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Women Empowerment through Microcredit: Rhetoric or Reality? An Evidence from Bangladesh

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Abstract

Microcredit has become a key instrument to the path of women empowerment in Bangladesh and has been replicated in many parts of the globe. However, the credit-based model does not go beyond the academic debates. Many scholars have argued that microcredit has brought substantial changes to the pathway of women empowerment. Challenging this view, scholars have claimed that microcredit has no significant effect on empowerment of women rather very often it causes harm to poor women. This paper assumes that the existing literatures have lack in finding the concrete impact of microcredit due to the perception of empowerment from a narrower view. Thus, this study defines empowerment from a broader perspective considering the different levels of empowerment and assesses the impact of microcredit on these levels based on empirical evidences from Bangladesh. It reveals that microcredit has very minimal effect on empowerment due to its overemphasis on income and economic empowerment. The paper concludes that microcredit often cannot bring desired changes to the lives of women in a patriarchal society unless further interventions are made at their social, cultural, perceptual and psychological levels.

Keywords: empowerment, microcredit, NGO, development, women

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Empoderamiento de las Mujeres a través del Microcrédito: Retórica o Realidad? Evidencias desde Bangladesh

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Resumen

Los microcréditos se han convertido en un instrumento clave para el empoderamiento de las mujeres en Bangladesh y ha sido replicado en muchas partes del mundo. Sin embargo, el modelo basada en créditos no va más allá de los debates académicos. Muchos investigadores han argumentado que el microcrédito ha producido cambios substanciales hacia el empoderamiento de las mujeres. Retando esta perspectiva, otros investigadores han manifestado que el microcrédito no ha tenido ningun impacto significativo en el empoderamiento de la mujer y que a menudo ha causado perjuicio a las mujeres pobres. Este artículo asume que en la literatura existente hay una vacío de resultados sobre el impacto concreto de los microcréditos debido a la percepción del empoderamiento desde una vision muy determinada. Además, este estudio define el empoderamiento desde una perspectiva amplia considerando los diferentes niveles del empoderamiento y evalúa el impacto del microcrédito en estos niveles basados en evidencias empíricas en Bangladesh. Este artículo revela que los microcréditos tienen un efecto mínimo en el empoderamiento debido a su émfasis exagerado sobre el salario y el empoderamiento económico. Este artículo concluye que los microcréditos por si solos a menudo no pueden ofrecer los cambios desdeados a las vidas de las mujeres en una sociedad patriarcal a menos que otras intervenciones se realicen a nivel social, cultural, de percepción y a nivel psicólogico.

Keywords: empoderamiento, microcrédito, ONG, desarrollo, mujeres

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The microcredit summit held in Washington, D.C. emphasized a striking vision for increasing the amount of financial services, and called for reaching large numbers of women borrowers. The most important reason behind this motivation was to make a significant contribution to the alleviation of global poverty (Mayoux, 1999). All over the developing countries ground-breaking lending programs have emerged with an aim to provide small amounts of capital to low-income entrepreneurs, particularly women, in order to empower them. The most prominent and glaring examples of "minimalist" microcredit programs are in Bangladesh, pioneered by Grameen Bank. These are small-scale credit programs that provide collateral free credit for income generating activities and other services to the poor. Since the 1970s, there has been a phenomenal growth of Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs) and currently 2170 NGOs are registered by NGO Affairs Bureau (NAB) in Bangladesh (NAB, 2012). Many of these NGOs specifically target women in the view that they are more likely to have constraints than men in access to credit, have limited opportunity in the labour market, and have power imbalance in household decision making (Pitt et al., 2006; Swain & Wallentine, 2007). Currently, 512 NGO-MFIs are carrying out micro-finance operation in Bangladesh (MRA, 2012). A good number of these microcredit enterprises have been remarkably successful in providing financial services to the rural poor women. However, the effects of microcredit on empowerment of women have been rather diverse and inconclusive. While many of the studies have found substantial impact on women empowerment, others have seen very marginal or no effect, even cited for negative consequences. Therefore, it is important to address whether, to what extent, and under what conditions microcredit programs could yield success to empower women.

Women Empowerment through Microcredit: Contested Claim

Microcredit programs in Bangladesh have produced a wealth of literatures. The most deserving issue in many of the literatures is primarily focused on the participation of women in microcredit programs. Therefore, the first question addressed by most of the literatures is why microcredit organizations target women as prospective

clients. Some scholars (Hashemi et al., 1996; Kabeer, 2001) believe that investing in women's capabilities empowers them to make choices, increases women's resource that contributes to the well-being of the family, and also contributes to greater economic growth and development of a country. Conversely, a growing number of microcredit institutions prefer women as credit clients in the view that they are more reliable and trustworthy borrowers compared to men, which can increase their recovery rate (Rahman, 1999; Mayoux, 2002).

The second issue documented in a wealth of microcredit literatures is the potential impact of microcredit on women empowerment. The interpretation and understanding on the impact of microcredit on women's empowerment and its measurement also varies across different studies. Pitt et al. (2006) indicates that credit programs lead to women taking a greater role in household decision making, having better access to financial resources, having greater social networks due to mobility and mutual interaction, more bargaining power vis-à-vis their husbands, and freedom of mobility. Amin et al. (1995) notes that poor women's participation in credit programs for income-earning activities have contributed to their behavioural change regarding fertility and the desire for the number of children. Other studies (e.g.; Mahmud, 2003; Kabeer, 1999) show that participation of women in microcredit programs widens their horizon of movement beyond family precinct which encompasses a number of different domains such as the healthcare centres and NGO office. In a recent study undertaken on Microcredit in India, Banerjee et al. (2009) shows that microfinance has no impact on participants' average monthly expenditure, per capita income, health, education or familial decision making. Accordingly, Sugg's (2010) study mentions that 57% female clients experience a rise in spousal verbal aggression since the start of their loans, and 13% in both verbal and physical violence.

On the contrary, it is claimed that impact of microcredit on women development is narrowly confined at individual level and as ignoring the collective dimension of transforming power relations throughout society (Drolet, 2010). Some studies (Rahman, 1999; Hossain et. al., 2005; Goetz & Gupta, 1996) note that providing financial support in the hand of rural poor women is not sufficient to empower them; rather it increases tensions within families and escalates domestic violence since

many of the borrowers have no control over loan use and consequently face problems in paying instalments. Haque and Yamao's study (2008) notes that microcredit is not suitable for poor women in Bangladesh. It can empower only wealthier women who have a certain level of income, land and assets.

In reviewing the existing literatures, it is anticipated that the effect of microcredit on women's empowerment is inconclusive, both optimistic and pessimistic. The main point of debate with regard to differential outcome of empowerment interventions is how empowerment is to be perceived and how it is to be measured. This paper assumes that the existing literatures have lack in finding the concrete impact of microcredit due to the perception of empowerment from a narrower view. Thus, this study defines empowerment from a broader perspective considering the different levels of empowerment and assesses the impact of microcredit on these levels based on empirical evidences from Bangladesh.

Data Sources and Methods

The data used in this paper is qualitative in nature and respondents were selected from three leading NGOs operating in Bangladesh including Grameen Bank (GB), Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC) and Association for Social Advancement (ASA) of Bangladesh. Three centres were purposively selected from above three NGOs (one from each) working in Sylhet, a division in the North Eastern region of Bangladesh. The area for this study has been selected purposively because NGOs working in Bangladesh most often offer similar programs and follow similar methods of operation in all centres throughout the country. Considering the qualitative nature of the data, a methodological triangulation has been followed in the course of study. First, the data were generated through in-depth interview to discover how microcredit influences the different dimensions of women's lives. A total of 15 female borrowers were selected purposively for interviews taking five from each of the NGOs. For getting access to the borrowers, the researchers collected the list of women borrowers from the respective branches and contacted to the borrowers who have at least two years of experiences as credit clients. The research participants were selected from those who expressed their interests to participate in

the interview. Then the researchers have visited the borrowers' home making appointment prior to the interview. To get relevant data from interview pertinent to research objectives, the researcher used an interview schedule incorporating some semi-structured open-ended questions, such as, why do women become the client of microcredit? How does microcredit bring about a change in their lives? How do women use their credit and in what ways it influences their family decision making? What are the drivers of change in their lives? Second, three focus group discussions (FGD) were arranged involving different cross sectional groups, such as clients, civil society members, NGO staffs and other key figures residing in the project areas. In the FGD, the research asked several questions to the participants including community perception and their observation of women's involvement into credit programs, changes in their social status and access to family decision making. The information obtained from FGD was also used to cross check and verify the data gathered through interviews. Finally, a secondary source of information, such as existing research reports, published books and articles of academic journals has been used to supplement the data used in this study.

Conceptual and Analytical Framework

The notion of 'empowerment' is varied and multidimensional. Women empowerment can be defined as the ability of a woman to do activities that bring her economic well-being, increase her status in the family (and thus in wider community), develop a strategy to be self-dependent, and can challenge the oppression of male dominated society by using her fullest potential. This would ultimately confer a woman's ability to emancipate from all sorts of subordinations in the family and the society at large. Rowlands (1995) defines empowerment as a process that enhances women's ability to control decision making and increase life choices by availing themselves of necessary alternatives to improve their existence in society, self-worth, and their sense of command over their lives, which are supposed to promote gender equity (p. 102). Moser (1993) defines empowerment as "the capacity of women to increase their self-reliance and internal strength" (p. 74). From the perspective of gender inequality, Kabeer (1999) defines empowerment as a process by which those who have been denied the ability to make

choices acquiring such ability (p. 437). Hashemi et al. (1996) creates an empowerment indicator based on the eight criterions: mobility, economic security, ability to make small purchases, large purchases, involvement in major household decisions, and relative freedom from domination by the family, political and legal awareness, participation in public protests and political campaigns. Many scholars emphasizes on cultural perspectives for understanding women empowerment. For them, social context has significant influence on women's lives and the same interventions are not effective everywhere (Sardenberg, 2010). Social context is comprised by social, economic, political, perceptual and cultural dimensions which have direct influences on empowerment practices of a particular society. Thus, the assessment of empowerment should not be based only to material means and interventions, but also to social relationships (Kabeer & Huq, 2010; Sardenberg, 2010), narratives (Priyadarshani & Rahim, 2010), voice (Goez & Musembi, 2008), choice (Kabeer, 2008) and negotiation (Huq, 2010). It is argued that empowerment needs to occur in multiple dimensions: economic, social and cultural, familial/interpersonal, legal, political and psychological (Malhotra, Schuler & Boender, 2002).

Thus, empowerment encompasses various dimensions such as economic, social, political, perceptual and psychological. Following the above explanation, this paper draws a view that empowerment is not merely change in economic well-being; rather it is an integrated process of social change in different forms and levels (a change in women's economic status, the ability to earn and spend money for the family's well-being, the alteration of attitude towards their lives, developing self-confidence, self-esteem and raising the level of consciousness). This new framework of understanding of women empowerment can be better illustrated by the following scheme:

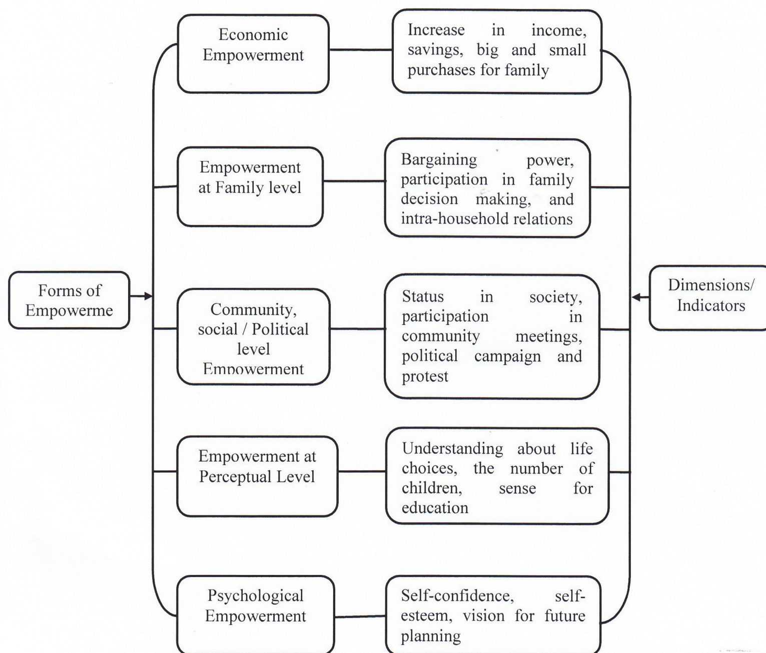

Figure 1. Empowerment Model created by the authors

The economic empowerment denotes an increase in income levels, savings and increasing the ability to make large and small purchases for oneself and family. Women's empowerment at family level happens when they can improve their bargaining power, participate in familial decision making processes, and get better intra-household relations. Moreover, women also can assume empowerment at community, social and political levels if they can raise their status in society; increase their ability to participate in community meetings, political campaign and protests. Women empowerment at the perceptual level occurs when they can develop their sense of using contraceptive methods for keeping the family size small. Making decisions regarding the number of children also reflect the improved sense of education. Women's psychological empowerment refers to their ability to develop self-confidence, self-esteem and the vision for future planning.

Empowerment through Microcredit: A Rhetoric or Reality?

This section deals with different forms and dimensions of women's empowerment in the context of the rural society of Bangladesh and evaluates the possible impact of microcredit on these processes. The review of existing literatures in the previous section clearly indicates that the effect of microcredit on women empowerment is contradictory and very often inconclusive. To reach a conclusion, the following section presents experiences of the female clients.

Economic Empowerment

Women's economic empowerment refers to their increasing ability to generate income through small scale business or any other similar type of loan funded activities. Such activities may help them to save money for further investment, as well as increase their ability to purchase things for satisfying immediate family needs. The findings indicate that small borrowings help them to earn money by investing in small scale business, such as a tea stall, stitching of cloths, vegetable shop, purchasing instruments for fishing and small vehicles, duck and poultry farming and so on. Women borrowers are able to buy household items and can save some amount of money for meeting the future needs. Many household items and appliances (i.e.; television, furniture, and sleeping bed) that were bought from the income of their small business were found in the clients' homes. One client said that involvement in microcredit programs inspired her to save money and it had been possible due to her hard work. She further remarked:

> There have been many changes in my life. But truly speaking, these things did not happen only by using loan. My effort was the prime force for it. My husband has two families (wives) and we have a large family. Sometime it also happened that we remained to starve. Now I earn income, maintain the family and enjoy mental peace.

For the last few decades, microcredit has been considered as a way of survival for many poor women, particularly divorced and separated

women and lone mothers who are taking the financial responsibility of the family, challenging the traditional myth of male bread winner role. One interview participant remarks:

> We have a large family consisting of nine members. My husband's income is inadequate to cover the cost. Many times we had to starve for having no food in our house. Finally, I decided to earn money and started clothing business taking credit from BRAC. At present, I am maintaining the family because my husband is sick. I have no savings in my hand but at least we have found a way of taking meal twice a day. If I did not get credit from NGOs, Allah (God) knows what would have happened to us.

Though some women have managed to increase their income, this is not the case for all female clients. This study has found much evidence that women failed to reap benefits due to high interest rate charges for such credit. Moreover, women's participation in a microcredit program may increase their family well-being, but it does not necessarily ensure their economic empowerment. The majority of the women use their credit to meet urgent family needs that support the view of Morduch (1998) which notes microcredit programs help smooth consumption of its beneficiaries; it does not alleviate poverty or empower its clients. The recent study conducted by Ali and Hatta (2012) also notes that although microcredit recipients enjoy slightly improved chances of social mobility and increased feelings of self-worth, there is no significant improvement in securing an enhanced economic base.

Empowerment at Family Level

Women access to credit is assumed to strengthen their bargaining power in the household allowing a woman to influence family decision making. Sen (1999) argues that women can participate in family decision making and thus improve their status remarkably if they contribute to family income. However, this study indicates that women's financial contribution does not challenge asymmetric gender relations within the households. During interviews, the researchers found that in most of the cases (more than 90 %) borrowers had no controls over loan use and income. Consequently, it does not significantly affect the bargaining power of women. One respondent shared her experiences as:

> Due to the financial crisis of the family, I took loan from ASA and bought a CNG (auto rickshaw) for my husband. He is running the family by the income he earns by driving the CNG. He just gives the amount in my hand at the end of month for repayment and I accordingly do so. I have no control over my loan and income. So, why he will care about my decision and how do you think that I am getting more power in the family through involvement in microcredit programmes?

The above testimony exemplifies that husbands or other male members of the households have the control over loans, but the clients have to retain the full liability for credit reimbursement. Thus it increases her level of stress and dependency (Rahman, 1999). Most of the interviewed women reported that they are more likely to comply with their husband's decision regarding family issues as Kabeer (2001) noted that women may be seeking to increase their influence within joint decision-making processes rather than independent control over income. Thus, microcredit could not be a direct challenge to break these asymmetric gender relations, and thus, does not necessarily increase women's decision making power and improve the relationships at the household level.

Social and Political Empowerment

Microcredit programme is a group lending process through which women get an opportunity to meet the people beyond immediate family relations outside the home, and to discuss the matters concerning various social issues, including political participation and their voting behaviour. Thus, supporters of microcredit argue that involvement of women in microcredit brings them outside family precincts, which is supposedly challenging the traditional norms of private sphere of women at home. This study contradicts with this argument noting that women's involvement in microcredit activities does not bring any worthwhile changes in their social and political lives. According to this study, women seldom participate in social and political activities outside the home with their own choices. All of the borrowers except one cast their votes for the same person decided by the male guardian of the

family. So far the changes in the social and political consciousness among the rural poor women are not an automatic effect of microcredit per se. One client refers the role of mass media in creating awareness. According to her:

> I never think if there is any influence of cooperative (NGOs) on us. The little changes that we experience in our lives are not merely the result of microcredit; rather the society has experienced many changes and these are the part of this process. You see everything is always changing.

Empowerment at perceptual level

Supporters of the micro-credit model argue that women's participation in credit programs may bring behavioural change in their lives as centre meetings provide them a scope to discuss many of the social issues regarding fertility, dowry, women power and prestige in the family and society, family relationships and so on (Kabeer, 2008). Discussions in centre meetings increase and expand the level of understanding of the participants. The experiences of women borrowers under this study do not comply with the argument. Women borrowers have found very little scope of sharing their experiences regarding their fertility behaviour and the number of children. All of the interviewed women remarked that they are less likely to sit together to share their experiences. They meet in a place on the day of repayment for few moments and very often send other persons just to handover the monthly instalment. Therefore, microcredit's impact on creating women's self awareness and rasing-consciousness about their contraceptive behaviour remain far away from the reality. This is still the norm that husbands will decide whether to have a child or the use of contraceptives. Though there have been evidences of greater reduction in fertility rate in last few decades, this is not the consequence of microcredit. Steele et al. (1998) argues that the contraceptive behaviour of women probably changed in the program villages because the necessary services were already available through the extensive network of family planning clinics and health workers in rural Bangladesh.

Psychological empowerment

Psychological empowerment refers to the development of self esteem and self confidence through which women are able to be motivated into action. Due to the group based lending process, women have to make their face in public places particularly with group members, program staffs, and thus build up wider networks and remain in the process of interactions with each other. Thus, the rituals of participation and contact with group members creates a base for women to develop an identity outside of their families, and with some authority figures, leading to the increase of their self-confidence (Hashemi et al., 1996) and the development of their ability to make future plans for the betterment of life (Schuler & Hashemi, 1994).

Many women borrowers shared that participation in microcredit programs has increased their confidence of handling capital and resources. During a focus group discussion one participant said, "While I took credit from BRAC first time, I was afraid of handling the cash and repayment of instalments. Now I am not worried about repayment of the amount'. The staffs of microfinance institutions also support this statement. During the interview, one staff member from BRAC notes that "few years ago, I thought twice to give loan amounting to Tk. 5000. However, now I feel no doubt to give her Tk. 50, 0000". One female client also noted in the similar way:

> I got an increase in my self-confidence. At first I started a business taking loan tk. 5000. Now I have taken loan amounting to tk. 45000. So what the fear I had at primary stage has been removed now. If I take more money, then I have that much courage to maintain them.

Though the above statement supports the positive impact of microcredit in developing women's self esteem, it is difficult to generalize this outcome. It is true that some women have been able to increase their business capital, but these examples are very few. Many of the borrowers have lost their capital through family consumption. Moreover, the increasing amount of loan in consecutive years does not reflect the actual development of self esteem of women. Rather it is a process of increasing the burden of loan amount. Many of the instances were found where borrowers had no alternative of taking higher of loan

for paying the previous loan. The rhetoric of targeting women as credit clients is that women have less opportunity to get access to credit and face some constraints in wider society, but in reality women make strategic choices as they pay back the credit with little or no trouble. One woman said:

> Microcredit did not bring any change in my life. I am now what I was just before. Take money and give them back in instalment. If I take loan we can work and increase our family income. It can help us for better living, nothings else.

Problems Surrounding Microcredit

Research findings, including the fieldwork of this study, have shown that microcredit has very minimal effect on women's empowerment and even linked it to negative consequences (Hume & Mosley, 1996; Mayoux, 2002; Rahman, 1999). Therefore, few questions are very pertinent that need to be addressed for a fair conclusion on the impact of microcredit on empowerment, such as, why the effect of microcredit on women empowerment is marginal? Is it the lack of empowerment potential of microcredit? What efforts are needed to get intended outcomes of microcredit? Responding to these issues, this section will address first the ineffectiveness of microcredit, and then will turn to the second question. The marginal impact of microcredit may be for a few reasons. **First**, it is observed that Microcredit Institutions (MCIs) are dealing with the clients who have the potential to repay the instalment. Less potential clients are not targeted to avoid risk of loan recovery. Therefore, the client who actually needs loans is sometimes denied. **Second**, women are the strategic choice of distributing loans but they are not their end users. It is the male members who really use and control the loans (Karim, 2008). This study has explored that women's lack of entrepreneurial skills and socio-cultural practices put barriers to the use and control of loan. **Third**, the main idea of the credit model is that small scale microfinance will help the borrowers to develop individual entrepreneurs where they will be self-employed and own private property (Todd, 1996). However, in practice credit is not used for women development. In many cases, it is used for household

consumptions e.g.; repairing houses, buying household items, payment for the dues, recurring cost for marriage and sick of the members (Ahmad, 2003; Hulme & Arun, 2011). NGOs are claiming that they are imparting training to their clients but in practice they are just giving loans and in due course, they collect it from the clients. This is not their concern how and for what purposes the clients are using the loans. **Fourth**, women are not integrated in mainstream development processes. NGO staff has openly stated that women are a strategic choice to NGOs for loan recovery instead of mainstreaming them into development. **Fifth**, male members have the responsibility for repayment as they use the credit, but many do not actually pay the loans. Women borrowers try to substitute their loans from alternative sources, either by selling their personal properties (e.g; ornaments) or borrowing loans from other NGOs through which many of the borrowers are getting into the trap of 'loan cycle' (Goetz & Gupta, 1996; Ahmad, 2003). Sixth, some credit organizations are reported to have put pressure upon women if they fail to repay the instalments in due time, and they are verbally abused in front of other peer groups for not making regular repayments (Rahman, 1999; Ahmad, 2003). One respondent notes:

> If I cannot pay the instalment in time, they use vituperative language. Personnel from NGO come to our home and stay sitting until I pay the instalment. They never consider our situation whether we are capable or not to pay the dues for that moment.

However, the field evidences of this study do not completely deny the potential of microcredit, rather it is perceived as a way of survival for rural poor women. The problem underlies in the distribution and management of credit. Credit is, of course, a way of empowerment, but it would not be sufficient if efforts are not made to change the patriarchal social structure (Hashemi et al., 1996; Hossain et al., 2005; Drolet, 2010). Likely to other researchers (e.g.; Drolet, 2010; Kabeer, 1999), this study finds that social, economic, political and cultural factors determine gender relations, which in turn influence a woman's ability to use microcredit. Women need to confront existing norms and culture in order to achieve their freedom and rights, which necessitates intervention at the social, cultural and perceptual levels.

Concluding Remarks

The study suggests that microcredit could become a good intervention in reducing the vulnerability of women. This is due to the fact that it could be conducive to generate income and thus build an asset base through small scale business enterprises of households. However, the practical evidence on the effects of microcredit has shown that credit alone is not often enough to empower women in the context of Bangladesh. Bangladeshi society and culture treat men and women differently and hence people hold a gender differentiated outlook towards their lives. Women empowerment in Bangladesh is embedded in the socio-religious and cultural practices that require a comprehensive change at all levels of human functioning including social, economic, political, psychological and perceptual levels. Microcredit serves as one of the catalysts towards this end. Many scholars (Hashemi et al., 1996; Kabeer, 1999) confirm that credit based models may contribute to the improvement of individual situations but are unable to break the patriarchal bond that constrains women's inclusion in development activities. Therefore, it is more rational to assume that women's empowerment may not reach its culmination unless change happens in gender perceptions. Credit with other social supports and activities (proposed as 'credit plus approach') may be a successful model for microcredit institutions. Some credit programs combined with a social program of skills training, education and awareness building, and livelihood protection may be considered very successful in order to empower the poor credit clients.

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Gender Differences in the Meaning of Dating and Marriage among International Students from Turkey

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Gender Differences in the Meaning of Dating and Marriage among International Students from Turkey

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Abstract

In this qualitative study, we interviewed 12 female and 10 male graduate students from Turkey. All of the participants have been living in the US for at least a year. Given that the collectivistic Turkish culture is very different than the more individualistic American culture, we aimed at understanding how men and women's meaning of dating and marriage changed as a result of living in the US. We conducted semi-structured interviews to understand the gender differences in the experience of change as experienced by the participants. The results and implications for cross-cultural research are discussed.

Keywords: Gender, dating, marriage, international students, Turkey

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Diferencias de Género en el Significado de las Citas y el Matrimonio para el Estudiantado Internacional Procedente de Turquía

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Abstract

En este estudio cualitativo, entrevistamos a 12 mujeres y 10 hombres estudiantes de grado de Turquía. Todos las personas participantes habían vivido en los Estados Unidos por lo menos un año. Dado que la cultura colectivista turca es muy diferente a la cultura individualista americana, tratamos de entender cómo los significado de hombres y mujeres sobre las citas y el matrimonio cambiaron como resultados de vivir en los Estados Unidos. Realizamos entrevistas semiestructuradas para entender las diferencias de género en la experiencia de los cambios vividos por los participantes. Los resultados e implicaciones para la investigación transcultural son discutidos.

Palabras clave: Géneros, citas, matrimonio, estudiantes internacionales, Turquía

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The topic of gender differences is one of the most commonly researched areas in the field of psychology. Researchers have long studied the role of gender differences across a variety of psychology. Researchers have long studied the role of gender differences across a variety of relationship variables such as mate selection preferences and criteria (Buunk, Dijkstra, Fetchenhauer, & Kenrick, 2002; Higgins, Zheng, Liu, & Hui Sun, 2002), dating (Miller et al., 2005), sex and love (Hendrick & Hendrick, 1995), sexual attitudes and behaviors (Oliver & Hyde, 1993; Petersen & Hyde, 2010). Studies consistently highlight that meaning of dating and marriage differs for women and men (Hendrick, Hendrick, Slapion-Foote, & Foote, 1985; Oliver & Hyde, 1993).

In addition to gender differences, dating and marriage practices show great variability across cultures. Most people in individualist cultures choose their romantic partners, marry for love, and tend to believe that love is the most important factor for marriage (Zinn & Eitzen, 2005). On the other hand, in collectivistic societies, marriage is seen as joining of extended families and is a 'huge responsibility' that should not be handled by young people (Hamon & Ingoldsby, 2003; Sherif-Trask, 2003; Tepperman & Wilson, 1993, p. 73).

With rapidly growing number of international students in the U.S., several studies have examined factors helping or hurting their adaptation to another culture including language barriers, academic performance, interpersonal problems with American students, racial/ethnic discrimination, loss of social support, alienation, and homesickness. One of the overlooked areas has been if and how change occurs in international students' expectations vis-à-vis romantic relationships. This is an important topic given the role of romantic relationships in predicting the mental health of college age young adults (Braithwaite, Delevi, & Fincham, 2010). In addition, the cultural adaptation to another country could be highly effected by one's romantic relationships.

The Meaning of Dating and Marriage in Turkey

With a 99% Muslim population, Turkey has been referred to as collectivist culture by many scholars (Goregenli, 1997; Imamoglu et al.

1993). In the Turkish culture, dating and marriages remain to be traditional with clear gender roles. Although premarital dating and sex are seen as a part of “being a real man” in Turkey for men, it is commonly forbidden or frowned upon for women to date or engage in sexual activities outside of marriage. This negative attitude towards women’s dating and sexuality is evident by the prevalence of “medical virginity examinations” especially among the religious groups to ensure women’s virginity before marriage (Awwad, 2011; Frank, Bauer, Arican, Fincanci, & Iacopino, 1999) Virginity is still seen as representation of chastity, women’s status in the society and most importantly, family honor (Sever & Yurdakul, 2001).

Furthermore, premarital sexual relations or dating with the opposite sex (Shapiro, 2010) are still the leading reasons of “honor killings” which is one of the important social problems in rural parts of Turkey (Hayran, 2009). Honor killing is defined as “an extreme way of violence towards women because of honor in a feudal system” (Bilgili & Vural, 2011, p. 66). Also, in areas where premarital dating is not widespread, arranged marriages are the main way couples get married. The estimated rate of arranged marriages in Turkey is fifty percent, although this percentage is significantly lower among the urban, young, and educated (Atalay et al., 1992). Currently, approximately one-fourth of marriages are arranged in Ankara, the capital of Turkey (Hortacsu, 1999).

Along with the traditional and patriarchal values that are part of the Turkish culture, Turkey is also seen as a European country in the process of modernization (Hortacsu, 2003). Among the more educated and urban or “modern” youth, two dating trends are also on the rise. The first involves a process in which prospective spouses are introduced by one’s family, matchmaker friends or relatives but are free to make their own decisions after a few dates. Secondly, Western-style love marriages are becoming more common among the urban, educated youth (Atalay et al., 1992). However, while Western-style dating is on the rise, there is still a clear marriage ‘‘script’’ (Hortacsu, 2003) to be followed. In other words, choosing a partner is often a ‘‘family-involved mate selection process’’ (Day, 2010, p. 125) that is highly formal and structured. Through this process families of the youths inquire about each others’ backgrounds, position in the community, and socio-economic class to make sure that they are compatible with one another. Thus, consistent

with collectivistic values, harmony not only between the spouses, but also between the two families is highly emphasized, even when there is a focus on romantic love.

Overall, for most Turks, marriage follows a formal, non-sexual courtship period where parents are highly involved. However, with respect to possible effects of modernization on the meaning of dating and marriage, premarital dating and romantic love have become fairly prevalent among educated and urban Turkish youth (Hortacsu, 1999). Given the aforementioned gender and cultural differences in regards to meaning of marriage and dating, the aim of this study was to examine how the experiences of Turkish men and women have changed as a result of living in the U.S. vis-à-vis romantic relationships, and if these experiences varied by gender.

Methods

Participants

The sample was a convenience sample of 12 unmarried female (6 Masters, 6 PhD) and 10 male (7 Masters, 3 PhD) graduate students from Turkey who have been living in the U.S. for at least 1 year. The participants were between the ages of 23 and 32 years (M = 26.31 years). Seven female and three male students were in a romantic relationship at the time of the interview. The length of these relationships varied: Four were in relationship for one month to six months, one was in relationship between 6 month-1 year, and two were in relationship for more than a year. 11 participants were in an inter-cultural/racial relationship. Out of these intercultural relationships, six of the romantic partners were American, one was French, one was Arabic, one was Lebanese, one was Indian, one was Scottish and one was Mexican. In terms of religious background, all of the participants identified themselves as a Muslim. More than half of the participants identified themselves as "somewhat" to "very" religious.

Procedure

Informal, open-ended, semi-structured, and face-to-face interviews were

conducted in the native tongue of the participants. On average, the interviews lasted between 60 to 90 minutes and were audiotaped.

Interview questionnaire was prepared based on the relevant literature by researchers. Because we were interested in several aspects of romantic relationships, we asked participants questions on three different topics: 1) Premarital relationships: Subtopics included dating, premarital sex, and premarital cohabitation 2) Marriage: Subtopics included marital roles, expectations related to finances and parenting. Some of the interview questions were as follows: "Have your views about marriage changed as a result of living in the US? If so, how?", "Have your views about dating and sex changed as a result of living in the US? If so, how?"

Data collection and data analysis

For this study, we used grounded-theory in analyzing our data. In addition to the interviews, research notes taken during the interviews also were included in the data analysis. Data analysis began immediately after data collection and was concluded when we reached theoretical saturation (Rafuls & Moon, 1996). The interviews were coded independently and themes were identified by two researchers. The inter-coder reliability was calculated yielding a kappa value of .74 which is satisfactory.

Data analysis involved a cyclical descriptive process of categorization, and coding and recoding of data with the aim of achieving an internal order by identifying themes, categories, and subcategories (Hoshmand, 1989). Accordingly, in analysing our data, we used an open, axial, and selective coding respectively (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

In the absence of any existing theoretical framework, we aimed to conduct a data-based study (Creswell, 1998; Strauss & Corbin 1998). This inductive approach allowed us to identify factors underlying change and no-change in attitudes, expectations, and behaviours that happen during a specific aspect of acculturation: romantic relationships. Given that there is no existing theory or process model explaining shifts in romantic relationship experiences as part of acculturation, we also aimed at identifying a preliminary model explaining change. Purposive

and snow-ball sampling techniques were employed to obtain data; specifically, people of Turkish ethnic origin were contacted through the on-campus Turkish Student Association at a public south-eastern university. Emails were sent to an active member list to recruit participants to take part in an interview. Initially, we had 7 students who showed interest, and through snow-balling we reached a total of 22 students who agreed to participate in an interview.

Results

Because we were primarily interested in understanding how men and women's meaning of dating and marriage changed as a result of living in the US, we reported findings across two genders. Our main point of interest was to identify how participants had or had not changed in the meaning of dating and marriage and explore the differences by gender. We used a coding system such as 'student 1', 'student 2' instead of using names of students to honor the participants' confidentiality.

Male themes

We came across three main themes in regards to change in men's expectations. Namely, these were "lower and pessimistic expectations", "less responsibility", and "less romanticism" and "more sexuality". It can be clearly seen that most of the participants made references to at least two of the themes which could imply that there is commonality in men's experience in regards to romantic relationships (see Table 1). The themes are presented below.

Table 1
Male Themes

	Lower and pessimistic expectations	Less responsability	Less romanticism and more sexuality
Participant 1		x	
Participant 2	x	x	x
Participant 3	x		x
Participant 4	x	x	x
Participant 5		x	x
Participant 6		x	x
Participant 7	x		
Participant 8	x		
Participant 9			x
Participant 10			x

Lower and pessimistic expectations.
A few male participants mentioned that after interacting with several American women and observing dating relationships in the U.S., they have gotten more pessimistic about relationships and their prospects for marriage. Some attributed this to linguistic, religious, and other cultural differences, Participant 2, (24 years old, 1 year in the US) said:

> I can't expresss myself in English the way I do in my native tongue, I don't even know how I could be sexually intimate with someone in English.

Participant 8 (25 years old, with a Turkish girlfriend) said that he is pessimistic about relationships in the US.

> In Turkey, if you have a decent job, you take the girl to a decent dinner, the girl would be open to marry you. But, in the US,

> women are independent; they can accomplish everything on their own. In a way, they don't need men. In addition, language becomes an impediment to connect with women. For example, recently, I took a girl to a comedy club, but due to my cultural and language limitations, I couldn't understand much. We couldn't experience the show the same way. She picked up on this, and she stopped seeing me. I also think that the expectations of Turkish women are lower, so it's much easier to date them.

In general, these students saw language as a big barrier that prevented them from connecting romantically. These results are in line with previous research suggesting that language proficiency is the most significant indicator in international students' overall adjustement (Olmedo & Padilla, 1978; Ward & Kennedy, 1993). Language barriers can possibly hinder international students' social interactions with their American peers (Hayes & Lin, 1994; Jacob & Greggo, 2001). One could argue that this could also spill over their romantic relationships.

Other participants mentioned their traditional understanding of dating being incongruent with the American way of dating. For example, Participant 7, (26 years old, Masters student) said:

> In the U.S., people change partners very quickly, divorce rate is high. I don't think I could have a long term relationship in this country. There were so many good women in Turkey who could be good housewives, good wives, good potential mothers, but here the women are too independent and I don't think I can find someone I can marry. And even if I did, we would probably get divorced.

Participant 4 (25 years old, Masters student), mentioned that he feels temporary in the U.S. which makes him see his romantic relationships temporary as well. He said:

> Because I feel temporary, I don't have the same expectationsrelationships as I would in Turkey.

Less responsibility.

A lot of the male participants talked about the traditional gender roles and the responsibility that comes with romantic relationships in the

collectivistic Turkish society. As described earlier, dating in Turkey is a public event where families often get involved. Because of this involvement, the dating couple, especially the male might feel like he is being watched and might be careful not to overstep the boundaries set by the society and by his partner's family.

Participant 1 (25 years old, PhD student and with a French girlfriend), mentioned:

> In Turkey, I used to feel very responsible towards girls. If I had a Turkish girlfriend here, maybe I would feel more responsible. But in general, I don't feel any responsibility towards women here.

In addition, Participant 2 reported:

> Dating in Turkey meant, holding her hand, kissing her on the forehead and being responsible for her overall well-being. In the US, I see that I can hang out with a girl as friends during the day and have sex with her at night, behind closed doors. Everybody is responsible for themselves, does their own thing. It's so much better.

Similarly, Participant 5 (27 years old, Masters student, with an American girlfriend said that inTurkey relationships require the male to take on both emotional and financial responsbilities. He elaborated:

> When you go out, you pay for things, if she doesn't work, you provide, if she wants a gift, you get it for her. In the US, I don't feel such responsability. When I go out with someone to a restaurant, she pays for her own dinner: Some women even take offense to a male paying for things. At first, I had hard time adjusting but now, I rather enjoy having less responsbility.

In addition, Participant 6 (28 years old, PhD student, with an American girlfriend) touched upon the sexual responsability involved in romantic relationships. He reported:

> If you get sexually involved with a girl in Turkey, it is automaticallly expected that you are responsible of her. In fact, I

> could say that it is expected that you get married to her. This puts a lot of pressure on men which pushes them to propose, get engaged, and get married. But in the US, sex is like a sport. It's recreational. So, when I have a sexual encounter with someone here in the US, I feel like I just enjoyed myself. No sense of responsbility what so ever.

Participant 4 talked about the connection between dating and marriage. He said:

> In TR, relationships are viewed as the stepping stone to marriage. Your girlfriend starts treating you like your mother. She shows extreme care towards you. She cooks and bakes for you. She expects that you call her at least once a day and, if you don't, she gets mad. An alternative can not even be imagined. Given these interactions, as a guy, you immediately feel responsible for her; you feel attached. However, American girls do not expect much, and as a result, men do not expect much of themselves. So, there is not a much of an attachement or a sense of responsibility.

Less romanticism and more sexuality.
Some of the participants mentioned that they have found it difficult to be chivalrous with girls (their attempts were often misinterpreted or taken advantage of), and observed that romantic relationships in the host culture are more sexual compared to the relationships in the home culture. Few male participants referred to this observation in explaining that "they have become less romantic and chivalrous and adopted a more sexual approach to romantic relationships".

Participant 3, (25 years old, Masters student, with a, Mexican girlfriend) said:

> Relationships here are more focused on sex, and are less romantic. I expect much less emotionality from an American girl, and as a result am less emotional in return. I don't think I can have a long term relationship here, culturally I can only see myself dating an Asian girl.

Participant 9, (26 years old, Masters student) reported:

> My expectations from relationships have lowered. Given the cultural, linguistic and religious differences, I don't expect relationships to be romantic, deep, or emotional. I see my life here to be temporary which causes me to think of relationships as less romantic, and more sexual.

Participant 6 also referred to a similar theme:

> Because I feel less responsible towards American girls, I don't feel guilty when I get sexual with girls. As a result, I have been enjoying my sexuality a lot more here. I feel more carefree, and can behave as I wish without any worries.

Participant 10, (29 years old, Masters student) talked about the gender differences int terms of sexuality. He said:

> In Turkey, it is expected that females have no sexual experience before marriage, whereas for men, it's expected that they have as much experience as possible. This double stardanrd can be very confusing and makes it hard for men to find good sexual partners. However, in the US, this is experienced very differently. I can gain a lot of sexual experiences without feeling responsible or having to get married. I do think that theses experiences will serve me well both among my male friends and with the opposite sex.

Overall, male students' expectations from sex are much lower but their likelihood to engage in sex and frequency with which they do is higher. I seems like for these male participants, consideration of virginity is still seen as representation of chastity and women's status which actively influence their sexual behaviors (Sever & Yurdakul, 2001).

Female Themes

When we examined the reports of the female participants, four main themes emerged: "lower and pessimistic expectations", "separation of dating and marriage", "expectation of less traditional gender roles", and "value of marital sex". Similar to their male counterparts, most female

participants also referred to at least two of the themes which implies that these is an overarching experience in regards to how change is experienced (see Table 2). Another interesting observation about the table was that even the female participants who started to think of dating and marriage as separately still saw sex to be connected to marriage. The themes are discussed below.

Table 2
Female Themes

	Lower and pessimistic expectations	Separation of dating and marriage	Expectation of less traditional gender roles	Value of marital sex
Participant 11			x	x
Participant 12	x	x		x
Participant 13	x			x
Participant 14				x
Participant 15	x		x	
Participant 16			x	
Participant 17				x
Participant 18				x
Participant 19		x		x
Participant 20	x	x		
Participant 21	x		x	
Participant 22		x	x	

Lower and pessimistic expectations.
Similar to the male participants, the female participants also voiced a decrease in their romantic relationship expectations. Few participants have mentioned that language, religious, and other cultural differences made them believe that they would not be able to find a marriage partner in this country.

In addition, unlike their male counterparts, female participants

reported being disappointed by the dating etiquette in the US. More specifically, they mentioned that miss rituals such as paying for dinners, opening doors, and other chivalrous acts.
Participant 12, (23 year old, PhD student, with an American boyfriend) said:

> Ok, we are equal but there are certain gestures that men should do because of chivalry such as taking the girl out for dinner, open doors etc. I just find American men to be rude at times.

Participant 21, (27 year old PhD, with an Indian boyfriend) said:

> My expectations from relationships have been lower since I have been living in the US. I find romantic relationships in the US to be very short and superficial. I sometimes miss the chivalrous gestures of Turkish men. That's why I prefer dating people from similar cultures to mine. Men from collectivistic cultures seem to be more similar to Turkish men.

Participants 13, (26 years old, dating a Christian Lebanese) reported that there are huge difference between Turkey and US. She said:

> After I moved here, I realized my expectations from men. I expect Turkish men to buy flowers on a first date, take me to nice dinners, and not have sexual expectations for long while. However, in the US, men expect something sexual on a first date. So, relationships become really focused on sex. Therefore, I don't think I can ever find my prince charming in this country.

Separation of dating and marriage.
Most of the female participants mentioned a strong association between dating and marriage in Turkey however, they reported that as a result of living in the host country, they have learned to appreciate that dating does not always have to lead to marriage. Some participants mentioned that "they take their relationships less seriously, and enjoy them while they last as opposed to thinking immediately about the future implications and marriage".
Participant 12, (32 years old, living in the US for more than 3 years,

and who has an American boyfriend) said:

> I used to think of dating as tied to marriage, but not anymore.

Participant 19, (27 years old, living in the US for more than 3 years, with an American boyfriend reported):

> In Turkey when girls start dating, we immediately start dreaming about our wedding date, start thinking if families would get along. But, now, I am actually thinking that dating and marriage are different things; I only date to have fun.

Similarly, participant 22, (27 years old, PhD, with a Scottish boyfriend) shared her feelings about the difference between dating and marriage:

> In Turkish, we have an expression that says 'there are girls to marry and then, there are girls to have fun with'. I used to hate this expression; however, living in the US, this is my reality. I have dated people here that I would never even think of marrying or dating in Turkey. For instance, I dated a waiter here. In Turkey, I would never really date him because of our socio-economic differences but here I knew that it was just dating, and it was just for fun. Because of this separation, I feel more liberated.

Overall, these accounts are highly similar to males' accounts of responsibility and their shift from romanticism to sexuality. It seems like both genders are experiencing dating as a separate, more recreational activity rather than an experience tied to marriage.

Expectation of less traditional gender roles.
Few participants mentioned their experiences and observations in the host culture made them revisit and reevaluate the traditional values that they grew up with in the home culture and made them want more egalitarian relationships. This was true for dating interactions (such as paying) as well as their expectations from their future husbands in regards to child rearing, household chores etc.

Participant 11, (26 years old, Masters student) said:

> I used to think that every time I went on a date, the man needs to pay, however, I don’t think like that anymore. Actually paying for my dinner with my own money empowers me and makes me proud.

Participant 15, (30 year old PhD, with an Arabic boyfriend reported:

> I want an egalitarian relationship with my partner. This includes household chores, providing, parenting etc. But along with the equality, I want my partner to remind me that I am a woman who deserves to be treated kindly. So, just because we are equal, it doesn’t mean that he can treat me like a friend. I want my partner to have nice manners.

Participants 16, (24 years old, Masters student) commented on her conflicted feelings about gender roles by saying:

> I am really confused about this topic. Based on traditional values, I like it when a guy picks me up at home, pays for food, and opens doors for me. However, I have to say that I have been also fascinated by the way Americans share responsibilities in child care and household chores. So, in a way, I want a world here I can have the traditional values along with postmodern egalitarianism. So, in a way, I pick and choose between the two cultures depending on my preferences. I am pretty sure just like I am confused; this contradiction would confuse my future boyfriends as well.

Value of marital sex.

Unlike their male counterparts, for most of the female participants, sex remained to be a sacred concept strongly tied to marriage. These participants explained that this was mainly due to their religious values which were independent of where they were in the world.

Participant 13 reported:

> Living in the U.S. softened my views about sex. I was against sex outside of marriage, living here made me think that it’s an individual choice based on one’s religion and spirituality. But I

> personally wouldn't do it.

Similarly participant 14, (27 year old, Masters student), who has only had Turkish boyfriends said that she is not against sex but that she doesn't think it is worth engaging in premarital sexual relationships. It is important to note that this participant also mentioned her wish and plans of going back to Turkey in the long run. More specifically, she said that if she knew for sure that she would stay in the US, or that she would partner with someone who does not value or expect virginity, she could view her sexuality differently.

Participant 18, (26 years old, highly religious) shared her observations about the two countries.

> I also see some sexuality being experienced in Turkish premarital relationships but it seems like in the US, sex is the main thing about the relationship. However, in Turkey, it's the emotions that make up the relationship. In Turkey, people can be in romantic relationships for 6-7 years, and still not experience sexuality. But, I can't think of that being a possibility here in the US. No man would ever tolerate that here. I think being patient sexually is a precious thing, it shows how much people value each other.

Overall, we see that plans of going back to Turkey shape women's expectations and experiences of sexuality. Concerns around societal judgements about virginity, family honor in the home country could play a role in sexual behaviors in the host country.

Discussion

In the light of the above mentioned themes, it seems like living in an individualistic culture impacted certain aspects of romantic relationships for these participants. When we examined the gender differences, we noticed that the change trajectories of males and females have had significant overlap. Both genders expressed a decrease in their expectations vis-à-vis dating and marriage. Language barriers seem to be a commonality between both genders along with cultural and religious differences.

Male participants emphasized their reluctance to be chivalrous and their shift towards being more sexual in their romantic relationships. On the other hand, females expressed disappointment in lack of chivalry in the American dating culture. It is important to mention that there was some contradiction in women's experiences. More specifically, while some of them expressed a disappointment in lack of chivalry which is based on traditional gender roles, other reported a desire for more egalitarianism in their relationships. It was also interesting that the female participants' views of sex remained mainly unchanged because of religious beliefs and traditional Turkish cultural values. These findings suggest that premarital sex is still a sacred concept among Turkish women, more so than men. This can be explained by the fact that the Turkish culture holds more traditional values about women's sexuality and that women's sexuality is harshly punished (i.e. honor killings). In addition, it could be argued that some of these female participants are holding on to the sexual values of their home country because of their probability of returning back.On the other hand, men experience sexuality in the US very differently. Turkish men experience sexuality in the US with less responsibility and sense of guilt which allows them to enjoy it more. In addition, men expect that their sexual experiences in the US are making them more socially acceptable among male peers and even better partners for women. So, it is clear that despite of the cultural shifts experienced in the US, the discrepancy between the male and female sexuality remains.

Implications for Research and Practice

This study provides an important step towards understanding gender differences in the acculturation process of international students and/or immig rants vis-à-vis their romantic relationships. Given the increasing number of international students in the US, it's very important to understand how living in the US changes attitudes and expectations of international students and/or immigrants. This line of research is also important in better understanding the adjustment process of international students to the host culture given the importance of romantic relationships on overall well-being (Demir, 2008; Braithwaite, Delevi, & Fincham, 2010). It could be argued that international students

who are more satisfied with their romantic relationships would have an easier time adjusting to living in the U.S.

Future research should focus on various factors that might impact change in regards to romantic relationships including demographic factors like SES, religiosity, language skills, having an American romantic partner, having American or international friends, and personality traits. In addition, acculturation level of the participants and the intention about going back to the home country should also be taken into consideration. It would be important to see how these factors encourage both male and female international students to change or prevent them from changing in the host culture. Future research could also investigate the behaviors of participants so that we could understand how change in expectations translates into behaviors.

The study's contributions should be considered in the light of some limitations. This study is qualitative in nature and is not generable to all Turkish or all International students. Given that all of the participants were graduate students, the participants' level of educational attainment was not representative of the Turkish population which could have influenced the results. In addition, this study inherently has self-report biases due to the way the data was gathered through interviews.

Lastly, this study presents important implications for practitioners who work with international students especially in a college counseling setting. International students are more likely to have specific relationship adjustment problems, so understanding these needs would be important in helping them. Lastly, given sex related violence towards women (i.e. honor killings) in Turkey, there is a need to better understand the attitudes and beliefs of Turkish men and women with the hope of putting an end to such violence. The experience of living in the U.S. might change men and women in a positive way which then could translate into more egalitarian relationships back in the home country. We hope that positive attitudes towards relationship dynamics and sexuality will eventually translate into social policy protecting women.

Lastly, this study might be used to better understand the adjustment process of international students after coming back to their home culture. It is very really normative for international students to go through an adjustment process. This process might be more accentuated for Turkish students who had the chance to experience greater freedom

in the US, especially in their personal lives. Having gotten accustomed to personal freedom, greater self and sexual expression might be hard for returning Turkish students who are faced with stricter moral values and social regulations. It might be important to consider counseling services targeting such individuals in order to facilitate their transition back to their home culture.

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Women's Education Reduces Risk of Gender-Based Violence: Evidence from 33 Countries

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Women's Education Reduces Risk of Gender-Based Violence: Evidence from 33 Countries

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Abstract

Many researchers report that a woman is less likely to be a victim of domestic violence if she is more educated. But some researchers found a different result: a few years in school had little effect on a woman's risk of being hit, or even increased her risk. This paper studies domestic violence against women in 33 poor countries, using data from 'Demographic and Health Survey' and 'Work, Attitudes & Spending' household surveys. In most countries studied, education clearly reduces the risk of violence; but education appears to have much less effect on risk of violence in some African countries. Nigeria is used as a case study, to examine these issues. The apparent lack of effect of education may be clarified by studying different ethnic groups separately. It is not obvious why these ethnic groups differ; but female seclusion and nomadic cattle farming seem relevant to GBV prevalence rates varying between ethnic groups.

Keywords: Gender-Based Violence, education, ethnicity.

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La Educación de las Mujeres Reduce el Riesgo de la Violencia de Género: Evidencias de 33 países

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Abstract

Muchas investigaciones han encontrado que una mujer tiene menos probabilidad de ser víctima de violencia domestica si tiene más educación. Pero algunos estudios han encontrado que haber ido a la escuela pocos años tiene muy poco efecto sobre el riesgo de una mujer a ser maltratada, o aumentar el riesgo. Este artículo estudia la violencia de género contra las mujeres de 33 países, utilizado los datos de la "Encuesta de Demografía y Salud" y datos de las encuestas de "Trabajo, actitudes y Gastos" en Nigeria. En la mayoría de los países estudiados en este artículo existe una evidencia clara que la educación reduce el riesgo de violencia; pero la educación parece tener muy poco efecto en el riesgo de violencia algunos países africanos. Nigeria se utiliza como estudio de caso, para examinar estos temas en profundidad. Este artículo presenta evidencias sobre esta evidente falta de efecto de la educación como un artefacto de los datos, que se puede explicar estudiando por separado diferentes grupos étnicos. No es obvio porque se diferencian estos grupos étnicos; pero el aislamiento femenino y la producción nómada de ganado pueden explicar muchas de estas patentes diferencias en las tasas de prevalencia de la violencia de género entre grupos étnicos.

Palabras clave: Violencia de Género, educación, etnicidad.

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GBV harms women, including physical injuries and psychological damage such as depression (Johnson & Ferraro, 2000, p. 957). An "extensive body of evidence exists with respect to household-level determinants of domestic violence [..] One of the most consistently reported relationships has been an inverse association between the wife's educational level and reported violence" (Koenig et al, 2003, p. 272). Education is not the only influence on GBV; this paper cannot consider all factors, due to lack of space.

Education has complicated effects. Education can empower women, improve female autonomy, and help women use information and other resources (Callaway, 1984; Jewkes, 2002, p. 1425). Heaton et al. (2005, p. 287) wrote "Education systems expose women to nontraditional role models and modern ideas that foster individualism and independence. Education also leads to greater human capital and potential for better employment". The education of men influences their behaviour towards women. Heaton et al. (2005, p. 288) wrote:

> The relationship between men's education and women's autonomy is complex. [..] As a husband's education increases, he adopts egalitarian views and sees the importance of spousal communication and joint decision-making. However, the opposite effect of men's education is also apparent in the literature. As a man gains higher educational status, it reinforces his gender role as the dominator and provider, thus suppressing his wife's voice and autonomy.

This paper investigate possible links between GBV and 'nomadic pastoralism', a type of farming in which cattle are taken long distances seeking pasture. Nomadic pastoralism is common in many parts of the world, including Africa, West Asia and South America (Tangka et al., 2000, p. 9). If there is a link between GBV and nomadic pastoralism, it could be because of cultural (rather than economic) differences between ethnic groups. In this paper, 'tribe' is used as shorthand for 'ethnic group' (usually based on a common language); 'partner' or 'husband' or 'wife' refer to married or cohabiting couples; 'Gender-Based Violence' (GBV) refers to domestic violence by a man against his partner. Use of the term GBV implies two assumptions: that considering violence

between spouses, more women than men are victims of domestic violence; and that some men use violence to control their partner (Bott et al., 2005, p. 3). Not all domestic violence is GBV; other violence (such as a woman hitting her husband, parents hitting children, or violence in homosexual relationships) are beyond the scope of this paper.

This paper uses household survey data, from DHS and WAS surveys. These sources both focus on relatively poor countries; none of the surveys analyzed in this paper are rich. Hence, new evidence in this paper cannot be considered to apply to the world as a whole – more research is needed.

Literature Review

Regarding the relationship between education and GBV, three patterns have been found in previous research:

Pattern [1] a consistent trend, in which a more educated woman has less risk of GBV. Evidence is reported for Bangladesh (Koenig et al., 2003, p. 280); Cambodia, India and Nicaragua (Kishor & Johnson, 2004, p. 28); India (Simister & Makowiec, 2008); Uttar Pradesh & Tamil Nadu (Jejeebhoy & Cook 1997, p. sI11); Karnataka (Rao, 1998); and Nigeria (Oyediran & Isiugo-Abanihe, 2005).

Pattern [2] a woman's education has little or no effect on GBV prevalence, until a threshold: above this, education lowers GBV risk. The Gujarat Institute of Development Studies, and International Clinical Epidemiology Network (INCLEN), found education reduces violence; but "In both studies, the reported violence did not decline incrementally with each added year of schooling, but was most apparent after women had attained relatively high levels of education" (Burton et al., 2000, p. 14). In Bangladesh, Bates et al. (2004, p. 197) found a woman's education cut GBV risk, but only if she had at least six years of education. In Colombia, risk is almost unchanged by primary education, but falls if education is above primary school (data in Kishor & Johnson, 2004, p. 28).

Pattern [3] an inverted U-shape – a few years of female education raises GBV risk, but more education lowers risk. For Uttar Pradesh, Koenig et al. (2006, p. 135) report regression results in which risk for

women with 1-6 years of education is more than uneducated women, or women with over 6 years' education. For USA & South Africa, Bott et al. (2005, p. 31) report an inverted U-shape in which women with least or most education have less risk than women with some education. In Jordan, regression results by Clark et al. (2008, p. 128) imply GBV risk is highest for women with secondary education, compared to 'primary school or less' or 'higher' education. Some studies find women with primary education most at risk: Dominican Republic, Egypt, Peru, Zambia & Haiti (Kishor & Johnson, 2004, pp. 28-9); Egypt (Akmatov et al., 2008: Table 3). "In gender-stratified contexts, important family decisions may remain out of the realm of even educated women. In extreme patriarchal settings, where the seclusion of women or their withdrawal from outside activities is a sign of prestige, better educated women may experience even less decision-making autonomy than do uneducated women" (Jejeebhoy, 1995, p. 45).

Male education may reduce GBV risks: 'Reported violence declined with the increasing education of both men and women' (Visaria 1999, p. 12; Hassan & El-Defrawi, 2000). But a woman's education may raise her risk of experiencing GBV if she is more educated than her husband, perhaps because such women resist control by their husband (Kishor & Johnson, 2004, p. 36; Kodoth & Eapen, 2005, p. 3283).

According to Amirthalingam (2005, p. 695-696), theories on domestic violence can be placed on a spectrum from individual, through family, to society-wide analyses. Explanations at the individual end of the spectrum include education, psychological issues such as childhood socialisation (e.g. growing up in a violent home), and factors such as alcohol, provocation, or jealousy.

Around the middle of the psychology-sociology spectrum are family-based theories. A dysfunctional family generates stress and conflict – for example, disagreement about spending. Levison's study of family violence in ninety communities found four factors best predict domestic violence: (1) sexual and economic inequality, (2) violent conflict resolution, (3) male domestic authority, and (4) divorce restrictions for women (cited in Amirthalingam, 2005, p. 699).

The society-wide end of the spectrum includes theories using macro-level explanations – considering structural forces in society, and culture. According to Amirthalingam (2005, p. 696), societies in which women

have equal status have less domestic violence. Some cultures seem more prone than others to domestic violence (Amirthalingam, 2005, pp. 698-9); GBV risk varies between ethnic groups. Among U.S. citizens, the 1995-6 'National violence against women' survey found GBV prevalence as 13% among Asian/Pacific Islander women, compared with 26% for African Americans, and 31% for Alaska native Americans (Johnson & Ferraro, 2000, p. 953). Simister (2010) found large differences in attitudes to GBV between ethnic groups in Kenya.

'Female seclusion'or female segregation (called 'purdah' in northern India)occurs in parts of Africa. Seclusion is associated with less education for women (Werthmann, 2002, p. 125; Oxaal, 1997, p. 13). Many women in Northern Nigeria practice female seclusion (Lewis Wall, 1998; Callaway, 1984; Entwistle & Coles, 1990, pp. 275-276). "Over 95 per cent of the married women in Kano City live in *purdah*[..] Islamic beliefs concerning the proper rôle and behaviour of women emphasise that seclusion is the appropriate living arrangement for married women. [..] those in *purdah*appear to be withdrawn, obedient, and deferent. Typically, their eyes are downcast, their smiles are rare, and their words are few" (Callaway, 1984, p. 431). Callaway (1984, p. 436) claimed, "The social position and ambiguous circumstances of Hausa women today are partly a consequence of the interplay between Islamic injunctions and indigenous Hausa culture which pre-dated Islam".

Female seclusion has complicated effects on women (Quinn, 1977, p. 182; Mason, 1986) – seclusion may "provide a means of protecting female spaces in which women pursue autonomous activities" (Werthmann, 2002, p. 119). Kintz claims a segregated woman tends to have higher social status than non-segregated woman; if a Fulani woman's husband entertains guests, "she chooses to show just a little of herself so that it escapes none of her guests' attention that she disappears immediately" (Kintz, 1989, p. 13). "A high-status Fulani woman will sometimes say, with visible satisfaction, 'I never go out of my courtyard'" (Kintz, 1989, p. 13). Some women may prefer not to leave home, to show they have servants for shopping. But most researchers consider segregated women to be victims of patriarchy (Mason, 1986, pp. 296-297).

In northern Nigeria, female seclusion is practised by several tribes,

including Hausa (Werthmann, 2002), Fulani (Kintz, 1989, p. 14) and Kanuri (Kritz & Makinwa-Adebusoye, 1999: 403). Kritz & Makinwa-Adebusoye (1999, p. 421) study five tribes in Nigeria, and find two northern groups (Hausa & Kanuri) have a "clearly articulated set of norms regarding appropriate behaviors for women and those norms dictate that women should not participate in public life", unlike the three ethnic groups in southern Nigeria they study (Yoruba, Igbo & Ijaw). Igbo women have "a high economic status" according to Ezeigbo (1990: 154) – Igbo women fought the "Women's war" in Aba from 1929 to 1931 (Ezeigbo, 1990, p. 150). Among Yoruba, trade gives women "domestic autonomy to join in activities and groups on their own without the permission of their husbands" (Quinn, 1977, p. 215). Female seclusion limits women's income-earning activities in northern Nigeria, whereas culture in some southern Nigerian regions encourages women to earn substantial income (Entwistle & Coles, 1990, pp. 275-276).

In Africa, some tribes practise female seclusion while others do not. Some writers suggest Islam is the cause; another explanation is cattle farming. Female seclusion may be related to the disease 'trypanosomiasis', spread whenTsetse flies in the rainy season bite cattle – e.g. in south Nigeria. Many north Nigerian farmerspractise transhumance, taking cattle from north to south Nigeria only when lack of Tsetse-flies reduce the risk of trypanosomiasis (Fasona & Omojola, 2005, p. 14; Kalu, Oboegbulem & Uzoukwu, 2001). Husbands & sons migrate with cattle to areas with good cattle grazing, while wives & daughters remain in north/east Nigeria (Kintz, 1989, p. 14); many men practising transhumance don't trust their wife to be faithful (Callaway, 1984, p. 439) and insist on seclusion (Werthmann, 2002, p. 121). Hodgson (1999, pp. 41-42) reports that among East African pastoralists (including Masai), men's control of livestock gives them control over women; but Masai women are not secluded – they can leave the family home, and earn money from trade (Hodgson, 1999, pp. 47-49; Tangka et al., 2000, p. 14).

There are other possible links between cattle-herding and GBV. Lott & Hart (1977) claimed that among cattle-herding societies such as Fulani, dominance is a way to control cattle, and this spills over to interaction with humans: Fulani men are aggressive, due to socialisation

of boys from 6 years old. Lott & Hart (1977, p. 175-6) claim that a herd of cattle has a dominance relationship, in which a dominant animal forces others to be subservient; Fulani and other tribes such as Masai have an "aggressive personality" – a Fulani herdsman dominates his cattle herd. "If a herdsman has the sort of personality needed to display sufficient aggression to maintain his position as dominant over all cattle in his herd, we might expect that his interactions with people would also involve assertive and aggressive behavior" (Lott & Hart, 1977, p. 177).

The Gabra tribe herd cattle on the Kenya-Somalia border, where "the environment is sufficiently dangerous for the society to depend on the strength and aggressiveness of their men for survival", leading to male dominance of women; similar patterns apply among Tuareg in Mali & Niger (Rasmussen, 2009. p. 170) – Rasmussen doesn't explain why men, but not women, use rifles and enter environments where groups are in conflict over land. Tangka et al. claim that among Masai, "Cattle herding is seen to be too strenuous for girls". But "Nomadic women in Somalia graze cattle, sheep and goats, whilst men are responsible for the camels" (Tangka et al., 2000, p. 15). This suggests most cattle-herding is done by men because of cultural rather than biological reasons.

Myres (1941) claimed nomadic cattle-keeping pastoralists in Africa spread from Egypt along the Nile, into Eastern Africa, along the Equatorial Highland into the Congo forest and South Africa; all these pastoral groups are "socially not very different in essentials from cattle-herders in Sudan and along the southern Sahara margin" (Myres, 1941, p. 27). This culture, which included female seclusion, spread to former nomadic peoples who have settled: "the custom of the desert intervened once more to create that fatal seclusion which has done more than anything else to keep society stagnant and futile all round the great Old World grasslands" (Myres, 1941, p. 38); "the effects upon society may be foreseen; that attitude of men towards women which treats them as intrinsically weak, defenceless, and dependent upon the physical services of men" (Myres, 1941, p. 40). GBV prevalence may be affected by female seclusion, or by nomadic cattle rearing, or both; female seclusion may be related to nomadic pastoralism. Female seclusion and nomadic pastoralism vary between tribes; studying seclusion, by looking at tribes separately, may help us understand GBV better.

Data and methods

This paper is mainly based on'Demographic & Health Survey' (DHS) data, provided by ORC Macro (Kishor & Johnson, 2004). Each DHS survey is a nationally-representative sample, with thousands of respondents; DHS is an excellent data source. Experience of GBV is only asked of women respondents. Women respondents in DHS surveys are usually aged 15 to 49. In 2012, I sought data from all DHS surveys including GBV, and found data on 33 countries (see Appendix Table 1). Future researchers will have more data, if DHS surveys are carried out in more countries. If a country has more than one DHS survey with GBV data, all DHS surveys in that country are combined for Charts and Tables in this paper. Sample sizes are in appendix Table 2.

The second data source is 'Work, Attitudes and Spending' (WAS) Nigerian surveys in 2003 and 2005: both are national surveys, consisting of urban and rural households in all Nigerian states. Fieldwork was carried out by RMS Nigeria Ltd., a commercial market research organisation. Each WAS survey interviewed approximately equal numbers of men and women respondents, of all adult ages: one adult was interviewed in each selected household. For both WAS surveys, the sample size is about five thousand respondents. Website www.was-survey.org has more information.

One way to estimate which tribes practice female seclusion is to assess if the husband does all shopping. For DHS, I use responses to question *v743c*: "Who in your family usually has the final say on the following decisions: Making household purchases for daily needs?" Respondents who answered 'husband/partner' were given a score of 1, and other answers (respondent; respondent and spouse/partner jointly; someone else; respondent and someone else jointly; or other) a score of zero. For WAS surveys, the question (*managMon*) asked "Which of these is nearest to the way regular household expenses are done in your household?"; response "Husband usually looks after all expenses" is coded 1, and other responses (wife usually looks after all expenses; husband and wife manage expenses together; husband and wife manage expenses separately; or other) coded zero. This score is averaged for each ethnic group, for surveys in Table 1. For Tables 1, 3 and 4, this

variable is divided into two categories: up to two-thirds husband-managed (labelled 'not mainly husband managed'), and over two-thirds ('mainly husband managed'). This definition of two-thirds or more 'predominant' is arbitrary (it may be justified by Table 3); it is labelled 'type of ethnic group' below. Tables 1, 3 and 4 are limited to ethnic groups in which there were at least 100 respondents in WAS Nigeria (2003 & 2005 surveys combined).

Rosenberg (2006) warns of dangers of comparing domestic violence prevalence rates in different countries: different surveys use different methodologies, different question wording, and different target populations (e.g. respondents' age range). To reduce this problem, DHS is the main data source for this paper. GBV prevalence rates are generally under-reported (Watts & Zimmerman, 2002).

In early DHS surveys such as India 1998-9, women were asked "Since you completed 15 years of age, have you been beaten or mistreated physically by any person?" and "Who has beaten you or mistreated you physically? [..] Anyone else?" (IIPS and ORC Macro, 2000); this paper interprets GBV as beaten by husband/partner. Later DHS surveys such as India 2005-6 use more specific questions (IIPS and Macro International, 2007): "(Does/did) your (last) husband ever do any of the following things to you:

a) Slap you?
b) Twist your arm or pull your hair?
c) Push you, shake you, or throw something at you?
d) Punch you with his fist or with something that could hurt you?
e) Kick you, drag you or beat you up?
f) Try to choke you or burn you on purpose?"

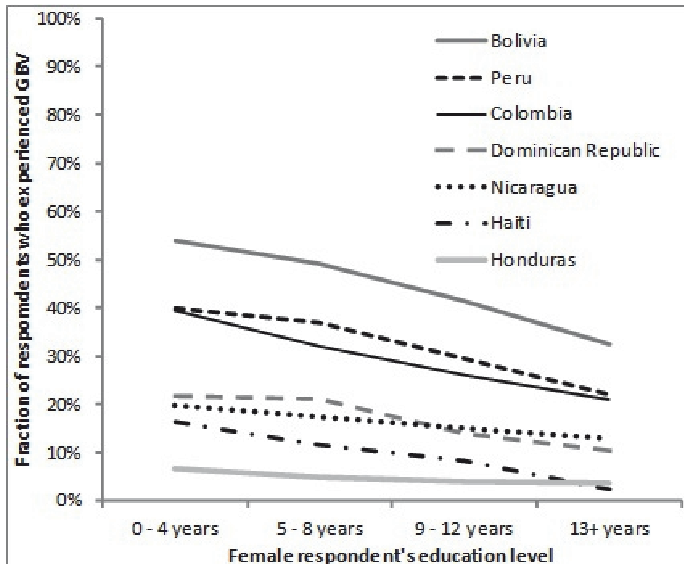
I interpret respondents who said 'yes' to one or more of categories a) to f) as GBV victims. Other problems such as threats of violence, or rape, are beyond the scope of this paper.

Weighting data is controversial (ORC Macro, 2013). DHS data are weighted using variable V005 (to correct for oversampling in some regions: see ORC Macro, 2013), for charts and regression in Appendix Table 2. Weighting is not used for other tables in this paper.

Results

This paper investigates effects of education on GBV using charts. For comparability between charts, I put GBV risk on the vertical axis from 0 to 100%, and use the same four education categories on each horizontal axis. Chart 1 uses data from DHS surveys in seven countries in central/South America. Data from three Colombia surveys in Table 1 (1990, 2000, and 2004-5) are combined in one line of Chart 1.

Chart 1: GBV versus education in seven Latin American countries

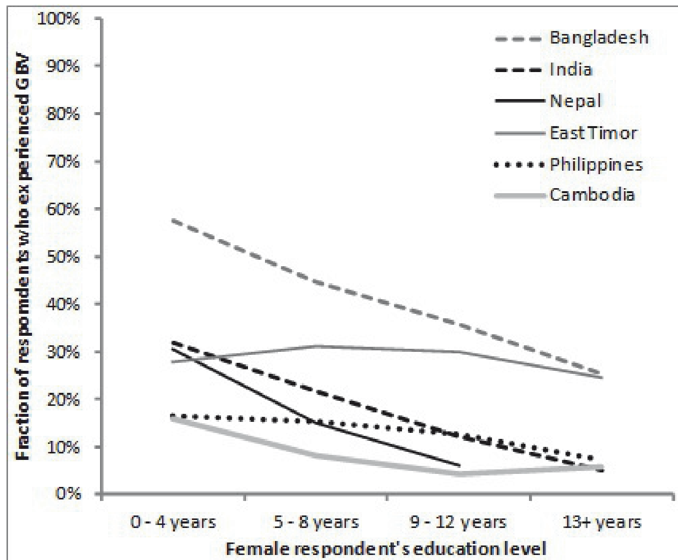


Source: DHS (author's analysis)

Chart 1 is clear: effects of education can be seen as downward-sloping lines in Chart 1, for all seven countries. A woman is less likely to report having experienced GBV if she is more educated (on the right of Chart 1) than if she has little or no education (on the left of Chart 1). Classifying women into only four education levels simplifies this and other Charts, but DHS report more the number of years each woman spent in education. The next evidence, Chart 2, is for Asia rather than

Latin America.

Chart 2: GBV versus education in six Asian countries



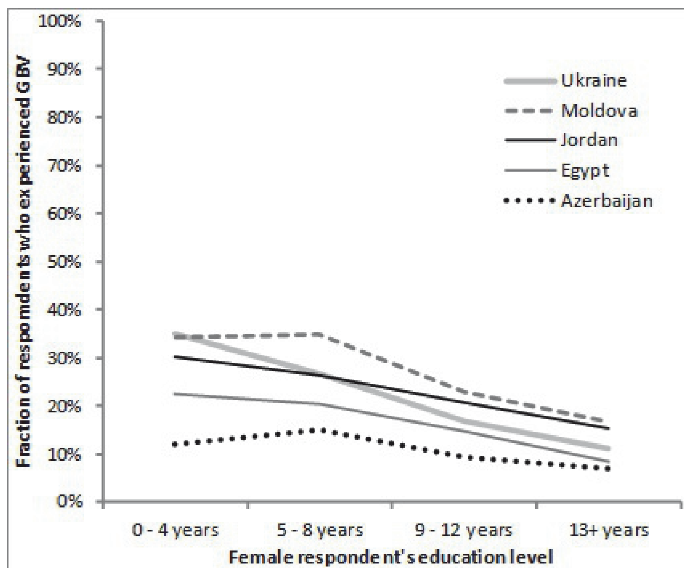
Source: DHS (author's analysis)

GBV risk seems to decline as we go from the left of Chart 2 (less-educated women) to the right of Chart 2 (women who spent more time in education). Lines in Chart 2 do not follow the simple straight-line pattern of Chart 1, but we would expect some random variation of each point on each line for each chart in this paper. In Chart 2, the only country where education seems to increase GBV risk is East Timor, from '0-4 years' to '5-8 years' education; but regression results in Appendix Table 2 show that controlling for a measure of ethnic differences, GBV risk fallsas we go from '0-4 years' to '5-8 years'. The line for Nepal in Chart 2 does not extend to '13+ years', because no women in the DHS Nepal survey spent over 12 years in education.

Chart 3 shows five countries in Eastern Europe & the Middle East; there is a downward trend for each country, from left (little education) to right (more education), except for a slight increase in GBV risk for

Azerbaijan and Moldova women with '5-8 years' education compared with '0-4 years' (this may be random variation – only 39 women in the '0-4 years' category in the Moldova survey provide GBV data; the difference in GBV risk at '5-8 years' compared to '0-4 years' is not statistically significant for Azerbaijan or Moldova, according to regression results in the Appendix).

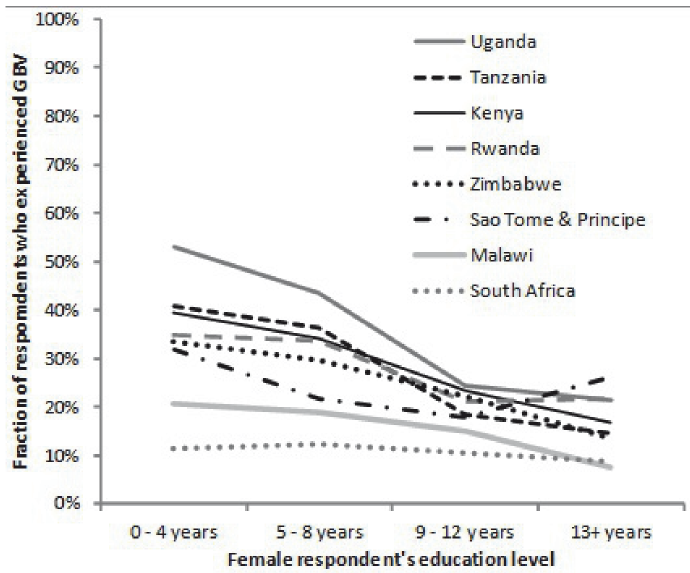
Chart 3: GBV versus education in five European & Middle East countries



Source: DHS (author's analysis)

Charts 4 and 5 refer to African countries; this paper divides African countries into two groups (north and south), because it would be hard to interpret a chart including all fifteen African countries for which we have DHS data on GBV. The division of Africa into northern and southern halves is arbitrary (likewise, Egypt could have been put in Chart 4, rather than in Chart 3).

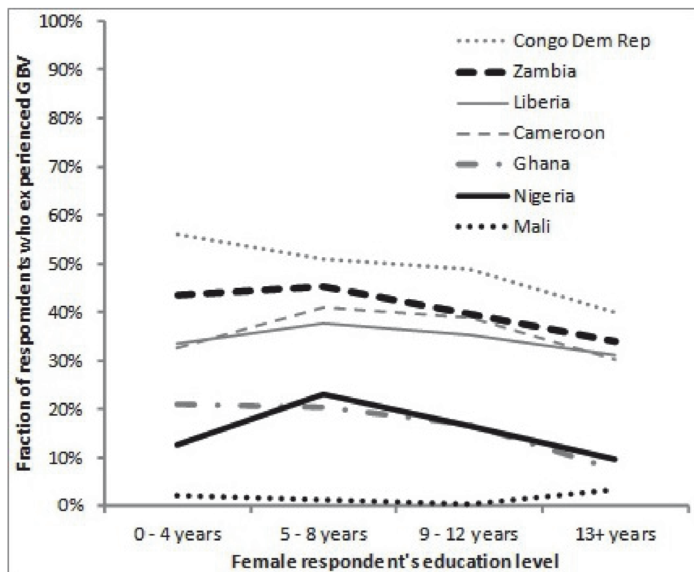
Chart 4: GBV versus education in eight southern African countries



Source: DHS (author's analysis)

As in previous Charts in this paper, Chart 4 uses data on female respondents, to assess if a woman's education level tends to reduce her risk of experiencing GBV. The general pattern is that among more-educated women (on the right of Chart 4), there is less chance of having experienced GBV from her current or former partner. The increased GBV risk in 'Sao Tome & Principe' from '9-12 years' to '13+ years' is an exception – this may be random variation, because the 'Sao Tome & Principe' sample is small (see Appendix).

Chart 5: GBV versus education in seven northern African countries



Source: DHS (author's analysis)

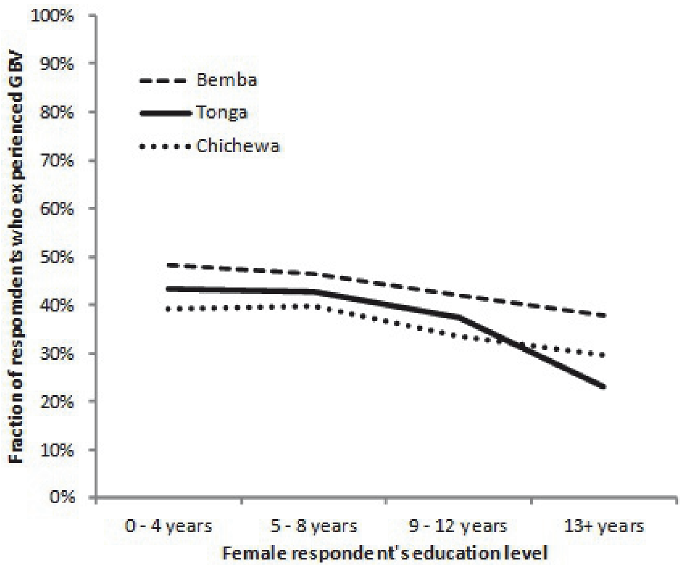
Mali has low GBV prevalence at all education levels. In Mali, Tuareg herd cattle (Rasmussen, 2009, p. 170); other tribes such as Fulani are also pastoralist. Mali's low GBV risk in Chart 3 may be compared to low GBV risk among Hausa & Kanuri in Nigeria (Table 3 and Chart 7); Mali's low risk may have the same cause as low GBV risk in Nigeria's pastoral nomadic tribes (Fulani, Hausa & Kanuri) – perhaps female seclusion, associated with cattle farming.

Chart 5 shows less GBV risk as we go from left to right; but four African countries do not fit this pattern (Zambia, Cameroon, Liberia & Nigeria) – their highest GBV risk is at 5-8 years of education. These four countries are worth investigating, to assess if education could increase the risk of GBV.

The lack of clear downward trends in Chart 5 seems surprising, given the pattern in other countries in Charts 1 to 4. The literature review reports that ethnic group is relevant to GBV risk; this paper now investigates effects of education and ethnicity, in Charts 6 and 7. These use the same data as previous Charts, but separate the sample into tribes:

for clarity, Charts 6 and 7 only show the three tribes with the largest sample-sizes in that country.

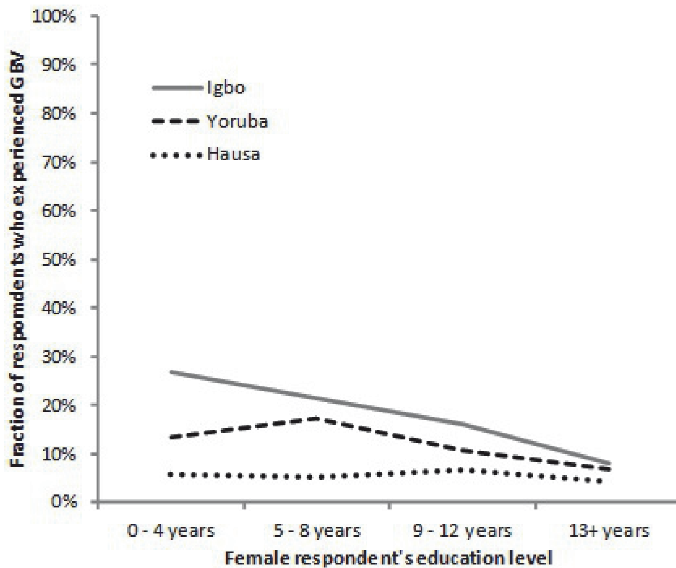
Chart 6: GBV versus education in Zambia, for three largest ethnic groups



Source: DHS (author's analysis)

Chart 6 shows the effect of education on GBV risk in Zambia, controlling for ethnicity. There is a general downward trend in each of these three ethnic groups, as we go from left to right; education seems to reduce GBV risk in each tribe. Hence, the apparent rise in GBV risk in Zambia (in Chart 5) from '0-4 years' to '5-8 years' may be misleading: this effect of education in Chart 5 isn't visible in Chart 6. Before attempting to explain why ethnicity may cause this complication, we can assess if a similar pattern is shown in Nigeria using Chart 7.

Chart 7: GBV versus education in Nigeria, for three largest ethnic groups



Source: DHS (author's analysis)

Chart 7 reports GBV prevalence at different education levels, for the three largest ethnic groups in Nigeria (combining DHS surveys from 2003 & 2008). Chart 7 is not entirely clear – larger sample sizes would be preferable; but there is a downward trend in GBV risk for Igbo respondents, and no evidence that education raises GBV risk among Hausa respondents. Hence, Chart 7 (suggesting education reduces GBV risk) seems inconsistent with Chart 5 (in which Nigerian GBV risk increased from '0-4 years' to '5-8 years' education). The rest of this paper attempts to reconcile Charts 5 and 7, focusing on Nigeria (relying mainly on WAS surveys; WAS have not yet studied Zambia).

Table 1 examines one way to explain apparent inconsistency between Charts 5 and 7: divide the Nigerian DHS sample into ethnic groups. This is shown in Table 1.

Table 1
GBV prevalence, by education and ethnicity

	Ethnic group							
Female respondent's education level	*Fulani* GBV risk	*N*	*Hausa* GBV risk	*N*	*Igbo* GBV risk	*N*	*Yoruba* GBV risk	*N*
0-4 years	6%	*1687*	6%	*4277*	26%	*489*	13%	*517*
5-8 years	10%	*84*	6%	*491*	22%	*854*	16%	*875*
9-12 years	9%	*44*	7%	*282*	16%	*1311*	10%	*1459*
13-16 years	0%	*4*	4%	71	8%	*414*	6%	*591*
17 + years		*0*	0%	*2*	6%	*35*	11%	*37*

Source: DHS Nigeria. N indicates the sample size.

Chart 5 suggests Nigerian women with 5-8 years of education have more risk of GBV than Nigerian women with 0-4 years of education. Table 1 disaggregates education and GBV into four ethnic groups. Most respondents on the ‘0-4 years’ row are Hausa or Fulani (4,277 plus 1,687 cases), and most on the ‘5-8 years’

row are Yoruba or Igbo (875 plus 854 cases). In the '0-4 years' row, Hausa & Fulani respondents have relatively low GBV prevalence and little education; whereas most respondents on the '5-8 years' row are Yoruba or Igbo, with high GBV risk. Controlling for tribe (in Table 1, and Chart 7) avoids confusing high-GBV-prevalence Igbo/Yoruba women, with low-GBV-prevalence Hausa/Fulani women. Ethnic differences in GBV prevalence are revealed in Table 1, but hidden in Chart 5.

Table 2 reports four characteristics of Nigerian households. Shopping evidence is based on answers to WAS questions 'How many hours do you spend per week, on shopping for food? And how many hours does your spouse spend?' (respondents are excluded if neither husband or wife shops). Women are classified as having a bank account if they had their own account, or a joint account with their partner.

Table 2

Characteristics of selected ethnic groups in Nigeria

Type of ethnic group	Ethnic group	Number of years wife spent in education	Husband spends time shopping, but wife does not	Fraction of wives with a bank account	Fraction of households owning cows
Not mainly husband-managed	lio	8	9%	32%	0%
	Gwari	4	10%	10%	18%
	Yoruba	9	6%	31%	1%
	Igala	6	3%	31%	1%
	Edo	10	6%	38%	0%
	Igbo	9	4%	31%	1%
	Efik	8	5%	39%	3%
	Ibibio	9	9%	32%	0%
	Tiv	5	3%	22%	1%
Mainly husband-managed	Fulani	1	36%	10%	66%
	Kanuri	1	43%	18%	44%
	Hausa	2	45%	9%	34%

Source: DHS (first & fourth numeric columns); WAS (second & third numeric columns)

In Table 2, there are clear differences between the 'not mainly husband-managed' and 'mainly husband-managed' rows. The three tribes at the bottom of Table 2 (compared to 'not mainly husband-managed' tribes) are less likely to experience GBV (consistent with Chart 7); are more likely to rely on husbands to shop, and less likely for wives to have a bank account (suggesting female seclusion); and more likely to own cows. Table 2 suggests Fulani, Hausa, & Kanuri tribes often practise female seclusion and own cattle.

In Table 3, the first pair of numeric columns are from WAS, in reply to 'Please tell me if a woman should work outside the home full time, part time, or not at all [..] after marrying and before having children'. Responses 'full time' and 'part time' are given a score of zero, and 'not at all' a score of 1. The next pair of columns is the fraction of respondents who replied 'yes' to DHS question 'Is a husband justified in hitting or beating his wife in the following situation: If she refuses to have sex with him?' The right-hand column of Table 3 is the fraction of DHS women respondents who had been hit by their husband.

Many respondents in the three male-managed tribes in Table 3 think married (childless) women should not be employed. Similarly in Table 3 regarding attitudes to GBV (the 3rdand 4thnumeric columns), women & men in the bottom three rows are more likely to say GBV is acceptable than the other nine ethnic groups (except Tiv). But in the right-hand column of Table 3, Fulani, Hausa & Kanuri women are less likely to experience GBV than women in the other nine tribes (this is consistent with Chart 7). The 'mainly husband-managed' tribes use less violence, but not because they consider GBV unacceptable. There may be another reason for lower GBV in these three tribes – men in 'mainly husband-managed' tribes may feel less need to use GBV, if a secluded woman is powerless (e.g. having little control over purchasing, if her husband shops).

Table 3

Characteristics of selected ethnic groups in Nigeria

Type of ethnic group	Ethnic group	Respondent said a wife with no children shouldn't work outside home		Respondent said a husband is justified in hitting his wife if she refuses to have sex with him		GBV prevalence
		woman	man	woman	man	
Not mainly husband-managed	lio	3%	6%	18%	9%	22%
	Gwari	6%	8%	19%	8%	11%
	Yoruba	2%	4%	10%	6%	11%
	Igala	4%	5%	30%	12%	15%
	Edo	1%	3%	12%	5%	29%
	Igbo	4%	6%	15%	7%	18%
	Efik	12%	15%	13%	14%	33%
	Ibibio	10%	11%	12%	7%	38%
	Tiv	9%	12%	39%	24%	43%
Mainly husband-managed	Fulani	34%	55%	48%	21%	6%
	Kanuri	22%	33%	38%	46%	8%
	Hausa	26%	41%	46%	16%	6%

Source: DHS and WAS

Discussion

Tables and Charts in this paper provide evidence on whether education influences GBV risk. Higher GBV prevalence is associated with low education levels, in all Charts in this paper. Charts 6 & 7 show large differences between tribes, regarding GBV risk. This paper suggests that female seclusion, associated with nomadic pastoralism – practised by ethnic groups such as Fulani, Hausa, and Kanuri – may explain the apparently non-linear relationship between women's education and GBV risk, shown in Chart 5 but perhaps also detected by some previous researchers (see literature review: *Pattern [2]*and *Pattern [3]*).

Charts 1 to 5 show differences between countries in their GBV risk, even controlling for education; it is not clear why such differences occur, but cultural differences seem a likely explanation. Cultural differences are the obvious explanation for differences between ethnic groups in Charts 6 and 7.

Conclusion

GBV is one of the biggest global problems, affecting many women in every country. Ethnicity may be relevant to GBV; this paper considered the possibility that female seclusion and nomadic cattle farming explain differences in GBV risk between ethnic groups. It is not clear if female seclusion or pastoralism is more important; these two practices appear to be inter-related, so it is difficult to know the real cause.

There has been disagreement between previous researchers about effects of education on the risk of GBV; some previous researchers (see literature review) found a non-linear relationship between education and GBV. It has even been suggested that a few years in school may make a woman more likely to be a victim of domestic violence. This is important: if education could increase the risk of GBV, should organisations such as the United Nations promote female education?

The claim that education reduces the risk of GBV is generally confirmed by all of Charts 1 to 7. In Charts 1 to 4, there seems no need to distinguish between effects of ethnicity and effects of education, because education seems to have such a clear effect in reducing the risk

of GBV. But in four countries in Chart 5 (e.g. Nigeria), it seems that women with 5-8 years of education are slightly more at risk of GBV than women with below 5 years of education. For these four countries, this paper investigates whether ethnic differences could have confused the picture, concealing the beneficial effects of education.

Some previous research suggests education might increase the risk of GBV, but most research suggests education reduces the risk. This paper confirms that in some countries, there is a complicated link between education and GBV risk; it is reasonable that some previous researchers found a non-linear pattern, in which a few years' education appeared to raise the risk of GBV. But this paper suggests ethnic differences sometimes conceal the effects of education on GBV: if we take ethnic group into account, education reduces the risk of GBV in every country.

It is not clear why education reduces the risk of GBV (in Charts 1 to 7, and in regression results); qualitative research may be appropriate to investigate this. Education may empower a woman to resist violence; another possibility is that an educated woman is more able to defuse a potentially violent situation. Or perhaps a husband of an educated woman is unlikely to use violence because she is more likely to leave him (an educated woman is usually less financially dependent on her husband, because educated people tend to be better-paid). The key finding is that female education reduces domestic violence; UN Women should continue to campaign for every girl and woman to have access to education.

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APPENDIX: data and regression

Sample sizes used for this paper are shown in Appendix Table 1.

Appendix Table 1

Surveys used in this paper

	DHS	WAS
Azerbaijan	2006	
Bangladesh	2007	
Bolivia	2003-4	
Cambodia	2000; 2005-6	
Cameroon	2004	
Colombia	1990; 2000; 2004-5; 2009-10	
Congo Dem Republic	2007	
Dominican Republic	1999; 2002; 2007	
East Timor	2009-10	
Egypt	1995-6; 2005	
Ghana	2008	
Haiti	2000; 2005-6	
Honduras	2005-6	
India	1998-9; 2005-6	
Jordan	2007	
Kenya	2003; 2008-9	
Liberia	2006-7	
Malawi	2004; 2010	
Mali	2006	
Moldova	2005	
Nepal	2011	
Nicaragua	1997-8	
Nigeria	2003; 2008	2003; 2005
Peru	2000; 2004-8	
Philippines	2008	
Rwanda	2005; 2010	
São Tomé e Príncipe	2008-9	
South Africa	1998	
Tanzania	2010	
Uganda	2006	
Ukraine	2007	
Zambia	2001-2; 2007	
Zimbabwe	2005-6; 2010-11	

For regression, the variable used for the 'year' column is calculated as year of interview minus 2000, where there is DHS data for more than one year.

Appendix Table 2
Regression results

Country	Respondent's time in education			Ethnic group		Year	Constant	*Sample size*
	5-8 years	9-12 years	13+ years	Cow-owing	Husband managed			
Azerbaijan	0.26	-0.30	-0.58	1.76	-0.03		-2.45**	*5,528*
Bangladesh	-0.52**	-0.90**	-1.40**		-0.07		0.32**	*4,453*
Bolivia	-0.17**	-0.47**	-0.86**		-0.02	-0.09	-0.09	*14,657*
Cambodia	-0.71**	-1.30**	-0.96		0.35	-0.08**	-1.46**	*5,227*
Cameroon	0.19	0.10	-0.30	-0.28	-0.59**		-0.34*	*3,012*
Colombia	-0.30**	-0.58**	-0.87**		0.34**	0.004**	-0.51**	*104,925*
Congo D.R.	-0.20*	-0.28**	-0.65*	-1.67	-0.004		0.74*	*3,167*
Dominican R	-0.03	-0.53**	-0.85**		0.22**	-0.03**	-1.22**	*19,318*
East Timor	0.19	0.10	-0.11		-1.46**	-0.15	0.54	*2,717*
Egypt	-0.17**	-0.81**	-1.48**			0.13**	-0.94**	*20,389*
Ghana	-0.16	-0.42**	-1.30**	-1.71**	0.10		-1.15**	*2,248*
Haiti	-0.37**	-0.73**	-2.00**		0.42**	-0.05**	-1.57**	*6,587*
Honduras	-0.36**	-0.55**	-0.70**		-0.20	-0.08	-2.14**	*18,796*
India	-0.62**	-1.38**	-2.38**	-0.43**	-0.20**	0.12**	-0.79**	*171,784*
Jordan	-0.22	-0.52**	-0.91**		-0.09		-0.79**	*3,444*
Kenya	-0.24**	-0.79**	-1.19**	-0.23	-0.54*	-0.02**	-0.06	*11,263*
Liberia	0.20*	0.11	-0.14	1.32**	-0.08	-0.67**	3.87**	*4,632*
Malawi	-0.11*	-0.40**	-1.18**		0.01	0.02*	-1.45**	*15,521*
Mali	-0.47	-1.72	0.44	-2.36**	-1.22**		-1.98**	*8,359*
Moldova	0.07	-0.51	-0.91**	1.00*	3.18		-1.09**	*5,571*
Nepal	-0.90**	-1.89**					-0.82**	*4,157*
Nicaragua	-0.12	-0.29**	-0.47**			0.16**	-1.04**	*8,324*
Nigeria	-0.01	-0.49**	-1.11**	-1.23**	-1.90**		-0.55**	*22,394*
Peru	-0.13**	-0.48**	-0.87**	-0.49**	-0.14**	-0.01*	-0.27**	*53,398*
Philippines	-0.08	-0.30**	-0.93**	0.09			-1.63**	*9,235*
Rwanda	-0.11*	-0.76**	-0.88**		-120	0.15**	-1.55**	*8,593*
São Tomé	-0.49**	-0.74**	-0.20		0.29*	-0.49*	3.09	*1,938*
Sth Africa	0.10	-0.09	-0.32*	-0.66	-4.02		-1.74**	*11,677*
Tanzania	-0.19**	-1.12**	-1.40**			-0.18*	1.39	*6,824*
Uganda	-0.35**	-1.23**	-1.38**	0.63	-0.26		0.01	*1,923*
Ukraine	-0.40	-0.99	-1.47	714.43	4489.37		-234.82	*2,843*
Zambia	0.07	-0.16**	-0.39**	-0.15	-0.28*	-0.03**	-0.02	*9,148*
Zimbabwe	-0.17*	-0.55**	-1.15**	4.26**	2.07*	-0.03	-2.19**	*12,346*

*Source: DHS data. * indicates statistically significant at 5%, ** significant at 1%.*

The key columns in Appendix Table 2 are the three education coefficients, relative to the reference category (0-4 years in education). Charts in this paper suggest more education is associated with less GBV; this implies all three education coefficients would be negative, and become more negative as we go to the right in Appendix Table 2 (corresponding to GBV prevalence falling as we go from left to right in the Charts). In Bangladesh, the coefficients are -0.52, -0.90, and -1.40: consistent with GBV risk falling as a respondent's education increases. A woman with 5-8 years' education is less likely to experience GBV than a woman with 0-4 years' education (because -0.52 is below zero); a woman with 9-12 years' education is even less likely to experience GBV (-0.90 is below -0.52); her risk falls further if she has 13-16 years' education (-1.40 is below -0.90). 87 of 98 education coefficients are negative, and most are statistically significant; 11 coefficients are positive, but only 1 positive education coefficient is statistically significant (Liberia: 5-8 years). Appendix Table 2 implies that more education is associated with less GBV; education is usually finished before marriage, so presumably lack of education is the cause, and GBV the effect.

The fourth numeric column in Appendix Table 2 is an aspect of ethnicity, based on cattle ownership. This is the fraction of households in this ethnic group owning cattle, in all countries studied (if it is unknown for an ethnic group, the DHS average for all countries is used). A blank in this column indicates that the author has not processed ethnicity for this survey – usually because the respondent's language isn't reported (e.g. DHS do not report language for Egypt, perhaps because almost all Egyptians speak Arabic). If DHS continue to survey more countries, it will be possible to assess more accurately the fraction of each ethnic group owning cattle. Of nine statistically significant coefficients in this column, four are positive and five negative; this doesn't suggest a strong link between cattle ownership and GBV.

The fifth numeric column in Appendix Table 2 assesses male financial management, a proxy for female seclusion used in Table 2. For regression, this varies from zero (no husbands in that ethnic group are

sole household money managers) to one (all husbands in that ethnic group are sole money managers). Most coefficients are not statistically significant; among significant coefficients, there is a mixture of positive and negative coefficients.

To summarise Appendix Table 2, there seems no clear effect of ethnicity on GBV risk. Education has a strong association with GBV risk (confirmed by charts in this paper). More female education reduces GBV risk.

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'The Barriers that only You Can See': African Australian Women Thriving in Tertiary Education Despite the Odds

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'The Barriers that only You Can See': African Australian Women Thriving in Tertiary Education Despite the Odds

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Abstract

This qualitative study argues the need to recognise the increasing numbers of new African women migrants who have come to Australia with tertiary qualifications, but who are not necessarily refugees. These women are enrolling in and successfully completing university study. At the same time, the study makes clear the limits of conceptualising African Australian women's experiences of education through a singular focus on struggle, disengagement and non-belonging. Rather, African Australian women's enrolment in higher education needs to be seen as enabling new forms of participation and belonging in resettlement, while simultaneously impacting in multiple and sometimes personally challenging ways on the women's more traditional cultural roles and identities. The article finishes by recognising that universities and other educational institutions can play a more active role in supporting migrant African women to thrive in tertiary educational contexts.

Keywords: african women, migrants and education, South Sudan, tertiary studies, qualitative research, CALDB persons

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Las Barreras que sólo Tú Puedes Ver: Mujeres Africanas Australianas Avanzando en la Educación Terciaria a Pesar de las Dificultades

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Abstract

Este estudio cualitativo argumenta la necesidad de reconocer el creciente número de mujeres inmigrantes Africanas que han llegado a Australia con titulaciones de educación superior, pero que no son necesariamente refugiadas. Estas mujeres se están matriculando y terminando con éxito estudios universitarios. Al mismo tiempo, este estudio marca claramente los límites de la conceptualización de las experiencias de las mujeres Africanas Australianas de educación a través de un enfoque singular sobre lucha, desvinculación y desapego. Es más, la implicación de las mujeres Africanas Australianas en la educación superior tiene que ser vista como nuevas formas de permitir la participación y la pertenencia en el reasentamiento, mientras que simultáneamente impacten de forma múltiple y a veces con retos personales a los roles culturales tradicionales de las mujeres y sus identidades. El artículo termina reconociendo que las universidades y otras instituciones educativas pueden jugar un papel más activo en apoyar a las mujeres Africanas que avanzan en el contexto de educación terciaria.

Palabras clave: mujeres africanas, migrantes y educación, Sudán del Sur, estudios superiores, investigación cualitativa, personas CALDB

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The Australian Human Rights Commission (2010) published a literature review entitled, African Australians: A review of human rights and social inclusion issues. The section on education contains no reference to African Australian students who are not refugees. This can be read as reflecting the report's emphasis on the barriers to social inclusion experienced by this diverse group of new Australians. On the other hand, however, the collapsing of the category of African Australians into that of refugees supports the hypothesis that underpins this article: namely that in the Australian context, there is only one discourse about African Australians and education. Within this discourse, African Australians are refugees and when it comes to education, they experience a failure to thrive.

Implicitly supporting this construction of African Australians' participation in education, the research that does exist emphasises the challenges faced by Sudanese Australians (read as African Australians) in relation to primary and secondary education, language centres, tutoring and literacy. The gendered challenges faced by Sudanese women in particular have been noted (Hatoss & Huijser, 2010; Levi, 2010). Following a widely-criticised series of events in 2007 in which the then-Immigration Minister Kevin Andrews and multiple media organisations (both print and televised) embarked on a campaign of vilification of Sudanese Australians, popular representations of "African Australians" became synonymous with Sudanese Australians, refugees and "black gangs" (Nunn, 2010). Suddenly, the only visible African Australian were dangerous or failing to integrate, socially and educationally. Despite the emergence of a more critical discussion in both popular and academic discourses about the multiple inaccuracies inherent in the propagation of such stereotypes, little remains published on the successful participation of African Australians in higher education (and other sectors). This paper adds to the small but growing body of literature (Ngum Chi, 2012) about emerging and thriving African Australian individuals, communities and 'visible' but 'invisible' migrants.

Addressing the paucity of material about African Australian women's involvement in higher education, the article provides a snapshot of some African Australian women in attendance at Australian universities. By

emphasising the diversity of the women respondents in this research, we seek to articulate the breadth and difference of African Australian women as these members of our migrant communities grow in numbers and contribute to the changing society and institutions of which they are a part.

In this paper we use the term African Australian purposefully, to highlight both its diversity and collective discursive power. Phillips (2011, p. 57) argues that the category of African Australian "homogenises their experiences and must be unpacked". While acknowledging this point, we suggest that African Australians can be considered as a constitutive category with some shared challenges at this particular historic moment. In using the term we do not wish to erase or diminish countless additional significant and numerous specific national and ethnic identities (Ngum Chi, 2012).

By discussing the diverse needs, experiences and backgrounds of African Australian women at university, the paper addresses a gap in the literature which at present reveals little sense that African Australians are part of our tertiary institutions at all. The failure to discuss the African Australian presence within Australian tertiary institutions only serves to confirm the notion that the education experiences of African Australians and women particularly can only ever be discussed in terms of poverty, trauma, marginalisation and discrimination. As Stevenson and Willott (2007) have argued in the British higher education context:

> homogenizing the support needs of young refugees along with those of other ethnic minority students is both inappropriate and insufficient and the continued failure to focus on them as a specific widening participation group will perpetuate their continued absence from the UK higher education system (p. 671).

As those concerned with Australia's multicultural universities know, African Australians do study, work, lecture and thrive in tertiary institutions. Moreover, while some of these African Australian students and staff have come to Australia as refugees and experienced significant school interruption, others have come here recruited as academics and professionals, from privileged backgrounds with private boarding school educations in countries such as Cameroon or Nigeria.

Highlighting five case studies for discussion, this paper contributes to a more nuanced understanding of African Australians' involvement in tertiary education.

Is it a matter of gender, class, or circumstance?

There is some evidence to suggest that students from refugee backgrounds feel disadvantaged at university compared with Australian-born and international students (Earnest et al., 2010). This could be attributed to gender and the individual's cultural background. The role of 'culture' and how 'culture' shapes learning and knowledge acquisition of migrants and those who identify with a 'minority' group is visible in 'migration and minority theory' and literature (Geisen & Bekerman 2012, p. 2). Cox (2012, p.12), contends that "when educational provision is unable to respond effectively to needs outside of the monolithic education system settings, education may or may not lead to learning". Contrastingly, anecdotal evidence and as yet unpublished research conducted among African Australian students indicates that African Australians who are not refugees claim that they do not experience any problems when they attend university (Mphande, 2011). This may suggest that while marginalities of race and gender can be formidable, class determinants may in some cases provide compensatory privileges, access to educational possibilities and a greater sense of belonging. A comprehensive class analysis is beyond the scope of this paper, but it is increasingly evident that the difficulties faced by some African-background refugees has more to do with their refugee experiences than ethnicity, a fact under-reported in both popular and scholarly writing.

Indeed, the challenges faced by non-refugee-background African Australians often bear similarities to non-African Australian students, including such things as transport issues or difficulty adjusting to university environments versus the more structured secondary school experience. Thus, the lack of problems reported by more privileged and non-refugee African Australians also indicates that class differences within this category are at least as pertinent to the analysis of their tertiary experience as ethnicity. While '[in]national data demonstrates that people from a low socio-economic background remain significantly

under-represented in Australian higher education' (Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, 2006, as cited in Scull & Cuthill, 2010, p. 59). Not all African Australians in attendance at Australian universities can be categorised as socio-economically disadvantaged. Similarly, contrary to popular misrepresentations, not all African Australian tertiary students attending Australian universities come from non-English speaking backgrounds. As such, English as a Second Language (ESL) disadvantage is another category (see Coates and Krause 2005, cited in Scull & Cuthill, 2010) that has little to no relevance for a proportion of African Australian university students.

The research method

Between March and December of 2011, the three authors of this paper and two Sudanese Australian research assistants conducted interviews with ten African Australian women living in Victoria. This research was approved by the human ethics committee at the University where the three authors were employed as academic staff at the time of the research. The research participants were aged between 18 and 38 years old. The majority had arrived in Australia in the last ten years and all but one were Australian citizens. Three of the ten were married and four of the ten had children. Half (5) came from Sudan, two from Zimbabwe, two from Nigeria and one from Gabon.

Each participant was asked a number of demographic questions in order to establish her age, length of time in Australia, education level, country of origin, marital status, number of children, and current living situation. The women then took part in semi-structured interviews that were recorded and transcribed for the purposes of analysis. The interviews included questions about family background and childhood, in relation to education and equity, as well as questions about whether participants had experienced discrimination at any of the various stages of their education. The participants were also encouraged to reflect on the meaning of tertiary education in their lives, for example, what they felt they had gained or lost as a consequence of their university education. The semi-structured nature of the interviews yielded detailed accounts of the women's perceptions of these matters. The interviews were conducted in English and lasted between thirty minutes and an

hour. The transcripts were coded and analysed by the authors with particular attention paid to recurring themes.

This paper draws on five case studies collected as part of the study as a whole. In this instance, the case study approach was selected as the best method of presenting the data because of its capacity to yield significant and detailed insight into the women's experiences of tertiary education and the diversity of African Australian women in universities in Australia. The particular case studies discussed in this paper have been chosen because they yielded rich data and because of their difference from one another - the individual story each tells about African Australian women's involvement in tertiary education. To protect the women's privacy, pseudonyms are used and some identifying details have been changed or omitted.

To begin, we consider the tertiary education experiences of two women from Sudan. Fiduma and Nadifa have different stories to tell when it comes to their tertiary education experiences in Australia. Their accounts support macro data which shows that educated women are constrained by social and economic structures and gender roles and relations within the family and beyond (Jayaweera, 1997a & 1997b; Sales, 1999). At the same time, analysis of this qualitative data reveals something of the meaning of education in their lives, demonstrating that these women's participation in higher education, while by no means straightforward in terms of their roles in their families and communities, is simultaneously a means by which they gain increased confidence and a degree of freedom from these roles.

Results

Fiduma: education, a life-changing experience

Fiduma is a 28 year old woman of South Sudanese origin. She came to Australia as a refugee, sponsored by her husband's auntie. After arriving in Australia in 2007 she became an Australian citizen in 2010. Fiduma is married and has five children under the age of ten. She lives with her husband and children, two of her brothers and three brother-in-laws. Fiduma was married at the age of sixteen. When asked whether she had experienced discrimination on the basis of gender in her family of

origin, Fiduma mentioned being taken out of school in Uganda to get married because her family needed the dowry to pay for the education of two of her brothers. She says she questioned her father's decision at the time but was not in a position to disobey him.

While Fiduma sees her removal from school as evidence of gender discrimination she says the discrimination she experienced in school was to do with ethnic and 'tribal' differences, rather than gender. Fiduma attended primary school in South Sudan. She describes this as being very hard: 'you wake up at 4.30, in the morning, we just walk, no shoes, no lights no nothing and we stay there like from morning 'til 5.30 and go back from school to home which would take us three hours'. At this time and in the area where she lived, 'a different tribe' would 'abuse' and 'fight' them because of ethnic differences. Later, she attended a Catholic boarding school in Uganda for two years, until she was withdrawn from school in order to be married.

Fiduma is studying second year nursing. She reports no problems at university with gender at an institutional level saying the standards for men and women are the same in this context. Apart from concerns about the standard of her work compared with Australian-born students and jokes about problems with 'parking' she is positive about her university experiences.

When asked what change would most benefit Sudanese or African Australian women at university, Fiduma did not mention institutional or educational matters but spoke only about the need for greater unity among the Sudanese students, noting that they tend to gossip about women who are studying and 'pretend that they are not Sudanese'. Fiduma has Australian-born and African-born friends at university, including two Nigerians and one Kenyan, but says it is difficult to identify with the other Sudanese students she has met. She talked about the problem of people in the Sudanese community putting women down when they were involved in tertiary education, saying 'they don't want me to go to school, they want me to stay with them always'.

Fiduma's responses point toward intra-Sudanese conflict and possible jealousy around women's participation in higher education. She observed wryly that if she progresses with her education and gains employment, other Africans will tell her husband 'now she's working she will be just at your neck so let her just stay home to cook for us and

you have to work so that you will give her some money'. Clearly, women's participation in education (and subsequently employment) is perceived as threatening the status quo of male authority. Women who become educated are thus perceived as creating 'gender trouble' because they transcend conventional gender roles in which men go out and earn money and women do housework and have children. Fiduma also talks happily about her husband being away in Sudan for almost a year. He had gone for a three month visit but was still there ten months later. According to Fiduma, the husband being away had allowed her to study peacefully without being distracted by him and his friends.

Certainly, and as Fiduma's interview demonstrates, women's participation in education directly impacts on their self-concept. As Fiduma says: 'I'm very different now. I got knowledge, decision making and I can solve my own problems'. Elsewhere Fiduma mentioned the increased confidence education has given her on other areas of her life, saying that now she doesn't need an interpreter, 'I can just speak by myself' and 'when my children are sick I can just rush and see the doctor by myself'. Fiduma compared this with the time before she began her degree, saying that such engagements in the wider community were 'very hard.'

Attending university also gives Fiduma a break from the boredom and anxiety she experiences at home. 'If I'm at home I'm bored but if I go to school I will not even think of our people back home … I will just focus on what I am doing.' She enjoys the opportunity to learn and discuss 'cultural issues' and health and finds the lecturers helpful. Fiduma's perspective can be contrasted with the research findings of Earnest and colleagues (2010, p.169) who note that:

> The journey, from arriving in Australia, to resettling and completing tertiary education is a long, arduous process that challenges the ambition, motivation and resilience of students. … Many of the participants in this study expressed a sense of anxiety and emotional distress due to carrying the burden of their refugee background, as well as anxieties and frustrations about the university culture and academic system; all of this was often compounded by real and overwhelming financial pressures and by issues that threatened the maintenance of their psychosocial well-

being.

Without undermining the value of the above findings (Earnest et al., 2010), Fiduma's story suggests that there are also positive aspects to African Australian refugee women's participation in tertiary education. This does not contradict the call for more 'specific tailored programs of induction into the university and its services for students from refugee backgrounds' (Earnest et al., 2010, p. 169), but it does suggest the limits of conceptualising refugee African Australian students at university through a singular focus on struggle and alienation.

Turning now to an analysis of Nadifa's story, we note that despite Nadifa's considerable struggles she, like Fiduma, represents her involvement in higher education as one of the most enabling aspects of her life.

Nadifa: 'it's impossible to be a typical Sudanese woman having this education'

Nadifa was born in Ethiopia and spent much of her childhood in Kakuma refugee camp in Kenya. The daughter of a high-ranking military leader, she received a consistent education, the majority of which was at Kakuma refugee camp in Kenya. Nadifa arrived in Australia in 2005 at the age of seventeen and completed half year eleven and year twelve in this country. She became an Australian citizen in 2010, the year in which she also completed her first degree, a Bachelor of Arts, at a university in Victoria. She is not married and has no children, though as stated above, Nadifa considers her younger siblings to be her children. Until early 2011, Nadifa lived with her mother and siblings and played a major role in domestic and child-rearing duties. After completing her first degree, Nadifa applied to study law through a university's equity program. She gained entry and at the time of interview was coming to the end of the first year of her law degree. Her decision to move out of the family home was related to her desire to be more proximate to the university and to give herself the best chance of focusing on her studies. At 23 she occupies a prominent position in her community, highly unusual for a woman, let alone someone of her age.

We noted above that Fiduma constructs university as an escape from

the other aspects of her life and concomitantly, displays an absence of concern about her place as an African Australian within the institutional structures. In contrast, Nadifa is critically reflective about the ways in which she, as a Sudanese-Australian, exists outside the university system. Nadifa's answer to the question 'do you feel you belong at university?' was an emphatic no. She elaborated: 'you sit in this room and occupy this space that you don't have ownership of – that your heritage has not influenced, that your community has not participated in. You think am I participating, am I validating this process of invalidating myself? Who am I?'

Nadifa refers often to a sense of not being 'valid', a feeling that seems to come partly from her outsider status as a 'tall, black' woman in the white, middle-class world of law students at a prestigious university. At the same time however her sense of liminality has at least as much to do with her moving away from the roles typically occupied by Sudanese women as it does with her not being like other, Australian-born and international students:

> In Sudanese culture traditionally I would be home with my mum, I'd be helping her out with the kids and looking after my little brothers and sisters and giving her more assistance as she gets older, probably think about getting married, things like that. It's changing now of course but essentially the same. But I can't maintain that whilst being at uni which is different for a 23 year old, young Australian. This is what you should be doing … going to uni, getting out of the house, beginning to work. Getting out of the house is completely a bad thing in Sudanese culture that puts strains on your relationships, people start gossiping in the community, that puts more strain on the relationship with your family.

Ultimately, Nadifa's existence at the interstices of two cultures is unacknowledged in the university context which she says, is 'not equipped to deal with people with so much mess that is created by two conflicting cultures. It's not like you can write I need my marks or I'm having trouble because I come from too many cultures … my experiences are yet not captured as a Sudanese Australian by that system'. She says these are 'the barriers that only you can see'.

Nadifa's journey to studying law seems to embody the promise that refugee women's participation in education can bring. Yet paradoxically, far from being a panacea, education is precisely what produces the 'isolation' that Nadifa says is her biggest challenge at university. This isolation is partly a result of the fact that there are no other Sudanese students in her current program and thus no one who understands her situation or to 'have lunch with'. She says 'it's very difficult … going to university and not knowing anybody, not understanding anybody, not feeling part of that environment or that culture.' At the same time, Nadifa faces the 'intellectual and social isolation' that emerges in parallel with her forays into education because every step she takes towards academic development is simultaneously a step away from her community of origin. The pain, loss and identity struggle associated with this journey is difficult to capture, let alone to represent in a cultural context in which higher education tends to be unambiguously associated with the opportunity for personal development, career prospects and individual gain.

In the following section, we discuss Geraldine's uncomplicated experience at university. Geraldine's experience strongly contrasts with that of Nadifa and serves as a reminder of the diversity inherent in the category African Australian.

Geraldine: 'there's more freedom!'

Geraldine was born in Zimbabwe and arrived in Australia in 2004 at eleven years old. She came with her parents, both skilled migrants. She began Australian school in grade 6, and is now completing her first year of a Bachelor of Psychology at a University in Melbourne. Geraldine reported no gender problems in relation to her schooling, but spoke of 'other discriminations' she experienced at secondary school. Her experiences echo Fiduma's in that she represents other women as the enforcers of the normative gendered expectations, and discriminatory treatment (whether within cultural groups or cross-cultural) when not adhered to.

Geraldine's parents are both university-educated, and she expressed a recognition that this may have provided 'an advantage' in regard to her own education. She also links the more gender-neutral adaptations in

her family's behaviours to not having maids in this country, so having to 'take turns' at caretaking tasks. Geraldine contrasts her parents' educational views and gender values with those who are 'more into their culture and they're more old-fashioned' in addition to ingrained cultural gender attitudes towards females/ daughters (Ngum Chi Watts et al., 2013). This commonly-held view exemplifies the great tensions experienced by many African women who seek higher education in Australia: whether true or not, there is a perception that education is in conflict with maintaining cultural values.

For Geraldine, education is a means to 'more freedom…more independence, [and] being more secure', and in her university course men and women seem relatively equal. When asked what she might change at her university, she replied only that she would live closer, but that 'there's not much else I would change because it's a pretty good experience.' Yet reflecting on her educational journey from Harare to Melbourne, Geraldine noted differences - including more competition back home - which she felt created greater motivation; she also noted that transition into school here, and between grades, could be made more seamless.

At university, there are 'international students – people from all over the world. People of different ages as well….you can't really stand out too much because everyone's different.' Asked whether she felt any identification with other African Australian women from any nation (not just Zimbabwe), Geraldine replied, 'I do, because we have that same background and we know where we're coming from'. Geraldine values her family's support of her studies, and recognises that for lots of the other African young women she knows, 'it becomes too much pressure for them and they want to sort of break away from [parents' expectations] so move away from home as soon as possible.'

Kamida: 'if they can do it, I can do it!'

Kamida's story bears thematic similarities to Geraldine's regarding the overriding value of education for Zimbabwean women, but also highlights some aspects of the high personal price she has paid for this education. From the perspective of an older woman who has completed her education, Kamida's narrative provides a counterpoint to

Geraldine's forward-looking and seemingly problem-free account.

Kamida arrived in Australia in 2003 at the age of twenty-three, and she currently lives by herself. She is not married and has no children; her family of origin remain in Zimbabwe. She attended primary and secondary school in Zimbabwe, and studied an undergraduate degree in Commerce in both Zimbabwe and Australia, finally completing a Masters degree in Australia. Kamida was supported by friends to come to Australia, and then through university, but has continued working throughout to support herself and pay her education bills.

While Kamida reports gender inequities back home, she cites the egalitarian values of her family (in particular her father), who believed his daughters should be educated 'so that we could be strong women, and look after ourselves.' Kamida's views on gender equity in Australia contrast with Geraldine's, perhaps informed by the male-dominated industry in which she works. Having lived in Zimbabwe until her emigration as an adult, Kamida comments upon the progressive gender attitudes in Zimbabwe compared, in her view, to some other African countries. Yet she still highlights the ways in which Zimbabwean women are positioned as the family maintainers so that 'you feel guilty if you are successful in career focus. You feel like you're not giving your kids enough time.'

Hard-working and self-supporting Kamida found that she 'couldn't relate so much' to 'other African kids from wealthy backgrounds' at university, because 'some of them are at school because their parents want them to go but they're not really interested.' She did not have time to develop a social life, working multiple menial labour jobs to pay her bills. Kamida reports having enjoyed her tertiary experiences, but would like to see an increasing number of African women role models in Australian universities, in order to offer 'a good example of people who juggle their career and their family.' Kamida states that better communication between those African women who have completed study, and those who have not had the opportunity, would make a significant difference in academic achievements and motivation within African communities. She stresses that when '…you have no hero… you think there's nothing else to do.' Clearly, universities can play a role in establishing and supporting African women student mentor and support networks.

Like Nadifa, Kamida wants to help other people from her home country avoid the trial and error she has had to experience on her own. She would like to 'inspire other people as well, particularly people from Zimbabwe, to show them that… we can do this, even in a country that's not our own.' Kamida especially identifies the need for 'living examples. Because having an example and a role model is good because you look at someone and go 'if they could do it then I can do it.''' The power of role models for young women is well-documented, internationally and in Australia. The painful isolation of being a family or community first in such endeavours clearly takes a toll, particularly for those like Kamida who have not been raised with such views, role models or resources:

> I've learned through my experiences that your confidence is what will take you to the next level and that is what will differentiate you… I was brought up where if you are a woman you hold back a little, you can't be the loudest person in the room. But to make it in my industry, or in any career, you need to step up and speak out for yourself as well. So I guess for a lot of African women I think this is the greatest challenge: having that confidence… to stand in front of a crowd, and, conduct a meeting or a seminar. It's too scary because women in Africa are not supposed to be like that.

In addition to the emotional cost of trail-blazing there can be high financial costs for international students like Kamida. When asked if she has any regrets about her educational and career accomplishments, Kamida reflected:

> Sometimes I look back at the amount of money I've spent… by the time I finished my Masters, I spent like $80,000 to study. I had to take out a loan and even up until now I'm still trying to pay off some of the loan. Particularly if you're an international student, your fees are paid upfront. Your life is a struggle.

While many students incur overwhelming debts in the course of their university educations, Kamida points out the additional obligations many African women must juggle:

> …if you have an African background you still have people to support. And if you are single, you're not married, you don't have the extra income. Sometimes I've looked back and I said, 'Is this really worth it? Ah maybe if I'd stayed in Africa I would have had no debt, maybe I would have been married.' But then I look at all the things that I've learned and got to know and the opportunities – I feel maybe it's worth it but it came at a price.

Clearly these challenges and complexities require further recognition in educational and migration discourses. Despite the high price of her education, Kamida values it immensely:

> …it's really changed my life. I've become a woman who's confident, a woman who believes in herself. I am this successful, independent young woman who is fearless! Who is strong as well and happy in myself. …I would do it all over again. I would not change a thing.

Kamida is considering returning to university to complete a PhD.

Naomi: "it" (university) gives you options

Naomi was born in Nigeria and arrived in 2003, at the age of 16. She attended international schools in Nigeria, Lagos, Israel and China before completing her secondary education in Australia. She has completed a medical radiation degree and is now working in her field of expertise. She lives with extended family in Melbourne.

Despite her class privilege and educational attainment, Naomi reports that in her family and Nigerian culture she as a woman is still primarily expected to get married and have children. She shares such goals but notes the ways in which the woman is 'supposed to be the one to sacrifice.' Yet she is clear that 'my family and my country will support and value education for women.' It's not 'all stigma' back home yet women are the ones expected to balance career, family maintenance and childcare. 'If not, then it's not considered a good thing unless you've sort of abandoned your way of life.' For her, as for several of the other participants, cultural expectations exist in tension with individual education and career goals; education is often seen as threatening a

woman's primary duties, while a man's education is framed as enhancing the family's opportunities. A woman's career is expendable, or – as Naomi says – 'it's more like a backup kind of thing'.

Regarding her university experience, Naomi does not think things need to change for African students in Australia, and did not struggle with race, gender, or integration issues. For such a well-travelled young woman, attending university in Australia was not substantially different from her earlier schooling, yet she prefers the directive nature of secondary school over the freedom and self-directed nature of university. She does not feel that anything was lost or compromised through her educational journey, culturally or personally.

Conclusion

This paper has argued that it is necessary to recognise the diversity of the emerging African Australian community, especially in relation to participation in higher education in Australia. Even within specific national and cultural communities such as 'the Sudanese' there is enormous diversity, including gender- and class-based differences based on background and forced or other conditions of migration, which need to be acknowledged. As scholars have noted (Kumsa, 2006; Marlowe, 2010; & Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2010), these communities and individuals require a more nuanced and complex representation and self-expression within Australian and international contexts, particularly (but not only) those emerging from refugee pasts.

In particular, we have focused on higher education as one context in which African Australian women are thriving, despite increasingly restrictive labels like refugee (Zetter, 2007) and inaccurate homogenising of distinct African ethnicities in the Australian context and internationally. Within the tertiary sector, enrolments of African Australian women from many different backgrounds, classes and circumstances are rising. Yet along with this progress come gendered complexities of balancing personal, familial and cultural responsibilities and needs. The article suggests possible ways to support African-Australian women in higher education, including formalised schemes to support their enrolment and retention, such as mentoring programs, African and women student networks, study groups, and targeted

intercultural initiatives. Ngum Chi (Watts) (2012) suggests an Austrafrocentric model of education whereby the African student or person is at the center of the education model rather than at the fringes in contrast to the current Eurocentric model of education.

This small qualitative study opens the way for further research into the diverse needs, successes and challenges of recently emigrated African women in western higher education institutions. At the same time, it makes clear the limits of conceptualising African Australian women's experiences of education through a singular focus on struggle, disengagement and non-belonging. Rather, African Australian women's enrolment in higher education needs to be seen as enabling new forms of participation and belonging in Australian society while simultaneously impacting in multiple and sometimes personally challenging ways on the women's more traditional cultural roles and identities.

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Las pioneras. Las mujeres que cambiaron la sociedad y la ciencia desde la antigüedad hasta nuestros días

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Review

Levi-Montalcini, R. &Tripodi, Giuseppina (2011). *Las pioneras. Las mujeres que cambiaron la sociedad y la ciencia desde la Antigüedad hasta nuestros días*. Barcelona: Crítica.

La científica italiana y Premio Nobel de Medicina Rita Levi-Montalcini, junto con su estrecha colaboradoraGiuseppinaTripodi, dedica este libro a ensalzar el crucial papel desempeñado por las mujeres en el avance científico a lo largo de la historia, a través de una andadura por las aportaciones realizadas por grandes mujeres en muy distintos ámbitos del conocimiento científicoa lo largo de las distintas épocas.

Arranca este recorrido conHipatia de Alejandría, una de las más famosas científicas de laantigüedad. Maestra en filosofía, astronomía y matemáticas,defensora de la libertad de pensamiento y gran promotora de la cultura, fue asesinada por un grupo fanático en el año 415 d.C.

Las autoras recogen la figura de mujeres brillantes cuya contribución en su época no fue reconocida. Tal fue el caso de Trotula de Ruggiero (1050), cuyas contribuciones llegaron a ser atribuidas a un personaje imaginario masculino.La astrónoma SophieBrahe (1556-1643), a pesar de haber desempeñado junto con su hermano Tychoun papel crucial en la revolución copernicana, nunca obtuvo el reconocimiento que sí obtuvo éste. La astrónoma MariaWinkelmann (1670-1720) fundó junto con su marido el Observatorio de Berlín. Tras la muerte de éste, se le negó la posibilidad de continuar trabajando en sus proyectos. Estas pioneras se han visto también obligadas a superar importantes obstáculos para poder dedicarse al desarrollo de su carrera científico-académica. La matemática SophieGermain (17776-1831), para poder ingresar en la Escuela Politécnica de París, tuvo que adoptar una

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identidad masculina. Por su parte, la matemática SofiaKovalevskaia (1850-1891), tras haberle sido otorgada la cátedra en matemáticas en la Universidad de Estocolmo, tuvo que enfrentarse a una campaña de oposición y descrédito propiciada por distintos intelectuales, que no toleraban que una mujer impartiese dicha disciplina. La misma Rita Levi se vio obligada a hacer frente a la oposición de su propio padre para poder matricularse en la Facultad de Medicina de Turín, así como al antisemitismo de la Italia fascista.

Otro de los elementos presente en la vida y trayectoria de estas pioneras es el compromiso con la justicia, con el progreso social, y con la situación de las mujeres. Rita Levi, junto con su hermana Paola, célebre artista italiana, creó una fundación dirigida a la educación de mujeres africanas. La astrónoma Maria Mitchell (1818-1889), ostentó la presidencia de la AssociationfortheAdvancement of Women, entidad dedicada a la lucha de los derechos de la mujeres. Por su parte, la física RosalynSuusman (1921), dedicó parte de su discurso al recibir el Premio Nobel de Medicina en 1977 a lanzar un mensaje de protesta contra la marginación de las mujeres en la ciencia. Irène Joliot Curie (1897-1956), al igual que su madre, Marie Curie, combinó su excelente carrera científica en el ámbito de la física nuclear, con la defensa de los movimientos pacifista y feminista. Además, ella y su marido se negaron a hacer públicos parte de los resultados de sus investigaciones, previendo la importancia que estos podían tener para la construcción de la bomba atómica. La química DorothyCrowfoot (1910-1994) dedicó parte de su vida a la lucha contra el desarme y contra el uso de armas químicas y nucleares.

Las Pioneras proporciona un conocimiento imprescindible para poder comprender en toda su magnitud la decisiva contribución de las mujeres al desarrollo científico, cultural y humanista del mundo. Las autoras realizan una inefable labor de visibilización y reconocimiento de todas estas mujeres trabajadoras, valientes y comprometidas, de su lucha incansable a lo largo de la historia y de su “capacidad innata para adaptarse a las condiciones ambientales” (p. 8). La propia Rita Levi, por su labor infatigable y decidida hasta el momento de su fallecimiento el pasado mes de diciembre de 2012 a los 103 años de edad, constituye el mejor ejemplo de mujer que cambio la sociedad y la ciencia.