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NOTE FROM THE FOUNDERS

It is with great enthusiasm that we present the first volume of the *Women, Culture, and Society Undergraduate Review*—a journal affiliated with the Women and Gender Studies Program. The WCS Undergraduate Review is an intersectional and interdisciplinary undergraduate journal that showcases leading scholarship about women’s issues written by University of Toronto undergraduate students. In publishing this journal, our intent was to establish a new academic platform for dialogue amongst the University of Toronto's undergraduate community. We received a large number of exceptional submissions from ten distinct disciplines, emphasizing the interdisciplinary nature of women and gender studies within academia.

The journal has been a collaborative effort on the parts of many, and we would like to thank all of those who were instrumental in its making. We are grateful to Professor Neda Maghbouleh who was the first person to show support for this journal and who graciously helped us write a proposal for this journal. We would like to thank Professors Anna Korteweg, Jan Noel, and Jayne Baker for also being very supportive of this journal in its initial stages. We are also grateful for the support of Professor Chris Petrakos who generously shared his time, experience, and resources to help us produce the best possible journal. We thank our faculty reviewers who took time out of their busy schedules to review papers and provide in-depth feedback. We thank Heather Thornton for helping us promote the journal. We also thank Shabina Moheebulla for offering her expertise in the presence of technical issues and for always being available for a quick chat. Our faculty advisor and mentor, Professor Joan Simalchik, provided us with the support and guidance essential to the journal's establishment, publication, and success. Without her help and encouragement, this journal would not have been possible.

We would like to thank all of the students who submitted their work to us. We appreciate the time they invested to submit a paper, especially considering the various other commitments they may have had during the past few months. We would like to thank the published authors in this journal. Their diligent efforts allowed us to bring together a journal that creates dialogue about some of the most vital topics surrounding women today. We expect that this journal will shed a light on these topics and that it will act as an opportunity for its readers to think about these issues in a new way. Finally, we would like to thank our readers for not only supporting this journal, but for also supporting student scholarship.

We hope you enjoy the first volume of the *Women, Culture, and Society Undergraduate Review*.



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Women Under Communism in Romania: One Step Forward Two Steps Back

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The Romanian Constitution made a great claim that the role of women had fundamentally changed and that the communist system had provided true equality. Communist states across the Soviet Bloc promised liberation for women. The claims of equality stem from Marxist doctrine; if one is to create a truly equal society, then one half of the population can no longer be oppressed. The role of women in these societies, however, did not reflect the great aims that the doctrines strive for, nor did they reflect the promises made by the state. Despite propagandist claims that the lives of women had greatly improved under the Romanian Communist Party (PCR), the reality of women's conditions had not improved. This essay will examine the lives of women in education, politics, and the labour force, the social transformation of Romania into a pronatalist state, and how the overall condition of women did not improve significantly. As in many circumstances, women sometimes faced more inequality, rather than less.

INTRODUCTION

The 1948 Constitution of Romania stated: "Women have equal rights with men in all areas of the state, economic, social, cultural, political and private."¹ The Romanian Constitution included a great claim that the role of women had fundamentally changed, and that the communist system had provided true equality for women. Communist states across the Soviet Bloc promised liberation for women. The claims of equality stem from Marxist doctrine; if one is to create a truly equal society, then one half of the population can no longer be oppressed. Friedrich Engel's theory of women's full-time employment claimed the oppressive status of women was a direct result of the bourgeois capitalist system, and that once this system was removed women would become full participants in the work force; there would no

¹ Joshua Kjerulf Dubrow, "Dynamics of political inequality of voice: Romanian and Polish women's parliamentary representation since 1945," *Studia Universitatis Babeş-Bolyai. Serie: Sociologia* 57, Iss 1. (June 2012): 10.

longer be inequality between the sexes.² The role of women in these societies, however, did not reflect the great aims that the doctrines strive for or the promises made by the state. Despite, propagandist claims that the lives of women had greatly improved under the Romanian Communist Party (PCR) and the introduction of Soviet-style communism, the reality of women's conditions had not substantially improved. This essay will examine the lives of women in education, politics, the labour force, and the social transformation of Romania into a pronatalist state. A pronatalist state is one in which the role of women is centered on having children, and this is backed by State policy and propaganda. Overall in Romania under the leadership of the communist party, Romanian women faced many obstacles and the overall quality of life did not significantly improve regardless of the claims made by the Constitution and State propaganda.

WOMEN IN EDUCATION

One of the great achievements of the communist states was opening education up to larger demographics; this included educating women. There was indeed a clear increase of Romanian women entering higher education. In 1970, 49% of women were receiving a secondary school education, and 30% received a higher-level education.³ The increase was in part due to the fact that the PCR encouraged women to enter higher education. Moreover, the PCR launched a national campaign to eliminate female illiteracy as well. Before the fall of the communists in 1989, the official statistics show that roughly 95% of women were indeed literate.⁴ Despite the appearance that women were indeed being educated in the same way as men, a deeper analysis of what types of education women were accessing reveal that inequality was still in play. The fields that women were encouraged to enter were influenced by traditional gendered roles; women were being funneled into fields that were considered more 'suited' for women.⁵ Barbara Wolfe Jancar, author of *Women Under Communism*, argues that women in Romania were being geared towards fields such as health care, education, and accounting, which were considered more feminine.⁶ The implication of this claim was that women are not seen as equal under communism, as stereotypical assessments of women's capabilities were still factors

² Jill Massino, "Constructing the Socialist Worker: Gender, Identity and Work under State Socialism in Brasov, Romania," *Aspasia* 3, no. 1 (Spring 2009): 150.

³ Barbara Wolfe Jancar, *Women Under Communism* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978), 16.

⁴ Daniela Andr n, and Thomas Andr n, "Gender and Occupational Wage Gaps in Romania: From Planned Equality to Market Inequality?", *IZA Journal of European Labor Studies* 4, no. 1 (May 2015): 3-4.

⁵ Wolfe, *Women Under Communism*, 13-14.

⁶ Wolfe, 13-14.

used to determine what education women were encouraged to pursue. Furthermore, the limitations of education affected the roles within society that women achieved. For example, leadership positions in the party elite typically did not go to doctors or teachers but tended to go to people who specialized in other fields such as engineering.⁷ It is important to note that education was greatly valued in Romania. With the placement of limitations on the type of education women undertook, they would not be equal in society. Despite the claims by the party that educated women would lead to equality and that they did not prevent, but rather encouraged, women to be educated, women were still treated differently based upon the gender.

WOMEN IN POLITICS IN ROMANIA

Communist doctrine claimed to further liberate women in the political sphere as well. Following the communist takeover in Romania, women were granted suffrage and the ability to stand for election.⁸ This should have been a momentous occasion that changed the political role of women. However, the reality of this change is not as significant as it first appears. The right to vote would carry more significance if any citizen's ability to vote held power. The elections in Romania were rigged elections and the PCR's victory was guaranteed,⁹ and so the ability for women to vote meant nothing in terms of tangible political power.

Moreover, when discussing political representation for women, a distinction between descriptive and substantive representation must first be made. Substantive representation is the "advocacy and policy that reflects the diverse interests of the citizenry; such representation of interests comes from having one's voice heard in the legislature and translated into action."¹⁰ Substantive representation is the form of representation that one must look at. It is where women would be able to make a real impact on government. The parliament of Romania did not have significant power, as the main decision-making body under communism was the Central Committee for the PCR. If women were to be active participants, they would have to be represented well in the Central Committee; however, that was not the case. Women were far more represented in the parliament.¹¹ Between 1948 and 1976, the level of women who

⁷ Wolfe, 16-18.

⁸ Ida Blom, "1945: Change or Continuity in European Gender Relations?" in *Women and Political Change*, ed. Sue Bridger (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1998), 38.

⁹ Daniel Chirot, "Social Change in Communist Romania," *Social Forces* 57, no. 2 (December, 1978): 463.

¹⁰ Dubrow, "Dynamics of political inequality of voice," 9.

¹¹ Dubrow, 9.

served in the Central Committee ranged from as low as 4.6% and as high as 9.1%.¹² This discouraging statistic makes it clear that women had no real capacity to make change. The data follows Putnam's Law of Increasing Disproportion: "as the importance of the office increases, the proportion of women declines."¹³ The inability of women to be active participants in politics in any truly tangible way ensured that women could not advocate for themselves. The consequence of this was that more harmful policies against women could be passed without true consultation with women. This reality highlights that women were not equal in communist Romania.

Additionally, the Communist Party was fully aware of the lack of political power that women had. The National Council for Women, a propaganda institution for the role of women in society, famously had a National Conference in which the leader of the PCR, Nicolai Ceausescu, gave a speech to address the lack of women in politics.¹⁴ Ceausescu promoted his wife Elena to the Communist Central Committee. She would be concerned with the role of women and was meant to embody the ideal politically-active communist woman.¹⁵ Regardless of the minor changes and slight acknowledgement of the problem, no real institutional change occurred. These outward displays were merely masking the larger societal problem. Furthermore, in a speech in 1973, Ceausescu addressed the fact there were very few women in the ruling bodies of the PCR. However, Ceausescu places the blame on women by critiquing their lack of political activism and participation. He then goes on to stress traditional roles, primarily motherhood, as more important.¹⁶ One can infer the goal of these speeches and the ceremonial promotion of Elena Ceausescu was not to increase political participation substantially; rather it was to remind women that their role was more important in terms of their reproductive capabilities as opposed to their political involvement. Moreover, if women were not involved, the blame did not fall on the party or society but women themselves.

WOMEN IN THE WORKPLACE

Under the communists in Romania, all citizens who were of working age had the ability, had the right, and had the duty to work, and they were guaranteed a job; there were no restrictions made to gender.¹⁷ On the surface, this appears to be

¹² Dubrow, 9.

¹³ Dubrow, 9.

¹⁴ Dubrow, 9.

¹⁵ Dubrow, 9.

¹⁶ Dubrow, 9.

¹⁷ Andr n and Andr n, "Gender and Occupational Wage Gaps in Romania: From Planned Equality to Market Inequality?" 3.

positive for women, as they were guaranteed work, and this does result in an increase of women entering the workforce, particularly in industries that were previously male-dominated. However, because of the labour shortages in all the communist countries, there was a desperate need for workers.¹⁸ In the education section of this essay, gender considerations were shown to be a factor in what fields women were encouraged to enter; the same can be seen in the work force. However, in terms of labour shortage, the traditional gender norms were challenged in industries with no significant political power.¹⁹ The gendered norm was challenged not because they were considered incorrect, but rather because the state was in desperate need. Furthermore, in times where shortages were not occurring, women were encouraged back into traditional gendered jobs.²⁰ Jill Massino, in her article *Constructing the Socialist Worker*, notes that scholars argue that one major shortcoming of communism is the "disconnect between ideology and everyday life"; the state "was interested in women's economic equality with men only in so far as their programme of mass industrialisation could be realised and support for the state could be garnered."²¹ The reality of women and improving their conditions was not the major consideration of, but rather the result of, the state's interests.²² The fundamental problem with this approach is, in spite of nominal benefits to women such as employment, they were not attempting to transform the patriarchal attitudes of society, and combat the traditional placement of women in the domestic sphere and all the responsibilities related to it.

A closer look at the practical struggle of this new need for employment by women is also important. Women under socialism faced great demands for their time due to the dual nature of domestic and public work. Women were still responsible for all domestic tasks, much the same as in the west. The state did offer some services such as childcare to mitigate this burden, but in many cases the childcare was not adequate for the needs of women.²³ Moreover, there was still a significantly unequal burden placed on women rather than men because all domestic tasks were the responsibility of women. As noted, the west also placed a heavy burden upon women in the domestic sphere. However, in the latter half of the twentieth century, household appliances were modernized, which helped women; these modern amenities were not available in Romania. Additionally, basic goods all had significant

¹⁸ Zuzanna Brzozowska, "Female Education and Fertility Under State Socialism in Central and Eastern Europe," *Population* 70, no. 4 (2015): 691.

¹⁹ Brzozowska, "Female Education and Fertility Under State Socialism in Central and Eastern Europe," 691.

²⁰ Brzozowska, 692.

²¹ Massino, "Constructing the Socialist Worker," 132.

²² Massino, 137.

²³ Brzozowska, "Female Education and Fertility Under State Socialism in Central and Eastern Europe," 692.

wait times. Bread and water could require waiting up to five hours in a line; that struggle added additional working hours for women.²⁴ Among communist sociologists, the term ‘the second shift’ became more commonplace to account for the significance of female domestic roles on top of their obligations to the state.²⁵ Women’s roles were asked to change, but men were not asked to adapt. The early propaganda during the Gheorghiu-Dej era of communism stressed the importance of the female worker, who was also a good mother, but this new position of women in society makes no mention of a good communist male worker who is also a father.²⁶ Jancar, in her book *Women under Communism*, echoes this sentiment with the argument that communist regimes “failed to consider the necessity of changes in male roles, if female roles are to change. It is impossible, for example, to involve women more in the public sphere if men fail to become more involved in the home.”²⁷ The second shift was not limited to Romanian women under communism; however, women were struggling with the unequal pressures of both domestic and work life in a society that claimed that work for women improved their lives. In reality however, instead of gaining more power in society, women were burdened with more work.

THE CREATION OF A PRONATALIST STATE

In 1957, Romania introduced one of the most liberal abortion laws in Europe; it allowed women who had unwanted pregnancies to get abortions upon request.²⁸ Having access to fundamental reproductive rights was a huge step forward for women. Reproductive control is a foundational right for women because women have a moral right to decide what can and cannot be done to their bodies. Pregnancies are emotionally and physically draining, and childbirth itself is extremely dangerous.²⁹ However, under Nicolai Ceausescu, this law was changed, and Romania transformed into a pronatalist state. Not only was abortion outlawed between 1966 to 1989 but all manner of family planning, such as access to birth control, were outlawed.³⁰ Other communist states such as Bulgaria and Hungary did have repressive reproductive

²⁴ Brzozowska, 691.

²⁵ Wolfe, *Women Under Communism*, 41.

²⁶ Massino, "Constructing the Socialist Worker," 139-140.

²⁷ Wolfe, *Women Under Communism*, 85.

²⁸ Brzozowska, "Female Education and Fertility Under State Socialism in Central and Eastern Europe.", 693.

²⁹ BBC, "Arguments in favour of abortion," accessed November 17, 2017, http://www.bbc.co.uk/ethics/abortion/mother/for_1.shtml.

³⁰ Cristian Pop-Eleches, "The Supply of Birth Control Methods, Education, and Fertility: Evidence from Romania," *The Journal of Human Resources* 45, no. 4 (2010): 92.

laws, but Romania was the most severe because birth control was also outlawed.³¹ This completely stripped women of all legal reproductive right control.

Under the communist system, all private domestic matters became state concern, as they all impacted the viability of the communist system. The birth rate influenced the state's plan for economic development.³² The Romanian state was facing a population crisis. The birth rate decreased from 22.9% in 1957 to 14.3% in 1966.³³ Nicolai Ceausescu blamed the previously liberal abortion laws for this decline, disregarding the struggles of society that would motivate women to have abortions, such as the workload they faced or the lack of economic growth of the state overall. Moreover, Ceausescu believed the Stalinist notion that population growth would fuel economic growth.³⁴ This essay has already explored how the needs of industrializing the state came before the concern of women. Ceausescu stated, "The foetus is the property of the entire society."³⁵ Women no longer had bodily autonomy in Romania; instead, their bodies were property of the society.

The importance of women having children became a central pillar in Romanian propaganda.³⁶ Motherhood became the duty of a communist woman, and the value of a woman was determined by her ability to have children.³⁷ This policy essentially dehumanizes a woman. Rather than being valued based on her own merit, she was reduced to a reproductive vessel. The communist Romanian state cannot be seen as liberator of women when its pronatalist policies completely disregard women and instead focus on their reproductive capabilities.

The pronatalist policy, beyond philosophical dehumanization of women, had very tangible destructive results for people. The policy was enforced not only through a propagandist approach where women were constantly reminded that their value was contingent upon reproducing, but harsh controls were introduced as well. Ceausescu stated, "Anyone who avoids having children is a deserter who abandons the laws of national continuity."³⁸ This statement fundamentally reflected how he felt about the issue. By 1977, there was an additional monthly tax for all childless persons

³¹ Andreea Andrei and Alina Branda, "Abortion Policy and Social Suffering: The Objectification of Romanian Women's Bodies Under Communism (1966-1989)," *Women's History Review* 24 no. 6, (December 2015): 882.

³² Andrei and Branda, "Abortion Policy and Social Suffering," 883.

³³ Andrei and Branda, 884.

³⁴ Andrei and Branda, 885.

³⁵ Wendell Steavenson, "Ceausescu's children," *The Guardian*, December 10, 2014.

³⁶ Lorena Anton, "On Memory Work in Post-communist Europe: A Case Study on Romania's Ways of Remembering Its Pronatalist Past," *Anthropological Journal of European Cultures* 18, no. 2 (2009): 110.

³⁷ Wolfe, *Women Under Communism*, 87.

³⁸ Steavenson, "Ceausescu's children."

regardless of sex or marital status. The secret police, the *Securitate*, strictly enforced the abortion and birth control ban. By the 1980s, condoms and the contraceptive pill started to become available in other states in and around Eastern Europe, but in Romania they remained harshly banned.³⁹ Doctors who performed abortions were imprisoned.⁴⁰ Doctors were no longer responsible for the mental and physical wellbeing of the women under their care but rather instruments in state oppression; if they did not report all medical history they would face heavy repercussions. The entire medical profession was a danger to the safety of women.⁴¹ Women's privacy and bodily autonomy was further violated when employers could check in their workplace for signs of pregnancy every three months. If they were found to be pregnant and did not end up giving birth, women could face prosecution.⁴² These controls monitored and continuously violated female autonomy.

Another consequence of such harsh reproductive control is that policies such as these do not prevent abortion, but rather prevent *safe* abortion. It is estimated that roughly 10 000 women died during this ban from complications on illegal abortions.⁴³ Surveys conducted after 1990 found that a considerable number of women had undergone as many as 20 to 30 abortions in their lives.⁴⁴ Women were terminating pregnancies for a multitude of reasons, such as the inability to provide care for children or an attempt not to be an instrument of the state, as well as the health risks. Regardless, the result of this destructive policy was quite evident; the lives of women were severely harmed.⁴⁵ Furthermore, the policy led to increased infertility as a result of the various side effects of non-modern reproductive control. Based on an unofficial estimate, nearly 20% of the 5.2 million Romanian women of reproductive age were infertile;⁴⁶ that is twice the number expected for a population that size. The policy did not garner the result intended but rather completely violated the rights of women.

CONCLUSION

The Romanian state promised great liberation for women, claiming that they would be equal “in all areas of the state, economic, social, cultural, political and

³⁹ Steavenson, "Ceausescu's children."

⁴⁰ Wolfe, *Women Under Communism*, 144.

⁴¹ Andrei and Branda, "Abortion Policy and Social Suffering," 891.

⁴² Steavenson, "Ceausescu's children."

⁴³ Jane Perlez, "Romania's Communist Legacy: 'Abortion Culture,'" *New York Times*, Nov. 21, 1996.

⁴⁴ Andrei and Branda, "Abortion Policy and Social Suffering," 893.

⁴⁵ Andrei and Branda, 893.

⁴⁶ Andrei and Branda, 894.

private”.⁴⁷ However, as we have seen, that is not the case. Under communism, women remained unequal. Education was meant to liberate women, but it continued to stress traditional gender norms. Political participation was misrepresented; the more important the position, the less women were represented. In key party roles, women were not strongly represented and thus, they were not able to influence policy that directly pertained to their well-being. The promise of equality in the workforce was also false. Women were indeed granted jobs in the workforce that were traditionally meant for men not because equality was the goal, but rather the economic needs of the state came before the concerns of women. Furthermore, the burdens of ‘the second shift’ in the domestic sphere was never addressed. Women’s roles in society may have changed but because men’s roles did not concurrently change, women still faced a greater struggle in both the domestic and public sphere. Finally, the most destructive change under the communists in Romania was the transformation into a pronatalist state. Women were reduced to reproductive machines, which resulted in severe consequences including the loss of bodily autonomy, more than 10,000 deaths, and increased infertility. Women were promised progressive initiatives under Romanian communists, as were many other persecuted or oppressed groups, only to become painfully aware that for every positive step forward, there was a damaging step back.

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⁴⁷ Dubrow, "Dynamics of political inequality of voice," 10.

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Liberatory Sexual Transgression or Heterosexist Patriarchal Violence? An Overview of Feminist Ethical Debates on Sadomasochism

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Sadomasochism is defined as a sexual power exchange that operates across a binary of dominance and submission.⁴⁸ Beginning in the 1980s, feminist discourse on women's sexuality has seen the emergence of a strong clash between polarizing philosophies of radical and liberal feminists. Many argue that sadomasochism remains a violent and particularly gender-coded practice in its simulation of heterosexist power dynamics. Others argue that sadomasochism functions as a means of sexual liberation in a patriarchal society, where women's sexual expression is heavily monitored and restricted. Indeed, the issue is one that feminists have continuously grappled with in an ongoing effort to navigate women's sexual liberation in a patriarchal society.⁴⁹ In this piece, I will trace the historical trajectories of the two mainstream feminist positions arising in conjunction with the sex war debates of the 1980s. I will examine how that has subsequently characterized the feminist ethical questions at stake in the sadomasochism debate, and analyze the key arguments theorized by liberal and radical feminists on opposing sides. Finally, I will highlight selected perspectives towards the debate brought forward by contemporary feminist theorists that illuminate more multifaceted theoretical models and conceptualizations of feminist debate on the topic moving forward.

INTRODUCTION

The sex war debates of the 1980s saw an initial clash between the polarizing philosophies of radical and liberal feminists on many contemporary issues of gender

⁴⁸ Maneesha Deckha, "Pain as Culture: A Postcolonial Feminist Approach to S/M and Women's Agency," *Sexualities* 14, no. 2 (2011): 130, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1363460711399032>.

⁴⁹ Deckha, "Pain as Culture: A Postcolonial Feminist Approach to S/M and Women's Agency," 130.

and sexuality. Therein began the emergence of a feminist social landscape for ongoing discourse around a range of women's diverse sexual practices, including their participation in the sexual culture of sadomasochism.⁵⁰ In her paper entitled "Pain as culture: A Postcolonial Feminist Approach to S/M and Women's Agency", Deckha (2011) defines the practice of sadomasochism as a consensual and organized sexual power exchange that operates across a binary of dominance and submission.⁵¹ In considering dominance as a key tenet of sadomasochist practice, sadomasochism can be considered an explicitly gender-coded representation of heterosexual power dynamics, most evident when women assume a submissive sexual role. Indeed, the issue is one that feminists must grapple with in an ongoing effort to navigate women's sexual liberation in a patriarchal society. However, the polarizing perspectives divided between radical and liberal feminists have repeatedly dominated much of mainstream feminist discourse on the topic.⁵² Therefore, the sadomasochism debate is one in which feminist ethics are inherently at stake, and a close reading of the differing positions represented in the feminist scholarship is necessary in order to investigate the scope of the discourse on this issue and analyze the key considerations elaborated by feminist theorists. In an attempt to characterize the issue and highlight the dominant arguments, I will trace the historical trajectories of the two mainstream feminist positions arising in conjunction with the feminist sex wars of the 1980s and how that has subsequently characterized the feminist questions in the sadomasochism debate. I will analyze the key considerations theorized by liberal and radical feminists on opposing sides, and highlight more complex arguments towards the debate brought forward by more contemporary feminist theorists. In doing so, I will ultimately highlight how the two polarizing positions at the crux of the debate can be reconciled through contemporary modes of feminist theorization moving forward.

BACKGROUND

The historical dimensions surrounding the emergence of sadomasochism as a contested topic among feminists originates during a period within the Western feminist movement, coined the 'sex wars'. The term 'sex wars' refers to a philosophical debate within the second wave of feminism that peaked during the late 1970s to the

⁵⁰ Alex Dymock, "But Femsub Is Broken Too! On the Normalisation of BDSM and the Problem of Pleasure," *Psychology and Sexuality* 3, no. 1 (2012): 55, <https://doi.org/10.1080/19419899.2011.627696>.

⁵¹ Deckha, "Pain as Culture: A Postcolonial Feminist Approach to S/M and Women's Agency," 130.

⁵² Lynn S. Chancer, "From Pornography to Sadomasochism: Reconciling Feminist Differences," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 571, no. 1 (2000): 78, <https://doi.org/10.1177/000271620057100106>.

early 1980s.⁵³ Increased attention towards the topic of sadomasochism during the sex war debates stems from the history of the feminist anti-pornography movement in the United States. The anti-pornography movement saw its foundations in the mid-1970s, where feminists who had been previously mobilized by promises of a sexual revolution for women during the 1960s had come to the conclusion that sexism remained “largely intact.”⁵⁴ Indeed, the 1960s marked a historical point during second-wave feminism where women’s activists heavily emphasized individual autonomy and freedom concerning sexual expression, prompting many advances towards access to abortion, birth control, and reproductive rights. ⁵⁵ However, by the 1970s, women began to recognize that a newfound commercialized sex industry in the United States, emerging out of the same values of unregulated sexual expression championed at the time, had instead encouraged a culture of increased tolerance towards sexual aggression, misogynistic violence, and sexist imagery.⁵⁶ As visuals of male-on-female sexual violence started to become commonplace as a direct result of the liberalization of obscenity laws in the United States during the 1960s, the growing concern around sexual violence coalesced through a new feminist anti-pornography movement. The movement was also heavily influenced by a growing political critique of heterosexual power dynamics in the private domain during this time, as many women began to bring forward their accounts of rape, battering, and sexual coercion to the attention of the public for the first time. In response, anti-pornography feminists mobilized not solely towards pornographic censorship, but towards championing legal reform, antiviolence education, and support services for survivors of sexual assault. As such, anti-pornography feminists saw male sexual violence as a broader social problem informed by patriarchal ideology, which needed to be confronted directly. ⁵⁷

As a result, the ideological foundation of the anti-pornography movement had given rise to much of the “anti-sex” rhetoric of radical feminists that has persisted in opposition to liberal feminists of the second wave who remained focused on sexual autonomy and individual agency.⁵⁸ Many radical feminist organizations were founded during this time, including Women Against Violence in Pornography and

⁵³ Patrick D. Hopkins, “Rethinking Sadomasochism: Feminism, Interpretation, and Simulation,” *Hypatia* 9, no. 1 (1994): 117, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1527-2001.1994.tb00112.x>.

⁵⁴ Carolyn Bronstein, *Battling Pornography: The American Feminist Anti-Pornography Movement, 1976-1986*, 2011, 30. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511975929>.

⁵⁵ Lynn Comella, “Revisiting the Feminist Sex Wars,” *Feminist Studies* 41, no. 2 (2015): 443, <https://doi.org/10.15767/feministstudies.41.2.437>.

⁵⁶ Comella, “Revisiting the Feminist Sex Wars,” 444.

⁵⁷ Comella, 443.

⁵⁸ Comella, 444.

Media (WAVPM).⁵⁹ The prominence of the anti-pornography movement and rising radical feminist groups in the aftermath of the sexual revolution meant that feminists who remained motivated by ideals of sexual liberation were no longer afforded the same space in the feminist movement to champion open sexual expression. These feminists formed their own organizations, which saw to a growing fracture of the women's movement across ideological perspectives in the aftermath of the sexual revolution. One of the key feminist groups of this era included Samois: a pro-sadomasochism lesbian-feminist organization that defined much of the early rhetoric around sex-positivity taken up the 1982 Barnard Conference on Sexuality in New York City, which promised a forum for feminists to engage in broader dialog and discourse on issues of sexuality within the women's movement. Unfortunately, controversy erupted when it was discovered that anti-pornography feminists were purposely excluded from being involved on the conference-organizing committee. Tensions ultimately coalesced on the day of the conference when anti-pornography feminists gathered in protest, wearing T-shirts openly proclaiming: "Against S/M."⁶⁰ Ultimately, what remained in the aftermath of this event was no longer simply a mounting tension between second-wave feminists with contrasting ideological positions, but a clear dividing line that mobilized feminists into one of two camps: "pro-sex" liberal feminism, or "anti-sex" radical feminism.⁶¹

Today, both Samois and many of the prominent anti-pornography feminist organizations of the 1980s have since disbanded. In "Revisiting the Feminist Sex Wars", Lynn Comella argues that the polarizing philosophies of radical and liberal feminists that defined the sex war debates continues to propagate in the current era of feminist politics, although the prominent organizations that once represented them no longer exist.⁶² Indeed, she argues that versions of sex-positive and anti-pornography feminism were continuously taken up in feminist scholarship over the years, which has subsequently influenced much of the modern generation of feminists inspired to take a defined stance on debates around similar issues, such as sex work.⁶³ Therefore, it is in understanding the legacy of the feminist sex wars and its influence on defining the two dominant positions at the crux of the sadomasochism debate that one can understand the "deep and enduring rifts within the broader feminist movement that are still felt today."⁶⁴

⁵⁹ Comella, 447.

⁶⁰ Comella, "Revisiting the Feminist Sex Wars," 453.

⁶¹ Bronstein, *Battling Pornography: The American Feminist Anti-Pornography Movement, 1976-1986*, 307.

⁶² Comella, "Revisiting the Feminist Sex Wars," 454.

⁶³ Comella, 455.

⁶⁴ Comella, 439.

SADOMASOCHISM AS LIBERATION

In her piece, entitled: “The Feminist Sexuality Debates and the Transformation of the Political”, Bat-Ami Bar On (1992) describes how the key ethical issues of the sex war debates emerged when feminists began questioning the interconnected nature of public and private life. She describes how the attempt to mobilize feminists to participate in the anti-pornography movement spurred a larger feminist critique of women’s sexual practices and choices, implicating sadomasochism as an “extension of the feminist critique of sexual violence”.⁶⁵ Therefore, a key focus of discussion in the debate was how traditional heterosexist power dynamics represented in the public sphere find themselves reinforced within the private realm of a woman’s sexual life.⁶⁶ Chancer (2000) describes how the sex war debates characterized what came to be considered one of the key ethical issues at stake for women’s sexual liberation: sexual oppression or sexual repression.⁶⁷ An emphasis on women’s sexual agency and choice, informed by much of the same value-base that encouraged some key advances in reproductive freedoms during the second-wave of the Western feminist movement, has come to inform the position occupied by liberal feminists.⁶⁸

In emphasizing sexual liberation, liberal feminists emphasize the divide between the ethics of the public and private realm, where the law should only regulate public activity and private sexual expression should remain under the control of the autonomous individual.⁶⁹ Furthermore, pro-sadomasochism liberal feminists argue that sexual pleasure plays a key role in facilitating women’s sexual agency in a patriarchal society, emphasizing the need for sex-positive perspectives “to fight sexism and sexual repression while simultaneously claiming sex for women.”⁷⁰ As such, many liberal feminist theorists have argued that sadomasochism can not only be understood as a healthy form of individual sexual expression, but as an inherently transgressive practice, as it allows women to resist dominant patriarchal restrictions around normative sexual behaviour.⁷¹

⁶⁵ Bat-Ami Bar On, “The Feminist Sexuality Debates and the Transformation of the Political,” *Hypatia* 7, no. 4 (1992): 52, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1527-2001.1992.tb00717.x>.

⁶⁶ Chancer, “From Pornography to Sadomasochism: Reconciling Feminist Differences,” 77.

⁶⁷ Chancer, 78.

⁶⁸ Dymock, “But Femsub Is Broken Too! On the Normalisation of BDSM and the Problem of Pleasure,” 58.

⁶⁹ Marie France, “Sadomasochism and Feminism,” *Feminist Review*, no. 16 (1984): 35, <https://doi.org/10.2307/1394956>.

⁷⁰ Bronstein, *Battling Pornography: The American Feminist Anti-Pornography Movement, 1976-1986*, 297.

⁷¹ Deckha, “Pain as Culture: A Postcolonial Feminist Approach to S/M and Women’s Agency,” 129.

SADOMASOCHISM AS REPLICATION

On the other hand, radical feminists characterize the debate by emphasizing the interdependent nature of heterosexist power dynamics as informed by wider patriarchal society, and their problematic replication within the practice of sadomasochism. In her piece entitled “Rethinking Sadomasochism: Feminism, Interpretation, and Simulation”, Hopkins (1994) offers an in-depth analysis of the radical feminist perspective by focusing on lesbian sadomasochism, informed by the contention initially caused by Samois as a pro-sadomasochism lesbian feminist organization. Hopkins outlines the arguments presented by radical feminists that describe lesbian sadomasochism as a practice that seeks to replicate gender inequalities, eroticize female submission, and support patriarchal values. Indeed, Hopkins describes how radical feminists argue that sadomasochism cannot be separated from the wider structural influence of patriarchal society, characterizing lesbian sadomasochism as an internalization of patriarchal values and an inherent replication of heterosexist power dynamics. As such, radical feminists believe that patriarchal culture remains a central tenet to the practice of sadomasochism and that as a result, lesbian sadomasochism supports patriarchal structures, even unintentionally.⁷²

Furthermore, Hopkins describes how radical feminists have called into question the nature of women’s agency in sadomasochism.⁷³ Radical feminists argue that consent to sadomasochism is inherently invalid, as it is both a structural impossibility given women’s subordination in a patriarchal society and it remains ethically problematic.⁷⁴ Indeed, radical feminists contend that desire remains highly informed by social ideologies, through which patriarchal institutions are a key influence.⁷⁵ Furthermore, radical feminists problematize the divide between the public and private sphere, arguing that consent, while often assumed as a private exchange of permission towards sexual behaviour, is never isolated from social constructions of male dominance enforced by society.⁷⁶ Therefore, radical feminists contend that consent to dominance cannot be considered ethically valid nor a product of true agency in a patriarchal society.⁷⁷

⁷² Hopkins, “Rethinking Sadomasochism: Feminism, Interpretation, and Simulation,” 118.

⁷³ Hopkins, 119.

⁷⁴ Hopkins, 118.

⁷⁵ Lorena Leigh Saxe, “Sadomasochism and Exclusion,” *Hypatia* 7, no. 4 (1992): 60, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1527-2001.1992.tb00718.x>.

⁷⁶ Saxe, “Sadomasochism and Exclusion,” 61.

⁷⁷ Hopkins, “Rethinking Sadomasochism: Feminism, Interpretation, and Simulation,” 119.

SADOMASOCHISM AS SIMULATION

Although the two dominant positions of radical and liberal feminists have been repeatedly taken up in ongoing discourse since the emergence of the sex wars, one of the earliest contemporary academics to have conceptualized an in-depth alternative theoretical model of sadomasochism just before the advent of the 21st century is Patrick Hopkins.⁷⁸ In his 1994 piece, entitled “Rethinking Sadomasochism: Feminism, Interpretation, and Simulation”, Hopkins acknowledges the complexity of the debate and attempts to merge key considerations from both positions. In doing so, he does not attempt to justify a liberal feminist perspective in emphasizing individual sexual liberation. Instead, he brings attention to the fact that sadomasochism can be characterized as a simulative practice, in which a woman as a sexual agent continuously negotiates her participation in sadomasochism through the staging of a performance.⁷⁹

Indeed, Hopkins argues that sadomasochism functions as a space where “violence is simulated but is not replicated.”⁸⁰ He argues that while sadomasochism may seem to perpetuate patriarchal ideologies, as a consensual and staged performance, sadomasochism occurs within a fundamentally different context than genuine sexual violence. Ultimately, he argues that the core aspects of patriarchy, such as oppression, violation, and true harm, remain absent within a simulated context. Hopkins defends the view that sadomasochism can be compatible with feminism, but in reframing his defense for sadomasochism in this regard, he does not take up arguments characteristic of a traditional liberal feminist perspective. Indeed, he merges both radical and liberal feminist arguments in his defense by recognizing that sadomasochism occurs as a performative practice that is still informed by patriarchal culture and cannot be isolated from the effects of structural and heterosexist power dynamics. In doing so, Hopkins ultimately consolidates his defense within a more multifaceted argument towards the debate, uncharacteristic of such polarizing oppositions taken up by liberal and radical feminists.

SADOMASOCHISM AS PATHOLOGY

Contemporary feminist theorists of the 21st century have also taken to different theoretical approaches in calling upon a more complex approach to characterize the

⁷⁸ Theodore Bennett, “Persecution or Play? Law and the Ethical Significance of Sadomasochism,” *Social and Legal Studies* 24, no. 1 (2015): 98, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0964663914549760>.

⁷⁹ Hopkins, “Rethinking Sadomasochism: Feminism, Interpretation, and Simulation,” 123.

⁸⁰ Hopkins, 124.

debate, uncharacteristic of the absolute binaries taken up by radical and liberal feminists. In 2012, Dymock authored her piece entitled “But Femsub is Broken Too! On the Normalisation of BDSM and the Problems of Pleasure”. Dymock examines how sadomasochism is taken up through the legal system and the psychiatric system. The position that Dymock occupies in relation to the sadomasochism debate is particularly interesting because she embraces a self-proclaimed radical feminist perspective, while deconstructing restrictions around normative sexuality defined by patriarchal institutions. Indeed, this may first seem counterintuitive, given that liberal feminists most often contest restrictions on women’s sexuality and emphasize sexual liberation by deconstructing social and cultural definitions of normative sexual behaviour. In doing so, sadomasochism comes to represent a non-normative sexual practice that transgresses social restrictions on women’s sexuality.

In her piece, Dymock describes how the legal system has functioned as a social institution informed by patriarchal principles that seek to restrict and prohibit women’s sexual agency. Indeed, these restrictions stem from regulations that rigidly define what is legally recognized as sex, consent, and pleasure. Furthermore, she describes how the psychiatric system tends to pathologize some women’s sexual preferences by characterizing them as unhealthy or unnatural, particularly when consenting to participation in harm through sadomasochism.⁸¹ Ultimately, despite her self-proclaimed radical feminist position and much unlike most radical feminists, Dymock does not condemn sadomasochism as a blatantly un-feminist practice. Rather, Dymock complicates feminist dichotomies towards the sadomasochist debate by deconstructing social norms imposed on women’s sexuality and problematizing the institutional hyper-regulation of sadomasochism, much like liberal feminists. In proposing a theoretical model of sadomasochism as pathology, Dymock merges liberal arguments that identify sadomasochism as a marginalized sexual subculture, and radical feminist arguments that critically analyze social institutions and their control on women’s bodies. Ultimately, she presents a more multifaceted understanding of sadomasochism and women’s sexual oppression, and how they operate within wider structural contexts.

SADOMASOCHISM AS INCIDENTAL

In consolidating these arguments within popular discourse taken up in more recent years, the importance for calling upon alternative conceptualizations of sadomasochism in the debate is encapsulated by Downing’s piece, entitled

⁸¹ Dymock, “But Femsub Is Broken Too! On the Normalisation of BDSM and the Problem of Pleasure,” 64.

“Safewording! Kinkphobia and Gender Normativity in *Fifty Shades of Grey*”. In her piece, Downing (2013) argues for a theoretical model towards sadomasochism that is neither “sex-positive” or “sex-negative”, but rather “sex-critical”⁸². In setting up her argument, Downing provides a close reading of one of the most popular contemporary erotic novels to have emerged in the past decade, entitled *Fifty Shades of Grey*. The novel tells the story of a young woman introduced to the culture of sadomasochism through her budding relationship with a powerful and wealthy businessman.⁸³ In calling upon a separate position towards the sadomasochism debate, Downing examines both radical and liberal feminist responses to the book; she argues that the dichotomies between the liberal sex-positive and radical sex-negative perspectives are ultimately not very productive in identifying some of the problematic narratives reproduced within the text.⁸⁴

Indeed, Downing takes up the sadomasochism debate in current feminist discourse uncharacteristic of previous feminists, as she does not attempt to argue the ethical nature of sadomasochism as a sexual practice itself, but instead focuses her analysis on women’s oppression within popular culture. She argues that the real issue the book presents is in the problematic nature of the book’s limited female representation and the reproduction of problematic gender hierarchies and power dynamics within mainstream heterosexual romances.⁸⁵ In doing so, Downing ultimately argues that the divisive nature of much of mainstream and historical feminist debate on sadomasochism is not productive in tackling key issues of women’s representation in popular culture. Through her commentary on *Fifty Shades of Grey*, she argues that feminists must move away from characterizing sadomasochism as ethically right or wrong, and should instead adopt a perspective which she coins as “sex-critical”: where the reinforcement of normative ideologies across all types of sexual practice are critically analyzed.⁸⁶ In this way, sadomasochism becomes an incidental piece of what is a larger critical exploration of representations of sexuality in relation to gendered oppression.

SUMMARY

In conclusion, it is evident that sadomasochism presents a complex ethical dilemma that feminist theorizers have been continuously grappling with in an

⁸² Lisa Downing, “Safewording! Kinkphobia and Gender Normativity in *Fifty Shades of Grey*,” *Psychology and Sexuality* 4, no. 1 (2013): 95, <https://doi.org/10.1080/19419899.2012.740067>.

⁸³ Downing, “Safewording! Kinkphobia and Gender Normativity in *Fifty Shades of Grey*,” 92.

⁸⁴ Downing, 92.

⁸⁵ Downing, 96.

⁸⁶ Downing, 95.

attempt to navigate women's sexuality in a patriarchal society. The emergence of the sex wars debate in the 1980s marks a considerable historical point in defining mainstream feminist discourse on the issue, as the two dominant positions occupied by liberal and radical feminists focusing on sexual repression and sexual oppression often still remain at the crux of collective feminist consciousness today. In this paper, I analyze the feminist questions at stake by tracing the historical trajectories of the sadomasochism debate arising in conjunction with the sex war debates and how this history defined the feminist ethical issues at interest. I subsequently analyze the dominant positions occupied on either side of the debate by describing radical feminist and liberal feminist perspectives. I examine the liberal feminist position in relation to the sexual repression defense by highlighting arguments that emphasize sadomasochism's potential for individual sexual liberation. I analyze the radical feminist perspective in relation to the sexual oppression defense, by highlighting arguments that describe how sadomasochism represents a replication of heterosexist power dynamics as informed by patriarchal ideologies. Finally, I highlight a select few perspectives of contemporary feminist theorists who characterize alternative theoretical positions towards the debate, complicate and merge liberal and feminist perspectives, and emphasize the problematic nature of focusing squarely on the dominant polarizing dichotomies characterizing the debate during the sex wars. Ultimately, in consolidating radical feminist and liberal feminist arguments, the key feminist ethical issues at stake and their historical context is realized, inspiring contemporary perspectives towards alternate modes of feminist theorization on the topic in the current scholarship moving forward.

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Shrinking

Miranda Jurilj

While this poem discusses my relationship with my mother, it also represents something much larger. It represents all the women I love and my experiences as I grew up watching them hate their bodies. It represents my own journey to find acceptance. And it represents my progress in learning to love my body and other bodies of size in a society that shames women for taking up space.

I went on my first diet when I was eight.
I didn't know what a diet was until then but to me it looked like shrinking dinners,
an end to snacks and watching my brother eat ice cream as my stomach rumbled.
I didn't want to diet, what kid would? But I accepted my role.
I knew why I was doing this, everything and everyone around me told me why.
I was big, chubby, fat, and therefore I was wrong and broken and needed to be fixed.
A diet would fix me.

I remember even the television told me why I needed to diet.
I listened closely as I learned to count calories and stopped counting butterflies.
I learnt what beauty was and that to be loved you must be beautiful.
I wanted to be beautiful.

I was in second grade the first time I was called fat by one of my peers.
As I stood confidently in line to leave the classroom another girl tried to butt in
front of me.
When I said I got there first I remember the venom in her voice as she told me
"you're fat."
The boy next to her laughed as tears welled up in my eyes.
No. Not that. Anything but that, I'm trying to fix it.

When I got home my mom saw the tears.
I asked her why? Why did God do this to me? Why did he make me fat?
She said he must have made me big enough to fit my big heart.

It made me feel better for a while but it didn't seem quite right.
This was coming from the women who would pinch at her rolls in disgust and weigh
herself three times a day, sighing each time.
This was from the woman constantly tugging at shirts and checking herself out in

the mirror, not for vanity but to make sure she was still sucking her stomach in. This was from the woman who put me on a diet, for my health of course, as she talked about being teased the same way when she was a girl.

My mother is a complicated woman.
She loves me more than anything and I know that.
She wants my happiness but truly doesn't see how anyone could be happy and fat.

She, like I, was told that our value in society relies on our waistline.
We are women. We are not meant to take up space.
We are told to shrink, starve and resist all temptations.
We are pressured into slimming down, calming down and quieting down.
I will shrink no longer.

If my thighs are too thick for you, know that they are strong, strong enough to carry the weight of this burden society has placed on women.

If my stomach disgusts you know that it is soft, soft enough to be a pillow for my lovers, as they as I share a closeness I'm told only beautiful people get to have.

If my squishy arms made you sick know they are big, big like my mother's, and her mother's and her mother's and they carry the secrets of generations.

If my chest repulses you know that it conceals my heart, a heart that has been broken by hatred but beats still for every woman made to shrink.

I have grown.
I have grown to love myself a little more each day.
And I will continue to grow and measure myself in ways that society never could.
I will not shrink for you.

Miranda Jurilj is going into her final year of undergraduate studies at the University of Toronto Mississauga. She is in the process of completing a double major in Exceptionality in Human Learning and Development (Psychology) and Sociology, with a minor in Women and Gender Studies. In addition to her studies, Miranda has been actively involved in her school community over the years by working and volunteering in various positions to promote equity and wellness on campus. She also spends much of her time writing, and performs her poetry on and off campus. Miranda is a feminist who loves her cats, cooking for loved ones, and fantasy and sci-fi movies.

Systematic Barriers to Health as Faced by Canadian Indigenous Women

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Colonialism and post-colonialism have led to various inequities and barriers in the Canadian healthcare system for the Indigenous population of Canada. This paper introduces some of the reasons for, and the consequences of, these barriers and inequities faced by Indigenous women. A literature review of current scholarship relating to the systemic healthcare barriers and inequities faced by Indigenous women was performed. The findings show that there is minimal scholarship present, and current scholarship focuses almost solely on reproductive healthcare, which further reinforces the notion of women's worth being their ability to reproduce. Likewise, it identifies a successful culturally-safe method of healthcare implementation used with Indigenous Australian women that could be applied to the Canadian healthcare system.

INTRODUCTION

Many do not know of the health disparities and inequities that exist within the Canadian healthcare system, which are a direct result of colonialism and post-colonialism. Colonization, industrialization, and the introduction of numerous treaties and acts have allowed the Canadian healthcare system to impose poor health and health services upon Indigenous populations. Colonization has left, and continues to leave, a large impact on the Indigenous population of Canada; colonial and systemic activities have attempted to strip the Indigenous population of their rights, culture, identity, and land (Lavallee and Poole 2010). This is a critical issue because Canada has consistently failed to provide adequate healthcare services to Indigenous women in the past, and with a growing Indigenous population these disparities need to be assessed.

In the same way, healthcare for Indigenous individuals is something that has been deeply affected by the Indian and Gradual Civilization Acts. Healthcare services and access are still controlled and provided by the federal government on

reserves because of treaty agreements (Lavoie and Forget 2011). However, these agreements have been hard to maintain, are inadequate, and are insufficient (Lavoie and Forget 2011). In the past, Indigenous populations have requested to have an autonomous and local healthcare system, but the federal government will not accept that healthcare and healthcare services are treaty rights (Adelson 2005). Another policy initiated in 1974, the Indian Health Policy, was created out of the need and desire of the federal government to integrate Indigenous healthcare under Canada's national healthcare system (Adelson 2005). This has subsequently created many problems because the national system is not the best answer for the healthcare needs of the Indigenous population, due to both the marginalization of Indigenous people and the lack of culturally safe healthcare services (Hole et al. 2015). Indigenous women in particular have much higher rates of mortality, injury, suicide, gestational diabetes, and obesity compared to women of other ethnicities (Kurtz et al. 2008).

While colonialism and post-colonialism are very important and have a large role in the presence healthcare barriers, disparities, and inequities to the mainstream Canadian healthcare system, this paper deviates from the explanation and background presentation of colonization and events, as there is extensive pre-existing research on colonialism. Instead, this paper will attempt to present findings based on the barriers that prevent Indigenous women from accessing and receiving proper care that meets their needs with the presentation of certain themes.

Various methods and criteria were used to locate the proper literature used in this review. Firstly, specific databases such as JSTOR and PubMed were used to find journal articles because these databases are interdisciplinary in nature and would allow for a more in-depth search for information from different points of view and backgrounds. Specific journals related to Indigenous studies were also looked into, including the *Journal of Aboriginal Health*, because these directly related to the topic of the literature review and they provide vital and relevant information. Specific key terms such as "health disparities", "inequities", and "Canada" were used to narrow down journal articles. "Aboriginal" was used as a keyword instead of "Indigenous" while searching for journal articles because, though Indigenous often remains a preferred term, "Aboriginal" is the more common term found in scholarship. Lastly, the journals used were restricted to publication dates of 2000 onwards in order to provide the most recent and accurate information in the literature review.

RACISM AND MARGINALIZATION

The current urban health care provided to Indigenous people is problematic in many ways. The Indigenous population of Canada is no longer limited to a reserve setting; Kurtz et al. found that approximately 70 percent of Indigenous individuals now live off a reserve setting, instead inhabiting more urban areas (Kurtz et al. 2008). However, the effort to improve healthcare for Indigenous populations is mainly geared to those that live on a reserve. Through a community-based participatory study of 13 urban-dwelling Indigenous women and their stories of encounters with the Canadian healthcare system, Kurtz et al. (2008) found that these women faced racism and marginalization when accessing Canadian healthcare services (Kurtz et al. 2008). Some women stated that the colour of their skin determined the type of healthcare treatment they received, and that the darker their skin colour, the more negative the assumptions made by healthcare providers were (Kurtz et al. 2008). The women also stated that the healthcare providers would assume that they were addicted to drugs and alcohol (Kurtz et al. 2008). One woman even came forward saying that healthcare providers assumed that her physical disabilities were a result of her drinking, rather than believing that they were the result of a stroke (Kurtz et al. 2008).

Hole et al. (2015) provides further evidence that Indigenous women do, in fact, face racism and marginalization while accessing Canadian healthcare services. A 38-year old participant stated that healthcare workers were hesitant to give her narcotics or pain killers because they were afraid she was going to become addicted (Hole et al. 2015). Another participant recalled that the first question a triage nurse asked her at the hospital was, “how much have you had to drink today?” (Hole et al. 2015). Both studies were conducted through participant interviews. The study conducted by Kurtz et al. (2008) was based on the interviews of the 13 Indigenous women currently residing in the Okanagan Valley and their encounters with the healthcare system. Alternatively, Hole et al.’s study was based on participatory action research and critical race theory which were used to conduct interviews with 28 indigenous community members (23 women and 5 men) from around the Okanagan Valley. While both studies provide valuable information, the sample size used by Kurtz et al. (2008) is quite small, so the data cannot be deemed applicable to the Canadian healthcare system and its services as a whole. These studies and similar studies can be strengthened by using larger sample sizes, and more research needs to be done.

CULTURALLY-UNSAFE HEALTHCARE

Another barrier that Indigenous women face while accessing the Canadian healthcare system is a lack of Indigenous cultural competency. According to Indigenous belief, health and healthcare is very multi-faceted and consists of physical, emotional, spiritual, and mental well-being, rather than just the body's physical well-being, which is most often prioritized in the Canadian healthcare system. In a study conducted by Fiske and Browne (2006), many of the women interviewed stated that they needed culturally-safe pregnancy resources (Fiske and Browne 2006). Gestational diabetes has a very high prevalence rate amongst pregnant Indigenous women due to various factors, such as unhealthy diets resulting from poverty and a lack of education (Fiske and Browne 2006). Some women shared their experiences of how doctors or nurses would chastise them for gaining a large amount of weight gain during pregnancy. However, the doctors or nurses would often ignore trying to understand what caused the weight gain, and they would not educate or discuss healthy eating and weight loss with the women. The culture and identities of the women were never taken into account. The women felt that more culturally-safe resources were necessary in the Canadian healthcare system - ones that encompass cultural awareness, sensitivity, competence, and education. The women also agreed that positive and culturally-safe messages related to pregnancy, healthy eating, and physical activity that were geared towards pregnant Indigenous women would be more beneficial to them.

The need for culturally-competent healthcare services which encompass a community's traditions, beliefs, and way of life is further supported by a study conducted by Homer et al. In this study, Australian Indigenous women were interviewed for two years in focus group settings about a Malabar maternity service for Indigenous Australian women; quantitative data was also collected through records. Homer et al. (2012) found that the Malabar maternity service works with Indigenous women and their communities to improve access to service, increase health literacy, and promote health and wellness. The services provided were created to be culturally-safe, and were established and implemented with the help of Indigenous health education officers that worked alongside healthcare providers such as midwives and nurses (Homer et al. 2012). In the focus groups, Homer et al. found that over 40 percent of the babies born through the Malabar maternity service were Indigenous and Torres Strait Islander. Moreover, Homer et al. also found that the Malabar maternity service successfully reduced the number of women who smoked during pregnancy, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous, with their usage of

culturally-safe health literacy initiatives. Likewise, the culturally-safe nature of the service made the Indigenous women feel more at ease and more likely to use the service.

While a Canadian study by Darroch and Giles (2016) conducted focus groups and interviews with 25 urban dwelling pregnant women, Homer et al. both conducted focus groups and used quantitative data. The sample size of 25 urban Indigenous women used by Darroch and Giles (2016) was quite small and a bigger sample size should have been used in order to attain more accurate and largely representative data. However, the post-colonial framework and discourse that was used by Darroch and Giles (2016) is important to the study. It strengthens the results because both colonialism and post-colonialism have had large effects on the Indigenous population; this is especially true with factors that are considered to be social determinants of health, such as housing and poverty. Homer et al. used clinical data which was entered through four checkpoints at the Malabar service: first antenatal visit, onset of labour, a few hours after the baby is born, and discharge from the service. The Malabar maternity service study is greatly strengthened through the use of mixed methods, both quantitative and qualitative, as this ensures that the limitations of a sole data-collecting method do not limit the results of the study.

A stark difference in success rates can therefore be seen between having culturally-safe and aware healthcare services, and having culturally-unsafe and discriminating healthcare services. A culturally-safe healthcare service allows for populations to have better health outcomes, and provides an opportunity for pressing health issues, such as a rising rate for gestational diabetes among pregnant Indigenous women, to be tackled and reduced. A more culturally-aware healthcare system would greatly benefit both Indigenous women and the Indigenous population of Canada as a whole. Healthcare campaigns, policies, and messages that are informative and relative to Indigenous lifestyle and culture would lead to better health education, as well as create a more accessible and culturally-safe healthcare system. Health is composed of more than just physical well-being and Western medicines; there are many different methods of healthcare around the world, including homeopathy and Ayurveda (a whole-body Indian healing system), that are often unrecognized by the West. A multi-faceted healthcare system with cultural awareness would allow for better care, as well decrease the amount of people that need to be seen. Furthermore, if Canada's healthcare system aims to be a universal healthcare system for every Canadian, then Indigenous individuals should not be

overlooked and every attempt should be made to create healthcare services that meet their needs.

POST-COLONIAL EFFECTS TO SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH

The Indigenous population of Canada still bears inequalities and inequities in post-colonial Canada through various means including marginalization, the Indian Act, and treaties; this in turn impacts their social determinants of health. Richmond and Ross (2008) used a critical population health approach following interviews of 26 Community Health Representatives (CHRs) from First Nation and Inuit communities across Canada to identify six health determinants as being vital to Indigenous health. These are: balance, life control, education, material resources, social resources, and cultural connections. In general, Indigenous women report to being less healthy than men, as was found in the study conducted by Wilson and Rosenberg (2002) where 74 percent of the Indigenous women surveyed stated they were healthy, compared to 84 percent of Indigenous men who reported they were healthy. Furthermore, it was found by Frohlich et al. (2006) that rates of diabetes are three to five times higher among Indigenous women than the national average and were highest among the women living on the reserve. Frohlich et al.'s (2006) study provides further evidence that chronic condition rates such as diabetes are higher among people in lower income households. This is evident by the fact that diabetes rates among Indigenous women are three to five times higher than other women and they often belong to low income households.

Education and proper housing are important social determinants of health. They are both included in the six social determinants of health as identified in Richmond and Ross' study and are vital to the health of Indigenous women. One cannot live a healthy life and prevent diseases, or keep diseases at bay, if one does not know anything about the disease. While a growing number of Indigenous individuals are pursuing, and earning post-secondary degrees, there is still a lack of adequate educational opportunities, especially a lack of proper health education.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

As seen in the studies presented, Indigenous women face many barriers while trying to access government-funded mainstream Canadian healthcare. Three main themes that were highlighted in the study of systemic barriers that prevent proper access to healthcare are: racism and marginalization, feeling culturally-unsafe, and

post-colonial effects to social determinants of health. These barriers are systemic in nature and stem from the remnants of colonialism; they have transitioned and continue to be prevalent in a post-colonial society. They are still very much present in Canada today and prevent Indigenous women from receiving proper healthcare; this in turn helps to contribute to the ill health of Indigenous women.

It was surprising to see that much of the literature based on the social determinants of health and Indigenous populations' access to healthcare was written in a gender-neutral context. What little literature exists on the health and healthcare access of Indigenous women specifically centers around pregnancy or gestational diabetes. More research needs to be done around Indigenous women as they face different healthcare problems, because their health issues include more than reproductive concerns. Additionally, it was unexpected that Indigenous populations are referred to as Aboriginal rather than Indigenous, in spite of the fact that the term "Indigenous" has been deemed as the most politically correct and preferred term by these communities. Furthermore, I was surprised to discover that other countries such as Australia are creating health services for Indigenous women that are catered towards them, and they are created with help from Indigenous health officers. Something similar can be implemented in Canada. Finally, more steps need to be taken to create a more holistic healthcare system that caters towards its pre-colonial population and takes their health needs into account.

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The Igbo Women's War of 1929

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This paper analyzes the significant event that occurred in southeastern Nigeria, in the last months of 1929, that became a steppingstone and landmark in the fight for women's rights in Nigeria. Tens of thousands of women traveled to lead a war against the oppressive force of the British colonizers who shut them out of a newly enforced government. Prior to the colonizers, the Igbo women had more political, social and economic power than European women and the British found this to be foreign. Therefore, the colonizers did not re-establish the Igbo women's previous rights and power politically, as well as economically and socially. The women protested their loss of power, and on some occasions reacted violently. Through this exploration regarding the Igbo Women's War of 1929, emerges a prime example of women's resistance.

In the last months of 1929, tens of thousands of Igbo women from Calabar, Owerri, and other provinces in southeastern Nigeria traveled to the town of Olonko to protest and lead a "war" against the British colonizers. This was in response to an alien system of government who they accused of excluding them from their role in the political and economic systems of the newly established British government. The protests were symbolic, ritualistic, and peaceful, but on a few occasions, the women violently clashed with the colonial officers which ultimately led to casualties of the women. This event is known as the Igbo Women's War, per Igbo history, and the Aba Women's Riots by British colonial records. In pre-colonial Nigeria, women had had a significant role in the social, economic, and political organizations of Igboland. They were allowed to participate in the government and held roles in the market. When the British enforced a new political system, they paid little attention to the traditional power distribution which altered the positions and roles of the Nigerian women. The Women's War is one of the most significant events in African-European relations in the colonial period because of its anti-colonial and feminist discourse. This was the first incident of its kind in Colonial Nigeria, as it was such a challenge to British rule and authority. In this essay, I argue that the Igbo Women's War represents an anti-colonial political resistance and the rejection of a new form of government.

Colonialism removed Igbo women from their involvement and influence in their traditional economic and especially political roles, and in turn did not include them in the new political systems and deemed them invisible.

To understand the significant change that colonizers inflicted on women, it is important to look to the past and analyze the pre- and early colonial traditional roles that Igbo women had. Political power was diffused and shared between the men and women.⁸⁷ The main political institution for the adults was the village assembly, with a large group of elders making most of the decisions. Igbo women actively participated in these assemblies but only spoke on matters directly concerning them. The men had more say in the rulings and decisions made because they had higher titles. The women came second to men in political power and influence, but they still had strong solidarity groups made up of their own lineages and kinships where they could exercise direct power through all-female organizations.⁸⁸ The women's base of political power lay in their own gatherings and meetings that existed as a parallel authority and political structure. These gatherings were significant in "self-rule among women and which articulated women's interests as opposed to those of men."⁸⁹ The women could discuss their mutual "interests as traders, farmers, wives and mothers," and as a collective group they could compete against the men rather than fail individually.⁹⁰

Through this area of political organization, they could also discuss their main economic resource: the market, which was a female-dominated space. The importance of the market in the lives of Igbo women cannot be exaggerated because it was "more than merely a space for trading" as it "serves as a central clearinghouse for information, much of it pertaining to women's affairs; the focal point for women's ritual activities; and the area where women spent much of their time."⁹¹ The women sold, bought, and traded products at the market while regulating that individuals were obeying the rituals, rules, prices, and fines that were established during the meetings. The women's role in the market was integral for the smooth workings of Igbo society. Marc Matera reiterates this point by stating that "any threat to the

⁸⁷ Judith Van Allen, "'Sitting on a Man': Colonialism and Lost Political Institutions of Igbo Women," *Canadian Journal of African Studies* 6, no.2 (1972): 166, accessed March 22, 2017, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/484197>.

⁸⁸ Samantha Mallory Kies, "Matriarchy, the Colonial Situation, and the Women's War of 1929 in Southeastern Nigeria" (master's thesis, Eastern Michigan University, 2013), 22.

⁸⁹ Van Allen, "'Sitting on a Man,'" 169.

⁹⁰ Van Allen, 170.

⁹¹ Marc Matera, Misty L. Bastian, and Susan Kingsley Kent, *The Women's War of 1929: Gender and Violence in Colonial Nigeria* (London: Palgrave MacMillan UK, 2012), 22.

market or women's control over the marketplace could be seen as a threat to the health and wellbeing...of women."⁹² The majority of the "threats" toward the marketplace were the actions of the males. Therefore, the women created specific rules just for them. For example, any unruly or rambunctious behaviour from young men was banned and the husbands and older men were asked to control them. If their request was ignored or denied, the women would solve the matter by using their main weapons of either starting a boycott or strike, or "sitting on a man" to force the men to police themselves. These methods were all effective as the men knew that the women's anger was not to be taken lightly. Judith Van Allen describes the act of "sitting on a man":

To "sit on" or "make war on" a man involved gathering at his compound, sometimes late at night, dancing, singing scurrilous songs which detailed the women's grievances against him and often called his manhood into question, banging on his hut with the pestles women used for pounding yams, and perhaps demolishing his hut or plastering it with mud and roughing him up a bit. A man might be sanctioned in this way for mistreating his wife, for violating the women's market rules, or for letting his cows eat the women's crops. The women would stay at his hut throughout the day, and late into the night, if necessary, until he repented and promised to mend his ways. Although this could hardly have been a pleasant experience for the offending man, it was considered legitimate and no man would consider intervening. (170)

By using these tactics, the women could be assured that their voices were being heard. Overall, in pre-colonial Igboland, the women were respected members of society. They had a substantial amount of power and influence in the economic and political aspects. Their participation in society was needed and crucial especially for their own unity. The women were connected to each other through networks built via the market, political influence, family lineage, and trade; these ties brought them together during tough times, kept them unified, and played a crucial role later when they declared their discontent with the new colonial system forced upon them.

The arrival of the colonizers brought a new form of authority known as Indirect Rule, run by Warrant Chiefs who were imposed upon the people by the new government.⁹³ The British were under the false impression that all communities in

⁹² Matera, Bastian, and Kent, *The Women's War*, 22.

⁹³ Olatunji Ojo, "'Shaving of a Women's Head': *Isinmo* and the Igbo Women's War on

Africa were ruled by kings and chiefs. The British appointed chiefs for a village or a group of villages and they were usually ordinary men with no indigenous prestige or high titles. Chiefs would represent their villages during case trials in the Native Court, which was established to execute justice per Native law and custom.⁹⁴ However, to Igbo people, it was just “native” in name.

The women suffered the most because of Indirect Rule because the new colonial policies favoured men over women: “men were appointed to the role of Warrant Chiefs, members of the Native Courts, market administrations, and were recognized as heads of households.”⁹⁵ These changes resulted in the women being deemed invisible by the new patriarchal system of government. They lost their control over the economic aspects of the market, as the men, with the support of the British, started dominating the marketplace and trading activities. This meant no income, and consequently, affected the women’s ability to provide for their family. Another policy that the British imposed was taxation. Taxing was a new concept to the Igbo people and it was met with some hesitation. The British thought that the profits collected from taxation would help the United Kingdom recoup from the war and would bring them benefits along with the Igbo people. In 1928, the colonial administration decided they would start taxing the men of Southeastern Nigeria.⁹⁶ The women were not directly taxed but they were still affected. They were forced to help contribute to the taxes when the men could not pay, using their collected income from the market. The women were strongly against taxation in their land and many of them testified against the practice at the Commission of Inquiry which was established to determine the cause of the Women’s War. The following is the testimony of one of the women, Mary Onumaere:

“Chiefs are oppressing us and taking all our money. Our children are taxed and we have no money to pay for them. We women are the mothers of Europeans and Chiefs, and we don’t wish women to be oppressed. We want peace in the land.” (238-240)

The British either ignored or did not care to notice the repercussions their policies created for women.

Forced Marriages in Southern Nigeria 1900-1936,” *Canadian Journal of African Studies* 47, no.3 (2013): 522, accessed April 17, 2018, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00083968.2014.898967>.

⁹⁴ Julius Lewin, “Native Courts and British Justice in Africa,” *Africa: The Journal of the International African Institute* 14, no.8 (1944): 448, accessed March 25, 2017, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1156303>.

⁹⁵ Kies, “Matriarchy, the Colonial Situation,” 57.

⁹⁶ Kies, 76.

The women did not want to be taxed because of the burden already placed on them due to the men being taxed. Their frustration and resentment toward taxing and census taking were rising. Thus far only the men were being asked for information. The women decided that until they were asked for information, they would do nothing, as they needed evidence before action could be taken. The evidence the women needed came when the agent of Oloko's Warrant Chief Okugo went to collect figures for the updated census.⁹⁷ He approached a compound and "told a married woman, Nwanyeruwa, to count her goats and sheep. She retorted angrily, 'Was your mother counted?'"⁹⁸ She was referring to the fact that women were not required to answer census questions and were not to be taxed. Nwanyeruwa and the Warrant Chief got into a physical confrontation. Van Allen wrote that "they closed, seizing each other by the throat."⁹⁹ After the incident, Nwanyeruwa told the women of Oloko what happened. The women interpreted the event as an attempt of taxation and the rumour spread throughout the market network. Women from nearby provinces gathered in Oloko and massed in protest at the district office. After several days of "sitting on" Chief Okugo and his agent, they received written consent that they were not to be taxed.¹⁰⁰ Okugo was also arrested, tried, and convicted of physically assaulting a woman, receiving two years in jail.¹⁰¹

The news of the victory spread throughout the network and approximately tens of thousands of women in sixteen other Native Courts also attempted to remove their Warrant Chiefs and the Native Administration.¹⁰² The women used the same tactics that the Oloko women used, but many attempts did not have the same results, as the British district officers made negotiations impossible. This prompted the women in those Native Courts to take matters into their own hands and "sit on" the Warrant Chiefs and district officers, burning Native Court buildings and occasionally, releasing prisoners from jail.¹⁰³ When the war arrived in Aba, the women burnt down a major administrative centre in the area, from which the British name for the war originates.¹⁰⁴ Large numbers of soldiers and police were called in to amend the disturbances. The demonstrations were considered peaceful by the Igbo women since

⁹⁷ Camilla Power, "The Igbo Women's War" (working paper, University of East London, 1992), 5.

⁹⁸ Van Allen, "'Sitting on a Man,'" 173.

⁹⁹ Van Allen, 173.

¹⁰⁰ Power, "The Igbo Women's War," 15.

¹⁰¹ Kies, "Matriarchy, the Colonial Situation," 91.

¹⁰² Koko Ete Ina, "The Tax Crisis of 1929 in Ibibioland," *Transafrican Journal of History* 21, (1992): 177, accessed April 17, 2018, <http://myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/login?url=https://search-proquest-com.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/docview/1297886207?accountid=14771>.

¹⁰³ Van Allen, "'Sitting on a Man,'" 174.

¹⁰⁴ Audrey Wipper, "Riot and Rebellion Among African Women: Three Examples of Women's Political Clout" (working paper, University of Waterloo, 1985), 28.

they were not armed, only the troops were. Van Allen states that there were two occasions where the women and troops clashed, leaving more than 50 women injured and 50 women deceased from gunfire. No man, Igbo or British, was critically wounded or killed.¹⁰⁵ The rebellion lasted for about a month and extended over all the Owerri and Calabar provinces (six thousand square miles) and contained about two million people.¹⁰⁶

The colonial government remained oblivious to the anger and resentment that drove the women. They viewed the war as a series of “riots” that were “irrational”. Using the word “riots” to describe the protests is inaccurate and deceptive because that entails an uncontrolled and impulsive action that involves violence to property and/or people. Calling the war “riots” also ignores the fact that it was a strong collaboration and organized event between these women, using traditional means, to express their grievances and employ change against an oppressive government. The Women’s War was the traditional method of “sitting on a man” but on a larger scale. The women used their cultural practices to show their discontent and use it against a colonial power.

After the Women’s War, the British implemented changes to policies so that an event like the war would not take place again. The Igbo women voiced their concerns and some consideration was given but at the end of it all, the women were excluded from any discussion of changes. Many of the reforms took little account of the women’s traditional roles and continued to undermine their power. For example, “the newly reformed Native Administration took over many functions of the village assemblies, seriously affecting women’s political participation,” the British made all judicial institutions illegal which meant that the women’s meetings and gatherings lost “vitality.”¹⁰⁷ They also proceeded to outlaw “self-help” thus banning the practice of “sitting on a man”; this meant that the women could not protect themselves and their interests, ultimately making them reliant on men for protection against other men.¹⁰⁸ The British had no regard for the women’s well-being and despite the women’s fight for freedom and visibility, they were continually stripped of their traditional power, role and influence in Igbo society.

The Igbo Women’s War of 1929 was technically a failure due to a lack of positive results. However, for the women, the war represented so much more. The

¹⁰⁵ Audrey Wipper, “Riot and Rebellion,” 28.

¹⁰⁶ Van Allen, “Sitting on a Man,” 174.

¹⁰⁷ Kies, “Matriarchy, the Colonial Situation,” 121.

¹⁰⁸ Power, “The Igbo Women’s War,” 16.

women were used to having a purpose and a role in their traditional society. They could participate in the government and had the responsibility of upholding the market. The arrival of the British colonizers took this away as they implemented an alien form of government. The British failed to recognize the women's traditional roles and participation in Igbo society and did not include them in the new form of Indirect Rule. The women were separated from all the power they once had and were deemed invisible. The men gained all the power while the women suffered in the background. This, along with the idea of being taxed, prompted the women into action. The war was a fight to regain their visibility and independence. Although the aftermath was not what the women hoped for, the Igbo Women's War is an important and historic event in Nigerian history, as well as for feminist and anti-colonial discourse. It later inspired other important protests, like the Tax Protests of 1938, the Oil Mill Protests of the 1940s, and the Tax Revolt of 1956. The systems that the pre-colonial Igbo women had were so vital for their independence and rights that it is intriguing to wonder what might have happened "if the institutions of Igbo women were nourished instead of undermined by the colonial situation."¹⁰⁹

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Content Analysis: How Canadian News Articles Victimize the Victim

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This content analysis looks at 20 Canadian newspaper articles that focus on the subject of sexual harassment. By exploring previous research, I note that the media plays a large role in displaying and reiterating society's deeply rooted biases and beliefs. Therefore, it is important to understand how these biases and beliefs impact the way that news stories are framed. By analyzing 20 articles related to sexual harassment in depth, I explore the ways in which sexually assaulted women are portrayed. Following a thorough examination, I come to the conclusion that women are generally portrayed negatively in the sampled news articles. These negative portrayals include: (1) the helpless victim; (2) the one to blame; and (3) the non-existent.

INTRODUCTION

Sexual abuse is a serious problem in society. However, historically, the sexual life of individuals was often associated with the private sphere and rarely recognized as a serious crime. Now that sexual violence has been criminalized, it is important to understand how these crimes are framed in the media. News mediums act as important tools not only because they frame stories in ways that concur with public beliefs, but also because they work to re-establish these beliefs. Therefore, in this paper I ask: how are female victims of sexual assault depicted in the media?

In order to answer this question, I analyze 20 Canadian newspaper articles using a content analysis methodology. However, I will first consider the contemporary literature surrounding this topic in order to understand the powerful consequences of the media as well as the importance surrounding studies on this topic. Using information from this literature review, I will discuss the methodology, present the findings, and critically analyze the results. By conducting this content analysis, the results have led me to find that women are generally portrayed negatively by using

one of three frames: (1) the helpless victim; (2) the one to blame; or (3) the non-existent. These results will be further explained in the analysis and conclusion.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Power of Media

Prior to exploring the role that women play in the media, it is first important to consider the role of the media itself. It is vital to examine the power relations in media, as well as the power it has as an informative and entertaining outlet. In general, many sources agree that the media is used as an important tool in society, reinforcing, and yet re-established by, societal stereotypes. Media constantly surrounds our lives, and Easteal, Holland, and Judd (2014) coin the term “mediatisation” to help explain its influence. According to their research, media has become such an important tool that it greatly influences and shapes social actors and institutions in their actions (Easteal, Holland, and Judd 2014). This has lead researchers to explain how the media focuses on specific issues and the way these issues are framed in particular ways.

Often times, the media does not commonly depict the severity or importance of news stories but instead, frames them to be interesting or to reflect the dominant beliefs in society (Lykke 2016). This can be dangerous because often, dominant beliefs work to subject women in a patriarchal society. Easteal, Holland, and Judd (2014) and Lykke (2016) argue that media sources work to reify bias and distorted social constructions. This results in gendered media through the use of masculine and feminine stereotypes (Easteal, Holland, and Judd 2014). When the media is influenced by these stereotypes, it then works to reinforce them as well. In Wright and Tokunaga’s (2015) research on the media’s process to objectify women, they explain that media creates mediated gender scripts. These are roles that are displayed and encourage the normalization of stereotypical gendered roles. These can be seen anywhere in the media, from a news article focusing on female political leaders with families, to male domination in porn (Wright and Tokunaga 2015). Research shows that media is a tool that is gendered and reproduces gendered roles. It is often so hidden that it becomes hard to recognize, which gives it even more power in playing a role in the social construction of the male and female hierarchy (Hollander and Rodgers 2014).

Violence and Female Depiction in Media

Women are often depicted in the media in a limited number of ways. Easteal, Holland, and Judd (2014) study how stories of violence against females are portrayed in the specific and limited frames that the media uses. They find that in most news articles on women facing violence, the incidents are portrayed as one-time anomalies (Easteal, Holland, and Judd 2014). By doing this, the authors argue that the media takes away the systemic and institutionalized gendered hierarchy, not recognizing that female sexual violence is a real problem, but simply an individualized one (Easteal, Holland, and Judd 2014). Lykke (2016) also finds that there is an individualistic account of female violence and includes the example of the media giving advice to women on taking precautions to protect themselves, such as not walking alone. This too addresses the problem of the media seeing sexual harassment as an individualized encounter, instead of seeing gendered violence as something institutionalized (Lykke 2016).

According to Hollander and Rodgers (2014) and Lykke (2016), when women encounter sexual violence, they are often stereotyped as victims: weak, dependent, and without autonomy. By using a content analysis of magazines, Lykke (2016) finds two key mechanisms that are used in the portrayal of women in stories of female violence: visibility and denial. Visibility explains how women are depicted and given characteristics that make them into objects, whereas denial explains the refusal to believe that violence against women is a social problem (Lykke 2016). Hollander and Rodgers (2014) come to similar findings by analyzing 922 articles involving females in sexual violent encounters and their resistance to sexual assault. They find that although there is actually a large percentage of women who resist sexual assault and are able to break free from their attacker, their stories are rarely reported as such (Hollander and Rodgers 2014). Regardless of the situation in reality, sexual assault stories in the media portray women as victims, as weak, and as having no self-autonomy or power. Although many women are powerful in these situations, they are still depicted in stereotypical roles as being inferior to men (Hollander and Rodgers 2014).

Effects of Media Portrayal of Women

After examining the power of the media as an outlet and looking at how women are often portrayed using this outlet, we must now consider some of the effects that the media has on society. Vance *et al.* (2015) study female images in the media and

the effects that it has on those who are exposed to it. The authors find that moral disengagement plays a role in disconnecting society from respecting women, when they are so often portrayed as nothing but objects to please men (Vance et al. 2015). This moral disengagement then leads to the belief of rape myths, the belief that women's bodies belong to men as objects, so it is okay to use force on them when they refuse to engage sexually (Vance et al. 2015). Wright and Tokunaga (2016) agree with this theory. Their research further shows that men who engaged themselves in media that portrays women in objectified ways were more likely to believe in intrapersonal violence, rape, and gender stereotypes. These effects of the media become extremely problematic, as it pressures men to objectify the female body (Wright and Tokunaga 2016).

Prior literature explains the importance of the media as a powerful tool and shows how it can have negative impacts on women in society. Based on previous research, as discussed in the literature review, there were often only two frames discovered that the media used to portray sexually assaulted women. Although these two frames were widely used, in this content analysis I seek to discover any other frames that may exist. This will be done by addressing my research question: how are female victims of sexual assault depicted in the media?

METHODOLOGY

One of the best ways to understand the media and its effects is to analyze the content itself. By conducting a content analysis as my methodology, I am able to directly analyze the source in question and recognize if there are any patterns. Conducting a content analysis as my research method also gives me the ability to better control the research. For example, I am able to limit the articles to a certain time period or publisher. Also, this methodology allows me to acquire both quantitative and qualitative findings. Therefore, I am able to produce quantitative information, such as how many articles focus on women, as well as qualitative information, such as the tone of the author.

Database

When conducting my content analysis, I limited my research to Canadian newspaper articles. This was done so that I can focus solely on Canada, as different countries may carry different cultural attitudes towards women. Also, conducting a content analysis on content throughout the world would be far too broad and would

require a much larger sample. I also decided to limit myself to news articles as they are the main mediums in which news stories are shared in writing. In comparison to magazines, news articles are more serious and event-based and because they are written, they are easier to code compared to news on the television.

When finding the database in which I would gather my sample from, I used the University of Toronto Library. I used this database because it is a trustworthy educational database. This database would contribute to ensuring the newspaper articles from my sample were written from legitimate news sources and were established enough to be recognized by the University. After I accessed the University of Toronto Library, I then went to the University of Toronto Newsstand, accessible to the University of Toronto students. Once gaining access to the University of Toronto Newsstand, I then entered the Canadian Newsstream database in order to gain access to Canadian newspapers.

Sampling

Before searching for articles, I wanted to limit the results, so I set the database to only show results that were English newspaper articles. I also wanted these newspapers to be relevant and up-to-date, so I limited the results to articles written after January 1st, 2016. This was so that I could come to conclusions from my research that are still applicable. Since my database only provided me with established Canadian newspaper sources, I did not have to do any specific selections or limitation in authors or publishers.

After I limited the settings to only show the results I wanted, I searched the key terms: “woman” and “raped”. This focused my results on women, the main subject of my research question, and specified that they needed to have been affected by a common category of sexual assault: rape. The term “rape” is used to describe various unwanted sexual acts (e.g., sexual harassment or sexual assault) because the general population may not be aware of the distinctions between these acts. By using the term “rape”, not only is it popularly known and defined, but it is also often used by authors in order to catch their readers’ attention. I also wanted the results to be more individualized so that I will be able to see how the author talks about women in individual cases, as opposed to very general ones.

Once I started my search, I got over 1000 hits of news articles that came up. Before approaching the results, I knew that I wanted to focus on more individualized

cases and I also wanted to eliminate any possible biases that could occur in the selection process. Thus, I limited my research sample to the first 20 news articles that contained one main character focus in the title. This character could be any gender to eliminate bias, but needed to be singular, so that I could really focus on individualized cases and events. By individualizing the sample, I eliminated any articles that focused on large societal problems, such as how rape, in general, affected society. I looked for terms such as “woman”, “man”, “victim”, “rapist”, or even specific names in the titles, and selected the first twenty of these to make sure my selection was not biased.

Coding

While reading through the articles, I implemented a specific method of coding. This was done by highlighting key words in the news articles in three different colours: green, yellow, and blue. I highlighted all the times the victim was spoken about positively or framed in a way that gave them power or agency in blue. In green, I highlighted all the times women were framed negatively: women were accused of being weak or not in control, or they were blamed for what had happened. In yellow, I highlighted all the times the man or the accused was given power, or their actions were justified. For the blue highlight, I tried to find empowering words or descriptions of women trying to fight off their rapist. For the green, I looked for descriptive terms like “weak”, “tried but could not”, or “tricked”, as these played into the notion of demeaning the victim. When it came to the yellow highlight, I looked for times when the accused were given powerful descriptions, when they were given hegemonic masculine traits, or when they were believed to be innocent in their accused raping.

FINDINGS

After analyzing the news articles, referring to Table A that displays my results, I found a total of 197 incidences that worked to demean women in their role as victims, 130 incidences where men were spoken about in a powerful dynamic, and 16 incidences where women were given agency and power. Although there is an imbalance of power in the quantitative results, there were also many qualitative patterns that I noted as well.

Table A

Coding Colour	Text Examples	Total Tally of 20 Articles
Green (Negative Framing)	<i>“Brutally beaten”, “she struggled”, “considered a suicide risk”, “she was a street worker”, “vulnerable and drug addicted woman”</i>	197
Yellow (Power to Masculinity)	<i>“Chased her down and dragged her”, “athletic and over 6 ft tall”, “she never said no”, “tricked her”</i>	130
Blue (Power and Agency of Victims)	<i>“I said no”, “she fought him off”, “she reported the incident”, “put up a fight”</i>	16

The Helpless Victim

There were 197 incidences that I found in which the media demeaned women. Most of the media frames that were used in these incidences were those of the helpless victim. These were instances that showed women to have very little agency; they were nothing but victims that were unable to protect themselves. Descriptive words, often unnecessary, were used in these instances. For example, instead of saying a woman was beaten, it was noted that a woman was *brutally* beaten, or instead of stating that the woman ran away, they would state the woman was *fleeing* away, using language to highlight their lack of power. This was also often seen when the victim spoke to reporters and the articles quoted what they said. It seemed that most of the quotations chosen were often ones that further painted the woman as the weak victim. One woman that was raped years ago was interviewed and still accounted what had happened to her. Instead of focusing on how she overcame the event, the author focused instead on how her life will never be the same.

The One to Blame

Another important frame that was I found was that in which women were the ones to blame for their own misfortune. Not all victims were “innocent” in their life choices and these were often greatly highlighted in the articles. One article emphasized that a victim was already a prostitute and often did drugs. Some articles even insinuated that the women put themselves in the situation due to who they were as people. Aside from being the “one that was to blame” for what happened, some articles even painted the victims as the “bad ones”. There was another article that spoke of a woman going through a lot of work in order to fake a rape story, just so

that she would not get in trouble for losing her job. Although this woman did not actually get raped, this news article highlights an already common belief that women lie about their rape claims. Articles like these give society an excuse to blame the victim and deny or be skeptical about serious rape claims.

The Non-Existent and the Role of the Man

Another frame that I found occurred when the news articles really only focused on the offender as the subject of the article; this was the frame in which the women were “non-existent”. This was interesting because, although the victim had to be mentioned in order to go into depth about the offender, they were given little attention and only used to further the narrative about the offender. One article focused on a man who was known for raping over 14 women, yet there were only short quotations from a few of these nameless women highlighting the offender’s use of drugs as a way to rape them. Some articles failed to mention the women at all.

In the twenty articles that I analyzed, there were 130 times where men as the offenders were referred to in ways that reestablished their power and dominance in society. Although rape is a horrible criminal offense, articles often went into the details of offenders’ dominance over women by highlighting the number of victims, treating victims as nothing but numbers. They also often used language that drew attention to the man’s strength over that of the woman’s, and this was done on both a physical and mental scale. Often times, men were portrayed as outsmarting and manipulating women. There were also articles that even presented men as blameless, instead blaming women as the “ones who wanted it”, or the “ones getting revenge”.

The Powerful Agent

The frame that was not often seen was that of the woman as a powerful agent. Out of all the articles, there were only a total of 16 times where women were given some agency. The interesting part about all 16 of these times was that, although these women tried to enforce their power and agency, they were overruled and still taken advantage of in all cases. No woman escaped under the force of a man, even when trying to and/or verbally refusing them. It is true that small parts of the frame did exist, but this occurred rarely. Moreover, in these 16 cases, the main frame of the story was one of the other frames noted prior. These highlighted sections were simply small comments that enhanced the news story or made the other frames more interesting to the reader.

ANALYSIS

My results correlate with what Lykke (2016) argued, in that the media often reflects the dominant ideologies in society. Living in a society where gendered income inequality exists and there is a clear glass ceiling, my results reflect and conform with the existing gender hierarchy (Waylen 1998). My results show that women were rarely given the role of power or any dominance over a man and were continually placed in a weakened state. The gender hierarchy was not only reflected in the articles displaying the role of women, but also the role of men. Maiolino (2015) discusses the importance of masculinity and how men must work hard in order to reach higher levels of hegemonic masculinity. My results reflect this idea in that, although the men in the articles were criminals, they were painted fitting into the image of the ideal man. Factors like strength, intelligence, and competition were commonly spoken about, showcasing the hegemonic masculine features of these men.

My results display that the total tallies found when coding painted a clear image of the negative impacts that the news stories had on women. That being said, what is important to note are the additional frames that were discovered by my research that were being used to contribute to this image. When it comes to the frames I found in the news articles, my results agreed with and also further extended the previous literature discussed. Regardless of the fact that I did not use frames found in previous literature towards my own research, my results still correlated with the common theme of the “helpless victim”, a frame that had been established by previous literature. Although this was the most common theme in my results, I also found other frames that literature had not previously discussed. These were the frames of the “one to blame”, as well as the “non-existent”. These frames were found after I discovered repeated themes within the articles; they were further established by the patterns found after coding. These are two findings that are important to analyze since they work to re-establish women’s roles, but in a different light than that of a helpless victim. All rape cases are different, with different individuals under a variety of settings. Due to this, we must recognize that, although the “helpless victim” is the current dominant frame in literature, there are still different frames that exist, and this content analysis helps to highlight two new frames.

LIMITATIONS AND CONCLUSION

Although my research brings to light new frames and further highlights existing literature, there still may be some limitations to the research. Due to the fact

that I was limited to 20 articles, I may have gotten different results if my sample was much larger. Some may argue that a sample of 20 is not large enough to draw general conclusions from. Furthermore, although I tried to eliminate as much bias as possible with my method of sampling, I was still the one that coded all the work. The coding may have showed my bias, which is often done unintentionally and would have been perfected if it was coded by a number of people.

Although this research has a few limitations, it is still very important in finding the main three frames of rape literature: the “helpless victim”, the “one to blame”, and the “non-existent”. Moreover, it introduces the importance in recognizing a frame in which men are perceived as dominant over women, and discusses how this frame is used in absence of the women. The media plays an extremely important role in how it works with society to reproduce norms. Many consume these media pieces without questioning it. This is why this research is so important in showing that there is a bias in the media and that we, as members of the society, must recognize it. The only way for change is to first be aware and this content analysis is a start to this first step.

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