discriminate them. You know women's roles are limited in society and where it is required (repeat and stressed) genuinely required, they are presented both in the text and illustrations.

Another female subject specialist, holding a senior position, reinforced the above views by asserting and believing in females' limited role in society.

Female subject specialist (social studies) of textbook board KPK: See textbooks represent what prevail in the wider society. If you look and count activities and works around you, women have limited roles in society. Therefore, they are lesser in number in school textbooks. I don't think their lesser number makes any difference.

It is important to highlight that for a considerable number (7) of the respondents, gender imbalance in textbooks, is unnecessary and pointless discussion. A male curriculum designer, MoE, Islamabad argued:

> I think these are trivial things that you [the researcher] are pointing and discussing. Society is suffering from many other serious issues. Don't you think we need to focus on other key problems in education instead of such secondary issues? [He continued] corruption, absentees and ghost[1] schools.

A very identical view was expressed by the Principal of Higher Secondary School for Boys Peshawar city. He contemptuously said:

> The West [people in the west] has reached space and trying to live there [expression of contempt] we are still wasting time in these useless issues [gender bias material in schools resources]. Can we not focus on important aspect of education?

These quotes suggest that how respondents' understanding and experience of the social world and their place in it, is constructed through discourses (Davies and Harre, 1990) and how their experiences (family socialization, schooling and interaction with the larger society) inform their approach to gender issue which, in turn, seems to support gender biases in textbooks.

A very significant finding emerged when the questions regarding equal representation of females and males in the textbooks was asked to a female executive education officer. She argued that:

> I don't think it is not important to focus on how many of women exist in the texts and illustrations, what is significant are: in which roles and positions women are depicted. If there are more women than men but all of them are shown in the traditional stereotypical role of housewives, or depicted busy in domestic chores, it is more discriminatory than their less number against men.
>
> <div style="text-align: right">Executive District
Education Officer (female)</div>

The argument then is that balancing up the gender character, names, nouns and pronouns in textbooks, but portraying them in the traditional gender roles will not solve the problem. Rather the stress should be what role they (females) are presented in. This is exactly the argument put forward by post-structuralists feminists (see Walkerdine, 1990; Skelton, 1997).

Gender based division of labour

On inquiry about whether men and women should be assigned different social roles (male in public domain and women in the private domain) due to their differential biology, a range of opinion and responses were expressed by the study respondents. Majority of both men and women viewed gendered social order as natural and inevitable. They believed that behavioral differences in females and males as the result of biological differences between the sexes. For them biology is destiny.

A male curriculum designers MoE curriculum Wing, Islamabad argued:

> I think and believe that men are more suitable for the work in the public domain because of their stronger bodies, physical strength and rough and aggressive nature; whereas women are more suitable for the private domain of home because women find it difficult to keep up with the long and odds hours that public domain demand.

An almost similar stance to the above question was taken by few women educationists. For example:

> Female subject specialist textbook board KPK: "God had created women inferior to men in term of their physiological and biological composition structures (pause); therefore, it is men duty to earn and spend on their women. Gender based division of labour in society seems natural and real division of labour. Nevertheless, there can be cross participation (women in the selected fields in the public domain and men in the private domain) on need basis.

Another senior female educationist viewed that women's participation in different fields of public sphere as a potential threat to the moral fabric of society. She argued:

> *Female subject specialist textbook board, KPK:* Women's participation in all fields of public domain has given birth to too many moral evils in our society. I think it is better that they should be encouraged to develop liking for career in selected fields such as teaching and medicine.

Patriarchal societies, Skeggs (2002) would argue, give women the responsibility for the maintenance of social order and safeguarding human races through their virtues. Some of the female educationists were quite critical about domestic ideology.

> *Principal Girls' High Schools Peshawar City*: Domestic chores are not women's natural roles. These are assigned to females by society. However, these are socially created and deeply ingrained in our culture which is difficult to escape. How can wives force their husbands to share domestic chores or say them you work at home and I am earning, *ohhh* (expression of helplessness).

Executive education office (female) Peshawar city argued that:

> Involving one's husband in domestic chores belittles the husband status in his social circle and no woman wishes that her husband be labeled negatively. The family goes smoothly when the wives/women sacrifice, remain submissive and subordinate to their husbands

The following extract from female educationists' responses shows that women in two paycheck families feel strongly overburden due to second shift.

> We want our men to help us in household chores as we feel over burden after a daylong work in the public domain and also looking after the children and kitchen. We have to manage job and domestic chores for many reasons: a) it saves the family, otherwise it may lead to marital maladjustment; b) we don't force husbands to share domestic chores as people around us will talk about our husbands in bad terms; c) wives love to serve and care their husbands; and d) it positions a woman as a respectable and good wife when she scarifies, remains submissive and subordinate to her husband.
>
> (Extract from the majority opinion)

One female respondent very forcefully and emphatically argued that men's involvements in domestic activities are not compatible with our culture. She argued:

> See we are not living in western society to ask men to carry out domestic activities. Rather, as you know, we live in a culture where it is considered bad to ask men to do household chores. I think it cements marital relation. To be good in domestic chores actually elevate female's position.
>
> (Female subject specialist,
> textbook board KPK)

Most of these discourses seem unidirectional: justification of domestic chores as women's responsibility. It is eminent from these discourses that women use their feminine capital (domestic services and submissiveness) as 'bartering agent' for the acceptability and family security. The responses of the few (three female and two male) participants, who disagreed with sex based division of labour as natural but accepted it as cultural imperative, Fairclough would argue,

> are so profoundly naturalized within a particular culture that people are not only quite unaware of these most of the time, but find it extremely difficult, even when their attention is drawn to them, to escape from them in their course, thinking and action. (Fairclough, 1995, p 195).

Subject choice and gender

Sex of the children has decisive effect on their choice of subjects (see Page and Jha, 2009). Boys and girls, for example, do not pursue the same subject as the dominant ideology pushes them to study subjects which would best prepare them for their natural roles (argument of the essentialist and innate differences theorists). When choosing subjects boys and girls may be influenced by what they have learned about femininity and masculinity in early socialization (Sharpe 1976, 1994, Skelton et, al. 2006). On inquiry about *which subject are more suitable for girls to pursue as an academic career,* mixed but almost balance feelings and reactions were shared by the study's respondents. Almost half of the respondents expressed beliefs which strongly bind male and female role in society with biological differences between the sexes. Extract of some of these responses are:

> Female subject specialist Textbook board KPK: girls, if they can, should study medicine or social science.

The above position was reinforced with a more detailed answer to the question by another senior female curriculum designer. She argued that:

> (…) girls should study medicine as females are better doctors than males. However, all girls cannot and don't qualify for the medical college; therefore, the best fields for girls [after medicine] are psychology and home economics [giving the reasons] ultimately females have to look after the family and socialize children. You know well, these subjects help them in homemaking and child rearing in the best manner.
>
> (Female subject specialist (Urdu)
> textbook board KPK)

Similarly, principal government higher secondary school for boys Peshawar city opined.

> Boys and girls hear differently, boys like cooler colour, girls like brighter colour, boys take risk, girls avoid risk [he argued] there is biological differences and we cannot equate males and females. [Similarly] boys are good in natural sciences as compared to girls. [Therefore] I believe that social sciences suits girl more than natural sciences.

An opposing point of view was held by an almost equal number (12) of respondents, consisting both genders, claimed that academic discipline should not be gendered as boys and girls can pursue any subject they wish in line with their aptitudes.

> A senior curriculum expert, Ministry of Education: (…) gender makes no difference and I believe that no subject is masculine or feminine. Girls and boys can be equally good in a subject depending on their aptitude. But if females intend to pursue career, you know, there are many cultural issues for them which clearly affect females' choices of subject selection.

The above extract indicates how patriarchal structure of society constitute a framed whereby power is exercised through norms, hidden social threats which channel females to limited academic and job options without officially promulgated rules, prohibition and oppression. An almost the same position was held by another respondents.

> *Male subject specialist (English) textbook board KPK*: "…[A]ll fields are appropriate for girls if the patriarchal structure of society allows females to join any job they wish. Since society does not encourage to females to enter any jobs they wish due to restricted mobility, *purda*, therefore, parents and other social forces compel females to study subjects which either help them in running the family or guarantee a job in medicine, nursing and teaching etc.

Executive education officer female, criticizing cultural bias, argued:

> Girls can study all subjects if our society [patriarchal social structure] provides them opportunities for employment. I think cultural factors and some time lack of science laboratory and teachers in the neighboring School compel girls to study selected subjects [arts and humanities] and pursue education whatever is available.

Both these groups of respondents shared different opinion about the effect of children's sex on their choice of subject. The second category of responses is superficially not gender discriminatory and apparently very progressive. However, these, when critically analyzed, are not different but equally gendered by depriving children from their decision power on the ground of biological differences, cultural and structural factors such as purda, restriction on females' mobility to avail education away from their homes, and lack of educational facilities in female schools.

Women in traditional female careers

The study unpacked a very traditional mind set when the question regarding best profession for women was asked to the respondents. High majority, irrespective of their gender, agreed that the best professions for women are school teaching and medicine.

> *Principal Girl high School*: Teaching is the best profession for women as it has more and more vacations which give women the edge to look after household management.

> Teaching suit women as it is a job between breakfast and lunch time which does not affect women mothering role and she can easily manage domestic chores after school time. School teaching is best for women as   it gives them an opportunity to educate and socialize their children in the best way.
>
> Extract from interview

> School teaching needs pyar (love) not mar (beating) and women
> are very kind hearted and, therefore, very fit for teaching
> profession.
>
> > Extract from interviews

> *Principal Peshawar Cambridge (a private school)*: Teaching at
> school level involves less interaction with male members;
> therefore, it keeps the parda intact. Therefore, I believe teaching is
> the best for women.

These responses justify the appropriateness of female as school teacher on grounds common in other society such as 'women being kindhearted, women are the best for teaching children (Solomon 1985; Foster, 1993), it is in consonance with cultural norms (Joncich,1991), women needed income, they were anxious not to marry, they wanted to be more independent, and they were interested in fostering social, political and spiritual change (see Drudy, 2008; Smulyan, 2006, p 471; Hilton and Hirsch, 2000; Hoffman, 2003 cited in Francis, 2006, p 47)

However, in addition to the exhaustive and multiple explanations coming from the western scholarship, this study's findings add additional reasons and justification for school teaching as women's job in the context of KPK, or may be generalized to the entire Pakistani society. These are: 'more vacations' and 'a job between breakfast and lunch time', both of which don't affect the 'domestic ideology' thesis. This is because of these gendered beliefs that textbooks are embedded with messages applauding school teaching for women with the attach messages that women in teaching also carry out all domestic chores (Ullah and Skelton 2012).

Few respondents (5 males and 3 females) believed that biological differences between the sexes should not affect females' choices of career.

> Women can enter any field and do any job except those that are
> physically strenuous and involve long hours.

One of the male respondents asserted that

> There are many qualities that women are bestowed with by nature and many they adopt from the environment which enable them to flourish and prove their worth in any sphere of social and professional life provided they receive conducive environment.

> *Subject expert (English) textbook board KPK*: Women can be the best in any field of the public domain if they are given opportunities by the male dominated culture.

> One of the female respondent argued: women are better than men in doing any job as they always remain clear with and dedicated to their goals as compared to men. However, men don't let them to join all fields because they fear that women will threaten their supremacy by outperforming them.

These responses seem very encouraging coming from men as well as some women educationists. However, both categories have an implicit message which positions women in the subordinate positions in the society. As many believed that women are not capable of performing jobs that are 'physically strenuous' and involve 'long hours'; it also believes that 'women are bestowed with some natural qualities' which give them superiority over men. Both these positions are very essentialists. These support the thesis of psychological and biological differences between the sexes which, in turn, give men the space to argue that women are best fit for selected fields in the public domain like teaching and medicines which are not physically demanding and need the caring nature of women.   Moreover, this position on the issue negates the fluid nature of the 'gender' as a temporality which is embedded in the power of language (Davies, 1989; Butler, 1990). It alsoreaffirms the crude gender (sexual) division of labour with little reference to the social complexity underlying the formation of ideas and beliefs about 'masculinity' and 'femininity' in family, schools, media, peer interaction and state (see Connell 1987, and Walkerdine 1990). Similarly, some of these responses stress a universal womanhood and its celebration. It links women's subordinate positions to patriarchy without

giving attention to particularity of context and the manner in which gender identities are shaped by social institutions and children response to their socializations (Measor and Skies, 1992). Essentialists thinking are embedded in the claim-male dominated culture-which asserts that all men are oppressors and all women oppressed. In both categories there seems an implicit politics-avoiding or pretending to understand and challenge the root causes of 'gender codes' and 'gender order'.

Women and political leadership

There is a dramatic shift and evolution in women's entry to politics around the world. Nevertheless, women's inclusion and exclusion as political actors depends on a combination of economic, cultural, social, political and religious reasons. To find out the reasons of women's invisibility in the position of political leaders in the textbooks (see Ullah 2006), opinion of the educationists were sought on the question '*can/should women be political leaders?* Mixed responses were received from respondents which are transcribed and presented into two broad categories: *women shouldn't and cannot be political leaders.*

Secondly, they can and should be. Response of each participant was sorted into the relevant categories irrespective of his/her gender and a general extract has been derived from these responses. Majority (11 out of 17) male and (7 out of 11) females respondents opined that women cannot be effective political leaders and therefore they should not try to be political leaders. Their responses are presented in the following quotes:

> How can we talk about women to b leader in society in which men of characters and good reputation are afraid to participate in the dirty Pakistani politics?

Executive Education Officer (female) Peshawar: She particularly argued that-women cannot be an efficient political leader as they cannot keep secret and top political positions require politicians to keep state secrets. She further added that it is in women nature and psychology to share their stock of information with other and they enjoy telling 'half baked' stories".

Why we should talk about things which are useless, women are not
allowed by the religion Islam to be political leader". A belief held
by 3 male and 4 female respondents.

There were few (6 males and 4 females) respondents who believed
and supported women's role in politics.

Male subject expert (English) textbook board KPK: Women can be
better political leader than men if they were provided opportunity
and were allowed by men to participate in politics. They referred to
Benazir Bhutto as the most efficient political leader after her father
Zul-fiqar Ali Bhutto.

They can be efficient political leaders provided they get conducive
cultural environment to demonstrate their leadership talent.
Nevertheless, society's elites don't want their wives to be political
leaders as they are afraid their women may threaten their authority. If
women of the elite class cannot be part of the politics how can we talk
about the rest of women in Pakistan?

Some of them even pointed out Benazir Bhutto, Hina Rabi and
even Hillary Clinton to have gain political prominence through
their families, benefiting from their family connections. These
belief are so deeply established and held that curriculum and
textbooks are not only silent about women role in politics but the
role of the few prominent political figures (i.e. Fatima Jinnah) have
been masked and highlighted with their feminine characteristics
such as loving, sacrificing and kind instead of their political
activities (see Ullah and Skelton, 2012).

Gender, sports and physical activities

When asked about 'whether boys and girls should play the same games? Majority of the respondents, irrespective of their gender, expressed that they should not play the same games. They shared various reasons and explanation for their beliefs. After constant comparison of the explanations and positions that the respondents had on the issue of gender and sports, following extracts were obtained which was common among the majority respondents.

> Some sports which involve more physical strength like cricket, hockey, football etc don't suit girls due to their physiology. Therefore, females should not play these.
>
> > Extract from interviews

> Subject expert textbook board KPK: Girls are not created with the capacity of running and jumping. One can remain healthy even without playing any sport.

> Plying sports may break girls' hymen which can create future social complication for girls at the time of marriage. Keeping the hymen intact and saving it from breaking is what ensures her virginity at the time of marriage.
>
> > Extract from interviews

> Sports and games don't have gender and these should not be engendered. There is neither male sport nor female sport. Girls and boys can play any sport they wish. However, in the existing cultural environment women don't have the opportunity to play any game. We have to change the culture first.
>
> > Extract from interviews

The essentialist and biological imperative argument seem to have limited and continues to limit females' participation in sports and physical activities. Lumpkin (1984) argued that [historically] women were not provided equal opportunities because of the perceived physiological differences between the sexes (cited in Everhart, Pemberton and winter 2001). Analyzing the above illustration with Foucault's (1980, p 39) notion of 'power as circulating, existing in the individuals' action… touching their bodies, inserting into their attitudes …and everyday life' make good sense. The 'hymen myth' is equally restricting women participation in sport. The prevalence of hymen belief among majority male and female participants alludes to what Foucault called surveillance and or the ways Foucault (1980) and Walkerdine (1990) came to understand power as something beyond the power of the state which is visible and invisible, manifest and hidden and that exist everywhere. Here the power is invisible but exist in every site to control females' sexuality and maintain their modesty. The shift from manifest textual discourses to verbal discourses is actual a shift from visible to invisible apparatus of regulation and power relation (Walkerdine 1988). Taking into account the 'hymen myth' is the sole marker of female virginity and modesty is irrational and ideologically embedded discourse which serves the interest of male domination. Modesty is demanded in the religion Islam from both males and females.

Conclusion

This study explored the contradiction that educationists have regarding the issue of gender and education, especially with reference to the gender equality efforts in textbooks. The findings reveal that, on the surface level, there seem a tiny group of educationists who understand the notion of gender equality but their understanding of gender equality is in term of balanced number of male and female illustrations rather than in a way that would explicitly challenge gender stereotypes. Majority of female educationists, not all, were found more conformists in protecting and promoting the dominant notion of femininity and masculinity. They firmly believed in the essentialist dichotomies of each gender. On the whole, educationists see 'gender' issue as 'sex' issue

where boys/men and girls/women are seen as separate entities-abiological perspective that reduces 'gender' to the essentialists views of males and females. This male-female binary confounds any meaningful   discourse on 'gender'; we will say block thinking and discourse of the varieties of 'femininities' and 'masculinities' that exist out there (see Connell, 2006). To be more robust in the claim, we argue that the study findings suggest educationists' beliefs (which inform school textbooks and school process) clearly underpin and support gender biases and stereotypes in school textbooks. Hegemonic masculinity and feminine subordination is naturalized and legitimized through the powerful discourses of 'social role conformity on biological differences between the sexes', 'institutional responses to females participation in education and the work world', women as the custodians and bunkers of morality'. To ensure gender equality in and through education, a comprehensive gender awareness training of educationists cannot be ignored and taken lightly. Female can think out of the traditional gender roles when they come across multiples role models. Thus presenting children with a 'wider range of experience' (Walkerdine, 1990, p 89) [options, roles, and positions] may change children's view of themselves and possible course of actions (Skelton, 1997, p 43).

Notes

[1] Schools that exists only on paper and are functional in the government's record but teachers and students do not come for teaching learning.

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Dynamics of gender representations in learning materials

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Dynamics of gender representations in learning materials

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Abstract

The concept of representation has been taken up in many disciplines, largely, in visual arts, music, media studies, feminism, gender studies among others. The particular interest that researchers in gender and education studies have taken in gender representation has yielded many studies that have in turn reported interesting findings that are instrumental to revision of learning materials and education process/programmes in line with gender fairness demands in some countries. This paper sheds light on the importance of gender representations in textbook studies by explicating on the concept of representation and its dynamics through learning materials in order to stress a need for more studies especially in under-researched sites. It is anticipated that scholars and researchers who do not share this orientation, and whose take on the concern with gender representation in learning materials studies is that it is a nonessential issue in education might be able to appreciate both the undertakings and the findings of studies on gender representations in textbooks.

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Representaciones de las Dinámicas de Género en los Materiales Educativos

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Abstract

El concepto de representación se ha tenido en cuenta en diversas disciplinas, en artes visuales, música, estudios de los medios de comunicación, feminismo y estudios de género entre otros. El interés particular que los investigadores en género y educación han tenido en representación de género han generado diversos estudios que concluyen resultados interesantes que son útiles para revisar materiales educativos, processos y programas en el ámbito del género. Este artículo da luz a la importancia de las representaciones de género en el estudio de los libros de texto a través de explicar el concepto de representación y sus dinámicas a través de los materiales educativos. Se menciona también la necesidad de que las y los investigadores que no comparten esta orientación deberían tener en cuenta los resultados de los estudios sobre las representacions de género en los libros de texto.

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I n this paper, I argue that one of the ways to appreciate gender representation in learning materials studies and acknowledge its place in the achievement of gender equality in and through education programmes (quality education) is to explore the concept of representation and its dynamics in socializing learners into gendered identities. This position is opposed to the stance which calls for de-emphasizing gender representation in learning material studies for a preoccupation with 'talks around the text' orientation that has been argued to be more rigorous, insightful and rewarding.

Background

The concept of representation and how it has been explored in visual arts, print and non-print media, especially in learning materials has been taken up by many researchers in gender and education. According to Sunderland (2000) studies and critiques of gender representation in textbooks blossomed in the 1970s and 1980s and into the early 1900s, (e.g. Cerezal, 1994; Cincotta, 1978; Hellinger, 1980; Myers 1992; Peterson and Lach, 1990; Schmitz, 1975; U'ren, 1971; Whyld, 1983) together with analytical frameworks. The acknowledgement that educational materials are key mechanism of socialization that instils values and attitudes in young people, including differentiated gender roles (Lee, 2011) is one of the motivating factors for many of these studies.

However, after Sunderland's (2000a) state of the art article was published, more studies have been done and more are still being carried out on the same subject (e.g. Ansary and Babaii, 2003; Birjandi & Anabi, 2006; Gharbavi and Mousave, 2012; Gooden and Gooden, 2001; Hamdan, 2010; Khurshid, Gillani & Hashmi, 2010; Lee and Collins, 2008; Leskin, 2001; Madu and Kasanga, 2005; McKinney, 2005; Sabir, 2008; Zhang, 2003; Zhao 2002). The general finding is that the kind of gender bias in texts is inimical to gender equality in the education of learners and it will impact negatively on their development. In fact, the kind of gender unfairness in texts does not only present inequality in the representation of members of sex groups, especially women, but puts a particular sex group on the other side of the bright light. Thus the overwhelmingly poor representation of female characters in terms

of visibility, subordination, stereotyping of personality traits and occupational roles (including illustrations), and derogatory treatment that Sunderland (2000b) reported over a decade ago is re-echoed by Lee (2011) as common features in contemporary learning materials.

While learning materials in some countries might have undergone reforms in order to bring about fairness in gender representation, based on the literature available to the writer, similar success is yet to be recorded in other countries such as Islamic countries and many parts of Africa. In fact, some societies are yet to transform their talks about the subject matter of gender equality to 'walking the talks' in their programmes as gender bias still characterises the learning materials that they use in their educational system. This stresses the view that studies are still being expected in those countries. In fact, Sunderland (2000a) observed that there are under-researched sites as regards gender and language learning in developing countries in Africa, Islamic countries, Eastern Europe, South America, and China. While researchers have responded to this dearth in China, (Ross and Shi, 2003; Zhao, 2002; Zhang, 2002) and in some Islamic countries (Gharbavi and Mousavi, 2012) and Eastern Europe barring South and East Africa and Central Africa (Page & Jha, 2009), it does not appear that researchers have seen the need for similar studies in sub-Sahara Africa.

However, while studies in these under-researched sites are still ongoing, Sunderland (2000b) suggested that this undertaking might be at the very peripheral area in gender and language education. In fact, Sunderland observes that such undertaking might lead at times to viewing gender in an outdated way in language education, resulting in oversimplification and unproductive generalizations, in particular, women and girls are sometimes simplistically represented as victims of gender bias in language textbooks, and of male dominance in the classroom. This picture, Sunderland (2000b) noted is far from being the full one, does little, I would argue to help female students, and may mislead teachers (p. 149).

Sunderland (2000b) concluded that studies that had been based on the assumption/definition (representation of gender in textbooks) of genderas a 'culturally-shaped group of attributes and behaviours given to the female or the male' and recognized that these phenomena and the

language (representation) through which they they are realized may be gendered in the additional sense that they may play a role in the further gendering of students. In other words, in shaping their masculinities and femininities (Humm, 1989) textbook studies may have been useful once, but ten years later sounds crude.   The point at which Sunderland (2000b) noted that the preoccupations inherent in much of the past work on gender and language textbooks should now be left behind and went further to illustrate one way in which this is happening to our understanding in this paper might be controversial.   In fact, after her proposal, many works have been done and more are expected to fill the gap in under-researched countries.

There is no doubt, that in communities where the first generation studies (Cerezal, 1991; Cincotta, 1978; Hartman and Judd, 1978; Porecca, 1984; Poulou, 1997;Talanasky, 1986) had accomplished a measure of success and the second generation studies in the same communities (e.g., Blumerg, 2007; Carlson, 2007; Chandran and Abdudllay, 2003; Healy, 2009; Sano, Ida & Hardy, 2001; Seng, 2003; Zittleman and Sadker, 2002) have attested to that success; new understandings of gender - seeing "gender in language education in new, non-deterministic ways" should be embarked upon.   In other words, these new ways, in these communities, Sunderland (2000b) says, should lead the way into research on gender and language teaching that avoids the pitfalls of representing teachers as predictable, willing, unquestioning textbook users, and of female learners as passive victims, and can engage with the notions of flux, agency, diversity and individuality (p. 150) but should not discredit previous undertakings.

Studies in gender representation in learning materials

It might be the case that studies in gender representation in language textbooks (using content and linguistic analysis) might have declined in frequency in the 1990s (Sunderland 2000b) in the West but this is not the case outside Western countries. For example, Tietz (2007) examined the representation of gender in introductory accounting textbooks among …and found that women and men are represented very

differently through out the textbooks, thereby reinforcing gender stereotypes and gender role stratification.

In their poster presentation on gender representation in Japanese EFL Textbooks, Sano, Iida and Hardy (2001) found that although gender-imbalanced language has been substantially eliminated from EFL textbooks since 1990 in terms of the number of chapter topics, more males are referred to or engaged in actions, reading through the texts reveals prominence in the number of features focusing on male characters. In their study of gender representation in Hong Kong English textbooks, Lee and Collins (2008) found that women are still commonly associated with housework and the home and men with paid work outside; women are weak, and men are strong; women are more passive, and men are more active; women are less frequently mentioned than males in both the written and visual modes.

Stockdale (2006) examined gender representation in an EFL textbook and found that males are still dominant in the amount of talk; men's names are more than females' and titled names, full names, and colloquial terms of address exhibited a frequency bias toward males. Mukundan and Nimehchisalem (2008) in their study of gender representation in Malaysian secondary school English Language textbooks reported that there is an absolute gender bias which discriminates against women. However it also found that males were discriminated against in their representation as those with most of the negative traits. Mustedanagic (2010) analysed textbooks used in Swedish schools in order to discover the extent to which values of equality are upheld in textbooks and how males and females are represented in non-stereotyped ways and as equal. It was found that the textbooks from the 1980s that still contain very stereotypical views on gender roles are still in use in some schools and that occupations held by women and men in the texts, and the distribution of males and females in the illustrations show that there is a tendency to promote males and to diminish females.

Ansary and Babii (2003) stated the point that the stereotypical role of women as mothers and homemakers is still being perpetuated in many current language textbooks where substantial sections of their societies presented in those textbooks are underrepresented or ignored. Similarly,

Otlowski (2003) investigated current English Language textbook used throughout (Expressway A) for the way gender-bias was depicted and found that the text still depicts women in roles that no longer accurately represent their role in society. While some texts represent the dominant culture in their societies others misrepresent the true happenings in order for some reasons.

Therefore, even in the communities where gender-fairness has been enforced in their learning materials, one might still find that the 'traditional' concept of gender is still a dominant culture with pockets of enlightened citizens being wary of the wave of feminism and its tenets and tolls on their societies. This suggests that in our new understandings of gender, some measure of our old understanding of gender should be accommodated. Therefore, although some theoretical developments may suggest that the text may not be the most appropriate focus of study and bias may be found somewhere other than in the text (Sunderland 2000b), there is still a significant place for text studies in our concern for gender equality in and through education. It has been reported in studies that bias still exists in texts (Gharbavi and Mousavi, 2012a; Lee, 2011) thus gender bias in textbooks does matter and is worthy of investigating in gender and language education studies.

Therefore, I argue that while Sunderland's (2000b) proposal might be valid in communities where preliminary studies on texts have occasioned revision of gender biased texts, the proposal is difficult to extend to sites where learning materials are still laden with gender bias that go unnoticed or unquestioned. A further consideration of the mechanics/dynamics of representation in texts and how artists/authors explore and exploit them in their works even in advanced countries still stress a need for more studies on textbooks.

Perspectives of representation

Exploring the concept of representation in texts and its dynamics in the literature suggests that it is a potent socializing agent in gendering learners into gendered persons that might be difficult to undo in their future adult life. Serge Moscovici (in discussion with Markova, 1998) stated that "a social representation is not a quiet thing". Thus, the theory

of social representations was first formulated by Serge Moscovici (Hoijer, 2011). A pedestrian definition of representations says that it is simply a re-representation of what is real. In that sense, representations from viewers and readers' point of view are secondary source, the primary materials being what we have in the real world. This definition is close to a perspective which sees representation as a re-enactment or re-construction or creation of what existed before or still exists in its original form. These definitions suggest that the representations we have in textbooks are not neutral and should not be taken as original - reality. These views of representation are similar to the idea that representation is that which stands in for something else.

Looking at representation from another perspective, Hall (1997) opines that representation is simply meaning creation - representation conveys meaning about reality to the reader/viewer so that representation that are presented in codes/texts are meaning loaded. Therefore, to represent is to depict something that stands in for reality…thus meaning is given to the things which are depicted that is close to the reality. In other words, representation might mean meaning giving. Based on this notion, Hall (1997) offers three approaches to representation - reflective approach, where representations simply reflect reality), intentional approach, where our understanding of reality is created by representation (the opposite of reflective) and constructionist approach, where representations create, or construct meaning which is based on a material reality (a mix of the reflective and the intentional approaches).

For Ferdinard de Saussure (1983) language does not reflect reality but meaning is constructed through language. Therefore, we make meaning through the creation and interpretation of signs and signs can be words, images, sounds, odours, flavours, acts, objects and so on. He postulated formula to illustrate his concept of representation. To him, signifier and signified give us sign, where the signifier is the form which the sign takes, and signified is the concept it represents and the sign is the total meaning that results from associating the signifier with the signified. Thus to him, representation, at a very basic level is the way in which signs are used to construct meaning.

What might be deduced from these definitions among others are what

readers and viewers take away from the codes and texts which are not
the reality but works of re-creation, re-enactment. This view is closer to
the idea of reflection that has been distinguished from representation. To
some scholars, the use of reflection implies that there is a direct
correspondence between phenomena (events, people, things) in the real
world and their appearance in texts. One idea that this perspective
suggests is that "… some kind of modulation or interpretive process has
been involved in re-presentation". In other words, some manipulation
or transformation is unavoidable in representation so that even
photographs are reflections, which we learn to read and interpret in
many   different   ways.

   Crag Owen (1950-1990) noted that representation is not neutral; it is
an act of power in our culture. Thus dichotomy exists between high and
mass culture which one can see privileges, the masculine over the
feminine…the high culture (masculine) are represented as production,
work, intellect, activity, writing; while the mass culture are characterised
by consumption as opposed to production, leisure in place of work,
emotion instead of intellect, passivity in place of activity and reading
rather than writing.

   For Baudrillard (1998), the entire concept of representation is
problematic especially in the media, for media representation are
simulations of realities that do not exist, thus they are hyperreal. This
view of representation is captured in his first order, second order and
third order. At the first order, you have signification (signs which imitate
real things) this is where reality is constructed through simulation e.g.,
representation in maps, paintings, etc; the second order simulation -
reproduction (signs to refer signs representations of reality which
imitate real things reproduced by mechanical technology e.g., films,
printing. Third order simulation - simulation (signs no longer represent
as there is no connection between real things but serve to mask this
reality and representation - absence of reality instead we have
hyperreality.

   Marxism with its ideological framework has a hegemonic view of
society, which has to do with fundamental inequalities in power between
social groups where groups in power exercise their influence culturally
rather than by force. For example, Marxism opines that representations

are encoded into mass media texts in order to enforce dominant ideologies in society (Althusser, 1971). According to Levi-Strauss (1958) all representations are encoded into texts and others are left out in order to give a preferred representation (the preferred syntagm).

As a movement, feminism questions the position of women within patriarchal society and the private sphere of home, children and domestic bliss among others. Feminism in the 60s and 70s served to uncover, challenge and eliminate oppression and dominant gender imagery - representations. It has witnessed debates on the narrow range of stereotypes present across all media, such as women as virgins, mothers or promiscuous, sex objects, as inferior to men as objects to be seen rather subjects who perform. The theoretical perspectives of radical feminism ---advocates the opposite of our society now, where women are the more privileged, powerful, prestigious society. It says that men's reason was created to emphasise masculine control and that it is not as good as women's intuition. Liberal feminism clamours for equality that cannot be obtained only through legal, political, constitutional amendments only but must be social too. It emphasizes equal rights for women; women can and should be treated the same as men and this leads to equality. Socialist feminism is of the idea that equality and feminism could be achieved through socialism. Post-feminism – idea that after the feminist movement, we don't need feminism any more. Masculinity and femininity are socially constructed and these are represented in texts and/or images. Thus, gender and ideology – ideas about gender are produced and reflected in language (O'Sullivan et al, 1998).

Representation in various forms is also used to engender stereotypes. Dyer (1982) argues that stereotypes are a way of reinforcing differences between people, and representing these differences as natural. As an ideological term, stereotype is a means by which support is provided by one group's differential against another. Thus stereotypes about men and women reinforce the idea that they are very different. However, this view has been criticized for misrepresenting the real world e.g. reinforcing that the (false) stereotype that women are available for sex at any time and for being too close to real world e.g., showing women in home servicing men, which many still do (Barker, 1989).

One area of study that has contributed much to how representations function to reinforce differences between people is social theory of representation (Duveen, 2000; Farr and Markova, 1995; Jodelet, 1991; Joffe, 2002; Gervais and Jovchelovitch, 1998; Howarth, 2002). According to Duveen (2000) (cited in Howarth 2006:07) social representations of gender reproduce gendered identities and gendered relations which serve to maintain and defend gendered differences in the social order.   This works by conversion: "…we convert these social representations into a particular social reality, for others and for ourselves" (Philogene and Deauz, 2001).   This view stresses Moscovici's popular sentence

> a social representation is not a quiet thing" in that "it is not that social representations simply reflect or inform our reality, but that in doing so they become what reality is intersubjectively agreed to be. What is critically significant here is that different representations compete in their claims to reality, and so defend, limit and exclude other realities (Howarth, 2006, p. 8).

Klapps (1962) distinction between stereotypes and social types throws more light on the concepts. Klapp (1962) defines social types as representations of those who belong to society. They are the kinds of people that one expects, and is led to expect, to find in one's society, whereas stereotypes are those who do not belong, who are outside of one's society.   One area where stereotypes have been investigated is in music where females and males are represented in binary identities such as:

i.   Men engage in significantly more aggressive and dominant behaviour;
ii.   Men are represented as independent, adventurous, unemotional and competent;
iii.   Stereotypical gendered occupations apparent (i.e. males as fire fighters/mechanics   women   as   cheerleader/waitress;

iv.   Women are represented as objects of sexual advances or as sexual   objects;

v.   Sex roles stereotyping and negative attitudes towards females;

vi.   Women are more likely to be presented in provocative or revealing clothing; and

vii.   Women are portrayed as decorative objects that dance, pose and do not play instruments

Another perspective of representation is sexual objectification and the male gaze Mulvey (1975) For example, voyeurism – erotic pleasures gained from looking at a sexual object who is unaware of being watched. The other representations include:

i.   Presence of women solely for the purpose of display rather than narrative function

ii.   Female on display is passive and objectified for a male gaze regardless of viewers gender

iii.   Women connote to-be-looked-at-ness and are the object of the male gaze.

On the other hand, men are represented to display ideal for body type, which can be unrealistic too. For example, aggressiveness and being in control of things fit into masculine ideal. Thus within stereotypes representation, representation has tended to focus upon the way in which different social groups are represented (gender, race, sexuality, social class, etc). As a postmodernist theorist, Baudrillard (1998) argues that our society has become so reliant on representations that we have lost contact with the real – we can no longer tell the real from the artificial. Reality is (now) determined by representation. There is no distinction between reality and representation, only the simulacrum (a copy that now has more reality than the object itself). Baudrillard (1998) discussed the concept of hyperreality – we inhabit a society that is no longer made up of any original thing for a sign to represent... it is the sign that is now the meaning. He argued that we live in society of simulacra – simulations of reality that replace the real. An application of

Baudrillard's claims suggests that representations are phony.   This position supports the claim that the media do not reflect and represent the reality of the public but instead produce it, employing this simulation to justify their own continuing existence (Merrin, 2007).

  We might deduce from these various perspectives that representations and reality are not synonymous…representations are farther away from reality. While representations tend to mirror what is real they should not be taken as kindred of reality, in fact, they are not natural. It might be added that realities and reflections are not the same though reflection is closer to reality than representation is to reality.   Representation is farther from reality because what is represented is often coloured by the artists' ideological and social values, in other word, representation often reflects the dominant culture that the artist represents and tends to portray. The position that representations are deliberately constructed to serve certain purposes, e.g., to reinforce the dominant ideological views of individuals or groups of peolple summarise the dynamics of representations. Thus Lacey (2009) notes that societal ideological values are apparent in representations. Conventional representation may portray femininity and masculinity in a subversive way or otherwise. Litosseliti and Sunderland (2002) observed that representations always relate to somenthing already existing, (but) they can all be seen as forms of recontextualisation. Thus Hoijer (2011) captures social representation in clear terms in the following quote:

> social representations are about processes of collecting meaning-making resulting in common cognitions which produce social bonds uniting societies, organisations and groups. It sets focus on phenomena becomes subjected to debate, strong feelings, conflicts and ideological struggle, and changes the collective thinking in society. As communication it links society and individual, media and public (p. 3).

A more encompassing definition of social representations is that of Moscovici (1988) which says:

> Social representations concern the contents of everyday thinking and the stock of ideas that give coherence to our religious beliefs, political ideas and the connections we create as spontaneously as we breathe. They make it possible for us to classify persons and objects, to compare and explain behaviours and to objectify them as part of our social setting. While representations are often to be located in the minds of men and women, they can just as often be found "in the world", and as such examined separately. (p. 214)

Commenting on its functions, Moscovici (1973) is quoted in Hoijer (2011, p. 5) thus:

> A social representation is a system of values, ideas and practices with a twofold function: first, to establish an order which will enable individuals to orientate themselves in their material and social world and to master it; and secondly to enable communication to take place among members of a community by providing them with a code for naming and classifying unambiguously the various aspects of their world and their individual group history. (p. xiii).

Moscovici (1984) identifies two major functions of social representations

> they conventionalize objects, persons and events we are meeting by giving them a specific form, localize them to a given category, and gradually establish them as distinct and shared cognitions … they are prescriptive in the sense that they through social structures and traditions are forced upon us …we incorporate them into our individual minds, as individuals we rethink collective cognitions…however, …individuals and groups can rework and transform collective cognitions" (cited in Hoijer, 2011, p. 6).

Representations and their effects

These perspectives of representation offer insights into how representations work. Primarily, they suggest that certain representations are reflective of social reality or they are mere subversives serving certain ideological social leanings and/or reflecting the dominant ideological culture of society that artists/authors represent. The perspectives also suggest that representations may be very close to real live of a people at a given time or may be mere types or stereotypes. In fact, Lacey (2009) argued that (media) texts cannot show reality as it is; by their nature, they mediate: To her, "realism is a form of representation that has a privileged status because it signs itself as being closer to reality than other forms of representations such as genre texts.   To Lacey (2009), all representations are the result of conventions produced at a particular time and place determined by the dominant ideology (p. 22). Thus what appeared to be realistic in the past is likely to appear contrived now; and that contemporary modes of realism are likely to be seen in this way by future generations.

These insights further suggest some pertinent questions which have been raised in the literature. Amongst them are: how is the text representing the world to us through the use of the technical codes? What does it suggest? Who is speaking? And for whom? What is represented to us? And why? What signifiers are used? What meaning is produced? What social groups are being represented? What is shown to be natural or deviant? Who constructed the representation? Why? Are stereotypes used? What effect do they have? Which characters are dominant? What characters are submissive? Who are the objects? Who are the subjects? What 'reality' is represented? How does the representation relate to reality?

Answers to these questions have been sought in textbook research and studies have reported insightful findings (answers) that have been instrumental to re-examination of the various representations in textbooks. However, what is more important to researchers is captured by Moscovici (1988) that social representations do influence our actions, particularly how we may explain our actions or the actions of others and that social representations are also contained within and developed through our social actions of our "social practices". Howarth

(2006) opined that we must see social representations as both influencing and constituting social practices (p. 15). This stance refutes the claim that social representations are ways of understanding the world which influence action, but are not themselves parts of action (Potter, 1996a, p. 168). In fact, Fiske (1996, p 214) says:

> (…) representations are real in their effects; they produce what passes for real in any particular conditions.

Moscovici (1998) puts it strongly thus:

> shared representations, their language, penetrate so profoundly into all the interstices of what we call reality, that we can say that they constitute it (p. 245). Representations not only influence people's daily practices - but constitute these practices (Howarth, 2006, p. 17).

Representations are products of many internal and external agents. Representations could be "external construction of the media" that are often held unto by many people but might also be rejected by another group of people; construction of individuals and collective representations of a group of people. Thus collective and individual representations have been distinguished in the literature. Durkheim (1898) identified a collective representation as a social fact which is imposed on us, difficult to challenge, static and uniform in its effects; while individual representations are the personal interpretations of distinct individuals (cited in Howarth, 2006, p. 11). Howarth (2006) quoted Moscovici's arguments that:

> collective representations are more common in so-called traditional societies, where there is comparative uniformity in belief and knowledge. For in these societies there is "less scope of individuality - for original, unique, or creative thinking and behaviour" (Meed, 1972, p. 221) and therefore less opportunity of competing knowledge systems to development (p. 11).

It must be noted that the literature on representations is robust on how collective representations as 'hegemonic representations' (Moscovici, 1988) are subject to resistance by individuals and groups in our contemporary society. Thus Moscovici has been quoted to have noted that "in the process of formation of a representation there is always both conflict and cooperaon" where the cooperation gives social agents a common code to discuss, debate and so constitute social realities (Moscovici, 1961/1976; Wagner, et al, 2000), while the conflict gives them something to debate about as different interests and relations of power compete (cited in Howarth, 2006:11). Lewis (1994) captures the variation and diversity of collective representations thus:

> (Representational) meanings become a battleground between and among folk cultures, class, subcultures, ethnic cultures, and national cultures; different communications media, the home, and the school; churches and advertising agencies; and different versions of history and political ideologies. The sign is no longer inscribed within a fixed cultural order. The meaning of things seem less predictable and less certain. (p. 25) (cited in Howarth 2006:12).

In what follows we shall examine how representations in textbooks impact on learners and users of such texts.

Gender representation in textbooks

Gender representation in textbooks might be seen as either reflecting certain ideological values that society holds or a subversion of the cultural norms. Howarth's (2004) study within school exclusion illustrates the potency of representation where "young black pupils are detailed in dominant representations of 'troublesome black youth' that marginalize their position and restrict their potential at school". Howarth (2006) reports how the black pupils recognise and describe how these representations are institutionalised within the material and symbolic curricula at school and how the representations inform the realities they experience. According to Yaqin (2002)

> books reflect the fixed views of a given social culture with respect
> to gender roles and contain definite gender characteristics patterns,
> all of which have an important influence on children and cause
> them to consciously or unconsciously imitate and learn from them
> (p. 14).

Yaqin (2002) further commented that books, as well as being reflections of socio-cultural influences, also tend to expand, reproduce, and strengthen society's gender biases and perceptions, all of which may affect the way children identify with and subject themselves to the gender role to which they belong (p. 22). As textbooks are often viewed by learners as authoritative, and therefore have the potential to influence a significantly large and impressionable audience (Foshay, 1990; Robson, 2001), their potency in socializing learners cannot be over-emphasized.

Similarly, Gullicks, Pearson, Child and Schwab (2005) noted that textbooks are often viewed by students as authoritative, and therefore have the potential to influence a significantly large and impressionable audience and that one function of textbooks is to serve as a "means to facilitate the integration of content about ethnically, racially, and culturally diverse populations" (Sileo and Prater, 1998). Treichler and Frank (1989) found that gender-biased materials affect the motivation of students who go through the textbooks. In the same vein, Mukundan and Nimehchisalem (2008) noted that the textbooks young people focus on repeatedly during the classroom practice, follow-up assignments or projects, and preparation for examination exert influence on the learner in terms of the quality of education they receive, their understanding of social equality and national unity.

In fact, Sileo and Prater (1998) noted that textbooks serve as a means to facilitate the integration of content about ethnically, racially and culturally diverse populations (p. 5). Mustedanagic (2010) explains how this is done. Whenever a text is read, an interpretation is made by the reader and meaning is constructed. Comparing language teaching with building a house, Mustedanagic (2010) noted that the text represents our materials…therefore, bad material, bad building. Thus linguistic sexism in textbooks creates deleterious real-world and damaging pedagogical

in textbooks creates deleterious real-world and damaging pedagogical consequences especially for women and girls (Poulou, 1997 and Treichler and Frank, 1989). Stromquist, Lee and Brock-Utne (1998) observe the impact that the school system has on learners and society at large thus:

> educational institutions are powerful ideological institutions that transmit dominant values, and function as mechanism of social control…schools transmit values that no only reproduce social class but also main gender structures…the formal school system contributes to the reproduction of gender inequalities through such mechanism as selective access to schooling, the content of what is being taught and what is not and how it is taught and the kinds of knowledge men and women (and boys and girls) get (p. 83).

Stromquist, et al (1998) concluded that observers and educators acknowledge that textbooks and curricular content leave lasting influences in our memories, as phrases and stories heard, read and written about men and women condition our minds (p. 97). They further stressed that because the formal curriculum, through textbook content and instructional dynamics, continues to promote the creation of gendered identities of asymmetrical nature…textbooks should continue to be a prime target in strategies to modify the curriculum.

It is interesting to note that studies on gender in learning materials have been instrumentals to the revision of gender-biased texts in many countries (US, UK, some parts of Europe, parts of Asia and others). Some of their findings and recommendations have occasioned follow-up activities that are contributing toward achieving gender equality in society and in effect, contributing toward national development which is the focus of the third UN Millennium Development Goals - gender equality.

Based on the importance of textbooks, the dynamics of text representation in socialising learners, and the contributions studies in the area have made to gender equality programmes one might be able to appreciate the reason why many studies have investigated the learning materials in the school system of their countries. These studies highlighted gender-biasness in learning materials and discussed some of

their consequences before calling for revision that will ensure gender-fairness in all its ramification in order to bring about gender equality in society and consequently national development.

Conclusion

From the foregoing, it might be argued that studying gender representations in learning materials in order to highlight discriminatory representations that will obstruct the achievement of gender equality in and through education in society for national development is crucial. If gender-biased textbooks are ignored because of the focus on talks around the text in the classroom, we might be overlooking earlier corrective measures that would have addressed important issues that are germane to gender equality in and through education. Thus, more studies on texts should be done in developed countries while scholars in under-researched site are expected to fill the gap in the literature. Perhaps, a better line of action is to allow both orientations to go hand and hand complementing each other with more emphasis on textbooks.

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Parental Differences in Family Processes in Chinese Families Experiencing Economic Disadvantage

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Parental Differences in Family Processes in Chinese Families Experiencing Economic Disadvantage

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Abstract

Parental differences in family processes (indexed by parental responsiveness, demandingness, control, and sacrifice for children's education) were examined in 275 Chinese intact families experiencing economic disadvantage in Hong Kong. Consistent with the previous literature, results indicated that there were parent gender differences in family processes, including parental responsiveness, demandingness, control and sacrifice for children's education based on the responses of parents and adolescents. Relative to mothers, fathers were less involved in parenting and having less sacrifice for their children's education. Furthermore, adolescents perceived greater paternal-maternal differences in family processes than did parents. This is the first scientific research that studies parent gender differences in family processes in Chinese families experiencing economic disadvantage. Theoretical and practical implications of the findings are discussed.

Diferencias entre padres y madres en procesos familiares en familias chinas en situación de desventaja económica

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Resumen

Las diferencias entre padres y madres en procesos familiares (indexadas como receptividad, exigencia, control y sacrificio por la educación de los hijos) fueron examinadas en 275 familias chinas intactas en situación de desventaja económica en Hong Kong. Confirmando la literatura existente, los resultados indicaron la existencia de diferencias de género en los procesos familiares incluyendo a nivel de receptividad, exigencia, control y sacrificio por la educación de los hijos basadas en las respuestas de padres y madres y adolescentes. En relación a las madres, los padres están menos involucrados en la crianza y se sacrifican menos por la educación de sus hijos. Además, los adolescentes percibieron más diferencias entre madres y padres que ellos mismos. Ésta es la primera investigación científica que estudia las diferencias de género entre madres y padres en sus procesos familiares en familias chinas en situación de desventaja económica. Se tratan las implicaciones teóricas y practicas de los resultados.

Palabras clave: family processes; parent gender differences; poverty; chinese families

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I n social science literature, it is not difficult to find the term "parental" as to represent the attributes of both fathers and mothers (Chao, 1994; Chao & Kaeochinda, 2010; Fan & Chen, 2001) One may ask the questions: do fathers and mothers have the same "parental" behaviors? Do they perform the same roles in the family? The answer brings theoretical and practical implications for our understandings of the family roles of fathers and mothers as well as their involvement in family processes. There is empirical evidence showing that parental differences in family processes influence the adolescent development (Bosco et al., 2003; Lewis & Lamb, 2003; McKinney & Renk, 2008). It is especially important for Chinese families experiencing economic disadvantage, as parental differences in family processes would be heightened in the Chinese cultural context based on the role theory of cultural perspectives (Hosley & Montemayor, 1997), and among families in low socio-economic strata according to the resources perspective and the structural model (Presser, 1994; Rubin, 1976). Unfortunately, it was found that research on parental differences in family processes in economically disadvantaged families is minimal. Using the search terms of "parental difference", "family processes" and "poverty/economic disadvantage", an advanced search of the PsycINFO in July 2012 for the period 1980-2012 showed that there were only 38 publications. Amongst these publications, there was only one publication pertinent to the Chinese community. Similarly, computer search using search terms of "parental difference", "family processes" and "poverty/economic disadvantage" of Social Work Abstracts in July 2012 for the period 1980-2012 showed that there was no publication.

Apart from the severe lack of research in this area, there are other limitations pertinent to the research on understanding parental differences in family processes. First, a majority of studies focus on parenting styles and parental involvement (Bosco et al., 2003; Harris & Marmer, 1996; McKinney & Renk, 2008; Paulson & Sputa, 1996), other family processes are relatively less studied. This is especially problematic in the Chinese context as the Chinese family systems as well as their intra-familial interactions were influenced strongly by Confucianism. Lam (2005) suggested that the Chinese meaning of

parenthood is "associated with the notion of 'responsibility for children' and 'making sacrifice for the benefit of children'" (p. 118). In Chinese culture, it is noteworthy that parental control and parental sacrifice are distinctive features of Chinese parenting (Chao & Kaeochinda, 2010; Chao & Tseng, 2002). However, studies on parental differences in parental control and sacrifice in Chinese families experiencing economic disadvantage were almost non-existent. Burton and Jerrett (2000) pointed out the "lack of attention given to cultural and contextual perspectives of family processes" (p. 1128). Hence, there is an urgent need to develop indigenous Chinese conception of family processes and study the gender differences in a more specific cultural and socio-economic context.

Second, research findings pertinent to parent gender in parenting and socialization patterns of adolescents are found equivocal. With reference to the Chinese culture, there is a strong discourse of "strict fathers, kind mothers" thesis (Wilson, 1974). However, this traditional thesis has been challenged in the contemporary Chinese literature (Shek, 1998, 2007a, 2008). In a study of 429 Chinese secondary school students, Shek (1998) argued that the concept of "strict father" made sense when "strictness" was defined in term of "harshness". However, when "strictness" was defined as "demandingness", fathers were not any more demanding than were mothers (Shek, 1998). Another longitudinal study of 2559 Chinese adolescents showed that general perceptions of the father's behavioral and psychological control to be lower than those of the mother (Shek, 2008). The traditional "strict father, kind mother" thesis was prone to challenges. Obviously, research findings on parental differences in family processes of the Chinese families are inconclusive and unclear.

Another limitation is that a majority of researches studying parental differences in family processes focused mainly on adolescents' perspective of perceived paternal and maternal socialization patterns (Bosco et al., 2003; McKinney & Renk, 2008; Shek, 2007a, 2008a & b), with parents' perspectives often neglected. As each set of respondents only represents one perspective, employment of a single perspective to understand the association would confine the findings to one particular response set. Besides, collecting data from a single data source would increase individual response bias. Paulson and Sputa (1996) reminded

researchers to be cautious that "what parents think they may be doing in the home may not be what the adolescent perceives" (p. 371). On the contrary, a multiple perspective to study family processes can give us a more comprehensive view (Day et al., 2001).

Parental differences in family processes

A review shows that the literature on parental differences in family processes covers two aspects: qualitative differences between fathers and mothers in child-rearing roles, and quantitative assessments of fathers' and mothers' involvement in parenting. Different theories have been proposed to explain for the different roles of fathers and mothers in family processes. First, the sex-role theory (Bem, 1974) suggests that femininity is associated with expressiveness, whereas masculinity is associated with instrumentality (Spence, 1993). Mothers may adopt a more affective style of parenting, whereas fathers may adopt a more goal-oriented style (Russell et al., 1998). Second, the gender-ideology approach suggests that gender ideologies shape the involvement of parents in parenting and doing housework. Mothers are more involved in the socialization process and family management (Coverman, 1985; Kluwer et al., 2000). Third, the role theory of cultural perspectives suggests that parenting roles and practices are determined by culture, which is historically developed and traditionally accepted. For example, with reference to the Three Cardinal Guide (*san gang*) and the Five Constant Relationships (*wu lun*) embedded in the Confucian philosophy, fathers are obliged to take up the role of training and monitoring the behaviors of children, as presented by the popular Chinese maxim "*yang bu jiao, fu zhi guo*" (it is the fathers' fault for only nurturing but not teaching his children). Mothers, in contrast, are defined as caregivers, responsible for maintaining the childcare and household management (Shek, 2002a).

   In the Chinese culture, it is noteworthy that there is a strong traditional discourse of "strict fathers, kind mothers" (Wilson, 1974). Fathers are generally regarded as "harsh disciplinarians" whereas mothers are kind and affectionate (Shek, 2002b). Popular Chinese maxims like "*bang xia chu xiao zi*" (a filial son is the product of the rod), and "*ci mu duo bai er*" (a fond mother spoils the son)

clearly state the "strict father, kind mother" thesis. However, recent studies on parent gender differences in parental control challenged the traditional "strict father, kind mother" thesis to become not more than a "cultural stereotype" in the contemporary Chinese era (Shek, 2008). Instead, the "strict mothers, kind fathers" thesis, or even "stricter mothers and kinder mothers" with fathers remaining detached (Shek, 2007a, 2008) was supported. Furstenberg (1988) referred to these phenomena as "two faces of fatherhood" (p. 193). On one hand, fathers moved towards more involvement in caring and rearing their children. On the other hand, increase in fathers' absence of child support was also evident. However, recent research did not have conclusive results in determining which "face" of fatherhood emerges in the low socio-economic strata. Thus, it is illuminating and worthwhile to explore parental differences in family processes of Chinese families experiencing economic disadvantage.

Regarding quantitative assessments of fathers' and mothers' parenting quality, literature review consistently shows that fathers are less involved in the socialization of children than are mothers (Forehand & Nousiainen, 1993; Noller & Callan, 1990; Paulson & Sputa, 1996). This pattern exists during infancy and continues through middle childhood to adolescence (Collins & Russell, 1991; Parke & Buriel, 1998). There are also different theoretical accounts of the relatively lower involvement of fathers in parenting. In the psychoanalytic theory, mothers are identified more as attachment figures for the children, whereas fathers are more remote (Hosley & Montemayor, 1997). Both sex-role theory (Bem, 1974) and the gender-ideology approach suggest that mothers are more involved in the family life and children's socialization than are fathers (Coverman, 1985; Kluwer et al., 2000). Furthermore, based on the role theory of cultural perspectives, mothers are more involved in family life and parenting than are fathers in Chinese culture, as indicated by the Chinese cultural inclination of "*Nan zhu wai, nu zhu nei*" (men manage things outside the family; women manage things inside).

Finally, the resource perspective posits that fathers comparatively pursue greater resources and decision-making power that contribute to differential roles and tasks in parenting between fathers and mothers (Presser, 1994). Based on this perspective, parental differences in family processes may be heightened in low socio-economic context. The

structural model suggests that blue-collar (lower socio-economic status) families, when compared with white-collar families (higher socio-economic status), demonstrate more patriarchal authority and clearly defined divisions of labor, with less shared decision-making and more defined spousal roles. There are research findings showing that fathers of low socio-economic status were more detached in parenting (Presser, 1994; Rubin, 1976). Furthermore, the physically demanding jobs and long, non-standard hours of work add additional barriers to economically disadvantaged fathers' parenting involvement.

Aspects of family processes in Chinese families

Against this background, a study based on survey research design was conducted to examine parental differences in family processes of Chinese families experiencing economic disadvantage. In the study, four aspects of family processes pertinent to Chinese culture were assessed: parental responsiveness, parental demandingness, parental control, and parental sacrifice for child's education.

Regarding family processes, parenting style was regarded as the "fundamental" one (Shek, 2002b). Maccoby and Martin (1983) classified parenting style into two-dimensional framework: parental demandingness and parental responsiveness. Baumrind (1991) further elaborated: "demandingness refers to the claims parents make on the child to become integrated into the family whole by their maturity demands, supervision, disciplinary efforts and willingness to confront the child who disobeys. Responsiveness refers to actions which intentionally foster individuality, self-regulation and self-assertion by being attuned, supportive and acquiescent to the child's special needs and demands" (p.748). Parental demandingness expects parents to be more restrictive and firm in monitoring and supervision of their children. Parental responsiveness entails qualities of sensitivity, warmth, encouragement and closeness through responding to the needs of the children.

In the Chinese culture, parental control is a distinctive feature of Chinese parenting (Chao & Tseng, 2002). As suggested by Chao (1994), parental control is associated with the concept of "training", which may be influenced by Confucian ideas. Chinese parenting based on

indigenous concepts utilized behavioral control, expressed by the terms "*jiao xun*" (to train) and "*guan*" (to govern). Yang (1981) proposed nine features of Chinese socialization practices: dependency training, conformity training, modesty training, self-suppression training, self-contentment training, punishment orientation, shame strategy, parent-centeredness, and multiple parenting. These socialization practices reflect the Chinese concept of parental control.

Parental sacrifice has been regarded as a central feature of family life in the Asian culture (Chao & Kaeochinda, 2010). Under Chinese familism, family members are supposed to subordinate their personal interests and goals to the glory and welfare of the family as a whole (Yeh & Yang, 1997). Parental sacrifice for children's education is a process in which parents give up their personal needs for the sake of educational needs of their children. The process involves three important components. First, education of children requires parents to mobilize different family resources, such as money, time, and effort. Second, due to limited resources with the family, parents face the struggle in its mobilization and distribution. Third, parents prioritize the educational needs of children over their own personal needs, and thus there is mobilization of the resources for children's education over parental fulfilment of their own needs (Leung & Shek, 2011a). Based on a survey of the literature on family resources for children's education, including family capital theory (Coleman, 1988, 1990), family investment model (Conger & Donnellan, 2007), parental involvement on children's schooling and activities (Epstein, 1987, 1992; Grolnick et al., 1997), and qualitative findings of Chinese parents and adolescents, five dimensions of parental sacrifice on child's education were identified: striving of financial resources, time spent on child's education, restructuring of daily routine, sacrifice of lifestyle and aspiration, and shielding from worries (Leung & Shek, 2011a). Though parental sacrifice for children's education has been a distinctive feature of Chinese family processes, research on the related area is far lagged behind (Leung & Shek, 2011b).

With respect to children's education, there may be divergent views concerning the roles of fathers and mothers in the context of poverty. On one hand, fathers are more conscious of the education and achievement of their children (Collins & Russell, 1991). With the fathers' role of

striving for adequate resources for the education and development of their children, it is especially demanding for fathers experiencing economic disadvantage, as the financial resources are very limited. Thus, fulfilling the role of fathers for their children's education would involve paternal sacrifice for their own needs. On the other hand, mothers were found to spend more time on the educational needs of their children and were more involved in school activities (Nock & Kingston, 1988; Russell & Russell, 1987). It is also taxing for mothers experiencing economic disadvantage who are generally of lower educational standard and perceiving themselves as less knowledgeable of the school system (Crosnoe et al, 2002; Furstenberg et al., 1999). Thus, maternal sacrifice for children's education should not be undermined. It is both illuminating and interesting to explore parental differences on sacrifice for children's education in economically disadvantaged families.

Research questions and hypotheses

Based on the review of different theories (psychoanalytic theory, sex-role theory, gender ideology approach, resources perspective, role theory of cultural perspective), evidence of recent studies on parental differences in family processes (Paulson & Sputa, 1996; Shek 2007a, 2008) and the recent challenge of the "strict fathers, kind mothers" thesis (Wilson, 1974), four research questions were addressed in this study:

The first question is: are there any differences in parental responsiveness between fathers and mothers? It was suggested that mothers would be perceived to have higher parental responsiveness than did fathers. As both parents' and adolescents' perspectives on family processes were examined, it was hypothesized that mothers would have stronger endorsement of parental responsiveness than would fathers based on the parental perspective (Hypothesis 1a), and adolescents would perceive higher maternal responsiveness than did paternal responsiveness based on the adolescent perspective (Hypothesis 1b).

The second question is: are there any differences in parental demandingness between fathers and mothers? As mothers were more involved in socialization, it was hypothesized that mothers would have

stronger endorsement of parental demandingness than would fathers based on the parental perspective (Hypothesis 2a), and adolescents would perceive more maternal demandingness than paternal demandingness based on the adolescent perspective (Hypothesis 2b).

The third question is: are there any differences in parental control between fathers and mothers? It was hypothesized that mothers would display more control than do fathers based on the parental perspective (Hypothesis 3a), and adolescents would perceive more maternal control than paternal control based on the adolescent perspective (Hypothesis 3b).

The fourth question is: are there any differences in parental sacrifice for children's future between fathers and mothers? From the traditional Chinese culture, mothers took up the family roles of nurturing and taking care of the children. With the Chinese cultural inclination of "*Nan zhu wai, nu zhu ne*i" (men manage things outside the family; women manage things inside), mothers may be more involved in children's education and make more sacrifice for their children. It was hypothesized that mothers would display more sacrifice than would fathers from the parental perspective (Hypothesis 4a), and adolescents would perceive more maternal sacrifice for their education than paternal sacrifice based on the adolescent perspective (Hypothesis 4b).

Methods

Participants and procedures

A cross-sectional survey with purposeful sampling was conducted. Intact Chinese families having at least one child aged 11 to 16 experiencing economic disadvantage were invited to participate in the study. The concept of relative poverty was adopted, with 50% of monthly median domestic household income according to Hong Kong Population By-census 2006 used as the poverty threshold. Families experiencing economic disadvantage were identified and recruited by children and youth service centers, school social work services, and community centers across Hong Kong. Finally, there were 276 families participated in the study. There was one set of invalid questionnaires,

leaving 275 sets of questionnaires for analyses.

Either the first author or trained social workers conducted the data collection. Fathers, mothers and adolescents were given explanations about the purpose of the research, procedure of data collection, the rights of respondents to voluntarily participate and withdrawal from the study, as well as the use of the data in the study. Informed consent was obtained. Fathers and mothers were requested to complete the Father Questionnaire and Mother Questionnaire respectively which contained measures of parental responsiveness, parental demandingness, parental control, and parental sacrifice, whereas adolescents were requested to complete the Adolescent Questionnaire which contained measures of paternal/maternal responsiveness, paternal/maternal demandingness, paternal/maternal control, and paternal/maternal sacrifice. To ensure confidentiality, the questionnaire was completed by each participant separately. The questionnaire was administered in a self-administered format. In case the participants had difficulties comprehending the questionnaires, the first author or trained social workers would ask questions or items in an interview format. Parents took around 45 minutes to one hour to complete the questionnaires, depending on their literacy level. Adolescents took around 35 minutes to complete the questionnaires.

The mean ages of the fathers and mothers were 49.94 (SD = 9.28) and 42.18 (SD = 4.97), respectively. Most fathers were born in Hong Kong (n = 98, 35.6%) or had resided in Hong Kong for more than 20 years (n = 115, 41.8%), whereas the mode of duration of stay of mothers in Hong Kong was between 6 and 10 years (n = 103, 37.5%). Regarding the educational attainment of fathers and mothers, a majority were of low educational standard, with 205 fathers (74.5%) and 204 mothers (74.2%) at the junior secondary level or lower. There were 211 (76.7%) fathers who had a job, 30 (10.9%) were unemployed, and 26 (9.5%) were retired. A high proportion of mothers were housewives (n = 199, 72.4%). The average number of children in the families was 2.34 (SD = .90). There were 96 families receiving welfare assistance (Comprehensive Social Security Assistance) from the Government, representing 34.8% of the sample.

From the adolescent profile, there were 134 boys (48.7%) and 141 girls (51.3%) participated in the study. The ratio was close to that of the

profile based on secondary schools (51.3: 48.7) in Hong Kong according to the 2006 Population By-census. The mean age of the adolescents was 13.56 (SD = 1.54), with the mean of boys and girls at 13.40 (SD = 1.60) and 13.71 (SD = 1.47) respectively. There were 18 adolescents (6.5%) studying in Primary Five or below (Grade 5 and below), 47 (17.1%) in Primary Six (Grade 6), 63 (22.9%) in Secondary One (Grade 7), 46 (16.7%) in Secondary Two (Grade 8), 42 (15.3%) in Secondary Three (Grade 9), 28 (10.2%) in Secondary Four (Grade 10), and 29 (10.5%) in Secondary Five and above (Grade 11 and above). Regarding duration of stay in Hong Kong, 144 adolescents (52.4%) were born in Hong Kong, and 74 (27.0%) had resided in Hong Kong for more than 7 years. But still, 24 (8.7%) adolescents had resided in Hong Kong for less than 3 years.

Instruments

Assessment of parenting quality

Regarding parenting quality, it was suggested that both global parenting style and specific parenting practices are essential elements in constituting the central features of parenting (Darling & Steinberg, 1993). Shek (1999) suggested that we should examine different aspects of parenting because they "can reveal the complex nature of the linkage between parenting and adolescent psychological well-being" (p. 273). As such, two separate measures of parenting were employed in the study.

1. *Paternal Parenting Style Scale (FPS/APPS) and Maternal Parenting Style Scale (MPS/AMPS)*. Based on the framework of Maccoby and Martin (1983) and parenting assessment work of Lamborn et al. (1991), Shek (1999) developed a modified version of the Paternal/Maternal Parenting Style Scale (FPS/MPS). There are two subscales: 1) Paternal/Maternal Demandingness Scale (FDEM/MDEM) assessing demandingness of the father and mother towards the child's behaviors; and 2) Paternal/Maternal Responsiveness Scale (FRES/MRES) assessing responsiveness of the father and mother to the child's behaviors. There are 7 items in

the Demandingness Scale and 13 items in the Responsiveness Scale.The scales were found valid and reliable in the Chinese culture with internal consistency, test-retest reliability, and concurrent validity (Shek, 1999, 2003). The total score of each scale was used as an indicator of the level of parental demandingness and responsiveness, with a higher score indicating more positive parental attributes. Reliability analyses showed that Paternal/Maternal Demandingness Scale and Paternal/Maternal Responsiveness Scale perceived by parents (FDEM/MDEM and FRES/MRES) and adolescents (APDEM/AMDEM and APRES/AMRES) had acceptable reliability in this study (α = .75 for FDEM, .65 for MDEM, .75 for APDEM, .72 for AMDEM, .70 for FRES, .61 for MRES, .82 for APRES and .80 for AMRES, respectively).

2. *Chinese Paternal Control Scale (APCS) and Chinese Maternal Control Scale (AMCS).* Based on a review of the literature, Shek (2005, 2007b) developed a twelve-item Chinese Paternal/Maternal Control Scale to assess control based on indigenous Chinese cultural beliefs. Adolescents are requested to rate the degree of agreement with each item on a 4-point scale ranging from "Strongly agree" to "Strongly disagree". Examples of the items are "My father expects me to be mature (*sheng xing*)"; "My father expects me to have good behavior so that I will not bring dishonor to the family (*you ru jia sheng*)". The APCS and AMCS showed internal consistency and divergent validity in previous studies (Shek, 2007b). The total score of the items in each scale is an indicator of the degree of parental control based on Chinese concepts, with a higher score indicating a higher level of Chinese parental control. The parental version of the scale (FCS/MCS) was modelled from adolescent's version of Chinese Paternal/Maternal Control Scale respectively. Reliability analyses showed that FCS, MCS, APCS and AMCS had satisfactory reliability in this study (α = .85 for FCS, .87 for MCS, .87 for APCS, and .88 for AMCS, respectively).

Assessment of Parental Sacrifice

1. *Paternal/Maternal Sacrifice for Children's Education Scale*

(APSA/AMSA). Based on the literature on family investment (Conger & Donnellan, 2007), family capital (Coleman, 1988, 1990), and parental involvement in children's education (Epstein, 1992; Grolnick et al., 1997), as well as qualitative findings from focus groups of parents and adolescents respectively, an indigenous scale assessing parental sacrifice for children's education was developed (Leung & Shek, 2011a). The scale was developed with 23 items measuring dimensions of sacrifice in terms of financial resources, time on children's education, reorganization of daily routine, sacrifice of lifestyle and aspiration, and shielding from worries. Participants were requested to rate the degree of agreement with each item on a 6-point Likert scale ranging from "Strongly agree" to "Strongly disagree". Examples of the items are "To fulfill my child's educational needs, I eat and wear less"; "Even I am tired, I try my best to understand my child's school life". Both PSA and MSA showed internal consistency, divergent validity and factorial validity in validation study (Leung & Shek, 2011b). Higher scores indicate greater parental sacrifice for children's education. Reliability analyses showed that Paternal/Maternal Sacrifice for Children's Education Scale perceived by parents (FSA/MSA) and adolescents (APSA/AMSA) had excellent reliability in this study (α =.93 for FSA, .92 for MSA, .94 for APSA, and .94 for AMSA, respectively).

Results

To examine parental differences in family processes (indexed by parental responsiveness, demandingness, control, and sacrifice for children's education), a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) and several univariate analyses of variance (ANOVAs) were performed. In order to examine parental differences in family processes, both perspectives of parents and adolescents were analysed.

From the parents' data, using Wilks' criterion, the results indicated a significant overall main effect for the fathers' and mothers' reports, with $F(1,548) = 19.00$, $p < .001$, partial eta squared = .22. To examine the differences in the individual dependent variable, univariate ANOVAs

was performed. Bonferroni correction was adopted to reduce the chance of committing inflated Type I error, i.e. alpha = .05/4, i.e. .013. Table 1 lists the results of lists the means and standard deviations for the measures of dyadic qualities, the univariate ANOVAs, and effect values in terms of partial eta squared of the dyadic qualities from the perspectives of parents.

Table 1.

Means and standard deviations for the measures of family processes, and the univariate ANOVAs, and effect size of the parent gender differences of family processes perceived by parents

	Family processes perceived by parents						
	Fathers' report		Mothers' report		Effect		Comparison
Measure	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*F* value	*Partial* η²	
Parental responsiveness	15.47	3.28	17.04	2.77	51.74***	.16	S (M>F)
Parental demandingness	11.71	3.36	13.10	2.61	44.32***	.14	S (M>F)
Parental control	38.12	4.46	38.93	4.88	5.80#	.02	S (M>F)
Parental sacrifice	104.66	15.62	109.92	14.79	22.90***	.08	S (M>F)

#.013 (Bonferroni correction was adopted to guard against familywise Type I error) < *p* < .05, **p* < .013 (Bonferroni correction was adopted to guard against familywise Type I error), *** *p* < .001

Possible range of scores in the scale: FRES, MRES (0 to 22 points); FDEM, MDEM (0 to 16 points); FCS, MCS (12 to 60 points), FSA, MSA (23 to 138).

Parenting responsiveness Paternal Responsiveness Scale reported by fathers (FRES) vs Maternal Responsiveness Scale reported by mothers (MRES). *Parenting demandingness* Paternal Demandingness Scale reported by fathers (FDEM) vs Maternal Demandingness Scale reported by mothers (MDEM). *Parental control* Chinese Paternal Control Scale reported by fathers (FCS) vs Chinese Maternal Control Scale reported by mothers (MCS). *Parental sacrifice* Paternal Sacrifice for Children's Education Scale reported by fathers (FSA) vs Maternal Sacrifice for Children's Education Scale reported by mothers (MSA).

S significant at .05% level. *M>F* Mothers' scores higher than fathers' scores.

Univariate analyses of variance showed significant differences on parenting responsiveness between fathers' and mothers' reports, with $F(1,548) = 51.74$, $p < .001$, partial eta squared = .16. Analyses showed that fathers had generally lower endorsement of parental responsiveness than did mothers. Hypothesis 1a was supported. For parental demandingness, univariate ANVOA showed that there was significant difference between fathers' and mothers' reports, with $F(1,548) = 44.32$, $p < .001$, partial eta squared = .14. Again, fathers had generally lower endorsement of parental demandingness than did mothers. Hypothesis 2a was supported.

For parental control, univariate ANVOA shows marginal significant effect for fathers' and mothers' reports, with $F(1,548) = 5.80$, $p < .05$ (but $p > .013$), partial eta squared = .02. Hypothesis 3a was marginally supported.

For parental sacrifice for children's education, univariate analyses of variance showed that there was significant difference between fathers' and mothers' reports, with $F(1,548) = 22.90$, $p < .001$, partial eta squared = .08. Fathers had generally lower parental sacrifice for children's education than did mothers. Hypothesis 4a was supported.

Regarding the adolescents' data for family processes (indexed by paternal/maternal responsiveness, demandingness, control, and sacrifice for children's education), using Wilks' criterion, the results indicated a significant overall main effect for the perceived paternal and maternal family processes, with $F(1,548) = 54.02$, $p < .001$, partial eta squared = 44.

Again, univariate ANOVAs were performed to examine the differences in the individual dependent variable. Bonferroni correction was adopted to reduce the chance of committing inflated Type I error, i.e. alpha = .05/4, i.e. .013. Table 2 lists the results of the means and standard deviations for the measures of dyadic qualities, the univariate ANOVAs, and effect values in terms of partial eta squared from the perspective of adolescents.

Table 2.

Means and standard deviations for the measures of family processes, and the univariate ANOVAs, and effect size of the parent gender differences of family processes perceived by adolescents

	Family processes perceived by adolescents						
	Paternal		Maternal		Effect		Comparison
Measure	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*F* value	*Partial* η^2	
Parenting responsiveness	12.53	4.50	15.52	4.05	154.29***	.36	S (A_m>A_p)
Parental demandingness	9.51	4.05	11.41	3.49	111.21***	.29	S (A_m>A_p)
Parental control	36.44	5.86	38.42	5.78	35.23***	.11	S (A_m>A_p)
Parental sacrifice	84.42	20.46	99.28	20.48	163.51***	.37	S (A_m>A_p)

*$p < .013$ (Bonferroni correction was adopted to guard against familywise Type I error), *** $p < .001$

Possible range of scores in the scale: APRES, AMRES (0 to 22 points); APDEM, AMDEM (0 to 16 points); APCS, AMCS (12 to 60 points), APSA, AMSA (23 to 138).

Parenting responsiveness Paternal Responsiveness Scale reported by adolescents (APRES) vs Maternal Responsiveness Scale reported by adolescents (AMRES). *Parenting demandingness* Paternal Demandingness Scale reported by adolescents (APDEM) vs Maternal Demandingness Scale reported by adolescents (AMDEM). *Parental control* Chinese Paternal Control Scale reported by adolescents (APCS) vs Chinese Maternal Control Scale reported by adolescents (AMCS). *Parental sacrifice* Paternal Sacrifice for Children's Education Scale reported by adolescents (APSA) vs Maternal Sacrifice for Children's Education Scale reported by adolescents (AMSA).

S significant at .05% level. A_m>A_p Adolescents' perceived maternal scores higher than perceived paternal scores.

Univariate analyses of variance showed significant differences between paternal and maternal responsiveness perceived by adolescents, with $F(1,548) = 154.29$, $p < .001$, partial eta squared = .36. Analyses showed that fathers were perceived to have lower endorsement of parental responsiveness than were mothers. Hypothesis 1b was supported. Similar to the results as parents' perspective, there was significant difference between paternal and maternal demandingness perceived by adolescents, with $F(1,548) = 111.21$, $p < .001$, partial eta squared = .29. Analyses showed that fathers were perceived to have lower endorsement of parental demandingness than were mothers. Hypothesis 2b was supported.

For parental control, there was significant difference between paternal and maternal parental control perceived by adolescents, with $F(1,548) = 35.23$, $p < .001$, partial eta squared = .11. Analyses showed that fathers were perceived to have generally less parental control than were mothers. Hypothesis 3b was supported.

For parental sacrifice for children's education, univariate analyses of variance showed that there was significant difference between paternal and maternal sacrifice perceived by adolescents, with $F(1,548) = 163.51$, $p < .001$, partial eta squared = .37. Fathers were perceived to have lower parental sacrifice for children's education than were mothers. Hypothesis 4b was supported.

Discussion

This study attempted to examine parental differences in family processes in Chinese families experiencing economic disadvantage. There are several unique features in the study. First, different aspects of family processes were examined, including parental responsiveness, demandingness, control and sacrifice for children's education. Second, indigenous Chinese conceptions of family processes were adopted and measured. Parental difference in parental sacrifice for child's education, in particular, is distinctive in this study as research on this area is almost non-existent. Third, the Chinese families experiencing economic disadvantage were recruited as participants of the study. Both cultural and socio-economic contexts were unique in the related studies.

Fourth, parental differences on family processes from both parents' perspective and adolescents' perspective were examined. Fifth, validated indigenous measurement tools of parental control and parental sacrifice for children's education were employed.

Based on the perspective of parents, it was found that there were significant differences in parental responsiveness, demandingness, control and sacrifice for children's education between fathers and mothers, with mothers showing higher levels than fathers. Similar results were obtained from adolescent perspective with mothers be perceived to exhibit higher levels of positive parental responsiveness, demandingness, control and sacrifice for children's education than were fathers. The results were consistent with pervious empirical research showing that fathers were less involved in parenting (Forehand & Nousiainen, 1993; Noller & Callan, 1990; Paulson & Sputa, 1996; Shek 2007a, 2008). However, parental difference in parental sacrifice is a unique contribution of this study.

The findings suggest that mothers showed stronger endorsement of parental responsiveness than did fathers. It should be noted that the effect size of father-mother discrepancies in parental responsiveness, especially from adolescents' point of view, was remarkable (Stevens, 2002). The observed difference was consistent with the theoretical accounts of sex-role theory, gender ideology approach and resources perspective where mothers are seen as primarily responsible for maintaining the daily management and nurturing the children whereas fathers are relatively more detached in caring and supporting their children.

Besides, mothers perceived themselves and were perceived by adolescents to exhibit more parental demandingness and control than did fathers, and the effect size between mother/father and paternal/maternal discrepancies on parental demandingness was also high (Stevens, 2002). The present study provides evidence showing that fathers are no longer "harsh disciplinarians" (Shek, 2002a) in Chinese families experiencing economic disadvantage. Nevertheless, it is illuminating to see whether Chinese families experiencing economic disadvantage present a "strict mothers, kind fathers" phenomenon, or support a "stricter mothers and kinder mothers with detached fathers" thesis (Shek, 2007a, 2008). Though a more egalitarian gender roles in

the contemporary world would expect fathers and mothers to have congruent parenting practices, the relative large effect size of parent gender difference on parental responsiveness perceived by both parents and adolescents in the present study indicates that the "strict mothers, kind fathers" thesis may not truly describe the phenomenon. The findings support the thesis of "stricter mothers and kinder mothers with detached fathers" (Shek, 2007a, 2008), where fathers getting less involved in exercising responsiveness, demandingness and control in socialization of their children than did mothers. The detachment of fathers may be intensified in low socio-economic context. The physically demanding jobs and long and non-standard hours of work add burdens for fathers experiencing economically disadvantage to be involved in parenting. In contrast, many mothers were housewives who may find difficulties in employment as well as have obligation to look after their children (72.4% of the mothers were housewives in the studied sample). As mothers spend most of their time at home taking care of their children, they are sensitive to the development of adolescents. Family rules and standards are essential for mothers to monitor the behaviors of their children. Thus, there is a need for mothers to pick up the role of disciplinarian in the family. Mothers have to manage the dual roles of both disciplinarian and caregiver of their children.

When looking into parental sacrifice for children's education, it was found that mothers perceived and were perceived significantly higher level of sacrifice for children's education than did fathers. There are two possibilities to account for the higher level of maternal sacrifice for children's education than paternal sacrifice. First, mothers were designated to care about all spheres of adolescents' lives. Thus, they are more ready to devote their time, money and effort for the education of adolescents, and these involve accommodation of daily routines and sacrifice of their personal needs. In contrast, fathers perform the main role of mobilizing financial resources for the support of the family. Thus, the scope of sacrifice between fathers and mothers was somewhat different, with maternal sacrifice covering more facets of sacrifice than paternal sacrifice. Furthermore, a majority of mothers were immigrants from Mainland China with shorter duration of stay in Hong Kong than were fathers. Mothers might perceive leaving the mainland to settle in

Hong Kong as a harsh choice, as they had to leave their own parents, relatives, friends and hometowns, move to a strange place and live at subsistence levels. With the expectation of better education for their children, mothers' decision to settle in a strange environment was obviously a sacrifice. Thus, maternal sacrifice was more prominent than paternal sacrifice from both parents' and adolescents' perspectives.

It is noteworthy to find that adolescents' perception of paternal-maternal discrepancies in family processes had greater effect size than father-mother discrepancies. This echoes with the literature that adolescents rated differently from their parents (Callan & Noller, 1986, Niemi, 1974). Callan and Noller (1986) suggested that parents tended to overestimate the socially desirable characteristics of the family, whereas adolescents tended to overestimate the negative characteristics. Parents devote themselves in nurturing their children, enhancing family cohesion, and providing a healthy environment for the children. Thus, they have a tendency to portray their families as positive and cohesive, as they have invested much time and effort in maintaining the proper functions of the family (Lerner & Knapp, 1975; Lerner & Spanier, 1980). On the other hand, adolescents focus on searching for self-identity and autonomy. They perform as "the precipitators of change in the family" (Callan & Noller, 1986, p. 818) and may be more critical to the family. The differences in developmental agendas result in discrepancies of parents and adolescents in the perceptions of family processes (Welsh et al., 1998).

There are several theoretical implications of the study. First, the study underscores the importance of studying parental differences in family processes in families (particularly Chinese families) experiencing economic disadvantage. In view of paucity of research in this area, the study is an important addition to the literature. Second, the research employed indigenous conceptions of Chinese family processes, and studied the parental differences in parental control and sacrifice for children's education, which are distinctive and contributive for the theorization of Chinese family models. The study opens "new paths to a deeper understanding of Chinese cultural, social, and psychological processes and patterns" (Yang, 1999, p. 182).

Third, the findings echo with the recent studies on gender differences in parental control (Shek, 2007a, 2008) and support the "stricter mothers

and kinder mothers with detached fathers" thesis (Shek, 2008). The present findings show empirical support for the re-definition of the traditional cultural stereotype of "strict fathers, kind mothers" thesis (Shek, 2008).

Fourth, as the study on parental difference in sacrifice for children's education in the context of poverty was almost non-existent, the results provide important clues for us to understand the Chinese family patterns of interactions and resources distributions. Though fathers experiencing economic disadvantage strive hard to support their children's education, mothers display more sacrifice by devoting their time, effort and money for their children's educational needs. The findings provide valuable information in the understanding of parental contribution of family resources for their children's education in the context of poverty.

There are also some practical implications of the study. First, mothers take up more parental roles on caring, nurturing, monitoring and control, and have more sacrifice for the education of their children. Mothers shoulder the burden of socialization of the children, and fathers are less involved in parenting. Mothers may also experience dual burdens of heavier parental control and being blamed for children's behaviors (Caplan & Hall-McCorquodale, 1985). Shek (2008) suggested that "higher behavioral control would be physically and psychologically taxing for mothers" (p.679). The strains and stresses of performing family roles may affect the psychological well-being of mothers, and may cause marital conflict. Social workers should be sensitive to the psychological and parenting needs of mothers and address their needs responsively.

Second, though fathers, as "*yi jia zhi zhu*" (the head of the family), have influential roles in the family, the findings show that fathers are less involved in the socialization of the children. There is a need to strengthen fathers' roles and involvement in parenting. However, long hours of work, low educational standard and cultural inclinations hinder paternal involvement in parenting (Leung & Shek, in press). Social workers have to reach out to engage fathers in family education programs. Men service should be expanded to cover parenting and roles of families.

Third, there is a need to adopt family-based anti-poverty policies, programmes and intervention strategies. Instead of taking a residual

model on providing tangible support for the families, it is necessary to formulate family-friendly policies which enhance joint parenting. The long hours of work may have hindered fathers experiencing economic disadvantage to be involved in socialization of children. Thus, legislation of restriction on maximum working hours should be explored with the implementation of minimum wage legislation in Hong Kong. Besides, the findings also suggest the importance of adopting a family-based intervention approach that enhances parenting in economically disadvantaged families. Family life education, asset building projects for families, and parenting enhancement programs would be necessary.

There are several limitations of the present study. First, the limitation of purposeful sampling should be recognized. As the participated families were not randomly sampled, generalizability of the findings may be limited. Second, the cross-sectional design in this study has the inherent problem in inferring cause-and-effect relationships due to time order. Hence, a longitudinal research design is recommended for future studies. Third, as the assessment of family processes was based on the self-reported questionnaires, the findings may only represent the perceptions of the "insiders". It would be more illuminating to include observational data in real-life settings from the "outsiders" view so that a more comprehensive picture of family processes can be obtained. Fourth, as the findings presented in the study were based on economically disadvantaged families in Hong Kong, there is a need to assess the generalizability of the findings in different Chinese communities (e.g. mainland China) and Chinese people living in non-Chinese contexts (e.g. Chinese-Americans). Fifth, it was found that the internal consistency of Maternal Demandingness Scale and Maternal Responsiveness Scale reported by mothers were not high (although the alpha values were acceptable). This would increase the measurement errors. Hence, it would be desirable to further examine the psychometric properties of these scales in future.

Despite these limitations, the present findings are pioneering and stimulating in view of the paucity of research in studying the parental differences in family processes of Chinese families experiencing economic disadvantage. Essentially, the study sheds light on understanding the parental differences in parental responsiveness, demandingness, control, and sacrifice for children's education,

which provide important clues for us to help the families experiencing economically disadvantage. In view of Shek's (2011) comment that "more QOL [quality of life] studies in individuals, families, communities and societies experiencing economic disadvantage should be conducted" (p. 372), the present study serves as an active and constructive response.

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Violencia de Género y Resolución Comunitaria de Conflictos en los Centros Educativos

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Gender Violence and Community Resolution of Conflicts in the Educational Centres

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Abstract

Gender violence is a reality in educational centers of which there is not many data. On the other hand the existing cases are frequently hidden behind general conflicts or bullying. In order to act on this problem, this article is based on two research projects funded by the Catalan Government and the transformational project of Learning Communities to present the community model of conflict resolution. This model is based on the participation of all the community, establishing common norms and egalitarian dialog among other elements.

Keywords: dialog, community model, gender violence, participation

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Abstract

La violencia de género es una realidad en los centros educativos de la cual no se tienen muchos datos. Por otra parte los casos existentes son frecuentemente ocultos tras conflictos en general o tras el bullying. De cara a actuar ante esta problemática, en este artículo nos basamos en dos proyectos de investigación financiados por el Gobierno de Cataluña y en el proyecto de transformación Comunidades de Aprendizaje para presentar el modelo comunitario de resolución de conflictos. Este modelo se basa en la participación de toda la comunidad, el establecimiento de normas conjuntas y el diálogo igualitario, entre otros elementos.

Palabras Clave: diálogo, modelo comunitario, violencia de género, participación

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L a violencia de género está presente entre los y las adolescentes y también dentro de los centros educativos de educación secundaria. En los centros de educación primaria se encuentra más oculta pero también es una realidad existente y latente. En el año 2008, el Observatorio contra la Violencia de Género alertaba sobre este hecho aportando información sobre el descenso de edad de agresores y víctimas. Casos como los de Maores, asesinada en Ripollet el año 2008 por dos compañeros de clase con uno de los cuales había mantenido una relación esporádica; Marta del Castillo, asesinada en el año 2009 en Sevilla; Avellaneda, asesinada el pasado noviembre de 2011 en Madrid… son algunos ejemplos de los que se han hecho eco los medios de comunicación.

También nos muestra esta realidad el reciente estudio *Igualdad y prevención de la violencia de género en la adolescencia* llevado a cabo por el Ministerio de Igualdad (2011), en el que han participado 11.020 chicos y chicas de 17 años de media. De sus resultados destacamos: uno de cada tres adolescentes (32,1%) corre el riesgo de convertirse en maltratador; el 4,9% de las adolescentes ya han sido víctimas de algún tipo de violencia física o psicológica por parte de algún chico; y el 18,9% de jóvenes (una de cada cinco) podría ser maltratada en un futuro porque justifica el sexismo y la agresión como formas de enfrentarse a conflictos.

Sin embargo, el acoso escolar y bullying sigue escondiendo, en numerosas ocasiones, la existente violencia de género. Aunque algunas investigaciones centradas en adolescentes han puesto de relieve la relación que existe entre el acoso escolar y la violencia de género (Díaz Aguado, 2001, 2004, 2006), la mayoría de los estudios sobre violencia escolar (Banks, 1997; Farrington, 1993; Olweus, 1993; O'Moore & Minton, 2005; Yoneyama & Naito, 2003) no contempla la dimensión de violencia de género de forma específica. En España, según el Informe Cisneros X (Piñuel & Oñate, 2007) la violencia en los centros educativos de primaria y secundaria es de un 23,30% sobre una muestra de 24,490 niños y niñas de 14 comunidades autónomas. A pesar de la ausencia de estudios específicos sobre violencia de género en los centros educativos contamos con noticias que nos muestran su existencia. En España ya hemos mencionado algunos de los casos como el de Maores, en Estados Unidos, el caso de Phoebe Prince, adolescente

de 15 años que se suicidó en 2010 después de recibir el acoso de sus compañeros y compañeras de instituto es un ejemplo de ello. Este caso, a pesar de ser catalogado como Bullying, tiene su origen en las relaciones afectivo-sexuales que Phoebe mantuvo con dos de los chicos que después participaron en el acoso.

Investigaciones internacionales nos muestran que la violencia contra las mujeres se da en los diferentes contextos educativos y ponen de manifiesto que actualmente chicos y chicas adolescentes están sufriendo agresiones sexuales por parte de sus iguales en contextos escolares y en sus primeras relaciones afectivas y sexuales, especialmente en citas (Fineran & Bennett, 1999; Lavoie et al., 2000; Silverman et al., 2001). Esta violencia y la existencia de contextos académicos poco favorables para combatirla tienen repercusiones sobre las mujeres afectadas, a nivel personal o en su rendimiento académico (Wagner & Magnusson, 2005). Los altos índices de violencia de género entre población adolescente y el aumento de denuncias entre este colectivo requiere de medidas urgentes que actúen en este sentido, ya que los aprendizajes adquiridos en las primeras relaciones influyen poderosamente en la posterior vivencia de violencia (Gómez, 2004; Duque, 2006). Ante esta realidad, diversos autores se han interrogado sobre las causas y las formas de erradicar esta violencia de género en los contextos escolares (Valls, Puigvert, & Duque, 2008).

Algunas investigaciones (Meraviglia et al., 2003) hacen hincapié en realizar prevención a partir del desarrollo de acciones formativas orientadas tanto al alumnado como al profesorado y a los y las familiares. En España, La Ley Orgánica 1/2004 de 28 de diciembre, de Medidas de Protección Integral contra la violencia de género pone especial atención a la tarea preventiva como una de las claves en la erradicación de este problema social. Aunque esta tarea preventiva es responsabilidad de toda la comunidad, la escuela ocupa un espacio central. En el Artículo 7 del Capítulo I esta Ley recoge la necesidad que el profesorado pueda acceder a una formación que le permita desarrollar actuaciones para prevenir la violencia de género, siendo un precedente en el avance hacia un trabajo integral para la prevención. Pero pese a la necesidad de formación inicial del profesorado establecida por esta ley, los resultados de investigaciones científicas como la dirigida por Lidia Puigvert, *Incidencia de la Ley Integral contra la Violencia de Género en*

la formación inicial del profesorado (Instituto de la Mujer. Plan Nacional I+D. 2007-2010), indican que los planes de estudios de las titulaciones universitarias de formación del profesorado que se implementan no proporcionan esta formación a las futuras maestras y maestros.

De esta manera, los y las profesionales de la educación se encuentran desprovistos en numerosas ocasiones de las herramientas necesarias para trabajar la prevención de la violencia de género, a veces por el desconocimiento del comportamiento sexual en las escuelas (Chambers, van Loon, & Tincknell, 2004). En otras ocasiones, el profesorado va improvisando respuestas a las situaciones de violencia de género que se dan. Por ejemplo, en la investigación de Valls (2005) se observa cómo se dan situaciones de violencia de género en las escuelas o fuera de ellas pero vividas por las y los estudiantes de educación primaria. Ante estas situaciones, el profesorado, lejos de afrontar el tema directamente, lo desvía o lo minimiza. Sin embargo, las niñas y niños son muy conscientes de lo que han visto o vivido.

Tal como desarrollaremos en este artículo, existen diferentes modelos de actuación ante esta violencia de género: desde modelos más disciplinares a modelos más basados en la mediación o, finalmente, en la participación de toda la comunidad. El modelo disciplinar sigue bastante presente y autores como Lewis (2001) muestran que actuaciones disciplinarias o agresivas por parte del profesorado contribuyen al buen comportamiento de los estudiantes. Otros autores como Cowie & Berdondini (2001) plantean iniciativas basadas en que los propios chicos y chicas desarrollen sus propias habilidades para resolver conflictos. Así mismo, Johnson & Johnson (1996) estudian la resolución de conflictos a través de mediación entre iguales. Otros autores (Banks, 1997; Farrington, 1993; Olweus, 1993; O'Moore & Minton, 2005; Yoneyama & Naito, 2003) identifican la inclusión de toda la comunidad para poder llevar a cabo programas de resolución de conflictos o anti-bullying exitosos. En la misma línea, más investigadores hacen hincapié en que la participación de familiares puede contribuir en la reducción del bullying (Ma, 2001), la importancia de las asociaciones de madres y padres (Mellor, 1995), y la necesidad de que toda la comunidad participe en la negociación de normas y valores conjuntos (Ortega & Lera, 2000).

En este artículo presentamos el modelo comunitario de resolución de conflictos (Oliver, Soler, & Flecha, 2009) en violencia de género en los centros educativos, desarrollado por el Grupo de Mujeres de CREA-SAFO del centro de investigación CREA, a través de diferentes proyectos de investigación y prácticas educativas.

Metodología

El grupo de mujeres de CREA-SAFO del centro de investigación CREA de la Universidad de Barcelona lleva años investigando sobre la violencia de género y su prevención. Uno de los aspectos preventivos en los que trabaja es en el modelo comunitario de resolución de conflictos. Un modelo que implica la participación de toda la comunidad en la prevención de la violencia de género en los centros educativos. En este artículo nos basamos principalmente en dos de los proyectos que el grupo de mujeres ha trabajado que son los siguientes:

- *Educació en valors per a la prevenció de la violència de gènere als instituts de secundària* [Educación en valores para la prevención de la violencia de género en los institutos de secundaria] financiado por la Generalitat de Catalunya y desarrollado en los años 2004-2005.

- *Prevenció de la violència de gènere en el context educatiu a partir de noves formes d'organització escolar* [Prevención de la violencia de género en el contexto educativo a partir de nuevas formas de organización escolar] financiado por el Instituto Catalán de la Mujer y desarrollado en el año 2005.

Por otra parte, se han analizado algunas prácticas educativas desarrolladas en el proyecto Comunidades de Aprendizaje. Las Comunidades de Aprendizaje (www.comunidadesdeaprendizaje.net) son un proyecto de transformación social y educativa que se realiza en centros educativos con el objetivo de alcanzar el éxito educativo para todos y todas las estudiantes y mejorar la convivencia. Este proyecto se realiza a través de la participación de toda la comunidad en el centro educativo: alumnado, profesorado y familias y también vecinos, entidades cercanas, etc. Acutalmente, existen más de 100 comunidades de aprendizaje en España, Chile y Brasil.

**Violencia de Género en los Centros Educativos:
una Realidad Invisibilizada**

Las cifras expuestas en la introducción muestran la existencia de violencia de género, no sólo en las relaciones afectivas y sexuales de personas adultas, sino también en las primeras relaciones que establecen niños y niñas de educación primaria y secundaria. Pero esta realidad no siempre se reconoce dentro de los centros educativos o bien, en el caso de identificarse, no siempre se actúa ante ella. De hecho, la violencia de género prácticamente no se trabaja de manera específica en la mayoría de escuelas españolas a pesar de las directrices marcadas por la *Ley Orgánica* 1/2004, de 28 de diciembre, *de Medidas de Protección Integral contra la Violencia de Género*.

Los resultados de nuestra investigación ponen de relieve tres aspectos sobre la realidad de los centros educativos al respecto, que puede ser abordada a través de la organización escolar, tal y como desarrollaremos en el próximo apartado. En primer lugar, se destaca que la mayoría de alumnado únicamente identifica la violencia de género con situaciones de violencia física, es decir, muestran un desconocimiento de los tipos y formas que adoptan estos abusos. En segundo lugar, encontramos que la gran mayoría de profesorado participante en la investigación niega la existencia de casos de violencia en sus centros o, en el caso de conocer alguno, lo considera como un caso aislado.

> Aquí en la escuela normalmente no habíamos visto, pero el año pasado, en sexto, se dieron casos de una chica que al salir de clase... que la agobiaban o que la coaccionaban. Pero era una cosa muy puntual. (Maestro de un centro de educación primaria)

En tercer lugar, los resultados del trabajo de campo nos muestran cómo en muchas ocasiones las situaciones de violencia de género que se viven en los centros educativos son minimizadas por las personas adultas, restándoles importancia incluso cuando la propia víctima manifiesta su rechazo a vivir esta situación. Según los niños y niñas y familiares participantes en estas investigaciones, generalmente el profesorado interpreta este tipo de situaciones como "cosas de la edad" o "juegos de niños". Habitualmente se reconocen los hechos pero lo que se cambia es la interpretación de los mismos. Una situación de violencia

de género se interpreta, unas veces como "cosas de niños" que no tienen importancia y otras, como violencia en general, difuminando así la perspectiva de género. Por ejemplo, levantar las faldas a las chicas en la escuela, tal y como nos relatan niños y niñas y profesorado, es una práctica habitual en los centros educativos, que forma parte de las agresiones que ejercen algunos niños hacia las niñas:

> A: Van corriendo y te levantan la falda y se van. (Alumna de un
> centro de educación secundaria)

Así, estos resultados nos llevan a plantear la necesidad de identificar la violencia y tomar conciencia de los diferentes tipos de acciones que comportan una agresión para otra persona. Tal y como hemos destacado, a menudo se ha normalizado el hecho de que los niños levanten las faldas a las niñas y pocas veces se interpreta como violencia de género. Ello está llevando a que algunas niñas decidan dejar de llevar faldas a la escuela para evitar ser agredidas por otros niños puesto que saben que no habrá ningún tipo de intervención por parte de las personas adultas.

> B: Ellos se lo toman como un juego, no lo ven tanto como una cosa
> que moleste al otro, si no como un juego. (Maestra de un centro de
> educación primaria)

Por contra, también debemos destacar que existen casos de profesorado que manifiesta tener una postura y actitudes muy claras ante este tipo de situaciones. En estos casos, los testimonios recogidos en las investigaciones en esta línea afirman la necesidad de que exista un posicionamiento público de rechazo a este tipo de actitudes.

> Yo lo que planteo, es que no se puede dar este hecho, de que uno le
> levante la faldilla a una niña, debe formar parte de la educación con
> la importancia que tiene. Yo como persona tengo derecho a que me
> respeten, de que si no quiero que me toquen, que no me toquen, pero
> tiene que ser parte de la educación, igual que decía antes lo de las
> emociones, y todo este tipo de cosas, el derecho a sentir. (Maestro de
> un centro de educación primaria)

Los resultados de las investigaciones que aquí presentamos también destacan que como consecuencia de que el profesorado reste importancia a estos hechos, los propios niños y niñas lo interpretan como una negativa por parte de las personas adultas a hablar sobre estos temas, llevándoles a creer que se trata de un tema tabú. En algunos centros educativos el profesorado opta por esquivar el tema o, incluso, por negar situaciones concretas que suceden alrededor de la escuela. Esto tiene como consecuencia que los propios niños y niñas juzguen como negativo el hecho de hablar sobre la violencia de género y que crean que conlleva un fomento de las actitudes violentas. Por lo tanto, negar esta realidad hará que la escuela se desentienda de su función como espacio de reflexión, construcción del pensamiento crítico y construcción de valores para combatir la violencia de género:

> F: A veces tú dices, quiero hablar de esto, de la igualdad entre hombres y mujeres o de una noticia y dice: "ah, va chicos no habléis de eso ahora.
> C: Ya lo hablaremos en otro momento...
> F: En la escuela no lo hablaremos, eso de "ya lo hablaremos en otro momento...", se acabaré el curso y todavía no lo habremos hablado
> (Alumnado de educación primaria)

Modelo Comunitario de Resolución de Conflictos

Los resultados de las investigaciones *Educación en valores para la prevención de la violencia de género en los institutos de secundaria* y *Prevención de la violencia de género en el contexto educativo a partir de nuevas formas de organización escolar*, así como la práctica educativa de las Comunidades de Aprendizaje, aportan un nuevo elemento que se suma a los ya mencionados en investigaciones previas para la prevención y superación de la violencia de género; este elemento hace referencia a la organización escolar. La forma como se organiza el centro educativo también puede incidir en la prevención de la violencia de género. En este caso, nos centraremos en el modelo comunitario de resolución de conflictos como una forma de actuación que afecta a la

organización escolar y contribuye a la superación de la violencia de género. Este modelo sigue las premisas del paradigma comunicativo, esto es poniendo como base fundamental de esta participación el diálogo igualitario y partiendo de las interacciones como forma de transformación social (Gómez et al., 2006).

Ante la existente violencia de género, diferentes modelos de actuación pueden ser aplicados. Tradicionalmente, el modelo disciplinar ha sido el más utilizado ante los conflictos existentes. Se trata de un modelo basado en la existencia de una autoridad explícita que impone unas normas verticales a seguir en el centro educativo. Este modelo implica una serie de sanciones y penalizaciones para las personas que no han cumplido las normas. Sin embargo, ni estudiantes ni familias han participado en la elaboración de estas normas ni tampoco en el establecimiento de las sanciones pertinentes cuando se incumplen. Un modelo posterior es el modelo mediador. Con este modelo se buscan nuevas maneras de hacer frente al conflicto en la escuela. No elimina la figura de autoridad pero añade una figura de "experto", de persona mediadora de los conflictos. Busca la ayuda entre iguales para resolver los conflictos iniciando un cierto diálogo sobre las normas. Finalmente, el modelo comunitario parte de la idea de que se necesita a todo el colectivo para resolver los conflictos. Toda la comunidad educativa: profesorado, familias y alumnado participa en la elaboración de normas conjuntas. Se trabaja, así, desde una ética procedimental donde las normas válidas son las consensuadas por todas las personas. Y se conforma, de este modo, un modelo más orientado a la prevención de los conflictos. En este modelo es clave también la participación de todos aquellos sectores de la comunidad educativa que tradicionalmente han participado menos, tal como comentamos en el siguiente apartado.

La Inclusión de las Voces de Todas las Mujeres

La reivindicación de la inclusión de todas las voces en la superación de la violencia de género nace del feminismo dialógico (Puigvert, 2001). Este feminismo incluye las voces de todas las mujeres sin discriminaciones por cuestiones de edad, pertenencia étnica, nivel académico, clase social u orientación sexual. La lucha feminista

comprometida con la igualdad en las relaciones de género cobra nuevo significado en la modernidad dialógica, apostando por un proyecto democrático basado en el diálogo entre mujeres procedentes de diferentes realidades sociales, culturales y académicas.

Los resultados de las investigaciones que exponemos en este artículo destacan la incidencia específica de la participación de las otras mujeres en la superación de la violencia de género. Tal y como analiza Puigvert (2001), en los espacios académicos como la escuela o en los discursos feministas, las voces de aquellas personas no académicas han sido tradicionalmente silenciadas al considerar limitadas sus posibilidades de aportar. Pero muchas de estas mujeres no académicas, las otras mujeres, que suelen ser las madres o familiares de los niños y niñas que asisten a ese centro educativo, desarrollan en sus vidas luchas diarias que son, sin duda, un claro ejemplo de cómo están contribuyendo a una mayor igualdad en las relaciones de género (Puigvert, 2001). Por esto es necesario recoger sus aportaciones también dentro de las escuelas rompiendo, tal y como nos relata esta madre, con el distanciamiento que tradicionalmente ha existido entre familiares y escuela:

> B: El magisterio parece que esté reservado para los docentes, que no podemos entrar: "hay cosas que son decisión de la escuela vosotros no podéis intervenir". Entonces claro… creen que queremos cuestionar su trabajo… claro es más cómodo poner una barrera que cuando interesa se abre y cuando interesa se cierra. (Entrevista en profundidad a una familiar de un alumno de primaria)

Este feminismo del siglo XXI entiende que todas las mujeres, también las que se encuentran en mayores situaciones de opresión o marginalización, tienen la capacidad de contribuir a transformar su realidad y su entorno. El feminismo dialógico cobra forma dentro de comunidades de aprendizaje, donde mujeres de diferentes edades, culturas y niveles académicos reflexionan conjuntamente llegando a acuerdos sobre intervenciones educativas concretas. Para ello es imprescindible dotar los contextos en los que estas mujeres se encuentran con las condiciones adecuadas para el establecimiento de diálogos igualitarios y de relaciones más igualitarias entre ellas. La

organización de estos centros educativos permite crear las condiciones óptimas para la inclusión de las voces de todas las mujeres en la búsqueda de soluciones y en la formulación de acciones educativas para la prevención de la violencia de género en las escuelas. Esto es a través de crear espacios de diálogo y reflexión.

Así, tomando como referencia los ejemplos expuestos en el apartado anterior, la transformación de la organización escolar de tal manera que se propicie la participación de todas las personas de la comunidad, conlleva un mayor conocimiento de la realidad que los niños y niñas están viviendo. Esto significa poder identificar en mayor medida los casos de violencia que están ocurriendo en el centro o incluso prevenirlos antes de que surjan a través de la identificación de actitudes abusivas que pueden derivar en un futuro en violencia de género. Los propios niños y niñas, tal y como se muestra en la siguiente cita, destacan que los y las familiares pueden aportar un conocimiento de su realidad que la escuela, en muchas ocasiones, no tiene y es complementaria al conocimiento que pueden tener los profesionales.

> Hablarlo con los padres está muy bien porque ellos te conocen mejor y saben que tienes que hacer, como te conocen bien quizás ellos han pasado estos problemas y te pueden ayudar.
> ¿Crees que el hecho de que las familias estén aquí en la escuela te puede ayudar a solucionar los problemas en general?
> Sí (Relato comunicativo de vida cotidiana a un alumno de primaria)

Esta apertura de la escuela, además de representar la entrada de nuevas propuestas de actuación y de colaboración de más personas para llevarlas a cabo, implica también el establecimiento y el fomento de nuevas vías de comunicación entre familiares y profesorado para que el trabajo que se hace sea un trabajo coordinado. El hecho de elaborar de manera conjunta las propuestas de actuación contra la violencia de género, y posteriormente implicar también a toda la comunidad en su aplicación, supone una vía para la mejora y transformación de los centros. Esto conlleva la creación de nuevos modelos organizativos donde la socialización preventiva de la violencia de género tiene un papel importante. Las propias familias están reivindicando la creación

de nuevos órganos de asesoramiento y tratamiento de los casos de violencia de género que se den en las escuelas.

> A mí me gustaría que hubiera, por ejemplo, si a mí un día me sale mi hija y me dice, mama, me están pegando cada día, me están .. cada día me tiran de los pelos, cada día me insultan... ¿a dónde me puedo yo dirigir que no sea la clase? ¿a dónde podría ir yo?
> ¿Esto no está?..
> Es lo que te decía… Que hubiera algo, una comisión de… en la que tu puedas exponer y que se encuentren protegidos.
> ¿Una comisión contra la violencia?
> Sí, sí porque hay muchos casos.
> (Entrevista en profundidad a una madre de una alumna de un centro de primaria)

El punto de partida para analizar la incidencia de la organización escolar en la violencia de género nos lo ofrece el proyecto educativo Comunidades de Aprendizaje (Elboj et al., 2002), en el cual se incluye la participación de las familias y de toda la comunidad. Las Comunidades de Aprendizaje surgen con el objetivo de superación de desigualdades sociales, entre ellas las de género, a través de la transformación de la escuela y del contexto en el que se encuentra ubicada. Este proyecto no se centra únicamente en el trabajo que se realiza dentro del aula por parte de los profesionales de la educación, sino que incorpora también las interacciones que se producen en otros espacios tanto dentro como fuera del centro educativo, y con las diferentes personas de la comunidad. El diálogo igualitario, y con ello los argumentos de validez en contraposición a los de poder (Habermas, 1987), marcan el desarrollo de estas interacciones. Así, los argumentos que se dan para apoyar o refutar una propuesta, resolver un conflicto… son valorados en función de la validez de los mismos y no de quién los emite. Para ello es necesario transformar el sistema organizativo tradicional de la escuela, ya que no sólo se trata de lograr la presencia en la escuela de personas hasta el momento alejadas del contexto educativo, sino también de su participación activa y tanto de familiares como de otras personas de la comunidad, así como de los propios niños y niñas. Esta participación activa está mediatizada, tal y como hemos

expuesto hasta ahora, por el diálogo igualitario. En el tema que nos ocupa, el éxito en la detección y prevención de la violencia de género viene dado por la inclusión de las aportaciones de una mayor diversidad de personas y el desarrollo de acciones consensuadas por la comunidad en base a los argumentos de validez.

Un Ejemplo del Modelo Comunitario: la Creación de la Norma

Para finalizar, queremos ejemplificar este modelo comunitario de resolución de conflictos con un caso concreto que se llevó a cabo en un centro de educación primaria que seguía el proyecto de Comunidades de Aprendizaje.

En este centro se observó que, igual que en otros, algunos niños y niñas tenían problemas por la forma como iban vestidos. Las niñas, por ejemplo, cada vez se atrevían menos a llevar falda a la escuela porque se la levantaban, mientras que el profesorado no siempre intervenía al respecto. De esta manera, las niñas y sus familias estaban optando por no ponerse falda, ya que estaban sufriendo lo que consideraban una agresión sexista.

A partir de esta situación, y siguiendo el modelo comunitario de resolución de conflictos, se decidió consensuar una norma por toda la comunidad. La norma tenía que contar con una serie de características:

> 1. Que pudiera ser claramente acordada per todas las personas, de todas las ideologías y edades. Se trataba de encontrar una norma en la cual el consenso en torno a ella fuera fácil, incluso entre personas que solían estar en desacuerdo en otros temas.
> 2. Que tuviera relación directa con un tema clave para las vidas de las niñas y niños.
> 3. Que existiera apoyo "verbal" claro del conjunto de la sociedad.
> 4. Que se estuviera incumpliendo reiteradamente, aunque estuvieran de acuerdo en que se tenía que cumplir.
> 5. Que se viera posible eliminar el comportamiento.
> 6. Que con su superación, la comunidad diera un ejemplo a la sociedad, familiares, profesorado, niños y niñas.

Para poder elaborar esta norma, lo primero que realizó el centro educativo fue la creación de una comisión mixta formada, como mínimo, por familiares, profesorado y alumnado, además de otros agentes de la comunidad. Esta comisión se mantuvo durante todo el proceso de elaboración de la propuesta y cumplimiento de la norma escogida. Aquí es clave la implicación del alumnado de todas las edades, ya que las normas que se eligen, como es el caso del centro explicado, tienen una relación directa con la vida de los chicos y chicas que, además, tienen mucha más información sobre la problemática que se está tratando, mucha más de la que pueda tener cualquier profesor o familiar. De este modo, difícilmente se podrá abordar con acierto el proceso sin la inclusión de la voz del alumnado.

En esta comisión, ante esta problemática concreta, se decidió la norma de "Que nadie sea agredido o agredida por la forma de ir vestida o vestido". A partir de aquí, la comisión se preparó para llevar la propuesta de norma al conjunto de la comunidad, exponiéndola, debatiéndola y decidiendo la propuesta en el claustro, y en una asamblea de la comunidad con la máxima participación posible de las personas del claustro.

Una vez expuesta la propuesta, los miembros de la comisión la hacen llegar a todas y cada una de las aulas del centro educativo. Durante la exposición en las aulas es importante que el profesor o profesora esté presente como un o una oyente más. Mientras, los delegados o delegadas van recogiendo el resultado del debate con toda la clase alrededor de la propuesta, e incluyen todos aquellos aspectos a modificar de la norma, así como los mecanismos necesarios a tener en cuenta para que toda persona de la comunidad asegure que no se rompa.

El siguiente paso consiste en un debate entre los delegados y delegadas del alumnado sobre la concreción de la norma y su aplicación. Este debate se realiza ante los miembros de la comisión mixta que están presentes como oyentes y, si es necesario, como asesores y asesoras. En este caso, la comisión mixta no dirige el debate sino que da apoyo cediendo el protagonismo a los propios niños y niñas. A continuación, se convoca una asamblea donde las delegadas y delegados del alumnado explican al profesorado, familias y a la comunidad en general, el resultado de sus deliberaciones. En este caso, se recogen las valoraciones de estos agentes de la comunidad educativa

que retornan a sus respectivas clases en presencia de la profesora o profesor tutor/a y de una representación de la comisión mixta.

En este momento, el conjunto de la comunidad se convierte en seguidora de la norma y de su continua revisión. La forma como se pretende llevar a cabo el seguimiento desde el centro que está realizando la experiencia es la misma que están desarrollando otros centros que a nivel mundial llevan a cabo procesos comunitarios de prevención de conflictos. Así, el seguimiento se pone en común (pero no se delega) a través de las delegadas y delegados del aula y de la comisió mixta, vigilando continuamente que esta norma se cumpla.

Finalmente, todo este proceso va acompañado de la autoformación, la cual se plantean realizar a través de tertulias dialógicas. Esto significa dedicar una sesión del claustro, como mínimo, a debatir, previa lectura de un libro sobre violencia de género (en este caso en relación a la norma escogida). También se plantea la posibilidad de que las tertulias se extiendan al alumnado y a las familias. Lo que se pretende es conseguir que una norma no se caracterice por su incumplimiento, sino que desde el día siguiente al establecimiento de la norma, nadie la incumpla.

Conclusiones

El modelo comunitario de resolución de conflictos se presenta como el más efectivo para la prevención de la violencia de género. Esto no exime de que este modelo incluya elementos de los otros dos modelos como la incorporación de personas mediadoras o el acuerdo de toda la comunidad de establecer acciones punitivas ante determinadas acciones de violencia de género. Pero todo se realiza orientado desde la participación de toda la comunidad.

La premisa para que pueda llevarse a cabo este modelo comunitario es que todas las personas de la comunidad educativa reconozcan la problemática y estén dispuestas a identificar los casos de violencia de género y a actuar en caso de que sucedan. Seguidamente, el centro educativo debe organizarse de forma que existan espacios de diálogo para el alumnado y también para profesorado y familias, donde plantear las dudas existentes sobre esta problemática, plantear casos que se estén

dando, y reflexionar sobre su posible solución. Una nueva forma de organización escolar donde la comunidad participe de la gestión y organización del centro educativo es necesaria.

En la participación de este modelo comunitario es esencial la participación del alumnado, independientemente de su edad. Quiénes están sufriendo la problemática son ellos, y por tanto, son ellos los que pueden realizar aportaciones clave en la comprensión de la problemática y la forma de buscar soluciones.

De todas maneras el modelo comunitario abre nuevos retos para el futuro, ¿Cómo conseguir realmente la participación de toda la comunidad? ¿Cómo superar las barreras que la propia comunidad pone a la hora de trabajar la prevención de la violencia de género? ¿Cómo clarificar ante la comunidad educativa y la sociedad la violencia de género que se esconde tras los casos de bullying? ¿Cómo integrar cada vez más actores de la comunidad educativa en la prevención de la violencia de género? ¿Cómo consensuar normas que realmente prevengan la violencia de género? ¿Cómo conseguir la implicación de aquellos y aquellas estudiantes de menor edad? El reto está en seguir avanzando a través del diálogo conjunto de toda la comunidad hacia una organización escolar que genere un ambiente adverso a toda violencia de género.

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Capital Erótico. El poder de fascinar a los demás

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Review. Capital Erótico. El poder de fascinar a los demás.

Hakim, C. (2012). *Capital Erótico. El poder de fascinar a los demás*.
Barcelona: Random House Mandadori.

Catherine Hakim escribió el *Capital Erótico. El poder de fascinar a los demás* en 2011 y ha tenido un importante impacto a nivel social y académico, habiéndose traducido al alemán, español, portugués, chino, japonés, italiano entre otras lenguas. Hakim es una socióloga británica con un extenso currículum científico en el ámbito de los estudios feministas, de hecho ha escrito más de 100 artículos en diferentes revistas. Además forma parte del comité editorial de revistas de prestigio tales como la *International Sociology* y la *European Sociological Review.*

En el *Capítal Erótico. El poder de fascinar a los demás* Hakim pone de relieve un aspecto sobre el que, según ella comenta, no se ha profundizado en los estudios sociológicos: el poder del atractivo como un aspecto que condiciona el éxito social. Ella lo define como **capital erótico** e introduce seis elementos que lo configuran: 1) el atractivo (*belle laide o beau laid* serían el concepto francés del que parte), 2) el atractivo sexual referido al cuerpo y al s*ex-appeal*, 3) la gracia, encanto y don de gentes, 4) la vitalidad entendida como mezcla entre forma física, energía social y bueno humor, 5) la presentación en sociedad ligada a la forma de vestir, el maquillaje, perfume, etc. y 6) la sexualidad vinculada a la energía sexual y la imaginación erótica. Cuando la autora introduce estos elementos realiza una generalización centrada en la cultura occidental, introduciendo la matización de la heterosexualidad y la subcultura homosexual europea y americana. Sin

embargo introduce la diversidad cultural como un aspecto que puede condicionar estos elementos así como el momento histórico en el que se configuran. De todos modos no profundiza demasiado en dichas diferencias culturales. La autora plantea que la teorización que efectúa sobre el capital erótico en el libro llena un vacío en la literatura científica sobre esta temática: *Mi concepto de capital erótico va mucho más allá que otras versiones anteriores centradas en el atractivo sexual* (p.26).

Desde el punto de vista de la desigualdad de género, Hakim subraya la diferencia existente en el capital erótico desarrollado por los hombres y por las mujeres. En este sentido la autora apunta que a nivel social, en diferentes ámbitos como por ejemplo el trabajo, se recompensa más positivamente al hombre que a la mujer. De hecho, ellas reciben prejuicios sexistas cuando los elementos del capital erótico van dirigidos a cosechar este éxito social. Sobretodo estas críticas vienen respaldadas por ideologías patriarcales que han trivializado el capital erótico femenino. Siguiendo esta línea vinculada a las desigualdades de género, en el libro se introduce una argumentación que ha sido introducida también por corrientes como el *feminismo dialógico* (Beck-Gernsheim, Butler, & Puigvert, 2003). Se trata de la feminidad. Hakim argumenta que algunas corrientes del feminismo no han defendido este aspecto como algo positivo de la mujer y lo han defenestrado, para ella es necesario recuperar su defensa y darle valor.

Otros temas sobre los que ahonda la socióloga británica hacen referencia al déficit sexual masculino y a la comercialización del capital erótico. Respecto al primer tema, Hakim muestra, a partir de los resultados de encuestas realizadas en distintas partes del mundo, un hecho remarcable para la interpretación de las relaciones sexuales entre hombres y mujeres: en dichas relaciones los hombres poseen un mayor deseo sexual que las mujeres y éstas últimas controlan su negociación. De éste modo el déficit sexual se refiere a la insuficiencia de sexo en los hombres. Por otro lado, respecto al segundo tema, Hakim es muy crítica con la comercialización del capitalismo erótico. Para la autora el capitalismo ha configurado una realidad en el que el erotismo se compra y se vende con dinero, convirtiéndolo en un producto más del mercado. Para ejemplificar esta comercialización en el libro también se hace un

 breve análisis de la prostitución.

   Por último, cabe señalar que el libro finaliza presentando un manifiesto dirigido a las mujeres. En este manifiesto Hakim insiste de nuevo en la importancia de recuperar el capital erótico como camino indispensable para terminar con la disparidad de género y conseguir una mayor visibilidad de la mujer en la vida social.

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