



# Changing Societies & Personalities

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### **Aims and Scope:**

*Changing Societies & Personalities* is an international, peer-reviewed quarterly journal, published in English by the Ural Federal University. *CS&P* examines how rapid societal-level changes are reshaping individual-level beliefs, motivations and values – and how these individual-level changes in turn are reshaping societies. The interplay of personality traits and sociocultural factors in defining motivation, deliberation, action and reflection of individuals requires a combination of theoretical and empirical knowledge. Since an interdisciplinary approach is needed to understand the causes and consequences of the contemporary world's changing socio-political institutions, moral values, and religious beliefs, the journal welcomes theoretical and empirical contributions from a wide range of perspectives in the context of value pluralism and social heterogeneity of (post)modern society.

Topics of interest include, but are not limited to

- value implications of interactions between socio-political transformations and personal self-identity;
- changes in value orientations, materialist and post-materialist values;
- moral reasoning and behavior;
- variability and continuity in the election of styles of moral regime and/or religious identity;
- the moral bases of political preferences and their elimination;
- social exclusion and inclusion;
- post-secular religious individualism;
- tolerance and merely “tolerating”: their meanings, varieties and fundamental bases;
- ideologies of gender and age as variables in political, moral, religious and social change;
- educational strategies as training for specific social competences;
- social and existential security.

The journal publishes original research articles, forum discussions, review articles and book reviews.

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## EDITORIAL

# Values Under the Influence of Various Contexts: Cross-Cultural Reflections

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How are food preferences related to the moral imperatives of everyday behavior? How does schoolgirls' and schoolboys' intelligence differ, and what determines these differences? Why are the virtues described by Aristotle relevant to employers in India? What does the obligatory wearing of a hijab tell us about the position of women in a society? What are the socio-cultural motivations of women to become oocyte donors?

In all honesty, I would probably never be thinking about these and many other issues if they were not the subjects of articles selected for publication in our journal. In today's world, as always in human history, our everyday behavior and perception of reality are determined, perhaps unconsciously, by numerous socio-cultural contexts. What is acceptable in one location may be completely unacceptable in another one. The failure to understand each other may stem from the influence of contexts, which fact eludes human perception. However, it is reflection upon reality that is the main purpose of scientific search, since it aims to elucidate the causes and origins of contextual peculiarities. Critical reflection makes it possible to penetrate into the nature of different cultures, become aware of their values and traditions and, if not share, then accept them. The possibility of such acceptance is raising many debates, which our journal seeks to promote. The articles in the current issue of *Changing Societies & Personalities* reflect upon various shifts in educational policies, managerial strategies, moral choices, etc., as well as the growing intricacy of contextual influences.

The main subject of the ARTICLE *Fluid Intelligence Test Scores Across the Schooling: Evidence of Nonlinear Changes in Girls and Boys* by Tatiana N. Tikhomirova, Artem S. Malykh, and Sergey B. Malykh (Russia) is intelligence as a significant predictor of educational achievement in all school subjects. The research is based on a cross-sectional study of more than 1500 primary, secondary, and high public school students (boys and girls in

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equal proportion). The authors' aim was (a) to examine changes in fluid intelligence test scores through all years of schooling from grades 1 to 11; (b) to analyze sex differences in fluid intelligence test scores for each year of schooling, as well as in fluid intelligence changes across schooling; (c) to investigate relationships between the year of schooling and schoolchildren's ages, and corresponding independent and joint influences on changes in fluid intelligence. According to the authors, "the analysis reveals that, despite a strong correlation between grade and schoolchildren age, grade is a more important factor in shaping changes in fluid intelligence during schooling". In addition, the authors make a lot of interesting and fruitful conclusions about differences between boys and girls in the terms of intelligence development at different ages.

Israel Kibirige (South Africa) in the ARTICLE *Short Learning Programmes for Skills Development Beyond COVID-19* elaborates on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as of globalization and the Fourth Industrial Revolution, on the quality and quantity of all levels of education. Today, the education system is faced by the demand to produce adept individuals capable of meeting unprecedented changes. Moreover, such individuals are expected to have sufficient knowledge and skills in the field of Information Communication Technologies (ICT). Short Learning Programmes (SLPs), which have been recognized in South Africa and other countries as an important educational component, could be a "panacea for producing empowered individuals to respond to unequivocal employment demands". The author uses the Capability Approach Theory (CAT) and Critical Realist Theory (CRT) as theoretical frameworks to clarify several issues regarding SLPs.

In the ARTICLE *Representing the Powerful Principle of Virtue Ethics: Commitment at Workplaces*, Mitashree Tripathy (India) analyzes the concept of virtue ethics, which, unlike other moral theories that primarily focus on the morality of action, "chiefly emphasizes the morality of character" or, in simple words, is focused "on being good or bad". Such traits of character as loyalty, trust, kindness, courage, honesty, patience, etc., encourage individuals to act morally, and are usually urged by the society to be practiced. However, the concept of virtue varies from one context to another depending on cultural traditions, social practices, professional requirements, gender, age, and the like. According to the author, the commitment at a workplace can be considered as a virtue, which improves interpersonal connection and social bonding, and thus stands equal along with other moral features, including honesty, sincerity, civility, dedication, competence, courtesy, tolerance, etc. Mitashree Tripathy poses the question: "Does there exist a drawback of commitment, or in other words are there any limitations to commitment?", and, after observing various forms of commitment (continuance, affective, normative, and blind), concludes that this phenomenon has both pros and cons.

Wajeeha Brar Ghias and Syed Zaheer Abbas Kazmi (Pakistan) in the ARTICLE *In the Eyes of the Beholder: Leaders' Personality and Courageous Followership* observe that Pakistan is ranked low in terms of institutional performance due to the high level of corruption and a lack of transparency. Therefore, "courageous followership is a type of behavior that develops the capacity of a manager to speak

up against unethical practices and make them partners with leaders”, which “not only challenges unethical practices, but also makes individuals support their leaders by assuming responsibility, serving the leader, and taking part in the transformation”. In order to answer the research question “What type of the personality of a leader encourages proactive courageous followership behavior”, the authors use a sample of 190 Pakistani private school leaders working in 30 top private schools as regular employees. The authors hope that courageous followership as a proactive form of followership with dimensions of assuming responsibility, taking part in organizational transformation, challenging the wrongdoings of leaders, etc., could enhance the overall culture of transparency in Pakistani institutions.

In the ARTICLE *Moral Foundations of Dietary Behavior and its Linkage to Sustainability and Feminism* by Benedikt Hackert, Liliith C. Voeth, and Ulrich Weger (Germany), ethical reasons (e.g., animal welfare, environmental concerns, world hunger) as the main motivations for becoming a vegetarian or a vegan are discussed. The authors underline that “in general, it becomes obvious that vegetarians, vegans, and meat eaters differ significantly in their attitudes towards animals and their moral consideration”, and pose the overarching question: What are the moral foundations for ethical diet change? In the study, two surveys are presented. In the first survey (511 participants from social networks and internet forums in Germany), moral-foundations-profiles (MFP) of vegans, vegetarians, and meat eaters, and the score of their individualization are investigated; in addition, the authors aim to determine the impact of diet type on other areas of everyday life and consumption (e.g., sustainable behavior, fair trade buying, donations). The second survey (159 participants from social networks and internet forums in Germany) explores to which degree vegans, vegetarians, and meat eaters support feminism as an ideology that aims for social justice.

Irina G. Polyakova, Dmitry O. Mazurov, Elvira E. Symanyuk, and Aleksandra Yu. Khramtsova (Russia) in the ARTICLE *The Influence of Socio-Cultural Factors on Oocyte Donors' Motivations and Disclosure Decisions*, draw attention to the growing demand for mentally and physically healthy oocyte donors in Russian fertility clinics. In Russia, similarly to many other countries, In Vitro Fertilization (IVF) treatment with donor eggs is considered one of the most efficient assisted reproductive technologies. At the same time, egg donation as a complex phenomenon fraught with ethical concerns remains largely underexplored in research literature. The study aims to examine the motivations of Russian oocyte donors and existing barriers to donation, as well as the key socio-cultural factors that affect the potential donors' decision to donate or not. The research is based on 16 semi-structured interviews, in which women displayed a diversity of motivations.

In the ARTICLE *Social and Economic Factors of Violence against Women in the South of Moldova: Identification, Estimation, and Mechanisms of Elimination*, Elena V. Bazueva (Russia) points out the high rate of violence against women in Moldova using the data from one of the settlements in Autonomous Territorial Unit Gagauzia. In the article, social and economic factors that influence violence against women are outlined and classified, namely: limited opportunities for women to realize their



economic rights in the regional labor market; a high level of patriarchalization of the population's consciousness; a lack of effective mechanisms for ensuring gender equality in the region, as well as a lack of coordination between the ministries and state departments responsible for the implementation of a gender equality policy. In the light of the recommendations given by the UN and EU, Elena proposes several projects that might be useful for preventing gender-based discriminatory practices.

The ARTICLE *Patriarchal Language Evaluation of Muslim Women's Body, Sexuality, and Domestication Discourse on Indonesian Male Clerics Preaching* by Eva Leiliyanti, Dhaurana Atikah Dewi, Larasati Nur Putri, Fariza, Zufrufin Saputra, Andera Wiyakintra, and Muhammad Ulul Albab (Indonesia) is based on the assumption that language is a storehouse of cultural ideas. Consequently, power inequalities and related discrimination in Islamic clerics' patriarchal language about Muslim women's bodies, sexuality, and domestication in Indonesia could be revealed by text-oriented discourse analysis. According to the authors, "language can be manipulated to produce linguistic coverings coupled with verb choice to influence causality attributions, offering tools to apply discrimination while masking reality and reducing perceived conflicts of interest". The study aims to compare and evaluate the scope of the patriarchal language of Muhammadiyah's, Nahdlatul Ulama's, and Salafi's clerics in their preachings posted on YouTube regarding these women's discourses. In particular, the authors discuss the role of hijab in Islamic discourse in Indonesia.

In the ARTICLE *The Concept of Mladostarchestvo as a Tool for Criticizing Religion in Modern Russia: An Analysis of Rhetorical Strategies*, Eugene I. Lyutko and Alexey I. Cherny (Russia) note that the term *mladostarchestvo* [the concept referring to young elders] is one of the most notable and widely used concepts "in the context of spoken language, journalism, and discussions on the net". Moreover, this term could also be placed among quite rare "elements of critical rhetoric applied exclusively (or almost exclusively) to the priesthood" in the Russian Orthodox Church. The relevance of a critical interpretation of the term is proved by the very fact of its popularity in today's discussions in the sphere of religion. The authors aim to reconstruct a history of this concept; their methodological approach is based on the study of rhetoric strategies and functioning of such a concept as *mladostarchestvo*.

The RESEARCH NOTES section contains the study *Perceived Discrimination of Old Settlers in Sikkim* by Bhasker Malu, Santhosh Kareepadath Rajan, Nikhita Jindal, Aishwarya Thakur, and Tanvi Raghuram (India). The article explores the racial minority of old settlers in Sikkim, a northeastern state merged with India in 1975. The main problem with the old settlers is their status of outsiders in Sikkim, "since they are not part of the indigenous ethnic groups and belong to various mainland Indian communities". Consequently, despite the long history of settlement, they still are not considered domiciles and are ostracized from availing many of the welfare facilities. The authors argue that old settlers in Sikkim are discriminated as a minority or a non-dominant group, and stress the need for a deeper analysis of the perception of such discrimination and its reasons. The research is based on a sample of eight men and three women out of old settlers' total number of less than 3000. The authors reveal 13 basic themes, two organizing themes, and one global theme of discrimination.

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The BOOK REVIEWS section contains three reviews. The first is of Ivan Strenski (2022). *Muslims, Islams, and Occidental Anxieties: Conversations about Islamophobia* by Elena A. Stepanova. She pays particular attention to Strenski's concern about the possibility of tolerating contradictory opinions, when the opposing sides are convinced of their own truth, which is surely applied not only to the possibility of a mutual understanding between Islam and Western cultures, but also to many other cases. Second, Olga F. Rusakova, Ekaterina G. Gribovod, and Yan Yu. Moiseenko in the review of V.V. Lapin, A.I. Miller (Eds.). (2021). *Simvolicheskie aspekty politiki pamiati v sovremennoi Rossii i Vostochnoi Evrope* [Symbolic aspects of the politics of memory in modern Russia and Eastern Europe] note that several Russian research centers have focused on producing the public discourse of the politics of memory following the global trend in viewing memory studies as an increasingly interesting research field and an effective strategy for interpreting the past. In the third review of the Priest M.V. Legeyev (2021), *Bogoslovie Istorii kak Nauka. Metod.* [Theology of History as a Science. Method], Andrey V. Lavrentiev argues that the author's intention is to form a new direction of scientific and theological thought, which, in his opinion, is the theology of history.

Discussions around the topics raised in the present issue will be continued in the subsequent issues of our journal. In planning to introduce new interesting themes, we welcome suggestions from our readers and prospective authors for thematic issues, debate sections, or book reviews.

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ARTICLE

## Fluid Intelligence Test Scores Across the Schooling: Evidence of Nonlinear Changes in Girls and Boys

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### ABSTRACT

The results of the analyses of the changes of fluid intelligence scores measured by the Standard Progressive Matrices test across all school years were presented. Sex differences in fluid intelligence scores for each year of schooling as well as in fluid intelligence changes across schooling were analyzed. A total of 1581 participants (51.1% boys) aged 6.8 to 19.1 years from one public school were involved in this cross-sectional study, of whom 871 were primary schoolchildren (mean age = 9.23; range 6.8–11.6), 507 were secondary schoolchildren (mean age = 14.06; range 10.8–18.0), and 203 were high schoolchildren (mean age = 17.25; range 15.3–19.1). To examine the changes in fluid intelligence both correlation analysis and polynomial regression of the total, boys' and girls' samples were performed. Linear, quadratic, and cubic regression models were fitted to the data. To explore sex differences in fluid intelligence in each year of schooling, the series

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of ANOVA were carried out. The results revealed that the school-age change in fluid intelligence is nonlinear for both girls and boys. The changes for girls during the schooling are best described by a quadratic relationship while those for boys are best reflected by a cubic relationship.

#### **KEYWORDS**

fluid intelligence, school-age years, education, development, cross-sectional study, sex differences, polynomial regression

#### **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

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## **Introduction**

Numerous studies show that intelligence underlies current and future individual achievements in education and professional success and is closely related to mental and physical well-being throughout life (Aichele et al., 2019; Brouwers et al., 2009; Deary et al., 2007; Nisbett et al., 2012; Tikhomirova et al., 2019a; Tikhomirova et al., 2020). Meta-analyses revealed that intelligence is a significant predictor of educational achievement in all school subjects (Brouwers et al., 2009; Deary et al., 2007). The results of large-scale longitudinal studies investigating the causal relationships between intelligence and academic success support this hypothesis (Deary et al., 2007). Certain works report that the more a person learns, the higher his level of intelligence is (Baltes & Reinert, 1969).

Moreover, intelligence is sensitive to characteristics of the sociocultural environment and first to the educational conditions of a particular class, school, region, or national education system (Nisbett et al., 2012; Tikhomirova et al., 2019a). For example, studies of schoolchildren from countries with different educational conditions have shown a decrease in cross-cultural differences in intelligence with school attendance, which is explained by the influence of the learning process on the cognitive development of students (Tikhomirova et al., 2019a; Tucker-Drob & Briley, 2014; von Stumm & Plomin, 2015). This sensitivity requires the study of patterns of change in intelligence occurring throughout the course of schooling in certain educational conditions.

Despite the fact that numerous studies have shown a relationship between intelligence and academic achievement, some differences in approaches to measuring intelligence can be found in these studies. Most of these studies are based on the Cattell-Horn model of fluid and crystallized intelligence (Cattell, 1963; Horn & Cattell, 1966). In accordance with this model, crystallized intelligence is defined as

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the ability to solve problems that are directly related to knowledge acquired during the learning process, from personal experiences and from previously formed skills. Fluid intelligence is defined as the ability to think abstractly and solve problems unrelated to previous experiences, personal knowledge or learning. Nevertheless, the development of fluid intelligence determines the effectiveness of new knowledge and skill acquisition during schooling (Barbey, 2018; Brown, 2016). Fluid intelligence is measured by tests with nonverbal stimuli not related to the sociocultural context. In the school setting, fluid intelligence is often measured using the Standard Progressive Matrices test, which lacks a specific cultural context in that it does not give one social group an advantage over another (Raven, 2003).

Age-related changes in fluid intelligence raise questions surrounding the role of the biological age of respondents and the number of years of schooling in these changes (Brinch & Galloway, 2012; Cahan & Cohen, 1989; Nisbett et al., 2012; Ritchie et al., 2015; etc.). Studies of children starting formal schooling at different ages (Cahan & Cohen, 1989), studies of groups of children not attending school in certain periods of life or receiving an additional year of schooling (Brinch & Galloway, 2012; Nisbett et al., 2012), and studies of older people with biological and educational ages correlated with current cognitive indicators (Schneeweis et al., 2014) allow us to assess the effects of these two factors. In these studies, it is concluded that education, school age in particular, has a more significant effect on the growth of intelligence test values throughout a person's life. Nevertheless, both biological and educational age are equally considered in the analysis of cognitive changes, and either the specificity of their influence on certain cognitive traits is taken into account or they are treated as factors identical in meaning.

The comparison of effects of biological age and years of schooling is especially relevant for studies of schoolchildren from Russia, where children can enter the first grade of school starting from 6.6 and to 8 years of age. This is due to the Federal Law No. 273-FZ *Ob obrazovanii v Rossiiskoi Federatsii* [On Education in the Russian Federation], which defines the age interval (6.6–8 years) from which parents can determine when children should start school (*Ob obrazovanii v Rossiiskoi Federatsii*, 2012). Thus, in one study of Russian primary school students, the range of age variability for grade 1 is 2.4 years—from 6.4 to 8.8 years of age (Tikhomirova et al., 2019a). Such a wide range of variability in the biological age of students in one year of schooling creates an opportunity to analyze the joint and independent influences of this factor on the development of intelligence during schooling.

Fluid intelligence scores change over time. This has been demonstrated by cross-sectional studies reporting changes in mean values (Desjardins & Warnke, 2012; Hartshorne & Germine, 2015; Kievit et al., 2016) and by longitudinal studies that calculate developmental trajectories over a certain time interval (Ghisletta et al., 2012; Tikhomirova et al., 2019a; Tikhomirova et al., 2019b; von Stumm & Plomin, 2015).

These studies show that life-long changes in fluid intelligence are characterized by rapid growth during childhood and adolescence, reaching a peak in early adulthood (30–40 years) and a gradual decline in old age. This pattern of changes in fluid intelligence confirms its role in age-sensitive cognitive ability (Hartshorne &

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Germine, 2015). Fluid intelligence develops unevenly from infancy to adolescence at a significant rate for some children and a less intensive rate for others (Tucker-Drob & Briley, 2014; von Stumm & Plomin, 2015;). It has been reported that individual differences in the development of intelligence in childhood are associated, among other factors, with the socioeconomic characteristics of the microenvironment—familial development experiences (von Stumm & Plomin, 2015). The significance of the socioeconomic conditions of one's family is shown both for the "starting" level of intelligence at 2 years of age and for the growth of intelligence from 2 to 16 years of age (von Stumm & Plomin, 2015).

According to the results of a longitudinal study, in the primary school age period from 7 to 11 years, there is an increase in fluid intelligence scores (Tikhomirova et al., 2019a; Tikhomirova et al., 2019b). At the same time, the most intensive growth occurs between ages 7 and 8 (grades 1–2 of primary school), and then up to age 10 (grades 2–4 of primary school), their scores on the Standard Progressive Matrices test statistically significantly improve.

In general, most researchers agree that the school aged period is characterized, on the one hand, by the most intensive growth of fluid intelligence and, on the other hand, increased sensitivity to sociocultural conditions, primarily educational (Brouwers et al., 2009; Tikhomirova et al., 2019a; von Stumm & Plomin, 2015). This duality is reflected in the problem of the causal relationship between intelligence and education, which leads to a need to control various characteristics of the educational environment when studying temporal changes in intelligence (Deary & Johnson, 2010). At the same time, the question of the nature of changes in test scores of fluid intelligence throughout the entire period of formal schooling, a time interval of 11 years, including childhood, adolescence and early youth, remains unaddressed.

Studies report both the existence of sex differences in intelligence and their absence (e.g., Flynn & Rossi-Casé, 2011). These contradictions are explained by differences in methods used to measure fluid intelligence, the age characteristics of study participants, and macroenvironmental conditions (see Nisbett et al., 2012).

However, most researchers agree that sex differences in intelligence are observed before the age of 16, when the growth rates of girls and boys differ (von Stumm & Plomin, 2015). According to the theory of sex differences in the development of intelligence, this pattern is based in differences in the rates of maturation found between girls and boys: in girls, intensive development begins at the age of approximately 9 years and remains more intense than in boys up to 14–15 years. At 15–16 years of age, growth in girls slows while boys continue to develop.

One study of intellectual development found that at the age of 16, intelligence scores do not differ in girls and boys, but at the same time, there are sex differences in the development of intelligence from infancy to adolescence, confirming the hypothesis of a relationship between uneven maturation and individual indicators of intelligence tests (von Stumm & Plomin, 2015).

Studies have demonstrated the age specificity of differences in intelligence between girls and boys during schooling (Colom & Lynn, 2004). In particular, it has been shown that at 12–13 years of age, girls perform better on intellectual test

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tasks than boys of 12–13 years and girls of 14–15 years. Girls of 14–15 years show better results on intelligence tests than boys of 14–15 years and girls of 16–18 years (Colom & Lynn, 2004). At the same time, at the age of 18, the test results of boys are superior to those of girls, and the effect of sex on IQ depends on the type of test task considered. As a rule, sex differences in intelligence, as for other cognitive functions, are explained using sociocultural (gender specificity of education) and neurophysiological (postnatal hormones) paradigms (Frenken et al., 2016; Miller & Halpern, 2014; Shangguan & Shi, 2009; Zilles et al., 2016).

This specificity in the cognitive development of girls and boys can determine differences in changes in fluid intelligence throughout school age. In addition, the results of studies on the sex characteristics of changes in fluid intelligence show different, sometimes diametrically opposing results due to, among other factors, the short time intervals of particular studies (for example, studies examining only adolescents or primary school students). The use of longer study periods covering various periods of life in the analysis of changes in fluid intelligence will make it possible to identify periods of growth, assess their intensity levels, and determine stages of stabilization in boys and girls.

## The Present Study

This cross-sectional study aimed to examine changes in fluid intelligence test scores over all years of schooling from grades 1 to 11. Additionally, sex differences in fluid intelligence test scores for each year of schooling as well as in fluid intelligence changes across schooling were analyzed. Finally, relationships between the year of schooling and schoolchildren's ages and corresponding independent and joint influences on changes in fluid intelligence were investigated.

School education in the Russian Federation covers the periods of childhood, adolescence and youth, creating an opportunity to examine changes in fluid intelligence over a long time interval covering those 6.6 to 19.1 years of age. Additionally, studying schoolchildren from a single public school affords us more control over the educational environment.

## Materials and Methods

### *Participants*

A total of 1581 participants aged 6.8 to 19.1 years from one public school were involved in the study, 51.1% boys.

The primary school-age sample (grades 1–4) included 871 schoolchildren with a mean age of 9.23 (range 6.8–11.6), 51.5% boys. The secondary school-age sample (grades 5–9) included 507 schoolchildren with a mean age of 14.06 (range 10.8–18.0), 55.5% boys. The high school-age sample (grades 10–11) included 203 schoolchildren with a mean age 17.25 (range 15.3–19.1), 40.2% boys.

Table 1 provides a description of the sample by year of schooling, covering Grades 1–11.

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The study was conducted in accordance with the Declaration of Helsinki, and the protocol was approved by the Ethics Committee of the Psychological Institute of the Russian Academy of Education (Project identification code 2016/2–12). Prior to data collection, all subjects gave their informed consent for inclusion to the study. Written parental informed consent was obtained for all participants. Data collection was carried out at the school in strict accordance with the developed protocols and under the supervision of the researcher.

## Measures

The fluid intelligence was measured using the paper-and-pencil version of the Standard Progressive Matrices test (Raven, 2003). The test consists of 5 sets with 12 items within each set. The item is a matrix, where the participant must select one missing element from 6 or 8 proposed options.

The matrices become progressively more difficult with each consecutive set and test. No discontinuity rules were applied, and the participants performed all of the tasks. The sum of correct responds was calculated.

### **Statistical Approach**

In the first phase, the variability in the participants' ages for each year of schooling was analyzed. A correlation analysis of the participants' ages and years of schooling was carried out. Then, to compare the performance of age and grade as predictors for fluid intelligence, a multiple linear regression was used.

In the second phase, the means and ranges of fluid intelligence test scores for the samples of girls and boys for each year of schooling were calculated. To examine the sex differences and their effect sizes for fluid intelligence for each year of schooling, a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was performed.

In the third phase, to examine changes in fluid intelligence, a correlation analysis of grade and fluid intelligence test scores and polynomial regression of the total, male, and female samples were performed. Various regression models, both linear and nonlinear (quadratic and cubic), were fitted to the data. A polynomial regression was carried out on a total sample and on the female and male samples to analyze sex differences in age-related changes in fluid intelligence. Parameter estimation was performed with the least squares estimator.

## Results

In this study, the age-related changes of fluid intelligence measured as Standard Progressive Matrices test scores were analyzed for the whole schooling period.

### **Age, Grade, and their Impact on Fluid Intelligence Scores Changes**

In the first phase variability in the participants' age for each year of schooling was examined. The mean and range of the participants' ages, sample sizes, and the number of boys in each grade are presented in Table 1.



**Table 1**  
*Sample Description*

Level	Grade	N	Average age (min – max)	N <sub>boys</sub> (%)
Primary	1	146	7.86 (6.8–9.0)	51.4
	2	297	8.89 (7.6–10.3)	55.0
	3	333	9.83 (7.7–10.9)	52.5
	4	95	10.85 (10.1–11.6)	46.9
Secondary	5	102	11.82 (10.8–13.0)	63.7
	6	114	12.81 (11.7–14.2)	55.8
	7	98	13.78 (12.7–15.2)	53.4
	8	99	14.81 (13.6–16.2)	59.4
	9	94	15.77 (14.3–18.0)	45.3
High	10	100	16.72 (15.3–17.8)	35.6
	11	103	17.77 (16.3–19.1)	44.7
Total	1–11	1581	12.31 (6.8–19.1)	51.1

Table 1 demonstrates the average age for students in each school grade. According to the data, students' average age increases with school education by one year from 7.86 in Grade 1 to 17.77 in Grade 11. In other words, the difference in average age between school grades is one year.

At the same time, a wide range of age variability within one year of schooling was obtained.

Therefore, with one year of schooling, the range of students' age may be more than two years. For example, in Grade 1, 6.8 years as a minimum and 9.0 as a maximum were observed. For the final year of schooling, Grade 11, these values are even higher: with an average age of 17.77 years, both sixteen- and nineteen-year-old students can study in this grade. Such a wide range of students' ages in a single grade is first associated with the early or late admission of children to school based on their parents' decisions (6.5 or 7.5 years old). Additionally, a significant overlap in students' age throughout years of schooling was found. Therefore, according to Table 1, students aged 7.7 can be enrolled in Grade 1, 2, or 3.

Given the considerable variance in the ages of students in each year of schooling, the interaction between ages and grades and their independent effects on fluid intelligence scores were examined. First, a correlation analysis of students' ages and years of schooling was carried out. Then, a multiple linear regression with age and years of schooling as predictors of fluid intelligence to the data was fit.

The correlation analysis reveals very strong interrelationships between students' ages and their grades ( $r = 0.98$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ). However, despite such a strong correlation, age and years of schooling can have unique effects on a child's cognitive development (Nisbett et al., 2012; Pica et al., 2004; Schneeweis et al., 2014; Tikhomirova et al., 2019a).

According to the multiple regression analysis, 31% of the variance in fluid intelligence scores is explained by years of schooling ( $\text{adj. } R^2 = 0.305$ ,  $F = 649.01$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ) and 24% is explored by age ( $\text{adj. } R^2 = 0.242$ ,  $F = 400.2$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ). When both predictors are fitted into one regression model, years of schooling are a statistically significant predictor of fluid intelligence ( $\beta = 0.77$ ;  $p = 0.000$ ), but student age ceases to be a statistically significant predictor ( $p > 0.05$ ). This finding points towards school education being a more important factor than age in the development of intelligence and falls in line with published results (Nisbett et al., 2012; Pica et al., 2004; Schneeweis et al., 2014). We thus decided to proceed in using the grade level as the single predictor for fluid intelligence test scores.

**Sex Differences in Fluid Intelligence Scores Across the Schooling**

Table 2 presents the mean and range of values (in parentheses) of fluid intelligence for each grade.

Table 2 demonstrates the mean values and the range of fluid intelligence test scores for the samples of boys and girls for each year of school education. The maximum score of the Standard Progressive Matrices test is 60, and the minimum score is 0.

As shown in Table 2, at the primary and secondary levels of school education (from Grade 1 to Grade 9), slightly higher mean values of fluid intelligence are observed for girls than for boys. On the other hand, for high school education (Grades 10 & 11), the mean values of fluid intelligence for the group of boys are slightly higher than those for the group of girls.

To examine these sex differences and their effects on fluid intelligence in each year of schooling, a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was performed. Statistically significant sex differences in fluid intelligence scores, with girls scoring higher, were obtained for Grade 9 only ( $F = 12.2$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ;  $\eta^2 = 0.16$ ).

**Table 2**  
*Descriptive Statistics for Fluid Intelligence Scores for Grades 1–11*

Level	Grade	Girls	Boys
Primary	1	32.34 (9–48)	30.99 (9–50)
	2	37.32 (10–52)	36.93 (13–56)
	3	40.75 (18–53)	40.36 (11–56)
	4	43.67 (26–54)	42.70 (8–58)
Secondary	5	45.65 (29–53)	43.69 (22–56)
	6	46.02 (34–57)	43.08 (22–57)
	7	48.56 (33–56)	46.26 (13–58)
	8	47.57 (36–59)	46.27 (28–60)
	9	51.43 (29–60)	48.07 (32–58)
High	10	49.18 (40–57)	51.17 (32–59)
	11	52.42 (44–60)	53.68 (47–59)
Total	1–11	42.36 (9–60)	41.32 (8–60)

The observed changes in mean values of fluid intelligence test scores differ for the male and female samples. Particularly, for the female sample, a stronger improvement was observed from Grade 1 to Grade 5, and then a slight improvement in fluid intelligence was found up to Grade 11. For the male sample, Grades 1 to 5 were also marked by intensive improvements in mean values of fluid intelligence, but from Grades 6 to 9, a stabilization of fluid intelligence was found, and then from Grades 10 to 11, intensive improvement was observed again.

### **Changes of Fluid Intelligence Scores Across the Schooling**

Correlation analysis between the year of schooling and fluid intelligence on the both total and boys' and girls' samples was performed. Spearman's correlation coefficient was recorded as 0.58 ( $p < 0.01$ ) for the total sample. This result suggests the not too close interrelationships between the year of schooling and fluid intelligence scores. Sex differences were also found. Thus, higher correlation coefficient was found for girls' sample ( $r = 0.63$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ) than for boys' sample ( $r = 0.49$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ). This result may be associated with sex differences in changes in fluid intelligence during the schooling period. In addition, not a very high correlation coefficient may be a consequence of the nonlinear relationship between grade and fluid intelligence for this period (e.g., von Stumm & Plomin, 2015).

To examine linear and nonlinear relationships, a polynomial regression of the total sample and of samples of girls and boys was performed. Linear, quadratic, and cubic regression models were fitted to the data. The sum of correct responses of the Standard Progressive Matrices test was used as a dependent variable. Parameter estimation was performed with the least squares estimator.

Table 3 presents the results of the series of polynomial regressions of the total sample (T) and of the samples of girls (F) and boys (M).

As shown in Table 3, all regression models had acceptable fit to the data.

**Table 3**  
*Results of Polynomial Regression of Fluid Intelligence Test Scores*

Type of regression model	Model Summary					Parameter Estimates				
	R <sup>2</sup>	F	df1	df2	<i>p</i>	Const.	b1	b2	b3	
Linear	T	0.31	649.0	1	1477	0.00	33.39	1.86		
	F	0.36	397.7	1	690	0.00	33.62	1.89		
	M	0.26	273.3	1	785	0.00	33.24	1.81		
Quadratic	T	0.32	345.3	2	1476	0.00	30.16	3.53	-0.15	
	F	<b>0.39</b>	<b>220.4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>689</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>29.37</b>	<b>4.09</b>	<b>-0.19</b>	
	M	0.27	141.9	2	784	0.00	30.74	3.11	-0.12	
Cubic	T	<b>0.33</b>	<b>240.7</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1475</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>25.66</b>	<b>7.21</b>	<b>-0.92</b>	<b>0.05</b>
	F	0.39	148.2	3	688	0.00	27.31	5.79	-0.55	0.05
	M	<b>0.29</b>	<b>104.5</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>783</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>24.07</b>	<b>8.54</b>	<b>-1.25</b>	<b>0.07</b>

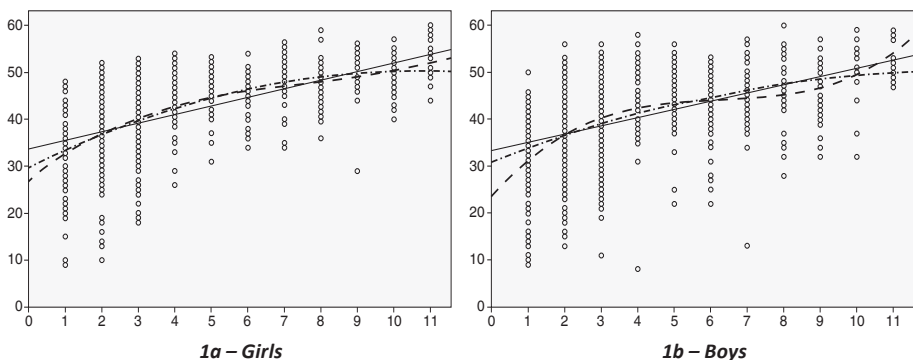
*Note.* The indices of the models that best fit the data are highlighted in bold.

The linear model explained no more than 31% of the variance in fluid intelligence scores for the total sample, 36% of the variance for the sample of girls, and 26% of the variance for the sample of boys. The results reveal that the nonlinear regression models explain more of the variance in the fluid intelligence scores than the linear model for all groups of schoolchildren (see Table 3). Thus, for the total sample, both the quadratic and cubic models better fit the data ( $R^2 = 0.32$  and  $R^2 = 0.33$  respectively,  $p < 0.001$ ), which suggests that the relationships are nonlinear rather than cubic. For the group of girls, both the quadratic and cubic models explain 39% of the variance in fluid intelligence scores, but the quadratic model uses the fewest parameters. Therefore, the quadratic model shows the best fit to the data for the school-aged girls. For the male sample, the largest percentage of the variance in fluid intelligence is explained by the cubic model ( $R^2 = 0.29$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Therefore, of the three tested regression models, this model shows the best fit to the data for the school-aged boys.

Thus, the changes in fluid intelligence with years of schooling are nonlinear for both girls and boys. At the same time, quadratic relationships are best applicable to changes in fluid intelligence found for the school-aged girls, and cubic relationships best describe the changes found for the male sample. In particular, the most intensive improvements in fluid intelligence scores were found for Grades 1 to 5, and a slight improvement up to Grade 11 was observed for the group of school-aged girls. For the sample of boys, the most intensive improvements in fluid intelligence scores were observed twice from Grades 1 to 5 and from Grade 10 to 11. Between Grades 6 and 9, the stabilization of fluid intelligence was fixed in boys. These different patterns of school-age changes in fluid intelligence are presented in Figure 1.

In Figure 1, Grades 1 to 11 are measured on the X axis and Standard Progressive Matrices test scores of 0 to 60 are measured on the Y axis. Fluid intelligence scores for each grade obtained from the linear regression (solid line), quadratic model (dashed line), and cubic model (dash-dot line) are illustrated.

**Figure 1**  
*Fluid Intelligence Test Scores for Each Grade Across the Schooling. The Distribution of Fluid Intelligence for Girls (a) and (b) Boys*



Note. Source: Authors.

Figure 1 demonstrates that a nonlinear graph fits the distribution of fluid intelligence quite well for both girls (Figure 1a) and boys (Figure 1b). For the sample of girls, the quadratic model and cubic model explain the most variance in fluid intelligence scores; however, the quadratic model uses the fewest parameters. Therefore, the quadratic model best fits the data for the female sample. As shown in Figure 1a, a great improvement in fluid intelligence was found from Grades 1 to 5 followed by a slight gradual improvement to Grade 11 for the group of school-aged girls. These changes are best described by a quadratic function, a parabola.

For the sample of boys, the cubic model explains the most variance and shows the best fit to the data. Figure 1b shows two significant improvements in fluid intelligence test scores in boys from Grades 1 to 5 and from Grades 10 to 11 with stabilization occurring between Grades 6 and 9. This pattern of change is best described by a cubic function, a cubic parabola.

## Discussion

This cross-sectional study aimed to estimate the changes of fluid intelligence scores measured by the Standard Progressive Matrices test for girls and boys throughout the schooling period. Moreover, sex differences in fluid intelligence scores at each year of schooling were analyzed.

The analysis reveals that despite a strong correlation between grade and schoolchildren age, grade is a more important factor in shaping changes in fluid intelligence during schooling. Therefore, when both predictors were fitted into a single regression model, grade was found to be a statistically significant predictor of fluid intelligence, whereas age was not. This finding points towards the significant importance of school education for children's cognitive development (Brinch & Galloway, 2012; Nisbett et al., 2012; Schneeweis et al., 2014). Moreover, formal education is very important for further cognitive functioning (Ritchie et al., 2015). In particular, the association between the duration of formal education and cognitive abilities measured at age 70 has a direct relationship after controlling for general intelligence factor *g*. The present analysis was carried out with school grade used as a single predictor for fluid intelligence test score changes.

This study shows that girls perform better than boys on fluid intelligence test tasks in each grade throughout primary and secondary school (from Grades 1 to 9). In contrast, during high school (Grades 10 and 11), the mean values of fluid intelligence test scores for the sample of boys were slightly higher than those of the sample of girls. However, statistically significant sex differences in fluid intelligence scores were obtained for Grade 9 only and age 15.7 with the girls having an advantage. An effect size of 16% was found, which is in line with Colom and Lynn (2004) who found that girls aged 12–15 achieve higher scores on intelligence test tasks than their male peers. In general, it was shown that there are no statistically significant sex differences in fluid intelligence test scores from Grades 1 to 8 and from Grades 10 to 11. This result corresponds with data on the lifelong absence of sex differences in fluid intelligence (e.g., Flynn & Rossi-Casé, 2011; Irwing & Lynn, 2005). According to a meta-analysis,

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there are no sex differences in means of fluid intelligence, but the range of test scores is wider for males than for females (Irwing & Lynn, 2005).

Sex differences in relationships between grade and fluid intelligence test scores were also revealed. A stronger correlation was observed in the sample of girls than in boys' sample. These results may be associated with nonlinear changes in fluid intelligence during school years as well as with sex differences (e.g., von Stumm & Plomin, 2015). It was shown that for girls, intensive development in intelligence begins at 9 years of age and continues up to 15 years of age. Then, after age 15, intensive development of intelligence in girls is slow, whereas boys demonstrate more intensive growth in intelligence than girls (von Stumm & Plomin, 2015). Thus, improvements in intelligence test scores show nonlinear patterns across childhood and adolescence.

Indeed, the results of polynomial regression reveal that nonlinear regression models explain more variance in fluid intelligence scores than a linear model for both girls and boys. Nevertheless, different nonlinear models fit to the data of our samples of school-aged girls and boys. The quadratic relationship was found to be the best fit to the pattern of change in fluid intelligence for our female sample. According to the results found for our female sample, the most intensive improvements in fluid intelligence test scores were observed from Grades 1 to 5 with slight improvements occurring up to Grade 11.

Changes observed in the sample of boys are best described by cubic dependency. For the male sample, the most intensive improvements in fluid intelligence test scores were observed twice from Grades 1 to 5 and from Grade 10 to 11 with stabilization occurring between Grades 6 and 9. These different changes in fluid intelligence are best described by a parabolic function for girls and by a cubic function for boys. These results are consistent with findings of previous studies (e.g., Colom & Lynn, 2004; Shangguan & Shi, 2009). In particular, it was shown that only for 10-year-old boys is there a positive correlation between levels of testosterone and success on fluid intelligence tests; at 12 years of age, there is a negative correlation, and at 8 years of age, there are no statistically significant relationships at all (Shangguan & Shi, 2009). These fluctuations in the influence of sex hormones on cognitive functioning may lead to a relative stabilization ("plateau") of fluid intelligence in boys from 6 to 9 years of schooling (aged 12 to 15) as shown in this study.

At the same time, the second intensive increase in fluid intelligence found for our sample of boys aged 16–17 may be related to the selection for continued school education Grades 10 and 11. In the Russian educational system, schooling from Grades 1 to 9 is compulsory, after which a student can continue academic studies at school or attend college for vocational training. As a rule, schooling in Grades 10–11 is chosen by students with good or excellent academic performance. According to the latest data, sex differences are found during schooling in Grades 10–11: the majority of girls continue to the senior grades as do boys, who have higher academic test results (Jackson et al., 2020). Therefore, the improvement in fluid intelligence test scores recorded in our study can be explained by a stronger "filter" for continuing education in high school for the sample of boys.

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Nevertheless, some studies have suggested the age-related specificity in fluid intelligence between girls and boys at school years periods (e.g., Colom & Lynn, 2004). In particular, sex differences in intelligence were found only from 12 to 15 years of age, with girls having an advantage in performance on intelligence tests (Colom & Lynn, 2004). At the same time, it was shown that at the age of 18, the test results of boys are superior to those of girls. In the present study, no statistically significant sex differences were found for senior school ages, although mean fluid intelligence test values were found to be slightly higher in boys.

To sum up, performance on fluid intelligence test scores improves nonlinearly with grade level, demonstrating sex differences after Grade 5.

Sex differences in the results of polynomial regression are also associated with a large percentage of the variance in fluid intelligence of girls explained by the number of years of schooling relative to boys. Within the frameworks of both linear and nonlinear models, the value of the coefficient of multiple determination  $R^2$  for girls varies from 0.36 to 0.39 while that for boys ranges from 0.26–0.29 ( $p < 0.001$ ). These data indicate more dependence of changes in fluid intelligence on the year of schooling for girls than for boys, confirming the relationship between behavioral levels and the specificities of sexual maturation (Miller & Halpern, 2014; Shangguan & Shi, 2009).

At the same time, the larger percentage of the explained dispersion in the variability of intelligence found in girls by “educational” age can also be explained within the context of the sociocultural paradigm (Frenken et al., 2016; Miller & Halpern, 2014; von Stumm & Plomin, 2015). Previously, it was shown that socialization processes, such as the sex specificity of education and parental stereotypes in the upbringing and education of boys and girls, can affect success on cognitive test tasks (Frenken et al., 2016; Miller & Halpern, 2014). It is generally accepted that girls, in demonstrating socially desirable behavior to teachers, complete tasks more thoroughly and accurately, study harder and, as a result, have more experience in training and operating with educational material, including nonverbal material. The gradual improvement in fluid intelligence indicators found in this study from 6 to 11 years of schooling for a group of girls may indicate a greater sensitivity to the effects of formal education. However, more research is needed to test biological and sociocultural effects on sex differences in the cognitive functioning of schoolchildren.

## Conclusion

The results revealed that the school-age change in fluid intelligence is nonlinear for both girls and boys. At the same time quadratic relationships are most applicable to change in fluid intelligence for school-age girls, and cubic relationships are best describing it in a group of boys. It is important to note, the study organized by cross-sectional design with appropriate limitations. Longitudinal studies are needed to examine the developmental trajectories of fluid intelligence.

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ARTICLE

## Short Learning Programmes for Skills Development Beyond COVID-19

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### ABSTRACT

The COVID-19 pandemic set a New Normal (NN) and altered the modalities of performing different activities. Several activities came to a standstill, resulting in job loss and school closure. New dynamics in the labour market emerged, such as Working-From-Home (WFH), Virtual Meetings (VM), Social Distancing (SD), and Downsizing (DS). These dynamics altered employer–employee relationships, which espoused new skills. The strategy was to change policies to work from home and use Information Communication Technology (ICT). However, many people were not adequately skilled to face the new challenges. This paper aims to describe what short learning programmes (SLPs) are, why institutions offer them and examine why individuals participate in SLPs. The author uses the Capability Theory (CAT) and the Critical Reality Theory (CRT) to explain why SLPs are crucial to face employment challenges beyond COVID-19. The main findings are that SLPs are necessary for everyone to be re-schooled and attain new skills needed at a specific time. Hence, many institutions offer SLPs to various learners. The contribution of this paper is the advocacy of SLPs to increase individuals' employability. Hence, SLPs are depicted as a means for skills development beyond COVID-19.

### KEYWORDS

knowledge, capability, unemployment, skills, development, short learning programs

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## Introduction

As the world attempted to come to terms with globalization and the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) changes, COVID-19 interrupted all activities, including education (Schleicher, 2020). COVID-19 affected schools' time, employment, and the quality and quantity of education. Amidst all this pandemonium, it is incumbent upon the education system to produce adept individuals to meet the unprecedented changes. This situation is comparable to the United States of America economic depression between 1929 and 1941, where the New Deal was introduced to save the education system (Fass, 1982). The New Deal outlined the responsibilities of federal institutions to manage education affairs in their local environments for the less fortunate. The Deal powered teachers from the less fortunate groups to benefit from the educational funds. Likewise, individuals must have the knowledge and skills to live, work, and thrive during unexpected changes. It is no wonder that society and personality change are needed to survive beyond COVID-19 and meet the challenges of the 4IR and other Industrial Revolutions (IRs).

In our situation, SLPs contribute to society and personality change to equip individuals with the proficiencies they need to face new challenges. Everyone needs skills to enhance personalities and provide societal changes in these changing times. The changes from globalisation, 4IR, and the COVID-19 pandemic (Beraza, 2018; Schwab, 2016) have drastically altered the workplace environment towards increased use of technology (Beraza, 2018) and created the New Normal (NN). Therefore, Information Communication Technology (ICT) studies through SLPs would be recommended to meet 21<sup>st</sup> century needs.

## Background

Globally, during COVID-19, institutions changed from contact to virtual learning (Georgiadou et al., 2020), and governments like Russia provided funds for ICT infrastructure (Nie et al., 2020; Revinova & Lazanyuk, 2021) and many others for sustainable development. In South African education after 1994 (the year of the end of apartheid), a lifelong learning framework using SLPs was adopted to redress the ills in education and attain social justice for everyone (Walters & Daniels, 2009). SLPs are used in Continuing Professional Development (CPD) in education institutions to learn specific skills (Melesse & Gulie, 2019; Thwala, 2021) and may attract monetary remunerations (Woessmann & Ludger, 2016) and enhance job satisfaction.

## Theoretical Framework

To fit in the NN in society, the author uses the Capability Approach Theory (CAT) and Critical Realist Theory (CRT) as theoretical frameworks to clarify several issues regarding SLPs. CAT is a normative framework for human life quality and development (Robeyns, 2006) and was used to explain individuals' lived experiences in choosing

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courses. It depicts what individuals are doing and their being (Nussbaum, 2000). It also deals with what individuals achieve. Individuals embrace human development in two folds: the ends and the means of development. The latter is vital, and individuals are directly or indirectly integral to all economic production to live and sustain others in society (Sen, 1989). Individuals need skills to be employable; hence, SLPs can upskill them in job opportunities and get better working conditions that improve their quantity and quality of life.

Sen (1992) presents two concepts of the CAT: functionings and capabilities. Functionings are the various roles an individual may undertake. Functionings are diverse and complex given that they range from individual to community-based and material to mental-based (Terzi, 2005). Functionings make up of intrinsic factors such as curiosity and desire to succeed. Community-based values like attaining education or skills command respect in any community (Gaskel, 2020). Capabilities recognise human diversity (Sen, 1992) in three aspects: individual characteristics, external environment, and capacity to transform the available resources (Terzi, 2005). Also, linking diversity to human justice is integral to human development. Therefore, to manage human development, one needs to manage the diversity of individuals regarding their functionings (achievements of a person) and capabilities (ability to achieve functionings) (Hinchcliffe & Terzi, 2009). L. Terzi (2014) argues that justice in institutions should be assessed according to individuals' diversity and let individuals benefit equally. Thus, this paper focuses on using SLPs to increase individuals' capability sets (Sen, 1989) and improve humans' ability and freedom to choose what to do and to why do it. Hence, SLPs can be a panacea to society and personality development.

The researcher used CAT to understand persons as "agents". These agents make up diverse goals for the community: motivations, habits, and sympathy of the individuals and the community (Sen, 1997). Hence, CAT has implications for the financial liberation of individuals related to the model of Homo Economicus since employment guarantees specific earnings. The robust and user-friendly model incorporates social norms, learning and cooperation, and interactive choices (Ng & Tseng, 2008). These interactive choices relate to individual behaviours in sociology, despite the criticism labelled against the model for being monolithic, which suggests enriching one person. This monolithic view can affect others as one person can be a resource to other people. Dealing with an individual can yield good dividends when everyone collaborates with another, making a chain reaction and benefitting many individuals. Therefore, the author argues that an individual is both a Homo Economicus (individual) and Homo Sociologicus (group of individuals—the society) (Ng & Tseng, 2008), given that all depend on one's self-interests. Considering the social view of norms (Weale, 1992), eight tenets are added to the social component that cannot be ignored as they are integral to the agent's decisions. These tenets include motivation for acting, rationality, freedom, morality and responsibility, action learning, human relations and social bonds, emotions, and preferences (Weale, 1992). All these tenets contribute to the individuals' decisions to take courses in formal schooling or through SLPs.

The author theorises that the SLPs dynamics' functionings and agents can be between the host institutions and the SLPs learners with the above social issues. CAT, as a normative theory dealing with functionings and agents in four specific contexts: companies, academic institutions, individual volunteers, and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), should sponsor SLPs to cater for all individuals in society. Unfortunately, no attention has been given to those four contexts. The author advocates for raising funds from such sources to support SLPs to cater for the less fortunate in society.

CAT describes what the object (SLPs) is about, but it does not explain why students and institutions engage in SLPs. Neither does it explain why the less fortunate are not included in SPLs. Thus, there is a knowledge gap about SLPs. This gap can be addressed using the Critical Realist Theory (CRT) to explain why SLPs are offered and why all individuals, irrespective of their education and financial status, should engage in SLPs. CRT focuses on the structure and its organisation. Learning should be fun and interesting to prepare all individuals for future life because the acquired knowledge and skills are needed in all areas. In SLPs, learners attain knowledge and skills to function in a novel format to bring societal change and meet life's novelties (Figure 1). The aim was to investigate SLPs' roles beyond COVID-19. Therefore, the objectives are to (a) explain the concept of SLPs, (b) examine why institutions offer SLPs, and (c) examine why individuals participate in SLPs.

## What are SLPs?

SLPs are offered in many institutions worldwide and are significant for lifelong learning (Melai et al., 2020). SLPs have different names, such as Short Professional Course in Spain (Sampaio et al., 2022) or short courses in the USA (Williamson & Heinz, 2021), France (Theodossopoulos & Calderon, 2021), the United Kingdom (Melai et al., 2020), South Korea (Kumar et al., 2022), Australia (Sokoloff, 2021), and Russia (Guzal, 2021).

In South Africa, SLPs have been recognised as an important educational component. The South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) defines SLPs as short courses and skills programs within short learning programs (South African Qualifications Authority, 2004, p. 14), formal or informal. The courses offered are less than 120 credit hours, which can be competence-based, where credits are awarded according to the specific assessment criteria or attendance-based with no credits awarded. Coombs and Ahmed (1974) define formal learning as taking place in an "institutionalised, chronologically graded and hierarchically structured educational system" (p. 8). Formal learning programs require applicants to exhibit basic attainment before enrolling for a course that culminates in certified qualification (La Belle, 1982). Conversely, Coombs and Ahmed (1974, p. 8) contend that informal learning is a "lifelong" procedure to gain knowledge, skills, and attitudes in different settings. This type of learning occurs in different settings (Brookfield, 1986), including informal settings.

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### ***Why Individuals Participate in SLPs***

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development study (OECD, 2018) shows that 32% of the jobs will change how they are enacted, while 14% will be automated. Increased use of technology demands that people be trained before using technology. Something more dramatic is that only 41% of adult graduates may find work leaving the majority, 59%, with no employment (OECD, 2018). It requires innovation to find how to absorb these graduates. One approach is to re-skill them through SLPs. For example, 66% of unemployed youths (Statistics South Africa, 2019) can be re-skilled through SLPs and take up or create employment.

Similarly, teachers who graduated from universities a few decades ago (20 years) may not have used computer simulations. SLPs should equip such teachers with technology to foster learning. ICT use in schools have reported positive gains in New Zealand even before COVID-19 (Brown et al., 2018). Recent studies shed the light on the current state in Brazil (Tomczyk et al., 2020), Russia (Coutts et al., 2020; Guzal, 2021), India (ILO & OECD, 2020; Kanwar & Carr, 2020), China (Fang et al., 2022) and South Africa (BRICS) (Kibirige & Bodirwa, 2021). SLPs will remain an indispensable tool for education beyond the pandemic.

### ***Why Institutions offer SLPs?***

Why do institutions offer SLPs? Why are SLPs necessary for everyone in the 4IR and beyond? The author argues that current job market uncertainties during the 4IR, especially during the onset of COVID-19, need to be addressed. COVID-19 has ushered in and amplified concepts such as NN and Working-From-Home (WFH), reducing human resource duties as everyone worked from home. Virtual Meetings (VM) minimised jobs for contact meeting logistics, Social Distancing (SD), and Downsizing (DS) (Bartik et al., 2020) created challenges. These and many other dynamics have altered employer–employee relationships and created uncertainty about what skills will be needed tomorrow. It has set in job instability (Béland et al., 2020) and no one can tell who will be jobless with the next dynamic change. Today, universities and companies offer SLPs to students or employees to improve production quality. It means anyone can be a candidate for SLPs in the ever-changing environment: teachers, doctors, et cetera.

Lifelong learning is in line with the Andragogy theory, which postulates that there is no end to learning as long as one lives. Thus, the theory explains the role of SLPs in educating individuals to attain knowledge and skills to succeed in the ever-changing environment. The author agrees with Albert Einstein in this context: “Once you stop learning, you start dying” (as cited in Kafle, 2019, p. 5). Unfortunately, according to OECD (2018), only 14% of the adult population engage in upskilling courses, SLPs, in the South African setting, suggesting that more needs to be done. In this paper, the author argues that individuals must be re-schooled and equipped with knowledge and skills. Also, the author contends that SLPs can be the panacea to position individuals ahead of the dynamic changes. Such dynamic changes point to the effects of COVID-19 on schooling and the notable changes caused by IR4 and other IRs. Therefore, SPLs can assist governments in reducing unemployment by re-skilling or upskilling individuals to meet the current context (Belsky & Mills, 2020).

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Notwithstanding the need for higher education, many with less educational attainment do not get employed. For instance, 6.7% of people with degrees were unemployed in 2018 compared to 28% with only matric attainment and 16% for Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) qualifications (OECD, 2018). It suggests that the more one is educated, the more chances of employment. It is more interesting considering we live in a knowledge-based economy, which makes adopting a Lifelong Learning approach crucial.

### ***SLPs Have Not Been Inclusive***

While SLPs have been used in the past, their use has not been inclusive, and there is a dearth of literature about their effectiveness (Hanbury et al., 2008). This dearth may be attributed to the long period it may take to see the impact, and results from such impact studies can better be gathered in longitudinal studies. For instance, SLPs were employed to build the capacities of teachers in introducing the Outcomes Based Education (OBE) curriculum. However, studies indicate they were ineffective in improving teachers' professional competencies to roll out the effective implementation of the new curriculum (Jansen & Taylor, 2003). The teachers were not oriented on what to teach in OBE, so many clerical and administrative tasks took teachers' time for preparation and teaching. During the workshops, they were given limited time to get a paradigm shift to implement the curriculum. Also, there were several changes in the curricula: Outcomes Based Education (OBE), National Curriculum Statement (NCS), and finally, Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS), which rendered mastering the teaching difficult.

### ***Targets of SLPs***

The purpose of the SLPs is to address individuals' capacity gaps arising from the ever-changing environment. The question is: Who are the clients of SLPs? It is those who have money to pay for SLPs fees while denying people living in poverty, as they cannot afford the fees. Thus, the current SLPs model favours the elites and the haves and is not for the have-nots (Kirsch & Beernaert, 2011). This lopsided access to SLPs by the less educated communities is a "ticking-time-bomb" for escalating unemployment, vulnerability to poverty, and crime. Something must be done urgently. Who should start it where it is most needed? Can SLPs be felt in the deep rural areas where unemployment is as clear as daylight? Can SLPs be developed to benefit the millions of unemployed individuals? The author believes SLPs should be tailored for these less-educated communities more than it has been recently, providing opportunities for social mobility.

The author posits that SLPs can be the panacea for producing empowered individuals to respond to unequivocal employment demands. This deficiency in employability skills is not only a South African problem. While Africa has 20% of the world's population under 25, there is limited preparation to succeed in the 4IR. For instance, South Africa's unemployment is 30% to 40%, which is increasing (Statistics South Africa, 2020). There is a need to engage these unemployed people in SLPs to gain the skills and knowledge needed by employers.



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## COVID-19 Effects on Education

Globally, education institutions had to close at one time (Li & Lalani, 2020), and over 90% of children were out of school because of closures (Guidance Note, 2020). While studies may not have quantified the overall impact of missing school, school closure effects on learning outcomes cannot be discreet. Learners lost time in schooling because of shutdowns, exacerbated by inequities for learners already lagging in education access. Schools adopted online learning as a stop-gap measure in different countries during school closures (Schleicher, 2020). Unfortunately, many children from rural areas in Low-and-Middle-Income Countries (LMICs) do not benefit from online learning because of limited technology and internet access (Bhula & Floretta, 2020). To salvage the situation, change the *modus operandi* and policies (OECD Policy Responses, 2020a) to allow new notions, such as working from home or online learning (OECD Policy Responses, 2020b). Hence, many education systems worldwide have re-opened in a hybrid format: online/virtual and alternate class attendance (Hargittai & Micheli, 2019) as NN. However, many children face challenges in adopting virtual learning in South Africa and other countries in BRICS (Anwar et al., 2020). As the COVID-19 waves come and go, the confusion continues, with schools shutting down and re-opening irregularly to cater for educational needs that include the safety of learners, teachers, and families (Meinck et al., 2022). It implies that all stakeholders in education should play new roles in supporting students' learning in this state of mutability.

In the South African context, schools closed for a few months and continued learning rotationally, where learners would attend school on alternate days. This rotational learning challenged the teacher and the learner to cover the required content in reduced time. This quick-fix method in education can result in producing individuals with knowledge gaps. Also, because of socio-economic challenges arising from the pandemic, some children did not attend school because their parents either lost jobs or their salaries were reduced, thus becoming financially vulnerable. To attain the job as a quantity factor and find the quality of working conditions (Sen, 1989) will remain a challenge now and in the future. Therefore, programs must equip individuals with basic knowledge and skills for survival in the 4IR and beyond. SLPs can provide individuals with skills to deal with knowledge gaps just-in-time in ever-changing contexts.

The competence of schooling is determined by the consistency between the quality of education and job market needs. Before the COVID-19 pandemic in December 2019, global discrepancies were identified between the graduates produced and the labour market demands (Verma et al., 2018). For instance, The World Bank's (Guidance Note, 2020) metric of "learning poverty," which refers to children who cannot read and understand a simple text by age 10, was a staggering 80% in low-income countries. This challenge was also exhibited in the low secondary education completion rate of only 35% (Brown, 2020). There is low proficiency in reading Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM), and a low proportion of university students per population in the school system. A study by van Zyl et al. (2012) acknowledged that

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South Africa's school system did not prepare learners adequately for higher education. The study indicated that many learners who joined universities lacked basic skills, such as reading and writing. These identified gaps in reading and writing can be addressed through SLPs.

### **The Deplorable Situation of the World Education System**

Through education, individuals are equipped with technical and non-technical skills necessary for productivity. Knowledge and skills are dynamic; thus, the labour market demands unique skills in different settings. It is no wonder that The Global Human Capital Report (2017) emphasized the significance of lifelong learning. If one lives, there will be new knowledge and skills to learn to keep abreast with change. Lifelong learning can occur through further education: formal, informal, long, or short duration since our focus is to reduce unemployment and increase efficacy for the employee through SLPs.

### **Crucial Issues at Hand**

Capability Approach Theory (CAT) is a theoretical framework for conceptualising human capabilities and functionings (Sen, 1980). CAT emphasises the quality of life individuals can attain and achieve. This framework is underpinned by three key concepts: functionings, capabilities, and freedom and agency. Functionings are about what an individual can do. Capabilities include an individual's achievements, which reflect what one can achieve (functionings). The last one includes an individual's freedom to choose what to do or become (Sen, 1985). Functionings are achievements, while capabilities are the abilities to achieve. For instance, functionings constitute abilities to study and achieve knowledge and skills in higher education. Thus, the capability approach has been used to conceptualise the role of SLPs in improving people's "capability sets", particularly what they choose and achieve to meet the changing market demands. Thus, Sen's CAT provides a lens to understand the potential efficacy of SLPs in increasing individuals' capability to choose and achieve during COVID-19, the 4IR, and beyond.

The author argues that SLPs can equip individuals with the required competencies. The COVID-19 pandemic is like a wake-up call to be ready for any unexpected change. While we have always known that change is the most permanent phenomenon in the world, no one ever imagined the changes that have occurred because of COVID-19. It can be likened to the great depression in the USA, where the education reform system adopted a New Deal to enhance skills for everyone. Similarly, it can be compared to the 1967 reform in Ireland, where education policy changed to remove inequality (Raftery & Hout, 1993).

Conversely, high-level education attainment resulted in inequality and altered parent-child relationships (Lucas, 2001). In this discourse, the author contends that keeping abreast with ever-changing contexts requires the acquisition of new knowledge and new skills (LeBlue, 2020). Change causes re-

schooling, and the author believes SLPs can be the new deal to prepare people to face new challenges.

Re-schooling is about up-skilling and re-skilling. Thus, people need to embrace lifelong learning to be a re-schooled society, especially in technology education (Rahmatullah et al., 2022). No one is so qualified in any field that there is no need for capacity building. SLPs are the panacea for capacity development to address personal and professional development challenges. New knowledge and skills gained from targeted SLPs can address capacity gaps, unemployment, and job dissatisfaction. It is envisaged that the 4IR will affect employment at all levels. Thus, the different sectors need to upgrade skilled people and infrastructure that promotes job opportunities in the 4IR and beyond.

## Discussion and Conclusion

This section deals with the main findings or the big picture regarding SLPs and discusses what SLPs are, why participate in SLPs, why offer SLPs, SLPs have not inclusive, targets of SLPs, and effects of COVID-19 on education. The main discourse the author advances is that SLPs are necessary for everyone to improve the *modus operandi* [the way of doing things] now and tomorrow beyond COVID-19. It is what one can achieve (Sen, 1985), and it is re-schooling and choosing what will meet the job market (Béland et al., 2020).

The author, on what SLPs are, used the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) definition of SLPs. They are short courses to enhance skills (Melai et al., 2020; South African Qualifications Authority, 2004), and they can be formal or informal. Currently, SLPs are offered in many institutions in South Africa (Table 1). Again, the author hypothesises that the more SLPs are offered, the more popular they will be. Hence, the need for this discourse regarding what SLPs in higher education now and beyond COVID-19. Considering individuals participating in SLPs, one wonders who needs SLPs. The author shows that everyone wants to (a) do better in his current job and (b) be guaranteed a job tomorrow. Hence, teachers, doctors, lawyers, artisans, nurses, et cetera, will be re-schooled to meet the changes in the workplace.

As shown in the section regarding why SLPs are offered, the researcher contends that institutions of higher learning and companies in South Africa offer SLPs to a diverse group of individuals (Table 1). These SLPs should narrow the gap between the working class due to changes in working environments. For example, institutions that offer ICT contribute to narrowing the digital divide. The need for institutions to offer SLPs is global, as shown during COVID-19, where virtual communication and learning were encouraged to keep abreast with duties in various countries (Coronavirus Research, 2020).

Before COVID-19 SLPs were not inclusive because they were considered a luxury, but during the pandemic, it became necessary to learn the NN to meet the demand of the workplace. Currently, SLPs offered at UNISA on what it terms a “just in time” and yet enough to keep individuals in employment. It was evidenced during lockdown; after that, workers learnt to communicate through Zoom<sup>1</sup>, conferencing,

<sup>1</sup> Zoom® is a registered trademark of Zoom Video Communications, Inc.

**Table 1**  
*A Few Samples of SLPs Offered by Various Institution in South Africa*

Group	Institution	Course Sample (Total courses offered)	Target	Duration
Institutions of Higher Learning	University of South Africa	Academic skills for different groups (20)	Professionals and students	Varies
	University of Witwatersrand	ICT in Education for Practitioners and Policy Implementers (5)	Professionals and students	Semester
	University of Cape Town	Data Handling for Primary Teachers—EDN2015CE (55)	Professionals and students	6 hours
	North West University	Designing Environmental Education Materials (40)	Professionals and students	Varies
	Cape Peninsula University of Technology	Writing Development Programme (5)	Professionals and students	≤ week
	Stellenbosch University	Data Handling (28)	Professionals and students	varies
	University of Johannesburg	ICT Solutions in Education (34)	Professionals and students	Varies
	University of Pretoria	Assessor Training (36)	Professionals and students	3 days
	Rhodes University	ISEA Integrated literacy workshop (5)	Professionals and students	Varies
	Walter Sisulu University	Information Technology Essentials (6)	Professionals and students	Varies
	University of Limpopo	Certificate in Inclusive Education (2)	Professionals and students	6 months/ block sessions
	University of Free State	Different courses (16)	Professionals and students	Varies
	Nelson Mandela University	Educational courses (83)	Professionals and students	Varies
Companies/ others	Commerce and Computer College of South Africa (Pty)Ltd	ICT certification (Not specified)	Professionals and students	Varies
	Afri-Training Institute	Various certification (Not specified)	Professionals and student	Varies
	Damelin Online Short Courses	Various courses (Not specified)	Professionals and students	Varies

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and submit reports from colleagues (Hargittai & Micheli, 2019; Hunsaker et al., 2019). What COVID-19 did was accelerate the need to use available for day-to-day duties. Thus, the need to learn technology links with the CA about what to learn (Sen, 1985) and why to learn it. This link is a knowledge gap that can be addressed using the Critical Realist Theory (CRT) (Archer, 1995) to explain why SLPs are offered and why all individuals, irrespective of their levels of education, should engage in SLPs. CRT focuses on the structure and its organisation. For SLPs to succeed, we need to link the structure and agency. CRT links what to why by providing the cause (Figure 1). It also addresses the seven ontological developments of critical realism broadly divided into three categories: basic, dialectical, and philosophy of metaReality (Bhaskar, 2020). Basic critical realism is level one, dialectical extends to level four, and the last three are dealt with as the philosophy of metaReality (Archer, 1995). These developmental ontologies are enacted in structure and agency (Booker, 2021), and they can safeguard against unemployment beyond COVID-19 and in eminent IRs. Hence a motivation for individuals' engagement in SLPs.

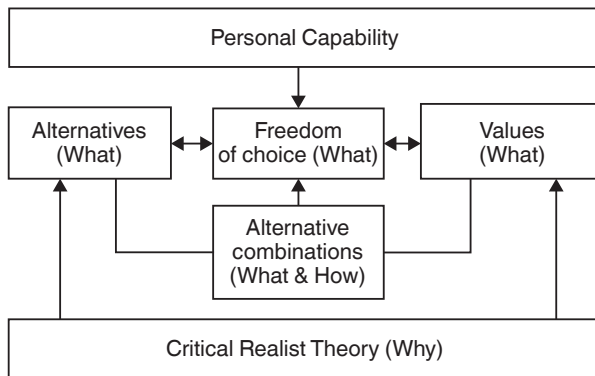
As stated in the section regarding the crucial issues at hand, engagement in SLPs enhances new knowledge and skills. In this way, a re-schooled society is created. Also, the re-schooled society will solicit sponsors of SLPs to enable the less fortunate to improve their skills. Thus, in this discourse, Capability Approach Theory (CAT) (Sen, 1985) was used as a lens to conceptualise what SLPs improve people's capabilities. In contrast, CRT provided the reasons for the enactment to avert unemployment beyond COVID-19. The author's discourse explored the current changes brought about by COVID-19 and the working conditions during and beyond COVID-19. The outcome of the discourses is that institutions offer SLPs considering Sen's Capability Approach Theory (CAT) (Sen, 1985) to explain the "what" concept, while the Critical Realist Theory (CRT) explains why individuals engage in SLPs. For example, the author used CAT as a lens to understand SLPs issues regarding workplace changes arising from globalisation, the 4IR and the COVID-19 pandemic. Besides CAT, the author used CRT to understand why institutions offer SLPs and why individuals choose to take available alternatives of upskilling through SLPs. After upskilling, one can do new jobs in a different context (Agha, 2022). While previous education emphasised technical expertise, there is an inevitable shift in employability skills to more social and soft skills (Kahn, 2017) and the use of ICT and internet of things (IoT) despite the fears raised by youths (Abramova et al., 2022). The 4IR, for instance, demands communication, teamwork; ethics and professionalism; lifelong learning; problem-solving, management, technology, decision making, critical thinking, and leadership (Clarke, 2016; Jameson et al., 2016). Many of these skills are hard to automate because they are associated with human interactions in different contexts.

Acquiring such skills from SLPs would make individuals more versatile, thus increasing their survival options. It calls for a deliberate effort to re-school individuals to empower them to meet the new market demands. The various capacity gaps must be identified, and customised SLPs should equip people with such skills, thus narrowing the capabilities gaps in different contexts. SLPs provisioning will have both short-term and long-term benefits. It will create jobs, as individuals use their newly

gained skills to improve their functionings. It is no wonder University of South Africa (UNISA) and others have well-established SLP programmes for various individuals' needs. In addition, the University of Johannesburg (UJ) has already established short online courses: *Artificial Intelligence in the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR)* and *African Insights*, SLPs—*Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs)*, which are limited in the country. To offer such programmes is a big endeavour and would require all stakeholders to work together as a team. As the African axiom goes, “it takes a village to raise a child” and “one ant cannot build an anthill” (Semali & Stambach, 1997, p. 15), suggesting that by working as a team, people achieve more. The participants need to be consulted on their passion to identify market needs and aspirations. To date, universities and companies offer SLP to students or employers to improve production quality. Anyone, such as teachers and doctors, can engage in SLPs. Figure 1 below illustrates a model for conceptualising SLPs for a re-schooled society. The model highlights the issues that influence individuals' decisions to consider capacity development through SLPs, and why institutions and students engage in SLPs.

**Figure 1**

*A Model to Understand What and Why Institutions as Well as Students Engage in SLPs*



Although SLPs have been around for decades and have been used as remedial programs, there is a paucity of literature on their impact on improving human capital. Higher education institutions should work closely with different employers to establish the apparent capacity gaps in the short term. It will generate those skills needed in the community and must be communicated to society. Also, there should be an evaluation of the quality and quantity of the SLPs. In this evaluation, the focus should be on how SLPs meet the communities needs. When considering the deficiencies, we need to consider the need for society capacity enhancement from a wide range of fields. There is a need to create inclusive SLP opportunities to include the low-skilled and less educated individuals to avoid further vulnerabilities. Thus, in this paper, there are two contributions: (a) this discourse motivates everyone to get re-schooled through SLPs to meet the ever-changing employment market; (b) there is a theoretical contribution regarding the use and the explanations of Critical Realist Theory (CRT)

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besides Capability Approach Theory (CAT) to generate a novel understanding of what and why SLPs are offered to all individuals (students) (Figure 1). The author borrows the words of Siry et al. (2012), who contend that society will attain a blend of doing and causative discourses. It suggests that society can access all forms of SLPs to advance skills development for their good.

In the long term, the key to unlocking Africa's prospects is to produce a skilled workforce. Therefore, there is a need for systemic changes in the education system, from the Early Childhood Development (ECD) level onwards, to give prominence to ICT and innovation and infuse social and soft skills in education curricular and co-curricular activities programming. Lobby for SLPs funding to also cater for the less fortunate in society. Establish quality assurance for SLPs in all sectors by appointing monitoring and evaluation officers to ensure quality. Also, blending humanity and technology for everyone on the globe to obtain security and boldness to face the future (Volini et al., 2021). It is envisaged that many SLPs graduates will gain knowledge and skills for their present and future work, especially as the world economy changes from a commodity economy to a knowledge economy. Similarly, the knowledge holders should get loans from the bank to establish SLPs.

Considering the COVID-19 pandemic, globalisation, and 4IR, chances for employment have shifted dramatically to favour technology-literate individuals. This paper highlights the need for a re-schooled society through SLPs to improve individuals' employability. Individuals without such skills will soon become irrelevant and thus be destined for a life of economic vulnerability. This paper highlights SLPs in providing re-schooling opportunities for all to meet the 4IR demands.

Since people have different capability sets (Nussbaum & Sen, 1993), SLPs should cater for their different needs. If they do not choose from the available resources, it will be "the tragedy of goodwill" (Floridi, 2006, p. 255). Re-schooling is a goodwill one can take from SLPs offered at various institutions. Thus, goodwill probably displays a readiness to participate in what is of interest in this discourse, which is getting everyone involved in SLPs to avert unemployment now and in the future.

Re-schooling is a goodwill one can take from SLPs offered at various institutions. Failure to take that opportunity is a tragedy where there is a lack of power to act on the available information. It implies that individuals are pressured to act on issues, and yet they have neither skills nor the resources to deal with the issues at hand. In that case, outsiders, like companies and NGOs, should promote and sponsor SLPs as a step in the right direction.

## Final Thoughts

Suppose there are opportunities to improve the functionings of less fortunate people with low socioeconomic status through re-schooling; there will be a community that will not function and limit national growth. The COVID-19 pandemic, globalization, and 4IR demands are likely to exacerbate the suffering of the less fortunate. This paper described SLPs as a building block for individuals' capacities to respond to labour market demands. The author used CAT and CRT to advocate for formal SLPs. Many

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informal SLPs are not documented and need further studies. The author contends SLPs can be a panacea for unemployment in the ever-changing world. Considering the formal schooling attained by individuals and the informal setups at the workplace, everyone needs SLPs to catch up with the recent developments in life. Hence, SLPs can be a panacea for everyone.

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ARTICLE

## Representing the Powerful Principle of Virtue Ethics: Commitment at Workplaces

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### ABSTRACT

The emergence of virtue ethics as a value foundation of society can be traced back to ancient philosophers. Having a committed workplace is a significant advantage for any organization. A committed workplace establishes a level of enthusiasm among employees that keeps them motivated to perform their duties and assignments, which provides benefit for both employees and organizations. Commitment at the workplace also provides subtle rewards such as pride, value, and positivity that one may experience. Irrespective of extrinsic or intrinsic motivation, some benefits are achieved thus driving commitment. However, another side of commitment referred to as blind commitment can ultimately make the company lose its susceptibility to innovations and adaptability to changes. This paper aims to explore the reasons behind commitment at the workplace as an appropriate paradigm of virtue ethics. The paper further subsequently discriminates this form of commitment from blind commitment for long-term benefits at the workplace. The paper aims to explore the extensiveness and intensity of virtue ethics that explains general moral philosophy and affects business and management ethics.

### KEYWORDS

philosophy, virtue, ethics, commitment, workplaces, organizations

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## Introduction

Moral theory often conveys ideas about actions that describe whether an action is right or wrong and good or bad. Moral theory attempts to answer the questions that replicate general moral debates, and discussions often lead to moral arguments. For example, when someone states that a specific action is morally right or wrong, it would be reasonable to inquire their thoughts behind the questionable action. Such inquiries lead to moral arguments, and these moral arguments lead to moral judgements which “are often of the utmost importance” (Waluchow, 2003, p. 15). Moral arguments are frequently accompanied by clarity of thoughts and understanding after a thorough analysis of problems, quandary, and notions that need to be addressed and practiced. For example, it may be considered morally wrong to kill a person, but if the person has raped and killed several innocent girls will it still be wrong? As another example, will an act of a father who could not keep a promise towards his child because of his work be considered as wrongful? A methodical examination of these examples would indeed provide a precision in the thought process as well as weigh the morality of actions. Some people would argue that, although the act of killing is wrong, killing a rapist is not a crime. Regarding the second example, breaking a promise is wrong but if the father’s intention is right and due to external factors, he cannot cope with the situation to keep his promise towards his child, he is not wrong. Likewise, there are several understandings of right and wrong actions and its philosophical underpinnings may sometimes lead to numerous moral judgements. Hence, moral theory is a must for every individual as it serves precision and provides reliability of an action.

We now come to believe that the hypothetical aim of moral theory is to unravel the fundamental nature of right and wrong actions such that one may become able to explain why a certain action is right or wrong and good or bad. However, the next question that follows is: Does there exist any fixed set of principles that determine whether an action is right or wrong? Studies indicate that perhaps several underlying principles may determine an action as right or wrong. However, “although the rightness or wrongness of actions depends on certain underlying features of actions, such features vary so much from case to case that there is no fixed set of underlying features to be discovered” (Timmons, 2013, p. 4). There are several moral theories like moral relativism, divine command theory, deontology, Kantian theory, moral pluralism, and many others that have been defined differently by moral theorists often counteracting the preceding definitions; nevertheless, the primary purpose of all moral theories is to provide standard and systematic answers to moral questions like *What to do?* and *How to behave in a particular situation?*

Thus, standing in the tradition of moral philosophy and moral judgement, it can be assumed that there is a standard moral point of view that navigates to make ethical decisions and that this moral point is further evaluated again based on ethical judgement. What can be derived from this approach is that there is a specific background of philosophy that provides an unbiased index where people can gauge their arguments or actions so that a decision can finally be made. Interestingly, concepts and theories on inability to comprehend or make decisions on rightness and



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wrongness, the goodness and badness of things also exist. One such theory claims that, in a certain situation that requires judgement or administration based on moral theory, one may not make subsequent decisions due to the lack of moral thinking. This theory is called moral or ethical blindness that incapacitates one's notions or views on making or acting upon a judgement. In such a situation, one may be completely blind towards adapting ethical dimensions towards deciding or concluding. In short, "people may behave unethically without being aware of it—they may even be convinced that they are doing the right thing" (Palazzo et al., 2012, p. 324) and realize later that they were involved in an unethical decision-making process. The central basis of ethical or moral blindness is that under certain circumstances the moral facet of deciding gradually fades away and that the decision maker slowly becomes unconscious of it. Often, such unethical decisions are promoted when one is completely disengaged from making decisions based on moral dimensions and this can be triggered by individualistic preferences, situational contexts, and organizational forces. Focusing on the organizational forces, employees may be more precisely associated with such virtues as obedience, commitment, and role identification. These virtues do not let the employees be logical or critically evaluate a given situation. Such blindness in moral thinking leads to blindness in commitment. Employees can completely turn a blind eye towards ethical decision-making and stay committed more towards their roles and responsibilities as instructed by their authorities than their ethics and moral.

Moving ahead with the flow of the paper, it would be apt to mention here that unlike other moral theories that primarily focus on the morality of an action, virtue ethics chiefly emphasizes the morality of character or, in simple words, on being good or bad. Overall, virtues are morally good qualities that deserve praise. In this connection, virtue refers to "a disposition or a pattern in someone's character or personality that leads them to act morally" (van Hooft, 2014, p. 1). These traits of character are admirable and often urged by the society to be practiced. They are loyalty, trust, kindness, courage, honesty, patience, and the like. However, the concept of virtue is not similar in every context. For example, the concept of virtue may vary between a male and a female. The male is considered as the head of the family who is supposed to take risks, be strong, and earn bread and butter for his family, while the female is expected to show the virtue of care and nurturance for the family. Similarly, such professions as medicine and nursing practice modesty and devotion, whereas the military professions consider these virtues as meekness and estimate straightforwardness and assertion. Furthermore, the younger generation may observe the concept of virtue different from the older generation and likewise. Let us say the older generation would believe in walking to save money, whereas the younger generation would ride vehicles to save time. In the examples mentioned above, each of virtues stands correct based on its respective context. Studies claim that even if one's attainment of a virtue is tied to some culturally, socially, gender, or generation "dependent particularities, one relatively quickly learns their formal and simultaneously universal core" (Höffe, 2010, p. 129). In a nutshell, we understand that virtues are mostly context-dependent. One immediately learns the virtue and also understands how it is supposed to be used in its specific and universal mainstay. When someone is loyal, it is immediately learned

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that loyalty is the key to building good relationships. Loyalty must be maintained at personal grounds, professional and even national levels. This virtue becomes highly compatible with one's character. In contrast, for those who have not learnt in general the use of loyalty or have not shown devotion or faithfulness, this universal core of loyalty is unidentified and thus remains truly unclaimed.

As already discussed, virtues emphasize characteristic traits that guide how an individual ought to behave. However, virtues are sometimes confused with values. In their study, van Oudenhoven et al. (2012) state that values are desirable but may not be put into practice and that is why not all values may be considered virtues. Common examples under this category are humor, beauty, and intelligence that, although being values, may not be virtues, as virtues "refer to concrete social interactions between individuals, which is why virtues can become guiding principles when people try to enhance social cohesion or integration of immigrant groups" (p. 29). Based on similar examples, the display of commitment can then be considered as a virtue, since commitment augments social bonding (Hirschi, 1969). Thus, commitment as a virtue stands equal along with other moral characteristic features such as honesty, sincerity, civility, dedication, competence, courtesy, tolerance, justice, integrity, compassion, benevolence, truthfulness, trustworthiness, courage, faithfulness, collegiality, loyalty, optimism, and selflessness and can be perceived within the cluster of virtue ethics (Lawton, 2005) that improve interpersonal connection and bonding.

Commitment is considered as an act of "resolution, a plan, a decision, a choice that is treated by the person making it as not to be altered simply at will" (Chartier, 2017, p. 71). An act subjected to change or altered as and when required or according to convenience is not commitment. Rather, an act that is more conscious and determinate is commitment. Commitment is caring deep with no holding back. The notion of commitment is purely distinct and originates, in its most profound form, from an individual's perception, heart, or inner self. It may "not be confused with intention to follow a course of action or with involvement in a course of action" (Walton & Krabbe, 1995, p. 14) because the intention is only a thought of doing an action and involvement reveals the degree of participation in it. On the other hand, commitment is an intense affair.

After understanding the concept of commitment as a virtue, it is further essential to gauge its depth at the workplace. Workplaces are rapidly shifting and so does our need to understand the actions and consequences of commitment or the complexities involved in the process and the varying results that are achieved to provide for diverse workplaces' practices and policies. It is essential to examine the inconsistent concepts related to commitments at the workplace which have been relatively significant because of workplace concerns. In an organization, a committed employee is considered as the one who sticks through ups and downs, does work diligently, puts a lot of efforts to increase the productivity, protects organization's assets and makes organization's goals as one's own. However, numerous changes affect workplace commitment such as changing relationships, work forms, people and positions, and organizational goals. Each change has made commitment more significant and applicable than ever. Furthermore, any such a change or drive that

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keeps the level of enthusiasm high in an employee igniting a feeling of responsibility towards the organizational goals, mission, and vision or any other relevant targets in the workplace is termed as workplace commitment.

At such an expository point when we now have an awareness of workplace commitment, the question that arises is: Does there exist a drawback of the commitment too or in other words are there any limitations to commitment? Will the virtuous act of commitment be justified if an organization “leads employees to accept the status quo even if it ultimately means that the company loses its ability to innovate and adapt to change” (Meyer & Allen, 1997, p. 3)? Alternatively stated, does blind commitment (Randall, 1987) stand morally correct even if the organization provides pay checks only for the working hours, but with an indefinite approach towards the employees to promote learning and growth? Studies indicate that “high level of organizational commitment can blind employees to evil and render the individual vulnerable to unethical and corrupt behavior in the interests of achieving corporate goals” (Hildreth et. al., 2016). Too much of commitment remains unidentified causing ill-effects on health, happiness, and creativity. Blind commitment may end up turning the employees exposed to risks and hazards in an organization. The current paper explores the importance of commitment as powerful principles of virtue ethics and also emphasizes the limitation of employee commitment mostly focusing on blind commitment.

## Literature Review

The study of commitment has been a topic of grabbing interest and a radical concept to comprehend the varying nature of human behavior. Interestingly, commitment has been conceptualized and defined variedly in the literature. As a study but “treated as a word requiring no such definition” (Becker, 1960, p. 32), commitment was predominantly and explicitly studied in the fields of psychology and sociology. However, after 1960, most of the workplace literature mentioned the notions of commitment and loyalty of employees towards an organization only being highly conformed than that of their objectives. At such a point, the research interest of psychologists and sociologists centralized on the engagement of employees in collective actions like strikes and negotiations. Through commitment towards their employers, union groups are able to grapple with the difference of status and power between the workers and the management thus improving social welfare (Roethlisberger & Dickson, 1939). Gradually, the notion of commitment gained widespread use in the workplace literature. Although many authors studied commitment as a predisposition and a mechanism through which commitment to a course of action may occur (Becker, 1960), there were other studies which viewed commitment more as a psychological perspective largely based on attitude (Kiesler, 1971). This attitude unites an employee with a goal, and the behavior followed by the drive to achieve the goal is considered as a commitment. Contemporarily, it was Hall (1971) who described career commitment as “the strength of one’s motivation to a chosen career role” (p. 59). Further studies also indicated the experiences of the employees who had faced several hardships attaining rewards that

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in one way or another encouraged their bonding with an organization (Grusky, 1966). Henceforth, multiple constructs on commitment at workplaces such as cosmopolitan integration and organizational introjections (Gouldner, 1960), organizational control and use of power for employee management (Etzioni, 1961), escalation of commitment (Staw & Fox, 1977) were identified providing insightful comprehension of commitment and its study. Later, some authors described it as a relative strength of an individual's identification and involvement in a particular organization (Steers, 1977). It was after the development of the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (Mowday et al., 1979) or later the Three Component Model (Allen & Meyer, 1990) of organizational commitment containing three components—attentive commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment—that corresponded to distinct psychological states and achieved a broad recognition, “a construct of importance to employees and organizations that managers could measure and attempt to influence” (Klein et al., 2009, p. 6). Studies indicating the same reasons describe commitment as a “psychological state” (Allen & Meyer, 1990, p.14), a “psychological attachment” (O'Reilly & Chatman, 1986, p. 493) or “psychological bound” (Mathieu & Zajac, 1990, p. 171). Other studies claimed that “commitment is an attitude that develops from a process called identification, which occurs when one experiences something, someone or some idea as an extension of oneself” (Fink, 1992, p. 7). Still, more studies described commitment as a constituent of three factors like “a strong belief in and acceptance of an organization's goals and values, a willingness to exert effort on behalf of the organization and a strong desire to maintain membership in an organization” (Mohan, 1993, p. 71). Over the past two decades commitment was mentioned within several conceptualizations with some variations, however, “despite more than 40 years of theory development and research there is still no easy answer” (Klein et al., 2009, p. 39) to a proper definition of commitment.

The origin of ethics often arises from the simplest questions like *How to lead a life?* and *What one must do to lead a good life?* Answers to these questions are in one's wants in life. A little contemplation would clarify that there are always good things like living and doing well that one most importantly wishes to achieve. Everything in life is based on desire, that is stronger than a mere wish. While wishes remain in thoughts, desires generate actions. These actions are aimed at achieving one's desires. Desires are the sources of actions that represent human living. Early ethicists developed far-reaching accounts on moral psychology and human behavior because of the same reasons. Ethicists view ethics as life-forming actions derived from a basic concept that “if what we do originates in our natural desires, then the ethics originates in our natural desires for doing well and living well” (Devettere, 2002, p. 13). One explanation that may be put here is that our living is moved mostly by desires and not solely by reason. These desires function independently of reason. The psychology of desire bounces from the thoughts based on cognitive ability and can be rational or from the feelings without much reflection that can be non-rational. Studies also claim that experiences take place when there is conflict between non-rational desires and reason. For instance, at times our bodies feel the need to get indulged and this provoke us to gratify what we usually judge to be insensible or be

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angry at actions that we deprecate as unfair or malicious, “it is when this conflict occurs that the desires are said to be irrational as impelling us to volitions opposed to our deliberate judgements” (Sidgwick, 1884, p. 11). Sometimes we give in, sometimes we do not—and that is when we strongly feel the impulsive force of such irrational desires. Mostly, such irrational desires are common among animals for their actions are determined by their instincts resulting from the incapability to reflect.

Interestingly, Plato (ca. 360–380 B.C.E./1888) had profound concern about defining different aspects of desires. In his book *The Republic* (Book IV), Plato mentions that sometimes non-rational desires may be a cause of some definite behavior among mature human beings. Plato describes that three parts of human soul that are the appetitive, the spirited, and the rational have their own desires consisting of urges towards pleasure like basic and bodily needs, emotions like sorrow, happiness, anger, and goodness like ones that are truly good respectively. The rational aspect based on logical reasoning decides whether the appetitive and intense desires are good for human life and living. While various philosophers interpret the three aspects of desires differently, Socrates believes, all human desires are rational. Plato claims some of the non-rational desires spring from the appetitive and spirited zones. Ethics for Socrates is rational as “it’s based on accurate knowledge that assists in making moral decisions, while for Plato, it is more than rational as we need to shape and form our non-rational desires through training, education, and the development of good habits, dispositions, and attitude, while Aristotle calls it intellectual virtue and character virtue” (Devettere, 2002, p. 16). Hence, virtue ethics focuses mainly on characteristics like justice, courage, honesty, love and the like. Plato’s view within the tradition of work and commitment elucidates that “everyone born into this world has an innate predisposition for a particular kind of work. Only by the finding and doing of this work can a person become who he or she truly is” (Sworder, 2005, p. 184). Only this predilection solely determines an individual’s personality, irrespective to any other comparisons with social conditioning, birth place, family background or any other factors that define the quest of human existence. The sole purpose of life is to carry out this work and make efforts to see that the task is completed. Furthermore, Plato strongly believes that every individual is naturally in-built for one specific kind of work only and is better served by doing just that since this is what complies with one’s intrinsic inclination. Considering his tradition towards ethics, Plato just like Aristotle maintains a virtue-based eudemonistic conception of ethics which solely delves around the happiness or well-being of an individual. On this, Plato preserves “the highest aim of moral thought and conduct and the virtues are the requisite skills and dispositions needed to attain it” (Frede, 2017). For example, the requisite skills of a race horse are whatever that drives it towards the commitment of running well. Similarly, the skill of an eye enables it to see well. This further ideates that anything that has excellence enables things to perform well and this is what Plato embarked on to ascertain, “a truly satisfactory account of any virtue would identify what it is, show how possessing it enables to live well, and indicate how it is best acquired” (Meinwald, n.d.). What is imperative therefore is the stringent and equivalent connection that keeps together work, ethics, and commitment and enabling and engaging rational emotional response towards stimuli.

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As an umbrella term, virtue ethics includes several of distinct theories and claims that provides distinguishing advances towards ethical and moral issues. These theories have originated in the works of Plato, Aristotle, Hume and others, it would therefore be quite an impossible and exhaustive task to narrate all the diverse theories. However, this paper would attempt to provide a glimpse wherever apt, more from the unparalleled theories as prescribed by Aristotle (ca. 350 B.C.E./1889) as it was here in his theories that reflected the development of ethics, moral psychology, and individual behavior. In the words of Aristotle, “virtue is the law of our nature under which law we are born” (Aristotle, ca. 350 B.C.E./1889, p. ix) and by that same law if we could attain any virtue we would be satisfied. This concept has also been backed by Crisp and Slote (1997) as they mention that “in his book *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle argued that the best life for a human being—*eudaimonia*—consists in the exercise of the virtues (or the ‘excellences’)” (p. 2). In other words, a life cannot be worth living without the exercise of virtue ethics. Although such theories have been highly criticized by Moore (1962) that “Aristotle’s definition of virtue is not adequate and express a false ethical judgment considering it highly unsystematic and confused, owing to his attempt to base it on the naturalist fallacy” (pp. 176–177).

Some authors understand the concept of virtue ethics by distinguishing it from deontology and utilitarianism. They explicate that while a utilitarian chiefly emphasizes the consequences of doing an action that in ways make the most of well-being, a deontologist primarily underlines actions that deal duties so one acts in accordance with moral duties, virtue ethics emphasizes “motives and character of moral agents” (Hursthouse, 1999, p. 2). Both utilitarianism and deontology deal with ethics of actions and behavior, not the outcome or consequences. Substantiating this claim, some studies reveal that both utilitarianism and deontology have severe limitations as they leave no space for motivation or cognition often leading to contradicting contexts as ethics “measure and compare the utilities of various people and reduce ethics to rules and leaving no place for conscious choice giving rise to conflicting rules” (Storchevoy, 2018, p. 56). Only virtue ethics strives to remain in a transitional position emphasizing exclusively the requisites of utilitarianism, deontology, and other ethics. Virtue ethics is rich in norms of excellence of character and well-disposed in “reason, feelings, desires, motives, emotions, as well as actions” (Swanton, 2001, p. 16218). Virtue ethics is thus an amalgamation of all the exquisite inner states that construct and reflect an individual’s character. Together, all these intrinsic qualities produce moral goods; however, “the combination of motivation and reason in specific contexts distinguishes virtue ethics from utilitarianism and deontology” (van Staveren, 2007, p. 27). Hence, while virtue ethics comprises all valued attributes, the character is reflected only on having good motivations and good reasons for actions. Griffin (1998) further supports this, claiming that “the virtues are grounds, they provide reasons, for our decisions about right and wrong” (p. 57). In other words, virtues are plain and basic, giving judgements about the right and wrong actions. Still, further studies identify virtue ethics with personality traits and describe it as “a disposition to act, desire, and feel that involves the exercise of judgment and leads to a recognizable human excellence or instance human flourishing” (Yearley, 1990, p. 87). Virtue ethics hypothesizes the

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distinctive states of an individual that persuades leading to an action considering those that induce morally good actions or more comprehensively socially acceptable actions. It is based on the principle that an individual with moral virtues is certainly ethical in comparison to others who solely follow rules or fulfil duties. Hence, here the emphasis is upon the character of a person and not on the nature of their actions. Essentially, the approach defends that people should act consistently, which is the crucial characteristic of ethical people.

Providing a detailed analysis on virtue ethics and workplace commitment, now the question arises in the concept of moral blindness and particularly, considering the context of workplaces, to what extent or not the concept of moral blindness is reflected. The concept of moral blindness is proposed by Bernard Stiegler in his book *States of shock: Stupidity and knowledge in the 21<sup>st</sup> century* (2015), where he states that moral blindness is an act of stupidity. While he concludes that stupidity is human; however, the lack of thinking links to blindness. However, Bird (1996) views that people in fact carry moral beliefs but somehow fail in articulation. Bird expresses, “they remain silent out of deference to the judgements of others, out of fear that their comments will be ignored or out of an uncertainty that what they might have to say is really not that important” (p. 1). They may even fail to raise questions about happenings that might need investigation or further questioning. This makes them morally mute or silent. In other words, Bird defines moral blindness as a state when “people fail to see or recognize moral concerns and expectations that bear upon their activities and involvements” (p. 85). Interestingly, moral blindness takes place at all levels: personal, social, and more particularly at professional levels with extensive consequences. For instance, “unethical behavior may be deeply ingrained in an organization’s routine procedures, including its related artifacts like forms, standard operating procedures” (Kump & Scholz, 2022). These routine procedures may execute employees to carry out their roles and responsibilities in a way like things are often done, i.e. without questioning. In other words, such unethical practices are routinized without much critical thinking or questioning resulting in blind commitment.

### **The Virtue of Workplace Commitment**

Workplaces are dynamic systems working for a mission. There are many factors that help run this system and affect its growth development. Commitment is one of the many radical factors that affect the performance of a given workplace. It is also apparent to understand why employees remain committed to their work or organization. Some studies claim that the shifting demands of the current markets and organizations, the increasing attachment of more and more people to the organization indeed gets critical “when innovation, continuous improvement, high-quality standards, and competitive prices are demanded of companies and employee discretionary effort comes to be an essential resource” (González & Guillén, 2007, p. 401). Other expressions also suggest that the objective may be either intrinsic originating from within self like personal values, attributes, or extrinsic arising from external factors like norms and work experiences that keeps employees motivated to move forward.

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Reasons behind an employee's commitment towards organization are numerous, they vary from employees to employees. However, research reveals that it all depends on the compatibility between employees and organizations that occurs when "at least one entity provides what the other needs or they share similar fundamental characteristics or both" (Kristof, 1996, p. 5). General fundamental characteristics may be common goals that both an organization and employees share. Further studies disclose that commitment takes place mostly because of values (Bar-Haim, 2019, p. 16) found as a common feature in both employees and an organization. Another reason that binds an employee with an organization is an employee's sense of identification with the work that they do, so much that they are entirely absorbed into it. Some may connect more with team spirit being the ideology and never letting it down. Others do it for an organization as a whole and how it works for its employees and contributing to that effort is the driving factor behind commitment. Hence, one may assume that each reason is specific and different from others and each reason indicates high levels of commitment. Each reason further reveals some kind of characteristics traits like having values, sharing commonality, identification with work, not letting co-workers down, obligation towards an organization. These characteristic traits are morally good and are valued as fundamental principles on a morally good being. Such virtues are comprehended to promote collective and individual greatness.

Virtue ethics has been regarded as an unremitting process where individuals evolve for good. Workplace environment today has primarily focused on virtue ethics as it is virtue ethics, although not the only parameter, that contributes to the growth and expansion of an ethical mindset. Some research states that the ethics approximated by Aristotle often "diverges from his predecessors as he believed that individual character was at the heart of ethical behavior rather than compliance with rules or duty" (Meglich, 2015, p. 2). According to Aristotle (ca. 350 B.C.E./1889), the theory of virtue ethics has its own strengths comprising that "the more involved are people in virtuous acts, the happier they would be as happiness is the chief good and as an energy of the soul according to the best virtue in a perfect life" (p. xvi). However, taking happiness as the sole purpose of life, a question arises: Can the pursuit of happiness be relied on the act of commitment? As one study professes, "a commitment involves two components. One is an act: the summoning up of a resolve. The other is the content: whatever is the object of the resolve" (Cahn & Vitrano, 2007, p. 1888). From the said perspective, it may be suggested that unless an employee intentionally and willingly attempts to resolve something he may not be involved in the virtuous act of commitment. One has to learn and practice virtues to be virtuous consistently. Perhaps that is why when employees at the workplace involve themselves more into commitment willingly and persistently, they tend to remain happy and thereby be liable to still remain more committed. It acts like a cyclic process.

Workplace commitment is largely driven by employees' motivation. Studies believe that "commitment can serve as a particularly powerful source of motivation and can often lead to persistence in the course of action even in the face of opposing forces, such as outcome contingencies or fairness concerns" (Gagné,



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2014, p. 37). Many theories and research compare motivation and commitment revealing some similarities. Although both motivation and commitment are the forces mostly implicated for behavior, however, motivation is a broader concept than commitment and “commitment is one among a set of energizing forces that contributes to motivated behavior” (Meyer et al., 2004, p. 994). Most importantly, commitment is generally allocated and is confined to major decisions and long-term implications such as commitment to continue the work in an organization even in trying times or commitment to continue the work with a client, whereas motivation is reserved with minor or short-term implications such as motivation to continue with a team or a project or simply to organize one’s workstation. Aristotle virtue ethics reflects moral questions like *What kind of person do I want to be?* instead of *What should I do in these circumstances?* (Waluchow, 2003, p. 216). In other words, virtue ethics is a character-based ethics fostering individuals to develop good character and motives. According to Aristotle, the significance of motivation plays a vital role in the moral assessment of actions and people. Studies rightly claim that “the ethical assessment of a person’s character is determined only by the motives that determine his actions” (Gaut, 2018, p. 249). However, ethically irrelevant actions that get motivation through any feelings or thoughts may not be considered entirely ethically wrong. This suggests that “the character traits arise from the basis of virtue that is expressed behaviorally because of conflicts with emotional or cognitive traits” (Fleming, 2003, p. 60). Many times, at the workplace, employees may be driven towards wrong actions or dealings for instant gains or shortcuts to success. They may have inappropriate thoughts but can be ethically good as they may have the capability to resist any influence of such thoughts and feelings on their will. Thus, it may be assumed that thoughts and feelings that do not motivate insignificant or unethical actions are equally crucial. Commitment as a virtue is deeply rooted with motivation, embedded and infixed, difficult to remove.

Aristotle claims that “virtue can be either natural or acquired by habit, teaches to think rightly respecting the principle” (Aristotle, ca. 350 B.C.E./1889, p. 197). Does it mean that commitment is a natural tendency and it comes effortlessly to the employees? Virtuous character evolves through recurrent practice as one study asserts “by building, we become builders, by playing the lyre, lyre players and so too we become just by doing just actions and temperate by doing temperate actions” (Rhode, 2019, p. 5). To be precise, much of character is produced through repeated activities so many times that this becomes an individual’s second nature thereby establishing a virtuous disposition of character. Thus, the situations compel people to shape their characters either by bringing something to the situations or taking something away from them. This something is character generally interpreted as positive traits. Furthermore, character interpreted as positive traits explain us ways to lead a good life reflecting stability with choice and will. Natural virtues promote morally good actions and arise from “virtues as the core characteristics like wisdom, courage, humanity, justice, temperance and transcendence that are universal, perhaps grounded in biology through an evolutionary process” (Peterson & Seligman, 2004, p. 11). However, virtue as a rational nature is highly unstable because while

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the inherent traits may drive towards a courageous action, willingness and need may still drive into a conflicting direction which is why habituation is required. As one study explains, “habituation in humans can produce contrary dispositions and the directions in which these dispositions take shape are determined by desire and choice” (Leunissen, 2017, p. 37). This study claims and confronts that virtue traits cannot be permanent and steady; habituation causes an immense impact. Still, more studies claim that natural inclinations may be shaped by some kind of training or education, “the authentic character virtue does not arise until a person does not take charge of his or her life and freely decides what when and how to perform the actions that develop the character” (Yuen, 2020, p. 100). It is evident that commitment as a virtuous act also comes to employees only when they have the freedom to perform their duties that develop their character.

The above section focused mostly on the philosophical analysis of the reasons behind employee’s commitment at the workplace. However, the section below studies the Three Component Model (Allen & Meyer, 1990) that focuses on the psychological reasons behind employees’ commitment at workplaces. The model determines primarily on three factors that are affective commitment (emotional connection), continuance commitment (fear of losing) and normative commitment (obligation) that emphasizes the “want to, need to and ought to” (Matusitz, 2013, p. 234) perspective of commitment. However, it is important to comprehend that “affective, continuance and normative commitment are considered to be components rather than separate types of organization commitment” (Goffin & Helmes, 2000, p. 291). One should not be mistaken that the employees are categorized under these three components; rather, these three components describe how each employee’s feels for the organization at varying degrees. Let us understand the concept in detail and in connection with Aristotle’s philosophical distinction of virtues as a reference that would provide a robust explanation of commitment at workplace.

Aristotle (ca. 350 B.C.E./1889) in his *Nicomachean Ethics* describes that there are many virtues that humans seek through actions and relationships and these virtues can be deterministically ordered according to the relationships. Aristotle further describes the three ends in a relationship that dwell on friendship, namely “friendship for utility, friendship for pleasure and friendship of good people” and this concept clearly solidarizes with the concept of organizational commitment with the three-component model of psychological mindset that are affective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment. Aristotle’s friendship for pleasure is connected to the areas of feelings and desires which can be identified with affective commitment where emotions play a pivotal role and explain one’s attachment towards an action. Similarly, friendship for utility is like continuance commitment where people pursue reward or utility and further make the decision of leaving or staying in an organization after an analysis of cost-benefit principle. And lastly, friendship of good people is compliant with normative commitment where employees stay committed with the organization to pursue the objective of personal distinction or fulfilment. The subsequent sections study in details each of the commitment as prescribed by the three-component model (Allen & Meyer, 1990).

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***Affective Commitment***

Affective commitment is the psychological state of employees where emotions play a vital role. It refers to “the emotional attachment, identification with and involvement” (Allen & Meyer, 1990, p. 2) at a workplace. There is a genuine desire to be part of the organization as an employee receives job satisfaction. Many authors also tend to claim that “affective commitment develops when involvement in an occupation proved to be a satisfying experience” (Coetsee & Roythorne-Jacobs, 2007, p. 63). In other words, when the employees are provided with ample freedom and opportunities to learn, grow, and develop their skills there will originate a sense of emotional attachment towards the organization. Studies clearly mention that “employees who had greater freedom to accept their job expressed significantly stronger affective commitment to the organization they chose than did those with less freedom” (Meyer & Allen, 1997, p. 50). Furthermore, the development of affective commitment also occurs when an organization understands and is committed to the employee’s personal fulfilment. In return, employees are likely to contribute significantly in bringing more productivity to the organization thereby improving their competence, and resulting in a happier, healthier staff and possible reducing employee turnover (Clausen et al., 2015). It is a psychological give-and-take process of positive emotions. Thus, the development of affective commitment vastly augments when personal values and organization values and goals align fostering “coordination and communication that facilitate job performance and bring desired rewards” (Edwards & Shipp, 2007, pp. 240–241)

***Continuance Commitment***

Continuance commitment occurs when employees evaluate the pros and cons of quitting an organization. Employees tend to weigh the loss and gains of staying in the company where the loss they would experience by leaving may be greater than the gains they might achieve in a new position or company. Continuance commitment is described as “the extent to which employees feel committed to their organizations by virtue of the costs that they feel are associate with leaving” (Meyer & Allen, 1984, p. 375). This suggests employees do not have the emotional attachment to their work or organization, they rather feel the need to continue there because it would be too expensive to quit. Studies claim that “this reluctance to quit may be due to the risk of losing a large bonus by leaving early or because they are well established in the community where they work” (McShane & Von Glinow, 2000, p. 136). Also, other studies indicate that “continuance commitment develops as a result of lack of alternative employment opportunities and an accumulation of side bets, that is investment that increase the costs associated with leaving the organization” (Cohen, 2003, p. 121). However, organizations are often responsible for creating continuance commitment among the employees. Certain company practices bind them through golden handcuffs encouraging them to stick with the organization instead of moving out. Although the organizations stay successful in reducing turnover, they fail to originate emotional attachment thereby leading to low or less engagement in the organization’s behaviors rebating the sense of belonging. In addition, continuance commitment is more likely to promote formal grievances instead of solving interpersonal issues.

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### ***Normative Commitment***

In addition to the “want to” and “need to” perspectives of commitment, the third perception is “ought to” or a sense of obligation that associates an employee with an organization because “remaining a member is the morally right thing to do” (Jex, 2002, p. 134). Morally committed employees engage in activities driven by a sense of duty. Their sense of duty may arise from various reasons, one of which may be “a consequence of socialization experiences and investments made by the organization in the individual” (Dipboye, 2018, p. 217). Thus, employees understand the feel and need of obligation and demonstrate loyalty at their workplaces. At certain levels, the loyalty demonstrated by the employees is based on the fact and their belief that there exists a rational point of view in achieving a goal. Studies discuss that normative commitment perfectly aligns personal identity with rationality. This indicates that employees are bound to achieve this goal considering it as a prescriptive force of ought or, in other words, it means “they think that overall rational is something that they ought to achieve and, in that sense, they have a normative commitment to achieving such unity” (Rovane, 2019, p. 23). Hence, normative commitment is carrying out rational activities out of consideration that essentially springs from a certain rational point of view.

After an analysis of the three components of commitment, it can now be assumed that one common factor in all three of them is the motivation behind remaining committed at the workplaces. For example, in affective commitment there is emotional motivation, in continuance commitment, motivation to continue exists as there are no better options, and in normative commitment motivation entails because of morals and values. This motivation becomes a character trait of an employee that let the employee to be involved in the decision-making process like whether to stay or quit an organization. Such tendencies in ethical decision making “allow a person to decide how to behave in any particular situation” (Oko, 2011, p. 56) in terms of motive rather than the consequences.

Amalgamating the concepts as contributed by the authors and researchers, philosophers and psychologists, commitment at workplaces can be comprehended as a multifaceted construct and one can better understand why employees become committed to an organization only by being aware of this versatility instead of choosing one definition over the other. Commitment can be influenced by several factors like motivation or can be achieved through practice, making it a habit through training and education. The quality of the commitment is largely dependent on the mindset of the individual. For example, if the mindset of the individual is committed more out of willingness than out of fear, the bond is expected to be stronger and last longer. Many employees remain committed to their jobs because of their passion or love for what they do, or sometimes they find their personal goals aligning with those of the organization. At times, many employees stick to their job out of fear of losing what they have. Furthermore, a feeling of obligation to their organization or to their senior may also make them committed to the organization. However, the ultimate fact relies on the notion that when the individuals are provided with the freedom to contribute in a certain assignment or pursue a career, they are more likely to be efficient and productive.

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Hence, commitment can be understood as an internal force that unites an individual to an objective. Likewise, organizations are also expected to be responsible towards the employee's growth and development by providing them ample opportunities to do challenging and significant work. Such opportunities would motivate the employees to develop a sense of belonging towards the workplaces crafting a kind of commitment among the employees. As a dynamic process, commitment reflects the tendency to "bind an employee to the organization; thereby reducing the likelihood of turnover" (Young, 2006, p. 45). This points out that, on the whole, the predisposition of commitment is binding an employee with the organization for equal or mutual benefit. The objective of the mutual benefits fosters the development of an attitude for which both the organization and the employee manifest a commitment mindset. Hence, commitment in itself is a reflection of the actions and the consequences and produces a recurring process, a continuous one, a consistent one.

However, revising all said about commitment and comprehending commitment as an ethical perspective, the point that needs attention here is the following: having its strengths, commitment has limitations as well. By mentioning this, the section below discusses about blind commitment or the downside of commitment emphasizing mainly the disadvantages of commitment.

### **Blind Commitment**

Literature on the concept of moral blindness suggests that a lack of integration of moral thinking in making decisions is defined as moral blindness. Mostly, when employees focus too much on simple following the orders as part of organizational criteria without inquiring the moral radicals of any activity or action, they tend to practice moral blindness. In other words, there is a general pantomime of obedience towards the manager or the authority or towards a functional role in the business organization. This suggests employees who follow moral blindness are incapable of using their thought process and are blindly committed towards the instructions of the administration. The underlying causes of such a behavior pattern can be that due to the lack of moral thinking the employees fail to see an ethical dilemma in their actions. And even if they do, they tend to ignore this ethical dilemma in order to return the favor of their duty as a part of organizational mandate. Somehow the employees are strongly attached to the ideologies of the organization that they cannot see beyond it. Rendtorff (2020) finds "this attachment as an abstraction from concrete human needs and concerns in the business organization" (p. 93). He further elucidates moral blindness as "the dark side of action in organizational systems, and it manifests the need to move towards ethical principles, judgement and ethical recognition in management and administration" (Rendtorff, 2017, p. 6).

Based on an organization's perspective, it is an obvious fact that every organization would want their employees to be committed. It is because a committed workforce appears to positively affect the growth and development of an organization. However, the employees' perspective of being too committed is generally overlooked. Every organization has its hierarchical structure hence, although employees work

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under an organization but there is always an immediate superior whose orders and instructions they are committed to. Those who hold authoritative positions but at the same time lose their own motivation or are suffocated by their own roles and responsibilities may significantly abuse or misguide the commitment of the employees. This may be one of the many reasons behind the existence of blind commitment.

Blind commitment (Randall, 1987) to an organization means that employees accept an organization as it is with all its strengths and weaknesses, faults and flaws, and success and failures. However, can the act of blind commitment be necessarily the act of virtue? One study argues that “a strong commitment to retaining and acting on one’s commitments even through testing circumstances, however is not necessarily virtuous, because such a commitment could equally well be involved in vices of excess” (Rees & Webber, 2013, p. 399). Decoding this, one may assume that vice is anything that “counts against having a good moral character or virtue” (Adams, 2008, p. 36). In other words, vice is anything that contains negative traits in an individual’s character. As already explained in the above sections, virtue is powerful, however, powers sometimes are predisposed to run to excess or, at times, to paucity. This excess of virtue creates vices. Studies determined that “vice is simply an excess of virtue” (Bierbower, 1888, p. 216). For example, too much of courage is rashness, too much of discretion is spinelessness, too much of kindness is assumption, too much of liberty is extravagance, and too much of loyalty is drudgery. In a similar context, the excess of commitment can be dangerous too as “this can lead to an environment where ethically dubious instructions are carried out without question” (Dietz, 2014). Blind commitment supersedes commitment to the extent that it often becomes a cult-like shaping the behavior of the employees. In other way, blind commitment like an excessive subservience to the authority, can largely hamper personal goals and attempts towards self-learning and knowledge gain. This is because the authorities would want their employees to remain glued to their work, group and other activities relevant or irrelevant to their group. On the other hand, employees fear to lose whatever they possess and constantly remain devoted. This further leads to “expenditure of time and energy that is therefore not available to invest elsewhere that is towards family or hobbies” (Meyer & Allen, 1997, p. 3). Furthermore, an employee’s critical thinking gets dampened as in every other situation they have to follow orders and instructions believing it as a part of their duty and justifying their commitment to the workplaces. This attitude is a clear example of blind commitment. The employees believe that their sense of duty makes them committed little knowing that too much of acceptance and saying “yes” all the time is nothing but a slavery. This situation is totally compliant with continuance or normative commitment where employees stick to workplaces due to moral obligation or fear of losing something significant. Hence, evaluating situations is a must.

At workplaces, critical thinking is a must as this ability facilitates the evaluation of one’s own thoughts, feelings, and actions as well as employers, management, stakeholders and others at workplaces. While thinking is considered casual and effortless, “critical thinking calls for persistent effort to apply theoretical constructs to understanding the problem, consider evidence, and evaluate methods or techniques

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for forming a judgement” (Seel, 2012, p. 635). The central notion of critical thinking is to question, assess reasons and go beyond single perspectives of things and situations. Thus, commitment without critical thinking, or logical reasoning and questioning is ineffective. Developing critical thinking is not impossible. Through proper training and guidance employees can be made aware of viewing and thinking of things differently. To a certain extent, if not completely, such training can present to the trainees their ethical emotions that play a crucial role in the processes of ethical deliberations. For example, when certain things go wrong or right at the workplace, ethical emotions notify the employees of such things making them think, assess and question the situations instead of blindly following and saying “yes” to everything. Hence, blind commitment is a vice and should not be promoted.

Evaluating both commitment and blind commitment, it is presumably clear that commitment has both its pros and cons. However, it is surely a difficult task to understand how much commitment is required at the workplace and when is the right time drawing a line between commitment and blind commitment. Further, since critical reasoning is an aspect that differentiates between the two, it can be assumed that an individual should stick to critical reasoning every time before taking any orders and making any decisions. One study cites Aristotle and claims that “natural character virtues without practical reason are blind while effective reasoning without the guidance by moral virtues is either mere cleverness or villainy” (Besser-Jones & Slote, 2015, p. 27). This means that one cannot entirely disregard moral virtues over critical reasoning and vice versa since both the aspects stand clearly as the two extremes and virtue stands in between them. Too much towards any of the extremes is too little towards the other one whereas virtue stands halfway from the two extremes. Hence, while blind commitment at the workplace is one extreme, negligence of duties and responsibilities is another. The golden mean in such a case would be to remain committed towards the organization, superiors, colleagues, with a genuine motivation to stand by them and do things rightly whenever needed, specifically at the times of contingencies. It is an obvious fact that human nature would get attracted towards any of the extremes. At that moment, employees should restrain themselves from getting biased towards one of the extremes and try to be at the halfway from both extremes. Although maintaining the balance between the two extremes is difficult to achieve, it may not be impossible.

## Conclusion

Organizational commitment and its consequences indicate that values and virtues relate closely as competencies and their strong implementation should be considered as an integral feature in any organization. It is imperative to highlight the fact that employees at times are unable to see the ethical dimensions of situations which make them responsible for the consequences of the decisions they have made. After the review of some protuberant and recent research works in the field of organizational commitment this paper brought into limelight the three-dimensional framework that proceeds for a distinction between “continuance”, “affective”, and

“normative” dimensions of commitment and thereby distinguishes them from blind commitment that is a result of moral blindness. In an attempt to satisfy the primary purpose of this paper, the study explored the essence of moral theory and virtue ethics as its integral part. The paper attempted to unravel the rationale behind commitment at the workplace. Commitment can mean a lot of things and can originate from desires, both rational and irrational, and motivation, both intrinsic or extrinsic. It can be related to a psychological state of mind like commitment out of attachment, commitment out of fear, and commitment out of obligation. Similarly, commitment can also have philosophical connotations mostly as a virtue. Based on the principles of Aristotle, any virtue in excess is a vice. Similarly, commitment in excess is blind commitment that lacks critical thinking and hampers personal goals and development. Fortunately, the balance between commitment and blind commitment is, although difficult, but not impossible to achieve. Escaping the extremes and focusing on the mean is a tactic. Hence, a means or a balance between the two commitments creates a treasured work environment that provides a platform for long-term business. Aristotle principles on virtue ethics specify that the greater emphasis should be put on developing personal virtues than building perfect systems. The importance of commitment as the appropriate paradigm of virtue ethics has been established and subsequently discriminated from blind commitment for long-term benefits at workplaces.

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ARTICLE

## In the Eyes of the Beholder: Leaders' Personality and Courageous Followership

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### ABSTRACT

The literature on leadership through the lens of followership does not provide empirical evidence of leaders' personalities and their perception of subordinates' courageous followership behaviors. This paper explores the connection between personality and courageous followership. The study sample is 190 school leaders working in the top private schools in Pakistan as regular employees. The responses collected through simple random sampling techniques and Stata 16 software are used for data analysis. Data analysis indicates that leaders having extraversion, agreeableness, consciousness, and openness to intellectual/imagination personality traits perceive their subordinates' behaviors as courageous followers, whereas the neuroticism personality trait resulted in a negative perception of courageous followership behaviors among Pakistani school leaders. This paper is prominent research in a new direction of leadership through followership. This study recommends emphasizing the development of positive personality traits in leaders so that they can transform their subordinates into courageous followers which is an antidote to toxic leadership.

### KEYWORDS

personality, big five traits, followership, courageous followership, proactive

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## Introduction

Good leadership and followership are important for organizational success. Leadership along with followership reflect the behaviors, actions, or roles that individuals play in their respective positions in organizations. The role of followership and followers has recently been considered a crucial component of leadership research (Uhl-Bien et al., 2014). In addition to leadership, focusing on followership helps to explain the complex relational interaction among leader-followers to understand more about organizational dynamics and complexities (Uhl-Bien & Carsten, 2018). Considering the changing environment and lessons learned owing to COVID-19, we need to develop leadership and followership equally to deal with the complexities and challenges of today's organizational problems (Uhl-Bien, 2021). Management theories also need revisions and should refocus by adding an ethical dimension in research (Ghoshal, 2005) that places all responsibility on leaders for the failure or success of organizations, which is not a viable solution. Individuals in academia should also see their role as proactive and responsible as well as accountable members of society. The seven important skills needed for the 21<sup>st</sup> century include critical thinking, integrity, resilience, adaptability, empathy, optimism, and being proactive (Prince, 2019). A proactive role demands individuals, to be honest, committed, and proactive in their respective roles whether a leader or followers.

Education is the key builder of society, and the education sector plays a key role in the development of society. According to the Global Competitiveness Index 2020 (Schwab et al., 2020), institutions play a pivotal role in a country's development. Among institutions, the education sector is considered the fifth pillar for efficiency enhancers of a country. In Pakistan Vision 2025 document (Ministry of Planning, Development & Reform, 2014), the Government of Pakistan (GOP) set a target of increasing public expenditure on education from 0.2% of the gross domestic product (GDP) to 1.4 % by 2025. Despite all the efforts, Pakistan is ranked 110 out of 141 nations in the world on the global competitive index (Schwab et al., 2020), where institutions are ranked 107 among 141 countries in terms of the performance of institutions. One of the reasons for its low ranking is the high level of corruption and lack of transparency, which is also reflected in its low rank on the transparency indicator where Pakistan is ranked 101. To improve transparency, organizations need to promote transparent leadership and encourage effective and honest followership as this helps in promoting a culture of transparency.

We have toxic triangles in our institutions, which is a combination of unethical leaders, conformer followers, and an environment of corruption (Padilla et al., 2007). Employee silence is one of the mediating factors in the development of toxic leadership and low organizational performance (Saqib & Arif, 2017). The deference to authority on unethical standards along with fighting against a toxic work environment remains a matter of concern in an Asian country like Pakistan (Anjum et al., 2018). Particularly, in Asian cultures, such as in Pakistan, a leader's authority is many folds, and it is the leadership style that develops followership behavior. It is necessary to identify the dimension of a leader's personality that promotes a proactive type of followership.

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Courageous followership is a type of behavior that develops the capacity of the manager to speak up against unethical practices and make them partners with leaders (Chaleff, 2009). This proactive behavior not only challenges unethical practices, but it also makes individuals support their leaders by assuming responsibility, serving the leader, and taking part in the transformation. Research on courageous followership in Pakistan found a positive impact on exemplary leadership practices among public and private sector managers (Ghias et al., 2018). Moreover, in the Pakistani context, Islamic work ethics also value the individual behavior of courageous followership in non-profit organizations (Ghias et al., 2020). We need to inculcate and promote courageous followership behavior among institutions to get rid of toxic triangles and overcome inefficiencies to compete with world countries.

Further, evidence from Pakistan (Sharar & Nawab, 2020) suggests that schools must encourage the development of leadership traits among young teachers by encouraging and developing their leadership skills. Leaders should be aware of the behaviors of their followers and to ensure that they attain the maximum benefit, leaders must be trained to appreciate the proactive behavior of followers. Organizations need to encourage the proactive behavior of their employees and develop leaders who can promote and encourage proactive behavior (McCormick et al., 2019). Courageous followership is a form of proactive behavior in followership roles that inculcate the development of exemplary leadership (Ghias et al., 2018) and develop individuals to be transformational leaders (Green, 2018). Personality studies taking a research approach to followers' personality traits on the perception of their leadership style (Hetland et al., 2008) found that avoidant leadership is preferred by subordinates having personality traits of openness and agreeableness.

D.R. Kudek (2018) studied two dimensions of followership styles, independent thinking, and active engagement (Kelley, 1992) as outcomes of the big five personality traits. To measure personality, the researcher used the mini-international personality. The item pool developed by Donnellan et al. (2006) was in a non-student population. The results of the study concluded that four personality traits, extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and openness to experience, have a positive relation with followership dimensions of independent thinking and active engagement, while neuroticism is negatively associated. This study also recommended seeing leaders' perceptions of their followers in different cultural and organizational contexts.

From the cultural perspective, Arun and Gedik (2020) analyzed the role of Asian values on leadership styles and leaders' roles and found that Asian cultural values have a different application to Mintzberg's leadership roles. This research study will be meaningful from different cultural perspectives as leaders' perception of subordinates' followership is still untapped in leadership and followership research. Therefore, literature reasoning also supports undertaking this study in Pakistani private schools to research leaders' personalities and their perceptions of subordinates' courageous followership behavior. The United Nation Sustainable Development Goals (Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2015) adopted by 193 member countries in September 2015 also represents a renewed focus on inclusive, lifelong, and equitable education. Based on statistics mentioned in *Annual Status of Education*



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*Report 2019* (ASER Pakistan, 2020), 62% of children are attending private schools which are preferred over government schools. It is pertinent to understand the leader's perception of followership behavior as they are inculcating values and ethics to future generations. If such a culture is present in school leadership, it will be transformed for future generations.

## Literature Review and Research Hypotheses

### ***Courageous Followership***

The history of followership behavior is as primitive as human civilization; leadership and followership are processes co-created for social exchange. Management scholars in the twentieth century recognized the independent role of followers (Uhl-Bien et al., 2014). Earlier leadership theories of Great Man, where leaders were considered heroes, have evolved with the growing changes in the social-economic paradigm recommending a shared form of leadership (Northouse, 2019). The followership research is still in its infancy; the word search on Web of Science (WOS) by the authors resulted in 171 articles on "followership" and 25,585 articles on "leadership" that reflect the minimum focus of research on the followership construct. Seminal work on followership in the management domain was introduced by Kelley (1988) in the article *In Praise of Followers* in which he highlighted that role of followers in an organization deserves equal importance as leadership. Kelley introduced the followership styles grounded on two behavioral dimensions—*independent and dependent thinking*, and *active/passive engagement of followers*. The followers adopt five different styles; *passive, alienated, conformist, pragmatic, and collaborative or star followers*.

While extending the work of star followers, Chaleff (2009), a management practitioner, introduced the concept of *courageous followership*—a proactive form of followership with dimensions of *assuming responsibility, serving the leader, taking part in organizational transformation, challenging the wrongdoings of leaders, and undertaking actions such that the follower is sufficiently capable to leave the organization due to unethical practices of the leaders to take moral action*. The work of followership is still in its infancy as most of the followership models in management are developed by practitioners and theory building needs more empirical investigations (Northouse, 2019). The overarching theory of followership posits to analyze the role of a leader's personal behavior as an outcome of their follower's behavior, as leadership is a process where leaders and followers interact to complete the leadership process. (Uhl-Bien et al., 2014). This study will answer the question that what type of personality of leader encourages proactive courageous followership behavior.

### ***Big Five Personality Traits***

Personality traits can be defined as the persistent, cognitive behavior that individuals exhibit with consistency in different situations. Parks-Leduc et al. (2015) define personality traits as behavioral components that differentiate it from other individuals. Many research concepts and theories have been studied over time, but the big five personality traits are the most widely researched, which focus on the researcher's

understanding of the behavior and attitudes of individuals in an organization (Lynn, 2021). The big five personality traits can be differentiated into five personality traits, namely extroversion, agreeableness, neuroticism, conscientiousness, and openness to experience such as intellectual/imagination (John & Robins, 2021). The extroversion personality is related to sociability and high energy, while agreeableness is related to compassion, trust, and respect toward others. Conscientiousness personality is related to productivity and responsible behavior, while openness is related to imaginative and open-mindedness towards experiential life, whereas neuroticism is related to negative emotions such as anxiety and depression (John & Robins, 2021, p. 42).

The research on followers' personality traits found that the big five personality traits are related to followers' perceptions of transformational and transactional leadership (Hetland et al., 2008). The personality traits of extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and openness to experience are positively related to authentic leadership and negatively associated with neuroticism in a dyadic time-lagged study among students in Pakistan (Shahzad et al., 2021). Many research studies have examined personality with leadership traits or leader's personality impact on job outcomes of employees (Ishaq et al., 2021; Sameer & Priyadarshi, 2021) but the research on big five personality traits do not answer the relationship of leader's personality and their perception of the subordinate's courageous followership behavior. In this regard, the following section will build a theoretical understanding of the relation of a leader's perception of subordinates' followership with leaders' personalities.

#### *Extraversion and Courageous Followership*

Extraversion personality traits are associated with individuals' attitudes towards energy assertiveness and adaptive nature to change. Extravert leaders tend to be more sociable and encourage team performance which is highly related to subordinates' attitudes, such as organizational commitment (Simic et al., 2017) while playing a positive role. Extraversion leaders show a high level of leader-follower exchange relationship (Dust et al., 2021), which means that extraversion leaders like to promote individuals in their group having traits of confidence, dedication, and proactive behavior. Courageous followership is also related to a high level of organizational commitment (Dixon, 2003) and inculcates exemplary leadership (Ghias et al., 2018). This aspect that extraversion leaders might like courageous followership behavior of their subordinates leads to the following hypothesis:

**H<sub>1</sub>:** Extraversion leaders' personality is positively related to the leaders' perception of subordinates' courageous followership.

#### *Agreeableness and Courageous Followership*

Agreeable traits of personality are related to accepting, conforming, and nurturing attributes (Northouse, 2019). Individuals with agreeableness traits are warm and honest, and never tend to affront their subordinates (Zhang et al., 2021). Even leaders with agreeableness traits are perceived as authentic leaders by their subordinates (Shahzad et al., 2021). Individuals with agreeableness traits are kind, trusting, and welcoming to subordinate action which helps to boost the morale of followers (Ishaq

et al., 2021). Courageous followership is an authentic form of behavior that naturally works for the common purpose of the organization and leader's success (Chaleff, 2009) and such behavior might be liked by agreeableness leaders.

**H<sub>2</sub>:** Agreeableness leaders' personality is positively related to leaders' perception of subordinate courageous followership.

#### *Consciousness and Courageous Followership*

The consciousness personality trait of leaders is related to the behavior of being careful, ambitious, and practical (Northouse, 2019). Leaders high on this trait are self-disciplined and honor integrity and values at the workplace (Kalshoven et al., 2011), follow the organizational rules and regulations and enhance positive leadership behavior among individuals. Research literature reflects that consciousness personality traits are associated with positive leadership and organizational attitudes of employees, while courageous followership is nurtured when leaders are open and allow their subordinates to access them (Chaleff, 2009). The consciousness trait is also related to the active engagement of followers (Kudek, 2018). Leaders with this trait will likely have positive perceptions and likeness for courageous followership behavior of their subordinates.

**H<sub>3</sub>:** Consciousness of leaders' personality is positively related to leaders' perception of subordinate courageous followership.

#### *Neuroticism and Courageous Followership*

The neuroticism trait is the tendency of individuals to exhibit behaviors of anxiety, low self-esteem, and hostility (Northouse, 2019). Individuals with neuroticism traits cannot handle difficult situations (Djurkovic et al., 2006) which lead to more anxiety and low patience levels, and increased emotional distress. The neurotic behavior of individuals will lead to distressful behaviors in the workplace and individuals will not be ready and comfortable to interact with other members of the organization (Friedman, 2019). Leaders with neuroticism are more likely to exhibit destructive leadership behavior, such as abusive supervision (Ryan et al., 2021). Abusive supervision enhances employee silence behavior due to the fear of low-performance evaluation by leaders and takes the lead towards more neurotic employees (De Clercq et al., 2021). On the other hand, a courageous follower is a form of proactive behavior, an antinode to destructive leadership (Chaleff, 2009), and promotes the positive side of leadership (Green, 2018). Therefore, considering the above literature discourse, we can propose that neuroticism among leaders is a negative trait that is less likely to appreciate the courageous followership behaviors of subordinates.

**H<sub>4</sub>:** Neuroticism of leaders' personality is negatively related to leaders' perception of subordinate courageous followership.

#### *Openness to Intellect/Imagination*

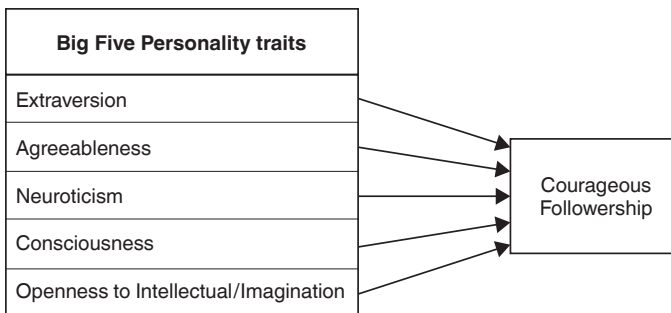
Individuals with openness to intellect/imagination traits of personality exhibit creativity, innovation, and curiosity about new ideas (Northouse, 2019). It develops the capacity of individuals to seek feedback from subordinates (Shahzad et al., 2021) and they show a higher tendency to enhance social relationships and

development activities for organizational change. Individuals with openness to intellect and imagination will support subordinates’ behaviors of courageous followership as this behavior also leads to organizational change and improvements (Chaleff, 2009). Furthermore, openness to intellect and imagination is also related to the independent thinking of followers (Kudek, 2018). This leads to the following hypothesis:

**H<sub>5</sub>:** Openness to intellect /imagination leaders’ personality is positively related to leaders’ perception of subordinate courageous followership.

**Figure 1**

*Conceptual Framework: Personality and Courageous Followership*



Note. Source: Developed by Authors.

## Methodology

The study is descriptive while considering leaders in private sector schools as units of analysis. The data collection is cross-sectional with minimal interferences of researchers in a non-contrived environment.

## Sample

The population constitutes private schools in Islamabad. A list of private schools was obtained from the Private Educational Institutions Regulatory Authority Islamabad<sup>1</sup> (PEIRA-ICT). A total of 337 schools are registered in PEIRA-ICT. The selection of schools and school heads was based on research criteria. Firstly, schools with a less rigid hierarchy and a framework of open communication and critical thinking were selected. Secondly, schools with international certifications and standards with a higher student enrollment were included in the research study. Lastly, the schools willing to participate and available for research due to COVID-19 constraints and the availability of staff were included in the study. Totally, 30 schools were included in the study. Each school administration was contacted personally by researchers through small interactive sessions. The list of school heads and coordinators in

<sup>1</sup> Registered Institutes. (n.d.). Private Educational Institutions Regulatory Authority ICT-PEIRA. <https://peira.gov.pk/institutes/registered.php>

leadership positions was collected from the administration. In each school, there are 10 key leadership positions including school head and coordinators who supervise five or more teachers in their daily activities and decision-making. Totally, 300 questionnaires, 10 in each school, were distributed through simple random sampling techniques. Totally, 242 questionnaires were returned with an 80% response rate. After data screening, a total of 190 responses were included for analysis in the Stata 16 software (StataCorp, 2019).

### ***Instrument***

The study used a courageous followership questionnaire developed by Dixon (2003) with 19 items scale rated by leaders about their subordinates' courageous followership behavior. This scale is widely used in research to study courageous followership behavior among faculty members with an overall reliability  $\alpha = .74$  (Schwab, 2017). This instrument is used in a variety of sectors, such as military organizations (Green, 2018) in Pakistan to measure managers' followership and leadership behaviors (Ghias et al., 2018) with  $\alpha = .78$ . It is also used in measuring the relationship between Islamic work ethics and project managers in NGOs (Ghias et al., 2020). This instrument is also used in studying students' courageous followership behavior and its impact on authentic leadership among university students in Pakistan (Zafar et al., 2021). In this study, the reliability of courageous followership  $\alpha = .83$  shows consistency with previous research.

A mini scale of personality with 20 items has been used to measure the leader's personality. The scale was developed by Donnellan et al. (2006) from an international personality pool of 50 items through rigorous tests. The properties of the scale were further validated by R. E. Baldasaro and colleagues (2013) considering 15,701 young individuals and the reliability of the instrument was within the acceptable range. The mini-scale of personality has been widely used in different populations with acceptable scale validity and consistency (Perry et al., 2020). To check the reliability of the instrument, data were processed in Stata software, where items with reverse codes were adjusted. The reliability of each is as follows: extraversion  $\alpha = 0.88$ , agreeableness  $\alpha = 0.76$ , conscientiousness  $\alpha = 0.86$ , neuroticism  $\alpha = 0.77$ , and openness to intellect/imagination  $\alpha = 0.82$ .

## **Results**

### ***Respondents Profile***

The results of the study are obtained using Stata 16 software through descriptive, Pearson correlation, and multiple regression analysis. The sample demographics consist of 76% female and 24% male, where 35% are 20–29 years, 51% are 30–39, and 14% are 40 years and above. The education level of the school leaders represents 10% having doctorates, 56% having master's degrees, and 34% having bachelor's degrees. Considering the work experience, 26% had 1–6 years, 45% had 7–13 years, and 29% had 14 years and above. Concerning the nature of the job, 81% were regular employees and 19% were on a contractual basis.

**Descriptive Statistics and Correlation Matrix**

The descriptive statistics table explains the mean and standard deviation values of the variables. The Pearson correlation matrix reflects those values of *r* should be from -1 to +1 (Cohen, 1988). The association of courageous followership is significantly positive with extraversion *r* = 0.47, *p* ≤ 0.05, agreeableness, *r* = 0.54, *p* ≤ 0.05, consciousness, *r* = 0.43, *p* ≤ 0.05, and openness to experience, *r* = 0.38, *p* ≤ 0.05. The neuroticism trait of personality has a negative significant association with courageous followership *r* = -0.40, *p* ≤ 0.05.

**Table 1**  
*Descriptive Statistic and Correlation Matrix (n = 190)*

	Correlation						Statistics	
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	Mean	SD
I	-						3.16	.59
II	0.48*	-					3.38	.58
III	0.32*	0.38*	-				3.05	.59
IV	-0.37*	-0.44*	-0.25*	-			2.72	.65
V	0.26*	0.29*	0.36*	-0.18*	-		3.58	.48
VI	0.47*	0.54*	0.43*	-0.40*	0.38*	-	3.64	.55

\* Correlation is significant *p* ≤ 0.05.

Note: I = Extraversion, II = Agreeableness, III = Consciousness, IV = Neuroticism, V = Openness to Intellectual/Imagination, VI = Courageous Followership

Note. Source: Developed by Authors from research data.

**Hypothesis Testing Regression Analysis**

The multiple regression analysis was computed with standardized variables to test hypothesized relationships in H<sub>1</sub>, H<sub>2</sub>, H<sub>3</sub>, H<sub>4</sub>, and H<sub>5</sub>. The results of multiple regression analysis are exhibited in Table 2. The data was analyzed for regression assumptions. The Pearson correlation Table 1 confirms no multicollinearity in data as the values of Pearson correlations are less than 0.80. The variance of inflation values was less than 10 as exhibited in Table 2. The data is normally distributed as the assumption of variance is met, heteroscedasticity  $\chi^2_2 = 2.14$ , *p* ≥ 0.001. No variance in residual of data was found.

**Table 2**  
*Multiple Regression Analysis Personality and Courageous Followership (n = 190)*

Model	B	Std. Error	β	t	Sig.	VIEW
(Constant)	1.08	.73	1.97	2.70	.000	-
Extraversion	.21	.072	.19	3.10	.001	1.39
Agreeableness	.25	.065	.27	4.08	.002	1.30
Consciousness	.16	.062	.16	2.67	.001	1.25
Neuroticism	-.11	.052	-.13	-2.26	.001	1.26
Openness to Intellect/Imagination	.20	.069	.17	2.98	.005	1.15
R <sup>2</sup> = .44, ΔR <sup>2</sup> = .41 F = 28.18**, df (5,184)						

\* *p* ≤ .05, \*\* *p* ≤ 0.01, \*\*\* *p* ≤ 0.001

Note. Source: Developed by Authors from research data.

The data of responses collected from school leaders on the big five personality traits of extraversion, agreeableness, neuroticism, conscientiousness, and openness to intellectual/imagination as independent variables and leader's perception of their subordinate's courageous followership as a dependent variable is regressed using Stata 16 software. The results in Table 2 verify the relationship between independent and dependent variables. The value of  $R^2$  in  $H_1$ ,  $H_2$ ,  $H_3$ ,  $H_4$ , and  $H_5$  as a significant contribution is made to leaders' perception of their subordinates' courageous followership behavior due to extraversion ( $\beta = .19, p < .01$ ), agreeableness ( $\beta = .27, p < .01$ ), conscientiousness ( $\beta = .16, p < .01$ ), neuroticism ( $\beta = .13, p < .01$ ), and openness to intellectual/imagination ( $\beta = .17, p < .01$ ).

## Discussion

This study aims to resolve the research problem in an untapped area of followership and personality from cultural and theoretical perspectives using a sample of Pakistani private school leaders. More specifically this study answers the research question: What type of personality of leader encourages proactive courageous followership behavior? Our analysis of leaders' personalities and their perception of subordinates' courageous followership behavior shows that the personality dimensions of extraversion, agreeableness, openness to experience and conscientiousness positively influence leadership perception of courageous followership behavior of their subordinates. On the other hand, neuroticism has a negative influence on courageous followership behavior. Among the personality traits, agreeableness has the highest beta value ( $\beta = .27, p < .01$ ), which means that if a leader has high agreeableness traits, they will encourage the subordinates to exhibit more courageous followership behavior. This is evident as agreeableness is related to conforming, accepting, and listening to advice behavior and leaders high on this trait are most likely to accept and promote courageous followership as a proactive form of subordination.

According to Zhang et al. (2021), highly agreeable leaders tend to have a high level of information-seeking behavior from their subordinates, and leaders who are information seekers accept the subordinates' proactive behavior. The result that agreeableness is a high predictor of courageous followership is different from the results of agreeableness relation with leadership (Shahzad et al., 2021) in which agreeable has a low moderate effect. This may be because agreeable personality traits promote fairness and justice, and such a personality will be more inclined towards courageous followership as subordinates are fair with the leader as well as with the organization (Chaleff, 2009). Another reason may be that the data was collected from diverse sectors (Shahzad et al., 2020), whereas the current study's data constitutes academic leaders who seem more responsible as nurturers of society.

Extraversion personality trait is another high personality trait in relationship with courageous followership (after agreeableness). An extraversion personality is change-driven and always appreciates individuals with proactive personalities

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because such leadership traits are more transformational (Schreyer et al., 2021). Extroversion leaders show a high level of leader-follower exchange relationship (Dust et al., 2021) and like to promote individuals in their group with traits of confidence, dedication, and proactive behavior which is confirmed by the result of this study. Conscientiousness is also related to courageous followership which is consistent with previous research, such as Kudek (2018) in which teachers' conscientious trait is related to Kelley's active engagement and independent thought. This is true in this study's results as academic leaders' conscientious traits influence leaders' perceptions of their subordinates' courageous followership behavior which is also derived from Kelley's followership styles (Chaleff, 2009). Such leaders value integrity and carefulness, and such personalities are high on information seeking and promoting employee advice (Zhang et al., 2021). This is true in this study result as the conscientious personality trait was found to be influencing the leaders' perceptions of their subordinates' behaviors. From a cultural perspective, the result of this study is rather true as in Pakistan, conscientious traits of leadership are also moderately related to sustainable intentions and individuals high on this dimension appreciate feedback (Ishaq et al., 2021). Similarly, courageous followership is nurtured if leaders allow their subordinates to access them (Chaleff, 2009).

Another personality trait is neuroticism in which individuals high on this trait show mood swings, anxiety, and low level of self-esteem. The results of this study demonstrate that leaders high in neuroticism do not perceive their subordinates as courageous followers as neuroticism is negatively related to courageous followership behavior. This is true as neurotic leaders, due to their negative attitude, reflect ostracism and high feelings of jealousy (Howard et al., 2020). Another reason why neurotic leaders do not perceive their subordinates as courageous followers is envy at the workplace. Meta-analysis drawn on social comparison theory based on workplace envy indicates that neuroticism tends to enhance individuals' ability to feel more with workplace envy (Li et al., 2021). Lastly, the result of this study indicates openness to intellect/imagination has a high moderating impact after extraversion traits on courageous followership. The reason for this may be that highly creative leaders have shown high congruence with highly proactive subordinates (Peng et al., 2020) as it benefits and supports the leaders.

## Conclusion

To conclude, this research study implies that the big five personality traits of leaders are linked to their perception of the courageous followership behavior of their subordinates. Although from a cultural perspective the deference to authority is still a matter of concern in an Asian country such as Pakistan (Anjum et al., 2018), leaders prefer and like the passive behaviors of followers. Interestingly, the overall results of the study indicate novel findings as positive personality traits of leaders provide a high perception of their subordinates' courageous followership behaviors, and negative personality traits, such as neuroticism, negatively impact subordinates' courageous followership. This result may be due to the collection of data after the breakthrough



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of COVID-19 scenarios where leaders need the proactive behaviors of followers (Uhl-Bien, 2021). In a collective culture, especially in crisis due to COVID-19, leaders promote creative followers while fostering social relationships to enhance social capital (Tang et al., 2021).

The present study has certain implications, particularly in the education sector of Pakistan. The study results provide a ray of hope for the cultural acceptance of subordinate proactivity. If leaders in schools are ready to perceive their subordinates proactivity positively, it will enhance the overall culture of transparency as it is one of the problems in which Pakistan is ranked 101 among 141 world countries (Schwab et al., 2020). Moreover, in the contemporary world, we need to promote transparent leadership and encourage effective and honest followership (Uhl-Bien, 2021) as effective followership helps promote a culture of transparency. Another important implication is that if courageous followership, a form of moral and ethical behavior (Chaleff, 2009), has acceptance in academia, the future generation will be in safe hands. Further, earlier studies (Maxwell & Schwimmer, 2016) have emphasized that teachers' professional development in ethical education not only adds value to the teachers' professional career, but it also promotes students' intellectual ability toward cognitive moral judgment. This is more required in the present situation as hope and self-leadership are moderated by a proactive personality (Abid et al., 2021).

The present study has a few limitations. Firstly, the data was collected from only private school leaders of the top schools in Islamabad, Pakistan, while it did not include public school leaders. The results could have been different as there is a difference in public and private sector leadership and followership behavior (Ghias et al., 2018). The questionnaire used for data collection is self-reporting in a personality perspective that might have created biases towards leaders' perceptions. Importantly, another limitation may be the collection of data post the COVID-19 outbreak that might have changed the perception of leaders towards courageous followership. The deference to authority is a matter of concern in an Asian country such as Pakistan (Anjum et al., 2018).

Future research should explore a better understanding of personality and followership. It would be interesting to undertake a comparative analysis of public and private school teachers along with other schools which are not even at the top. The results of such an analysis may identify leadership and followership problems. The longitudinal study can be very beneficial in the future, after training leaders on good personality and subordinates on courageous followership behavior, the research can measure the impact of change. This will lead to a better understanding of behavioral components as training of individuals for exemplary followership is part of Islamic teaching too (Nurhadi, 2020) and can be beneficial to build an environment of ethical culture because practicing Islamic work ethics enhances the capacity of individuals' courageous followership behavior (Ghias et al., 2018) that might be true in the teaching profession too. Future research can also examine the same study at the end of the pandemic as life goes back to normal, to understand the impact of the pandemic on the personality of leaders and followers' behavior.

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### **Conflict of Interest**

Author 1 and Author 2 states that there is no conflict of interest for this publication. The research was conducted without any financial assistance.

### **Authors Contributions**

Author 1 has contributed to the conceptualization, methodology, writing & reviewing of original draft and approved it for publication. Author 2 has contributed to the methodology, writing & reviewing of original draft, supervision, and approved of it for publication.

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ARTICLE

## Moral Foundations of Dietary Behavior and its Linkage to Sustainability and Feminism

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### ABSTRACT

In the current article, we explore and compare the moral-foundations-profile of vegetarians, vegans, and meat eaters and investigate how it is related to real-world behavior. Results of two surveys demonstrate a link between eating behavior, moral foundations, environmental behavior, and feminist ideals. We demonstrate that vegans place greater value on individualizing foundations (i.e., Harm and Fairness) and meat eaters on binding foundations (i.e., Authority and Loyalty), while vegetarians fall in between these poles. In addition, we observed that in other behavioral domains requiring moral assessment (e.g., sustainable behavior, fair trade shopping), people act in accordance with the moral foundations matching their dietary choice as well. We propose that the psychological basis of diet choice is embedded in the broader framework of moral foundations theory and that eating behavior is not a psychologically encapsulated domain but intertwined with other domains of moral behavior.

### KEYWORDS

moral foundations theory, dietary behavior, vegans, meat eaters, sustainable behavior, ethical behavior, feminism

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A moral system valid for all is basically immoral.

—Friedrich Nietzsche

## Introduction

### *Development of Vegetarianism and Veganism*

Throughout history, animals have played a significant role for human food production. With a rising population and an increasing demand for meat and other animal products, animal agriculture has changed significantly in the last decades. Nowadays, industrial livestock farming has become common practice to meet the demands that come with a rising population, that is, to produce more and cheaper meat and other animal products (Godfray et al., 2010). As a result, more than 70 billion land animals are raised, kept, and eventually killed for human food production annually (Strategic plan 2013–2017, n.d.). The conditions under which these animals have to live in confined spaces, suffering from diseases and mental distress, have raised severe animal welfare issues of public interest (Steinfeld et al., 2006). With an increasing awareness of animal suffering related to food production, diet choice is no longer merely a matter of taste, but increasingly also a question of morality. Modern factory farming is a hardly justifiable practice for a growing number of individuals from an ethical point of view. Accordingly, over the past decades, an increasing number of people have adopted a vegetarian or vegan diet and lifestyle, defined as abstaining from meat and fish, or from all animal products, respectively (Definition of veganism, n.d.; What is a vegetarian?, n.d.). These growing numbers point to the importance of investigating the exact motivations and mental processes that underlie the adoption of a vegetarian or vegan diet and, also, on the other hand, what prevents individuals from endorsing this approach.

So far, research has consistently demonstrated that ethical reasons (e.g., animal welfare, environmental concerns, world hunger) are indeed the main motivations for becoming vegetarian or vegan (Beck & Ladwig, 2021; Coelho, 2019; Fox & Ward, 2008). Of course, non-ethical motives are also existent. However, Fox and Ward (2008) found that even when people start a vegan diet with only one motive (e.g., health), they tend to adopt a wider range of motives (e.g., environmental concerns) as they continue following the diet. Hence, it is likely that even vegans or vegetarians who start their diet with non-ethical motives adopt ethical motives over time. In line with this, Janssen et al. (2016) explicitly investigated the motives for adopting a vegan diet in Germany and revealed that 89% of vegans mention animal-welfare as a motive, whereas 69% mention health as a motive, and 46% mention environmental concerns. Though Janssen et al. also found that most vegans mention at least two different motives for their diet, it still becomes clear that animal-welfare is the most prevalent motive for a plant-based diet. Of course, it has to be noted that these motives might only be true for Western nations and can differ significantly across cultures (Rosenfeld, 2018; Ruby et al., 2013). Nevertheless, it becomes evident that a large number of vegans and vegetarians reject meat consumption to prevent animal suffering and exploitation. A crucial aspect in this regard is the notion of animal sentience that stands in for the position that animals experience not only physical



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states, but also emotional ones such as joy or fear (Low, 2012; Proctor et al., 2013). Research could demonstrate that “the extent to which an entity is considered to possess mental capacities, it is also considered to be morally relevant and therefore worthy of protection from harm” (Bastian & Loughnan, 2017, p. 4). As a result, when animals are considered as not being able to suffer physically or mentally, people are generally less concerned about the animal’s wellbeing—which again facilitates meat consumption (Bastian & Loughnan, 2017). Both vegetarians and vegans acknowledge animals’ capacity for mental suffering, but vegans go even further and reject the use of animals as resources per se (e.g., for food, clothing, etc.; see Turner, 2019). Accordingly, with the founding of The Vegan Society in 1944, veganism distanced itself from vegetarianism because a vegetarian lifestyle still tolerates a certain amount of animal cruelty for food production, which veganism objects to (Kalte, 2021). According to this position, animals deserve equal moral consideration as humans (that is, questions of life, freedom, and physical and psychological integrity). Moreover, from an animal rights movement’s perspective, animals should not only be protected from suffering, but should not be used for production at all and should not be treated as property, since the concept of a natural hierarchy in which humans are superior to animals is rejected (Singer, 2015).

In general, it becomes obvious that vegetarians, vegans, and meat eaters differ significantly in their attitudes towards animals and their moral consideration. It seems plausible that these differences in attitudes also become apparent when looking at underlying moral principles in the different diet groups. These moral foundations associated with a change of diet and lifestyle will be clarified in detail in the present work with the overarching question: What are the moral foundations for ethical diet change? Or, to put it more precisely: Are there interindividual differences concerning those foundations that can explain why some perceive a vegetarian or vegan diet change as necessary, while others don’t?

### ***Eating Behavior and Moral Foundations***

A general classification of moral principles that include interindividual differences between different *moral foundations* has been brought forward by moral foundations theory (Graham et al., 2011). It acknowledges that five foundations are relevant in moral judgment: Harm avoidance/Care; Fairness/Reciprocity; Loyalty/Ingroup Favoritism; Authority/Respect; and Purity/Sanctity. Harm avoidance and Fairness are also termed individualizing foundations since those emphasize individual rights, whereas Authority, Loyalty and Purity are also termed binding foundations, as those emphasize group ties. Additionally, a score of Moral Progressivism can be derived: High scores on Moral Progressivism are characterized by higher scores on Harm avoidance and Fairness and lower scores on Authority, Loyalty, and Purity, whereas low scores on Moral Progressivism are characterized by lower scores on Harm avoidance and Fairness and higher scores on Authority, Loyalty, and Purity (Yilmaz & Saribay, 2017).

When taking a closer look at carnism, vegetarianism, and veganism, it becomes clear that each of these diets involve a certain ideology with central aspects of morality

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(Definition of veganism, n.d.; Weitzenfeld & Joy, 2014; What is a vegetarian?, n.d.). Even though, in everyday-life a large number of other factors (e.g., taste, social norms, etc.) determine what we actually eat as well (see Marcone et al., 2020; Renner et al., 2012; Steptoe et al., 1995; van Strien et al., 1986), the decision to adopt a vegetarian or vegan diet can involve moral evaluation. Thus, it can be assumed that different diet groups (e.g., vegetarians, vegans, meat eaters) differ from each other in the relative importance they place on different moral foundations. As stated above, a common ethical motivation for becoming vegetarian is to minimize harm to animals. Therefore, it is plausible that vegetarians place great importance on Harm avoidance when confronted with situations that call for moral assessment. In line with this, De Backer and Hudders (2015) found that the pattern of endorsement regarding different moral foundations differs between meat eaters, flexitarians—“one whose normally meatless diet occasionally includes meat or fish” (Merriam-Webster, n.d.-a),—and vegetarians in such a way that vegetarians show more endorsement for individualizing moral foundations (i.e., Harm avoidance, Fairness). Further, De Backer and Hudders (2015) also found that meat eaters place more importance on binding moral foundations (i.e., Loyalty, Authority/Respect) than vegetarians. Also, it has been suggested that omnivorous eating patterns are linked to social dominance orientation and also partly to authoritarianism (Becker, et al., 2019; Dhont et al., 2016; Dhont & Hodson, 2014; Graça et al., 2018; Hamilton, 2006; Veser et al., 2015). More specifically, social dominance orientation is associated with legitimizing meat eating via human supremacy beliefs (Becker et al., 2019), which implies an increased emphasis on the legitimacy of natural hierarchies. This also implies an affinity for Authority, which is in line with research results that show a correlation between conservative political attitudes and also traditional views (Kalof et al., 1999; Ruby, 2012) with binding moral foundations (i.e., Authority, Loyalty). Therefore, it seems likely that meat eaters also value Authority and Loyalty when assessing moral situations.

We aim to extend these findings by including a vegan sample in our analysis, since vegans' attitudes towards animal use differ in principle from those of vegetarians, as only vegans reject animal usage completely (Kalte, 2021). Also, in contrast to De Backer and Hudders (2015), we did not include a flexitarian sample because we did not aim to conduct a comprehensive replication of De Backer and Hudders (2015), but rather to extend their findings by including a vegan sample. Hence, the focus is on the vegan sample and the expected differences between the diet groups. Furthermore, the difference between flexitarians and meat eaters is a purely quantitative one, since there is no type of animal product that flexitarians generally reject but meat eaters do not. In contrast, the boundaries between meat eaters, vegetarians, and vegans are rather clear cut. Whereas vegetarians still tolerate a certain amount of animal suffering (e.g., separating cows from their calves, killing of male chicken), vegans reject any kind of animal suffering for food production. Therefore, it seems plausible that vegans place even greater importance on Harm avoidance than vegetarians. Furthermore, in contrast to vegetarianism, animal rights ideology, which demands a vegan lifestyle, rejects animal use per se and objects to human superiority. Hence, veganism can pursue an ideal of fairness

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and, as a consequence, vegans should attach greater importance to Fairness when assessing moral situations compared to vegetarians. In addition, veganism opposes social dominance orientation more strongly than vegetarianism, since human superiority over animals is not supported (Ulusoy, 2015). As a result, vegans can be expected to show less binding moral foundations than vegetarians.

### ***Eating Behavior and Consumption Behavior***

In mainstream literature, veganism typically refers to abstaining from the consumption of any animal products, such as meat, dairy, eggs, and so on. Whereas this definition is sufficient for drawing a satisfying distinction between vegetarianism—defined as an abstinence from meat and fish—and veganism, it is not much more than a mere description of consumption behavior. What is not included is the philosophy and the moral conviction that precede these distinct behaviors, which is the idea of extending empathy and morality from humans to animals—a concept that is seen by philosophers as an ultimate form of social justice and the next stage in human evolution, that abandons human supremacy and aims for co-existence of humans and nature at eye level (Ulusoy, 2015). As a consequence, veganism as a cultural movement can be interpreted as an overarching ideology that does not only include a certain type of diet, but “work as a catalyst to make the connections among various stances revolving around ethics, environmental sustainability [...]”, as Ulusoy states (2015, p. 419). In line with this, research has already demonstrated close associations between veganism and other movements such as environmentalism movements (Cherry, 2006). For instance, the global environmental movement *Fridays for Future*, whose goal it is to pressure policymakers into taking severe actions against the progressive global warming (Who We Are, n.d.), is also supportive of a vegan lifestyle. For *Fridays for Future* participants, following a vegan diet is considered another climate action, since the carbon footprint can be reduced significantly simply by pursuing a plant-based diet (Kokkonen, 2020). Furthermore, many vegan food or clothing companies produce organically and sustainably (for a list of such companies, see Trademarked Products—A., n.d.). Also, on the other hand, traditional organic labels in Europe cover aspects of sustainability and animal welfare (e.g., Demeter, Naturland<sup>1</sup>; Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development, n.d.). In line with this, research has shown that vegans’ aims are, in addition to advocating animal rights, also to protect the environment and to reduce world hunger (MacNair, 2001; Ulusoy, 2015).

The intertwining of both movements of veganism and environmental activism can be explained from a psychological point of view; an extension of vegan ideology into other areas of life besides eating behavior seems plausible: De Backer and Hudders’ findings (2015) clearly demonstrated that endorsement patterns regarding moral foundations differ between vegetarians and meat eaters—hence it can be assumed that those differing attitudes can also come to the surface in situations other than eating behavior; to be more specific, it can be expected that vegans, vegetarians and meat eaters exhibit distinct behaviors in situations that involve moral assessments and ensuing forms of behavior or decision making. Specifically, assuming that vegans,

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gemuesekiste.com>

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vegetarians and meat eaters have different psychological moral foundations (e.g., Harm avoidance, Fairness) underlying their diet choice, it is plausible that they also morally evaluate other behaviors for which the respective moral foundations play a role, differently. For instance, such behavioral domains are concerned with climate change, exploitation of the earth's natural resources, and social justice in general (see, for example, Jackson et al., 2021; Jansson & Dorrepaal, 2015; Koszałkowska & Wróbel, 2019). Prominent examples of associated situations that call for moral behavior can be considered, for instance, the amount of consumption behavior in everyday-life, sustainable shopping, social commitment, and means of transport. Based on the differences in moral foundations between the diet groups, it can be assumed that vegans, and to a lesser degree also vegetarians place more importance on sustainability and social justice due to higher importance of Harm avoidance and Fairness than meat eaters.

In the present study, we aim to determine areas of everyday life and consumption (apart from animal products) in which the differing endorsement patterns of moral foundations regarding the three diet groups might show an impact. In other words, we aim at creating a more comprehensive picture of what other everyday behaviors are implied by the endorsement of different moral foundations and how they are linked to vegan, vegetarian, and omnivorous eating behavior.

### ***Eating Behavior and Feminism***

As hypothesized above, meat eaters, and both vegetarians and vegans should act in accordance with their respective endorsement pattern of moral foundations in different domains. The moral foundations endorsed by vegans and vegetarians also reflect moral values that are central to feminism: pertaining to the objection to authority and the valuing of fairness, central to feminism is the analysis of subordination (of women, but also of intersecting oppressions like racism, heterosexism, or class oppression; see Allen, 2016). Pertaining to the emphasis on Harm avoidance, some feminists focused on an ethic of care and a principle of non-violence (Aristarkhova, 2012). Interestingly, a link between these two approaches (veganism and feminism) has already been worked out as part of what is called *ecofeminism*. Ecofeminism is the idea that discrimination against women based on their gender on the one hand, and human destruction of nature on the other are intertwined and that both forms of oppression have similar underlying mechanisms. Seeing animals as part of nature, ecofeminism is “the explication of relations of power that intersect gender and species” (Twine, 2010, p. 400). Hence, exploitation of animals is specifically addressed by vegan ecofeminists. For instance, in her book *Ecofeminist Philosophy: A Western Perspective on What It Is and Why It Matters*, Warren (2000) advocates justice and caring and criticizes (unjustified) domination (see Cuomo, 2002). We can thus say that egalitarian values like non-harming and fairness are immanent to feminist ideologies—and that the same is true for an animal rights standpoint, from which animals are seen as deserving equal moral consideration as humans when it comes to the question of life, freedom, and physical and psychological wellbeing. Thus, as a third question we wanted to know whether vegans and to a lesser degree

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vegetarians also support other ideologies that have a goal of social justice (i.e., feminism) more strongly. In addition, since there is a lack of empirical research on the relationship of moral foundations of feminists vs. non-feminists, we aim to generate some insights about this matter as well.

### ***This Study***

This study consists of two surveys that were conducted consecutively. Survey 1 investigated whether vegans, vegetarians, and meat eaters show different moral-foundations-profiles (MFP), that is, specific patterns of endorsement regarding the different moral foundations. Based on previous research as cited above, we developed the following hypotheses:

**H1.** Vegans score highest on individualizing foundations, vegetarians score lower than vegans but higher than meat eaters on individualizing foundations, and meat eaters score lowest on individualizing foundations.

**H2.** Meat eaters score highest on binding foundations, vegetarians score lower than meat eaters but higher than vegans on binding foundations, and vegans score lowest on binding foundations.

In addition, we aimed to determine other areas of everyday-life and consumption (e.g., sustainable behavior, fair trade buying, donations) in which the differing MFPs of the three diet groups might show an impact. We hypothesized the following:

**H3.** In terms of restrictive consumption behavior, sustainable shopping, use of sustainable means of transport, and social commitment the following rank order of diet groups is expected: vegans > vegetarians > meat eaters.

Survey 2 was conducted to explore whether vegans and to a lesser degree also vegetarians support feminism as an ideology that also aims for social justice more strongly than meat eaters. We hypothesized the following:

**H4.** The following rank order concerning the endorsement of feminist ideals is expected: vegans > vegetarians > flexitarians > meat eaters.

## **Survey 1**

### ***Introduction and Methods***

Survey 1 was conducted to investigate whether vegans, vegetarians, and meat eaters display a different MFP.

### ***Participants***

Participants were recruited online via different Facebook<sup>2</sup> groups and internet forums (e.g., groups for vegans and vegetarians, groups for students) in Germany. No paid platforms were included. Additionally, participants were recruited at the [BLINDED] and took part for course credit. In order to avoid any form of bias, participants were only given general information about the study, namely that the study was concerned with eating behavior. No incentives were offered. Following data cleansing (i.e., survey

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<sup>2</sup> Facebook™ is a trademark of Facebook Inc., registered in the U.S. and other countries. In the Russian Federation, it is recognised as an extremist organisation and its activity is prohibited.

not completed, age under 18 years, diet group not clear), data of 511 participants could be used for analysis. Of these, 376 were female, 123 were male, and 12 did not indicate their gender. Age had a median of 29 years and a range from 18 to 82 years. There was no difference in age between the diet groups (Welch's  $F = .249$ ,  $p = .78$ ). 217 participants were vegan, 85 vegetarian and 183 meat eaters (the remaining 10 could not be classified). Additionally, participants' political orientation was obtained.

### **Materials**

The survey was in German; when describing items, we gave the English translation. Individuals indicated their socio-demographic data, diet choice, consumption behaviors, their attitude towards animals, and the value placed on different moral foundations.

*Diet Choice and Motivational Basis.* To begin with, participants indicated their diet choice as “vegetarian”, “vegan”, “lactose-free”, “gluten-free”, “omnivore”, “no meat”, “no fish”, or “other”. As a second step, the variables were recoded, in order to only include the groups vegan, vegetarian, and omnivore. To do so, all indicated diet choices that include either meat or fish, or both (i.e., gluten-free, omnivore, etc.) were aggregated as omnivore, whereas the diet choices vegan and vegetarian remained unchanged. In order to assess the actual eating behavior more directly, participants were asked to indicate their actual meat and dairy consumption frequency using an ordinal scale ranging from *never* to *daily*.

Moreover, the motivational bases for an individual's diet choice, namely “animal welfare,” “environmental protection,” and “health” were assessed in three respective 5-point Likert scales (1 = *not at all important*, 5 = *very important*), indicating the relative importance of each motivational base with higher scores pointing to higher importance.

*Everyday Life.* To get a clear, and more comprehensive picture of individuals' regular behavior in everyday-life related to environmental protection, a questionnaire to assess self-reported behavior designed explicitly for this study was included. The first part of the questionnaire was concerned with making donations, namely whether participants have donated in general (“yes”, “no”), and if so, in what frequency these donations have taken place (“once”, “several times”, “monthly”, “weekly”, “daily”). The second part of the questionnaire was concerned with social commitment. The first item was binary and asked “do you show social commitment?”. If so, participants indicated which kind of social commitment they showed by selecting their answer from a pre-defined list with eleven options (see next sentence; “other” was also a possible answer) and by stating their commitment in their own words. Answers from those who showed social commitment were recoded later on as either “social commitment on an ethical base” (i.e., those who indicated “environment/nature”, “animal welfare”, “human rights”, or “integration work”) or “social commitment with focus on the community” (i.e., “those who indicated “politics”, “culture”, “children/pedagogy”, “education”, “religion”, “civilian service”). For those who selected “other” we categorized their open answers accordingly in a qualitative deductive way using the same categories. Unfortunately, 29 participants could not be categorized in this manner because of a technical error their open answers were not saved correctly. The third part of the questionnaire

contained five items concerning everyday consumption including items such as “I buy only as much as I need,” or “I wear my clothes until they are worn out.” The fourth part of the questionnaire contained five items concerned with environmental protection in everyday life, for example “I try to avoid plastic packaging,” or “Consistent waste separation is part of my everyday life.” Both measures were answered on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, 5 = *strongly agree*); all items are given in Appendix A and B. Internal consistency of both the third and the fourth part were acceptable ( $\alpha = .605$ ,  $\alpha = .664$ , respectively; Field, 2018; Wirtz, 2020). Additionally, several single items that addressed “looking for certifications when doing groceries”, “frequency of wasting food”, “frequency of travelling by plane”, “buying clothes from big companies”, “frequency of buying plastic bags”, “frequency of shopping at Amazon”, and “buying second hand clothing” were included. Responses for the single items were given on 5-point ordinal frequency scales (e.g., 1 = *hardly ever*, 5 = *very frequently*).

Finally, participants were also asked to indicate the means of transport they are primarily using, choosing from “car”, “plane”, “bus”, “train”, “bicycle”, “walking”, and “other”. Their responses were recoded as a binary variable, with the options environment-friendly (i.e., “bus”, “train”, “bicycle”, “walking”) vs. environment-unfriendly (i.e., “car”, “plane”).

*Animal Attitude Scale (AAS)*. Individuals’ attitudes towards animals were assessed with the AAS (Herzog et al., 1991). The questionnaire includes 20 statements concerning attitudes towards animals, such as “the use of animals in rodeos and circuses is cruel,” or “wild animals should not be trapped and their skins made into fur coats.” Responses were given on a 5-point Likert-scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, 5 = *strongly agree*). High scores indicate pro-animal welfare attitudes. Cronbach’s  $\alpha = .930$  in our sample.

*Moral Foundations Questionnaire (MFQ)*. Moral foundations were assessed with the MFQ-30 (Graham et al., 2011), which can be subdivided into five dimensions. The subscale Harm is concerned with avoiding and relieving suffering and is associated with compassion; the subscale Fairness refers to motives of justice and reciprocity (these two foundations being individualizing foundations); Loyalty builds on the protection that is possible in larger social groups, Authority stresses the recognition and respect for status (these being binding foundations), and Purity (which is of no relevance for our study). Out of these subscales, a score of Moral Progressivism (Clark et al., 2017) can be computed out of Harm, Fairness, Authority, and Loyalty (high scores on Harm and Fairness and low scores on Authority and Loyalty result in higher scores of Moral Progressivism). In the first part of the questionnaire, the respondents have to rate how important several statements associated with the different moral foundations are for the decision whether something is wrong or right (e.g., whether or not someone suffered emotionally). In the second part, respondents have to indicate to what extent they agree with different moral judgements (e.g., compassion for those who are suffering as a crucial virtue). Responses are given on a Likert scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, 6 = *strongly agree*). Cronbach’s  $\alpha = .805$  for the whole scale<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>3</sup> For the German version of the questionnaire and a comprehensive list of items, see: <https://moralfoundations.org/questionnaires/>

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### **Procedure**

Prior to the survey, participants were informed that they could cancel the survey at any time, their anonymity was ensured, and they gave their informed consent to collecting and publishing these data. Participants filled out the questionnaire online. First, they answered items concerning demographical data. In order to reduce the risk of social desirability, participants first answered the Moral Foundations Questionnaire before giving diet information. Next, they answered the questions pertaining to everyday life and at last they filled out the Animal Attitude Scale.

### **Data Analysis**

We performed a Welch-test for all comparisons of means (i.e., vegans vs. vegetarians vs. meat eaters) as a more suitable alternative to classic  $F$ -tests. In our data, neither homoskedasticity, nor normal distribution was given for all cases, and the negative effects of which increase when group sizes are unequal—as it is in our sample. Therefore, it is recommended to use the Welch-test, as it has only few disadvantages compared to the standard ANOVA, but can control for the error rates much better (Delacre et al., 2019). For cases in which homoskedasticity was given, we used Hochberg's GT2 as a correction for post-hoc tests as sample sizes were markedly different. For cases in which heteroscedasticity was given, we used Games-Howell for correction (Field, 2018).

We performed Pearson correlations for all correlations involving metric or Likert-type variables. This was warranted, since Likert-type data can be regarded as continuous, graphical inspection with scatterplots indicated a linear relationship between the variables, normality was given based on the central limit theorem, and outliers are theoretically not present in Likert-type data. For correlations involving ordinal variables we performed Spearman rank correlations as they require a non-parametric testing. For all correlations, we performed Bonferroni corrections of the  $p$ -values to minimize the chance of Type 1 error. The  $p$ -values presented in the next section are the corrected values. To test for relationships between categorical variables we computed Chi square statistics. For significant Chi-Square tests, we identified which cells contribute to the relationship between the variables using a post hoc procedure based on standard residuals and Bonferroni corrections (Beasley & Schumacker, 1995; García-Pérez & Núñez-Antón, 2003).

### **Results and Discussion**

*Moral Foundations Questionnaire and Eating Behavior.* Means on all MFQ variables (Harm, Fairness, Loyalty, Authority, and Moral Progressivism) differed for vegans, vegetarians and meat eaters based on self-categorization (i.e., actual eating behavior; Welch's  $F(2, 240.54) = 20.97$ , Welch's  $F(2, 237.00) = 9.26$ , Welch's  $F(2, 237.25) = 9.17$ , Welch's  $F(2, 238.97) = 27.72$ , Welch's  $F(2, 230.13) = 40.68$ , all  $p < 0.01$ ). Post-hoc testing revealed the following pattern. Vegans ( $M = 5.16$ ) and vegetarians ( $M = 5.12$ ) rate Harm as more important than meat eaters ( $M = 4.68$ ; both  $p < .001$ ). Vegans ( $M = 5.00$ ) and vegetarians ( $M = 5.02$ ) rate Fairness as more important than meat eaters ( $M = 4.73$ ;  $p < .001$  and  $p = .003$ , respectively). Meat eaters ( $M = 3.58$ ) and



vegetarians ( $M = 3.50$ ) rate Loyalty as more important than vegans ( $M = 3.28, p < .001$  and  $p = .048$ , respectively). Meat eaters ( $M = 3.57$ ) rate Authority as more important than vegans ( $M = 2.92$ ) and vegetarians ( $M = 3.18, p < .001$  and  $p = .002$ , respectively). In general, vegans ( $M = 2.07$ ) show higher Moral Progressivism than vegetarians ( $M = 1.77; p = .023$ ) and meat eaters ( $M = 1.27; p < .001$ ). Vegetarians score higher than meat eaters ( $p < .001$ ).

Small positive correlations between meat consumption and MFQ were found for the subscales Authority ( $r_s = .32, p < .001$ ) and Loyalty ( $r_s = .17, p < .001$ ). Small negative correlations between meat consumption and MFQ were found for Harm ( $r_s = -.36, p < .001$ ), Fairness ( $r_s = -.19, p < .001$ ), and for Moral Progressivism ( $r_s = -.40, p < .001$ ). There were small positive correlations between dairy consumption and MFQ found for Loyalty ( $r_s = .17, p < .001$ ), and Authority ( $r_s = .27, p < .001$ ). Negative small correlations between dairy consumption and MFQ existed for Harm ( $r_s = -.24, p < .001$ ), Fairness ( $r_s = -.15, p = .002$ ), and for Moral Progressivism ( $r_s = -.40, p < .001$ ).

*Moral Foundations Questionnaire and Attitudes Towards Animals.* Positive small to medium correlations between AAS and MFQ existed for Harm ( $r_p = .60, p < .001$ ), Fairness ( $r_p = .43, p < .001$ ), and Moral Progressivism ( $r_p = .53, p < .001$ ). Negative small correlations between AAS and MFQ existed for Loyalty ( $r_p = -.13, p = .017$ ) and Authority ( $r_p = -.33, p < .001$ ).

*MFQ and Diet Motivation.* There were small to medium positive correlations between animal welfare as motivation for a vegetarian/vegan lifestyle and MFQ found for Harm ( $r_p = .49, p < .001$ ), Fairness ( $r_p = .33, p < .001$ ), and also for Moral Progressivism ( $r_p = .34, p < .001$ ). No correlations existed for Loyalty ( $p > .79$ ) and Authority ( $r_p = -.12, p > .05$ ). Also, small positive correlations between environment protection as motivation for a vegetarian/vegan lifestyle and MFQ were found for Harm ( $r_p = .22, p < .001$ ), Fairness ( $r_p = .23, p < .001$ ), and Moral Progressivism ( $r_p = .18, p = .005$ ). No correlations were found for Loyalty ( $p > .97$ ), and Authority ( $p > .19$ ). No correlations were found for health as motivation for a vegan/vegetarian lifestyle and Harm ( $r_p = .14, p > .05$ ), Authority ( $r_p = .14, p > .05$ ), Moral Progressivism ( $r_p = -.12, p > .05$ ), Fairness ( $p > .65$ ), or Loyalty ( $p > .11$ ).

When comparing the correlation coefficients of the vegetarian sample with those of the vegan sample, it is noteworthy that, although not significantly, positive correlations between animal welfare as motivation for vegan/vegetarian lifestyle and Harm as well as Moral Progressivism tend to be stronger in the vegan sample than in the vegetarian sample. In line with this, positive correlations between animal welfare as motivation for vegan/vegetarian lifestyle and Fairness become significant for the vegan sample only.

Furthermore, the correlations between animal welfare as motivation for vegan/vegetarian lifestyle and Harm as well as Moral Progressivism were significantly stronger than the correlation between environmental protection as motivation for vegan/vegetarian lifestyle and Harm as well as Moral Progressivism ( $p < .001, p < .05$ ).

*Diet and Everyday Life.* A Welch test revealed a significant difference between groups for everyday consumption (Welch's  $F(2, 315.94) = 10.95, p < .001$ ). Post hoc tests revealed that vegans reported a more restricted consumption behavior than

meat eaters ( $p < .001$ ). In addition, there was a small positive correlation between everyday consumption and the AAS ( $r_p = .21, p < .001$ ).

Also, significant differences between groups were found for everyday environmental protection (Welch's  $F(2, 229.51) = 20.62, p < .001$ ). Post hoc tests revealed that vegans as well as vegetarians reported to lay more emphasis on environmental protection in their everyday life than meat eaters ( $p < .001, p < .001$ ). Also, there was a significant positive correlation between AAS and everyday environmental protection ( $r_p = .44, p < .001$ ).

Kruskal-Wallis tests showed group differences for the variables clothes from big companies ( $H(2) = 20.228, p < .001$ ), second-hand clothing ( $H(2) = 30.525, p < .001$ ), plastic bags ( $H(2) = 32.309, p < .001$ ), certifications (e.g., organic labels; ( $H(2) = 48.619, p < .001$ )). In contrast, Kruskal-Wallis tests showed no group differences for frequency of traveling by plane, frequency of shopping at Amazon, and frequency of wasting food, (all  $p > .05$ ). Bonferroni corrected pairwise comparisons showed that vegans and vegetarians buy more second-hand clothing ( $p < .001, p = .001$ ) and look for certifications more often ( $p < .001$ ) than meat eaters, and vegans buy fewer plastic bags ( $p < .001$ ) and buy less often clothes from big companies ( $p < .001$ ) than meat eaters. The pattern, that positive attitudes towards animals are connected to other moral domains is reflected by correlations between the AAS and the above-mentioned variables of moral behavior: there were positive small to medium correlations between the AAS and certifications ( $r_s = .36, p < .001$ ), second-hand clothing ( $r_s = .27, p < .001$ ), plastic bags ( $r_s = .29, p < .001$ ), and frequency of shopping at Amazon ( $r_s = .13, p = .004$ ). In line with this, a small negative correlation was found for clothes from big companies ( $r_s = -.16, p < .001$ ). No correlations were found for frequency of traveling by plane, and frequency of wasting food, and (all  $p > .05$  or  $p = .05$ ).

There was also a significant connection found between diet and environment-friendly vs. environment-unfriendly means of transport ( $\chi_2^2(2) = 13.580, p = 0.001$ ). Post hoc testing showed that vegans used more often environment-friendly means of transport than expected ( $p = .020$ ), whereas meat eaters used less often environment-friendly means of transport than expected ( $p = .047$ ). In addition, there was a connection found between diet and social commitment based on ethics vs. social commitment based without ethical focus (e.g., cultural work;  $\chi_2^2(2) = 12.525, p = .002$ ). Post hoc testing showed that vegans did more often social commitment based on ethics than expected ( $p = .018$ ), whereas meat eaters did less often social commitment based on ethics than expected ( $p = .03$ ).

Also, there was a connection found between diet and donations ( $\chi_2^2(2) = 11.150, p = .004$ ). Post hoc testing showed that vegans donated more often than expected ( $p = .0245$ ). However, when comparing only those participants that made donations, no connection between diet group and frequency of donations were found ( $p > .05$ ).

As shown in Tables 1 and 2, vegans value individualizing moral foundations (Harm avoidance, Fairness) more strongly than meat eaters, which, in turn, place greater importance on binding moral foundations (Authority, Loyalty) than vegans, with vegetarians roughly falling in between. Thus, the results support Hypotheses H1 and H2, pointing to a distinct MFP for each diet group. In addition, vegans show higher scores of Moral Progressivism than meat eaters, while vegetarians fall in between.

**Table 1**  
*Comparison of Diet Groups Concerning Their Moral Foundations*

Dependent variable	Comparison between diet groups
Harm	$M_{\text{meat}} = 4.68$ ; $M_{\text{vegetarian}} = 5.12$ ; $M_{\text{vegan}} = 5.16$ meat vs. vegetarian: $p < .001$ meat vs. vegan: $p < .001$
Fairness	$M_{\text{meat}} = 4.73$ ; $M_{\text{vegetarian}} = 5.02$ ; $M_{\text{vegan}} = 5.00$ meat vs. vegetarian: $p = .003$ meat vs. vegan: $p < .001$
Loyalty	$M_{\text{meat}} = 3.58$ ; $M_{\text{vegetarian}} = 3.50$ ; $M_{\text{vegan}} = 3.28$ meat vs. vegetarian: $p = .048$ meat vs. vegan: $p < .001$ vegan vs. vegetarian: $p = .048$
Authority	$M_{\text{meat}} = 3.57$ ; $M_{\text{vegetarian}} = 3.18$ ; $M_{\text{vegan}} = 2.92$ meat vs. vegetarian: $p = .002$ meat vs. vegan: $p < .001$
Moral progressivism	$M_{\text{meat}} = 1.27$ ; $M_{\text{vegetarian}} = 1.77$ ; $M_{\text{vegan}} = 2.07$ meat vs. vegetarian: $p = .023$ meat vs. vegan: $p < .001$ vegan vs. vegetarian: $p = .023$

Note. Meat = meat eater; vegetarian = vegetarian; vegan = vegan. Only significant results were reported.

**Table 2**  
*Correlations Between MFQ Variables, Everyday Consumption, and Environmental Protection and AAS, Meat Consumption, and Dairy Consumption*

	AAS	Meat consumption	Dairy consumption
Harm	$r_p = .60$ $p < .001$	$r_s = -.36$ $p < .001$	$r_s = -.24$ $p < .001$
Fairness	$r_p = .43$ $p < .001$	$r_s = -.19$ $p < .001$	$r_s = -.15$ $p = .002$
Loyalty	$r_p = -.13$ $p = .017$	$r_s = .17$ $p < .001$	$r_s = .17$ $p < .001$
Authority	$r_p = -.33$ $p < .001$	$r_s = .32$ $p < .001$	$r_s = .27$ $p < .001$
Moral progressivism	$r_p = .53$ $p < .001$	$r_s = -.40$ $p < .001$	$r_s = -.40$ $p < .001$
Everyday consumption	$r_p = .21$ $p < .001$	Not calculated	Not calculated
Environmental protection	$r_p = .44$ $p < .001$	Not calculated	Not calculated

Note.  $r_p$  = Pearson correlation,  $r_s$  = Spearman correlation.

**Table 3**

*Comparisons of Diet Groups Concerning Different Moral Behaviors*

Dependent variable	Significant post hoc comparisons
Big companies (Kruskal-Wallis)	Meat eaters > vegans ( $p < .001$ ); no differences to vegetarians
Second-Hand clothing (Kruskal-Wallis)	Vegans and vegetarians > meat eaters ( $p < .001$ and $p = .001$ , respectively)
Plastic bags (Kruskal-Wallis)	Meat eaters > vegans ( $p < .001$ ); no differences to vegetarians
Certifications (Kruskal-Wallis)	Vegans and Vegetarians > Meat Eaters (both $p < .001$ )
Traveling by plane (Kruskal-Wallis)	No differences
Amazon.com (Kruskal-Wallis)	No differences
Wasting food (Kruskal-Wallis)	No differences
Donation (Chi-Square)	Vegans > expected ( $p = .024$ )
Social commitment based on ethics (Chi-Square)	Vegans > expected ( $p = .018$ ) Meat eaters < expected ( $p = .030$ )
Environmental-friendly means of transport (Chi-Square)	Vegans > expected ( $p = .020$ ) Meat eaters < expected ( $p = .047$ )

*Note.* Post hoc comparisons were calculated only for significant Kruskal-Wallis or significant Chi-Square tests

In addition, we found negative correlations between individualizing moral foundations (Harm Avoidance, Fairness) and meat and dairy consumption, and, in turn, positive correlations between binding moral foundations (Authority, Loyalty) and meat and dairy consumption. In line with this, we found positive correlations between individualizing moral foundations and the AAS, and negative correlations between binding moral foundations and the AAS. These results provide further support for Hypotheses H1–H2.

As evident from Table 2 and 3, concerning moral behavior in other domains, we generally found support for Hypothesis H3: Vegans reported lower consumerism and more conscious shopping than meat eaters, and vegans as well as vegetarians reported stronger environmental protection than meat eaters. Further, vegans rather reported to have made donations than meat eaters. Also, vegans reported social commitment in ethical domains more often, whereas meat eaters reported social commitment in rather traditional domains more often.

## Survey 2

### **Introduction and Methods**

Survey 2 further investigated the possible linkage between diet choice and behavior in other moral domains, that is, correlations between meat consumption and attitudes to disposables. In addition, to investigate links to other ideologies advocating social justice, we also examined correlations between diet choice and attitudes towards feminist ideals. The survey was in German; when describing items, we give the English translation.

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### **Participants**

Participants were recruited online via internet forums (e.g., for students, for feminists) in Germany. Additionally, participants were recruited at the university [BLINDED] and took part for course credit. As the Feminist Identity Composite (FIC, see below) was designed for women, only female participants were included in Survey 2. Data of 159 women were analyzed. Age had a median of 24 years and a range from 18 to 69 years. There was no difference in age between the diet groups (Welch's  $F = .604$ ,  $p = .54$ ). 12 participants were vegan, 39 participants were vegetarian, 46 flexitarian, and 57 omnivorous (5 of the remaining could not be classified). In order to avoid any form of bias, the participants were only given general information about the study, namely that it is concerned with women, animals, and personality traits. No incentives were offered.

### **Materials. Waste Disposal Behavior**

Individual's Waste Disposal Behavior was assessed with a 24-item questionnaire (Mielke, 1985) that covers attitudes towards waste disposal behavior in different areas of life, such as packaging, buying bottles and cans, detergents and cleaners, waste disposal on the way, and disposal of dangerous materials. Sample items are: "When doing groceries, people should avoid products with fancy packaging," or "When having a picnic, people should use the next waste bin for waste disposal." Responses are given on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = *completely disagree*, 5 = *completely agree*), with higher scores indicating more sustainable waste disposal behavior. The questionnaire shows good internal consistency ( $\alpha = .887$ ).

*Feminist Identity Composite.* The Feminist Identity Composite is a widely used (DeBlaere et al., 2017) 33-item scale to measure 5 stages of feminist identity development as outlined by Downing and Roush (1985, as cited in Fischer et al., 2000). Passive Acceptance is marked by an acceptance of traditional gender roles. A sample item is "I think that most women will feel most fulfilled by being a wife and a mother." Revelation is a stage of questioning such gender roles and having a negative attitude towards men. A sample item is "Gradually, I am beginning to see just how sexist society really is." Embeddedness–Emanation has a focus on the felt connection women have with other women. A sample item is "I am very interested in women writers." Synthesis means women have non-traditional but flexible views of gender roles which are based on an individual assessment. A sample item is "I have incorporated what is female and feminine into my own unique personality." Active Commitment "is characterized by a deep commitment to social change and the belief that men are equal to, but not the same as, women" (Fischer et al., 2000, p. 16). A sample item is "I care very deeply about men and women having equal opportunities in all respects." Responses are given on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, 5 = *strongly agree*). Internal consistency of the FIC is good ( $\alpha = .856$ ) and strong convergent and discriminant validity has been demonstrated (DeBlaere et al., 2017). We translated the FIC into German using the technique of back-translation.

*Self-Assessed Feminism.* Additionally, we included one item to assess participants' self-perception as feminist: "To what degree do you consider yourself as feminist?" Responses were given on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = *not at all*, 5 = *very much*).

*Composite Respect for Animals Scale (CRAS-S)*. The Composite Respect for Animals Scale (Randler et al., 2019) is a 20-item scale that covers attitudes towards animals in a broad way. It is composed of ten subscales: Use of Animals in Research, Use of Animals for Food, Farm Animal Husbandry, Animals as Companions, Animals Use for Recreation, Human as Superior, Conservation of Animals, Animal Use for Clothing, Hunting/Angling, Commitment (emotional affection), containing items such as “It is wrong to kill crocodiles to make shoes and handbags from their skin.” or “I think it is perfectly acceptable for animals to be raised for human consumption.” Responses are given on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = *fully agree*, 5 = *fully disagree*). Internal consistency is good ( $\alpha = .825$ ).

### **Procedure**

Prior to the survey, participants were informed that they could cancel the survey at any time, their anonymity was ensured, and they gave their informed consent to collecting and publishing these data. Participants filled out the questionnaire online. First, they answered items concerning demographical data. The order of the different scales was as following: Saarbrückener Persönlichkeitsfragebogen [Saarbrücken personality questionnaire] (as part of another study), Waste–Disposal Behavior, Feminist Identity Composite, and Composite Respect for Animals Scale.

### **Data Analysis**

Data analysis was done following the same steps as in the analysis of Survey 1. Due to the small sample size of vegans, we will also report marginal significant results concerning the vegan sample.

### **Results and Discussion**

*Feminism (FIC)*. Means on the FIC variables Active Commitment, Revelation, Embeddedness–Emanation, and Passive Acceptance differed significantly between the diet groups (Welch’s  $F(2, 85.945) = 9.944, p < .001$ , Welch’s  $F(2, 87.394) = 3.829, p = .025$ , Welch’s  $F(2, 89.312) = 6.151, p = .003$ , Welch’s  $F(2, 87.944) = 3.949, p = .023$ ). No difference was found for Synthesis ( $p = .183$ ). Post hoc tests revealed that vegetarians and vegans scored significantly higher on Active Commitment ( $M = 3.78, p < .001$ ;  $M = 3.72, p = .056$ ), Revelation ( $M = 2.48, p = .019$ ;  $M = 2.65, p = .054$ ), and Embeddedness–Emanation ( $M = 3.59, p = .002$ ) than meat eaters ( $M = 3.13, M = 2.21, M = 2.91$ ), whereas meat eaters scored significantly higher on Passive Acceptance ( $M = 1.99$ ) than vegetarians and vegans ( $M = 1.71, p = .019$ ;  $M = 1.54, p = .003$ ). No differences were found for flexitarians.

There were small positive correlations found for CRAS with Active Commitment ( $r_p = .35, p < .001$ ), Synthesis ( $r_p = .24, p = .007$ ), Revelation ( $r_p = .28, p = .002$ ), Embeddedness–Emanation ( $r_p = .27, p = .002$ ). A small negative correlation existed for CRAS with Passive Acceptance ( $r_p = -.17, p = .02$ ). In addition, there were also small negative correlations found between meat consumption frequency and Active Commitment ( $r_s = -.36, p < .001$ ), and Embeddedness–Emanation ( $r_s = -.28, p = .001$ ). A small positive correlation was found for Passive Acceptance ( $r_s = .22, p = .02$ ). No correlations

were found for Synthesis ( $p = .29$ ) and Revelation ( $p = .05$ ). For dairy consumption frequency there were small negative correlations found with Embeddedness–Emanation ( $r_s = -.21, p = .04$ ). No correlations were found for Synthesis ( $p = .37$ ), Active Commitment ( $p = .01$ ), Revelation ( $p = .05$ ) or Passive Acceptance ( $p = .35$ ).

*Waste–Disposal Behavior.* Waste–Disposal Behavior differed significantly between diet groups (Welch's  $F(2, 91.962) = 16.981, p < .001$ ). Post hoc tests revealed that vegans ( $M = 4.34$ ) and vegetarians ( $M = 4.26$ ) scored higher on Waste–Disposal Behavior than meat eaters ( $M = 3.74$ , both  $p < .001$ ). Also, flexitarians scored higher than meat eaters ( $p = .005$ ).

There were small to medium negative correlations found for Waste–Disposal Behavior with meat consumption frequency ( $r_s = -.45, p < .001$ ), as well as with dairy consumption frequency ( $r_s = -.20, p = .01$ ). Additionally, a positive small to medium correlation existed for Waste–Disposal Behavior and CRAS ( $r_p = .48, p < .001$ ).

*Self-Assessed Feminism.* Self-Assessed Feminism differed significantly between the diet groups (Welch's  $F(2, 87.190) = 6.681, p = .002$ ). Post hoc tests could show that vegans ( $M = 7.42, p = .01$ ) and vegetarians scored higher on self-assessed feminism ( $M = 6.90$ ) than meat eaters ( $M = 5.16, p = .001$ ). A small positive correlation between CRAS and self-assessed feminism ( $r_p = .24, p = .002$ ) was found. Also, a small negative correlation between meat consumption frequency and self-assessed feminism ( $r_s = -.28, p < .001$ ) existed. No correlation existed for dairy consumption frequency ( $p = .07$ ).

**Table 4**

*Comparison of Diet Groups Concerning Feminism and Waste–Disposal Behavior*

Dependent variable	Comparison between diet groups
Active commitment	$M_{\text{meat}} = 3.13; M_{\text{vegetarian}} = 3.78; M_{\text{vegan}} = 3.72$ meat vs. vegetarian: $p = .019$ meat vs. vegan: $p = .056$
Revelation	$M_{\text{meat}} = 2.21; M_{\text{vegetarian}} = 2.48; M_{\text{vegan}} = 2.65$ meat vs. vegetarian: $p = .002$ meat vs. vegan: $p = .054$
Embeddedness–Emanation	$M_{\text{meat}} = 2.91; M_{\text{vegetarian}} = 3.59; M_{\text{vegan}} = 2.65$ meat vs. vegetarian: $p = .002$
Passive acceptance	$M_{\text{meat}} = 1.99; M_{\text{vegetarian}} = 1.71; M_{\text{vegan}} = 1.54$ meat vs. vegetarian: $p = .019$ meat vs. vegan: $p = .003$
Self-Assessed feminism	$M_{\text{meat}} = 5.16; M_{\text{vegetarian}} = 6.90; M_{\text{vegan}} = 7.42$ meat vs. vegetarian: $p = .001$ meat vs. vegan: $p = .01$
Waste–Disposal behavior	$M_{\text{meat}} = 3.74; M_{\text{flexi}} = 4.03; M_{\text{vegetarian}} = 4.26; M_{\text{vegan}} = 4.34$ meat vs. vegetarian: $p < .001$ meat vs. vegan: $p < .001$ meat vs. flexi: $p = .005$ vegetarian vs. flexi: $p = .009$ vegan vs. flexi: $p = .006$

*Note.* meat = meat eater; flexi = flexitarian; vegetarian = vegetarian; vegan = vegan. Only significant differences were reported. Results relating to the vegan sample were also reported when marginally significant, since the sample size was small ( $n = 12$ ).

**Table 5**

*Correlations Between Fic Variables, Self-Assessed Feminism, and Waste–Disposal Behavior and Cras, Meat Consumption, Dairy Consumption*

	CRAS	Meat consumption	Dairy consumption
Active commitment	$r_p = .35$ $p < .001$	$r_s = -.36$ $p < .001$	n.s.
Synthesis	$r_p = .24$ $p = .007$	n.s.	n.s.
Revelation	$r_p = .28$ $p = .002$	n.s.	n.s.
Embeddedness–Emanation	$r_p = .27$ $p = .002$	$r_s = -.28$ $p = .001$	$r_s = -.21$ $p = .04$
Passive acceptance	$r_p = -.17$ $p = .02$	$r_s = .22$ $p = .02$	n.s.
Self-Assessed feminism	$r_p = .24$ $p = .002$	$r_s = -.28$ $p < .001$	n.s.
Waste–Disposal behavior	$r_p = .48$ $p < .001$	$r_s = -.45$ $p < .001$	$r_s = -.20$ $p = .01$

Note.  $r_p$  = Pearson correlation,  $r_s$  = Spearman correlation.

As evident from Table 4 and 5, vegans and vegetarians score higher than meat eaters on FIC subscales that indicate rather feminist ideals (i.e., Active Commitment, Revelation, Embeddedness–Emanation), whereas meat eaters score higher on the subscale that indicates acceptance of traditional gender roles (i.e., Passive Acceptance). Further, vegetarians exhibit higher scores of self-assessed feminism than meat eaters. Correlations between FIC subscales and meat and dairy consumption showed the same pattern. In general, these results support Hypothesis H4, indicating that a distinct MFP can become evident in several conceptually similar ideologies.

Also, vegetarians exhibited a more sustainability-oriented attitude towards waste disposal compared to meat eaters, with flexitarians falling in between. This pattern is supported by correlations between meat consumption, dairy consumption, CRAS, and waste disposal. These results provide further support for Hypothesis H3 and point to the sustainability orientation of vegetarians not only on a behavioral level, but also in terms of attitudes.

### General Discussion

Prior research (De Backer & Hudders, 2015) investigated the relation between eating behavior, the respective moral foundations and other morally relevant behaviors (i.e., donating) between meat eaters, flexitarians, and vegetarians. We took these initial findings as a starting point and extended the research by including a vegan sample and by covering a markedly broader range of moral behaviors (i.e., means of transport, sustainable/fair trade consumerism, social commitment, donations) in our study. In addition, we looked at the endorsement of feminist ideals to see whether those are connected to specific eating behavior (i.e., vegans and vegetarians), as both are based



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on similar moral foundations. Overall, we found support for our Hypotheses H1–H2 concerning differing MFPs between the diet groups, for Hypothesis H3 concerning different diet groups showing moral behavior according to their MFP apart from diet choice, and also for Hypothesis H4 concerning vegans and vegetarians' stronger endorsement of feminist ideas.

### ***Moral-Foundations-Profile***

Survey 1 demonstrated that vegans have a MFP emphasizing individualizing foundations, and meat eaters have a MFP emphasizing binding foundations, while vegetarians fall in between. Consistently, vegans, as well as vegetarians, put more emphasis on Harm avoidance and Fairness when evaluating moral situations compared to meat eaters. Vegetarians and meat eaters value Loyalty more than vegans, and meat eaters put more emphasis on Loyalty compared to vegetarians and vegans. Hence, Hypotheses H1–H2 could be confirmed. Interestingly, such moral differentiation cannot only be detected in terms of distinct MFPs between diet groups, but even within groups of vegetarians or meat eaters, as indicated by negative correlations between meat or dairy consumption and individualizing foundations (i.e., Harm avoidance, Fairness). Our results are in line with earlier research (De Backer & Hudders, 2015), demonstrating that two moral foundations are predictive for diet choice, namely, Harm avoidance for vegetarians and Authority for meat eaters. Our study confirmed these initial findings and further found that not only Harm avoidance is connected to a vegetarian diet, but also Fairness—pointing to the great importance of individualizing foundations for vegetarians. In addition, our study included a vegan sample in the diet group comparison, yielding an even clearer tendency towards Moral Progressivism (high Moral Progressivism is indicated by a single score computed out of higher scores on Harm avoidance and Fairness and lower scores on Authority and Loyalty) as a result. Vegans differ even more than vegetarians from meat eaters in terms of their MFP, showing a strong emphasis on Harm avoidance and Fairness. Also, vegans displayed rejection of both binding foundations (i.e., Authority, Loyalty), whereas vegetarians only show an objection to authority. Hence, vegetarians' MFP, though also showing a tendency towards individualizing foundations, shows a slightly different pattern than vegans' MFP, and can be placed between meat eaters' MFP and vegans' MFP.

A theoretical explanation for the deviating MFPs of the different diet group is given by De Backer and Hudders (2015, p.73): "If the norm is to eat meat, then consciously reducing meat intake automatically implies not following the norm or not obeying general rules. This may explain the significant difference in moral attitudes between flexitarians and meat eaters." This should hold for vegans even more strongly, since their eating behavior deviates even more from meat eaters', flexitarians', and also vegetarians' eating behavior. These differences in following eating norms, or deviating from eating norms can be explained by differences in affinity towards Authority. In line with this, meat eaters follow eating norms and show support for Authority, whereas vegans deviate most from eating norms and show least support for Authority, while vegetarians fall in between. In line with this, we found that meat eaters hold views

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of the political right significantly more often than vegans, which has already been demonstrated in previous research (Dhont & Hodson, 2014; Veser et al., 2015). A relevant underlying mechanism in this regard is social dominance orientation which refers in this respect to the belief that humans are superior to animals (Dhont & Hodson, 2014), which, again, is positively associated with attitudes of speciesism (i.e., discrimination based on species due to human supremacy assumption; Dhont et al., 2016; Merriam-Webster, n.d.-b). This might function as a possible explanation for the fact that meat eaters place great value on Authority—but is still to be tested empirically in future research.

Furthermore, positive correlations between the AAS and individualizing moral foundations, and negative ones with binding moral foundations emphasize the linkage between MFP and attitudes towards animals, showing that the typical vegans' MFP correlates with positive attitudes towards animals. Also, significant correlations between animal product consumption and moral foundations within the group of meat eaters or vegetarians demonstrate important intersubjective variability: The larger the consumed amount of animal products, the greater the value attached to binding foundations, and, on the other hand, the smaller the consumed amount of animal products, the greater the value attached to individualizing foundations—regardless of diet group.

### ***Single-issue vs. General Ethical Behavior***

Survey 1 showed that vegans act in line with their MFP, that is, they place more emphasis on individualizing foundations, and less on binding foundations. Accordingly, vegans hold more restrictive consumption habits than meat eaters (e.g., meaning they consume less and hereby support sustainability). Second, their everyday behaviors are more sustainable (e.g., use eco-friendly means of transport). Third, they show a more conscious shopping behavior (e.g., buy clothes less often from big companies). Fourth, vegans show social commitment more often in domains with explicit ethical focus than in traditional domains without such focus (e.g., refugee relief vs. cultural activities). Also, vegans rather reported to have made donations than meat eaters. Hence, Hypothesis H3 could be confirmed. Furthermore, positive correlations between the AAS and individualizing moral foundations, and negative ones with binding moral foundations emphasize the linkage between MFPs and attitudes towards animals, showing that the typical vegans' MFP correlates with positive attitudes towards animals. All of the measured behaviors cover significant aspects of sustainability and social justice. Since both sustainability and social justice can be brought forward by avoiding harm (to humans, animals, and the environment) and acting fair (on an individual as well as on a societal level), vegans have a MFP which is displayed also in several domains apart from diet. In line with this, vegans that indicate environmental protection as the main motivation for their diet show nearly the same MFP as those that indicate animal welfare as the main motivation, pointing to intertwined goals of vegan ideology and vegan moral foundations. In contrast, vegans that chose their diet out of health motivations show a different MFP, which emphasizes that distinct MFPs are rather linked to certain motives for a vegan diet, and not to the diet itself. Nonetheless, differences between diet groups

were not found on all measures. Vegans order as often as meat eaters from Amazon or waste food to the same degree as meat eaters (but see below). For vegetarians, only measures of environmental protection differed from those of meat eaters.

Survey 2 further supports the pattern described above. Concerning waste disposal, vegans and vegetarians indicated a more sustainability-oriented attitude than meat eaters. Persons who categorized themselves as flexitarian fell in between. In line with this, negative correlations between meat or dairy consumption and sustainability-oriented attitudes towards waste disposal were found.

It seems plausible that moral foundations serve as underlying bases for corresponding attitudes and behaviors in different behavioral domains. That is, abstract moral foundations realize specific attitudes in a way that is consistent with the respective MFP. For instance, valuing care finds an expression in concern over disadvantaged groups, animal welfare, and environmental protection. Therefore, vegans, vegetarians, and meat eaters act according to their MFP in all domains that involve moral evaluation and are of importance to their respective MFP. Our results are in line with research about climate change indicating that foundations of Harm avoidance/Care, and Authority are linked to personal climate change norms (Jansson & Dorrepaal, 2015) and with results demonstrating moral foundations to be predictive of sustainable consumption behaviors and political involvement in sustainability issues (Watkins et al., 2016). In turn, our findings point to the improbability of a single-issue focus (e.g., only being vegan but not acting sustainable), which is consistent with empirical research. Furthermore, vegans who chose that type of diet based on health or sustainability motivations are likely to incorporate compassion for animals later on, whereas those who were motivated by animal concerns will adopt health reasons later on (Fox & Ward, 2008; MacNair, 2001). Hence, it appears that motivations expand over time, and becoming vegan can serve as a starting point for further ethical commitment in associated domains. In line with this, among others, important goals of vegans are also reducing world hunger or pursuing anti-big-business concerns (Kalte, 2021; MacNair, 2001).

### ***Moral Foundations and Their Support for Different Ideological Frameworks***

As predicted, we found a correlation between veganism and vegetarianism and support for feminist ideals. Hence, Hypothesis H4 could be confirmed. This finding is likely due to the emphasis on individualizing foundations which is the core of different ideologies seeking social justice; in this case, veganism and feminism. It seems likely that moral foundations are internalized early on and that they work as a kind of guiding compass to identify with broader ideologies, but also in order to direct moral behavior in different domains. Such a correlation lends psychological support to a conceptualization that places animals in an intersectional approach next to gender (and other categories; Deckha, 2008). “[S]pecies as a locus of hierarchy resembled, in its structure and effect, other hierarchical markers of differences, such as gender [...]” (Deckha, 2008, p. 250). As pointed out in the introduction, an individualizing MFP should be in accordance with individualizing foundations and a rejection of Authority, which is spelled out in the idea of equality concerning both, gender and animals.

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In addition, it is plausible that vegan and vegetarian women have stronger feminist identities than meat-eating women, as meat-eating is connected with higher SDO, which, in turn, is linked to sexism (Schmitt & Wirth, 2009). Further, Adams established a theoretical link between meat and patriarchy in her book *The Sexual Politics of Meat* (2010). Unsurprisingly, and in line with former research, our sample also found fewer men to be vegan (e.g., Kerschke-Risch, 2015). It has to be noted though, that our vegan sample was quite small (though statistically sufficient) and that future research might benefit from replicating our Survey 2 study with a larger vegan sample to ensure the results.

### ***Future Research and the Question of Cause and Effect***

Can a personal MFP be altered and thereby create a change in attitudes towards animals or even diet change? Since our study is correlational in nature, questions about causality remain unanswered. Thus, causality in terms of MFP, diet choice, and associated behavior is an important research question, which has to be approached in future studies on the topic. Up to now, there is still inconclusive evidence about the causality and malleability of moral foundations (Alper & Yilmaz, 2020; Day et al., 2014; Napier & Lugini, 2013), but from our results it seems reasonable to infer that MFPs are not an all-or-nothing phenomenon. As evident from the MFQ mean scores, most people value all foundations to a certain degree. For instance, vegans also attach importance to Authority and meat eaters to Harm avoidance, but to a much lesser degree than the other diet group, respectively. Hence, pertaining to causality, future research could investigate whether making certain foundations more salient can change attitudes to animals or perceptions of different diets or dieters, which we are currently planning to do in a consecutive experiment. On the other hand, the opposite causal direction might function, too: since specific moral foundations are embedded in different eating ideologies (e.g., non-harm in veganism or hierarchy in meat eating) people should also emphasize such moral foundations even more strongly after adopting a specific diet. For instance, priming a vegan versus meat eating mindset might change situational importance of certain moral foundations. Furthermore, it might change the perception of different diet groups (e.g., stigmatization of vegans).

Also, it has to be noted that our results might only hold true for Western nations, since diet motivations appear to vary across cultures (see, for example, Rosenfeld, 2018). Thus, future research could explore cross-cultural differences in MFP for different diet groups.

Next to the question of causality, it might be fruitful to identify further behaviors that belong in the investigated cluster, in other words, which other social behaviors are linked to diet via MFPs or moral foundations in general. Most likely, behaviors that involve aspects of authority or harm should fall in this cluster. For instance, implicit behaviors concerning racism like microaggressions or performance in an implicit association task targeting marginalized populations could be of relevance but also perceptions of social dangers (see Leeuwen & Park, 2009), homophobia (see Barnett et al., 2018), and ambivalent sexism (see Vecina & Piñuela, 2017). More broadly, research could investigate whether diet groups differ in terms of obedience

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or conformity; for example, concerning vaccine use or compliance with COVID-19 measures (see Chan, 2021). Another research question could be whether diet groups differ in how they show consideration or socially exclude others (e.g., diet groups with a specified food intolerance). Next to this, behaviors of different diet groups that are not primarily related to morality could be investigated. Diverse topics such as self-control (see Mooijman et al., 2018), identity in groups, or cognitive dissonance could be worthwhile to look at. Furthermore, demonstrated differences between meat eaters and vegetarians or vegans could be related to moral foundations, for example differences in empathy (see Dawson et al., 2021; Holler et al., 2021). Apart from that, another prospect is focusing on social and moral aspects of food (production) and whether those are also related to MFPs. Of interest could be for instance anti-consumption (see Culiberg et al., 2022) or attitudes towards livestock production systems and antibiotic use therein (see Goddard et al., 2019), genetically modified organisms (see Hielscher et al., 2016), or fast food (see Martinelli, 2013).

## Conclusion

To conclude, we could demonstrate differences in MFPs between meat eaters, vegetarians, and vegans. More specifically, meat eaters and vegans differ on all moral foundations and also most strongly from each other, whereas vegetarians fall somewhat in between. Concerning moral behavior apart from diet choice, the different diet groups acted in accordance with their MFP, thereby rejecting the idea that vegans are only concerned about a vegan lifestyle. More likely, a MFP serves as a basis for general ethical behavior. This idea is further supported by the empirical linkage between eating behavior and feminism, as these ideologies have similar underlying moral foundations.

## Statements

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**Appendix A: Everyday Consumption Scale**

1. I trash food with expired best before dates (reverse coded)
2. I buy only as much as I need
3. I own only clothes I actually put on
4. I wear my clothes until they are worn out
5. I have too much clothes (reverse coded)
6. When buying clothes, I pay attention to sustainable and social responsible production.

**Appendix B: Environmental Protection in Everyday Life Scale**

1. I would never take the plane if my destination is accessible by train/ car even if it takes longer.
2. I would not take the care if my destination is accessible by train even of it takes longer.
3. While doing groceries I try to avoid packages.
4. I carefully pay attention to waste separation.
5. I think it is justified that you have to pay for plastic bags in the supermarket.



ARTICLE

## The Influence of Socio-Cultural Factors on Oocyte Donors' Motivations and Disclosure Decisions

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### ABSTRACT

The study focuses on the motivations of Russian oocyte donors and the socio-cultural factors affecting these motivations. We conducted 16 semi-structured interviews with actual or prospective oocyte donors. All of them were patients of two fertility clinics located in the city of Yekaterinburg (Russia) planning to become oocyte donors within the period from 2 weeks to 3 months. We built a profile of a Russian oocyte donor: it is a 26-year-old married woman with at least one child, she has a secondary vocational education and a low income. All the women in our study displayed multiple motivations: apart from the interest in a financial reward and purely altruistic motivations, for many women the decisive factor is their desire to help their friends or relatives struggling with infertility. Interestingly, almost all of our respondents described their decision to donate as an attempt to move past a traumatic situation they once endured and to achieve closure by doing something really important and good. For many women, oocyte donation becomes a way to boost their self-esteem, to feel more significant and to promote their personal autonomy. As for barriers to donation, one of the most

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important is associated with the donors' unwillingness to make their identity known and to share this information even with their close circle of friends and relatives. For the majority of donors, anonymity is crucial. The disclosure of this information, in their view, will cause controversy in the donor's family and immediate circle of friends at present and will threaten their privacy in the future. The prospective donors are also concerned about the negative public attitudes or lack of understanding.

#### **KEYWORDS**

oocyte donations, oocyte donors' motivations, barriers to oocyte donation, anonymity of oocyte donors

#### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

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## **Introduction**

IVF treatment with donor eggs is considered one of the most efficient assisted reproductive technologies (Barri et al., 2014; Hogan et al., 2020). Due to the liberal approaches to assisted conception and IVF popularization in many countries, there is a growing demand for donated gametes, including oocytes (Álvarez Plaza, 2015). In Russian fertility clinics there is a high demand for mentally and physically healthy oocyte donors ready for repeated donations and able to objectively estimate the risks and benefits of the procedure.

In this light, it becomes crucial to study the motivations of donors and the barriers to donation as well as the key socio-cultural factors influencing their decision-making. As international studies have shown, oocyte donors' motivations can be altruistic or pro-social (Gürtin et al., 2012) as well as pragmatic, financial (Parames et al., 2014). Altruistic motivations may include empathy with other women, the desire to be generous to others and to help them. The reasons behind a woman's decision to donate may be the desire to help others, especially if she has relatives or friends suffering from infertility (Bakker et al., 2017; Bracewell-Milnes et al., 2016; Kurlenkova, 2016). It should be noted that although altruism can be the donor's primary motivation, after she discovers how many complications oocyte donation is fraught with, she may change her mind and welcome the prospect of a financial reward (Orobitg & Salazar, 2005).

In the countries where commercial oocyte donation is prohibited (Brazil, Canada, Finland, Australia), the donors' declared motivations are purely altruistic (Parames et al., 2014). Since sister-to-sister oocyte donation is the most widely spread and socially approved kind of reproductive donation (The American Society for Reproductive Medicine, 2017), intrafamilial donors are not legally bound in any way and are not subject to public pressure that would affect their level of autonomy in the face of a situation where one of their family members needs an oocyte (Jadva et al., 2011, p. 2777).

In the case of egg donation between friends or family members, "the donors' personal relationship with their recipient played an influential role in their donation

decision" (Yee et al., 2011, p. 407). Donors consider egg sharing as a way to help their recipients achieve motherhood (Blyth et al., 2011, p. 1138). Another motivation behind intrafamilial oocyte donation is the desire for the reproductive material to "remain in the family" (Kurlenkova, 2016).

Some donors reported that they preferred to donate their oocyte rather than waste them and that donation was a way to put behind painful experiences of their past and to cope with the feeling of guilt (Pennings et al., 2014). A recent study (Martin et al., 2020), involving interviews with oocyte donors and recipients, identified four main topics: the desire to "do something", stemming from the already existing donor-recipient relationship; the "feeling of duty" (the donors explained that they felt it was their "duty" to help their infertile friend or relative); the "woman-to-woman" topic, which placed the main accent on female solidarity; and the topic of "going through this together", which foregrounded the history of the donor-recipient relationship.

For commercial donors, the level of the reward's significance varies depending on the age. While some donors consider the financial reward less important, others, such as students or repeat donors, attach high importance to money (Klock et al., 2003). In the Netherlands, many donors are willing to donate only on the condition that they receive a financial compensation (Bakker et al., 2017). Moreover, some donors emphasize that "financial gain alone cannot compensate for the difficulties endured during the donation process" (Kenney & McGowan, 2010, p. 463).

Even if there is one dominant motivating factor, the donors also often claim that there are several different reasons why they have decided to donate. While some donors' motivations can be described as "pure altruism" or a "purely financial" interest, in general the researchers point to the existence of a diverse mix of motivations, combining both altruistic and financial motivating factors (Pennings et al., 2014). In other words, even those donors who cited being mostly interested in a financial reward also highlighted a certain degree of altruism as a motivating influence in their decision-making (Bracewell-Milnes et al., 2016., p. 461).

There is divergent evidence regarding the role that the donors' partners play in the former's decision-making. The opinion of the potential donors' partners is very important for these women's decision to donate their oocytes (Winter & Daniluk, 2004). There is also research evidence that it is not only the male partner's attitude towards donation but also his support that matters for the success of the donation process (Yee et al., 2011).

In 2014, in 11 European countries, a large-scale survey of oocyte donors was conducted by Pennings et al. (2014). Their study focused on the socio-demographic characteristics and motivations of donors in such countries as Belgium, the Czech Republic, Finland, France, Greece, Poland, Portugal, Russia, Spain, the UK, and Ukraine (n = 1,423; mean age 27.4 years; occupation: about 49% of donors were fully employed, 16% unemployed and 15% students). "The motivation in the total group of donors was 47.8% pure altruism, 33.9% altruism and financial, 10.8% purely financial, 5.9% altruism and own treatment and finally 2% own treatment only" (Pennings et al., 2014, p. 1076).

A recent Russian study, which included expert interviews with people working in the sphere of assisted reproduction, found that "single women and women on

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maternity leave prevail among egg donors; for these women their participation in the program [...] is a source of financial support, and for women on maternity leave it is easier to go to the doctor regularly” (Larkina, 2020, p. 79). The same study showed that most of the donors had mixed motivations: their desire for a financial compensation went hand in hand with the desire to perform a good deed (Larkina, 2020). Professionals in reproductive medicine emphasized that in the case of sperm donors, one donor as a rule can donate his gametes not more than 3–10 times although in fact the actual number of times is unlimited because if a donor wishes, he may participate in different programs and donate in different clinics (Larkina, 2020)

As for oocyte donors, they may face external as well as internal barriers. A donor may or may not know who has become the recipient of her gametes and what the result of donation is. The donation decision-making may be further complicated by the prospective donor’s abstract moral obligations (Blyth et al., 2011; Sydsjö et al., 2014): the donors may wish to obtain more information about the recipients appraising the recipient couple’s resources for child rearing (Yee et al., 2011) in order to feel secure in abdicating their responsibility for the resulting child’s future. If the recipient is unknown, donors may be concerned about the existence of unknown genetically related offspring (Blyth et al., 2011). On the other hand, some donors said they did not want to know anything about the recipients and the results of their donation (Gürtin et al., 2012). The awareness of the physical and mental risks of egg sharing can affect potential donors’ decision to donate, especially when they are considering the impacts of the procedure on their own reproductive health in the future (Yee et al., 2011).

An Australian study has shown that one of the barriers to oocyte donation could be the lack of reliable and easily accessible information on all the aspects of the donation procedure and the lack of public awareness about the need for donor eggs (Hogan et al., 2021). Another significant negative factor is the insufficient clinic follow-up care, including post-donation counselling (Hogan et al., 2021).

Institutional frameworks can affect the situation since in some jurisdictions certain limitations are established regarding the number of offspring born from one donor or the number of families the donor can assist in order to control for the risk of inadvertent consanguinity. For instance, the American Society for Reproductive Medicine (ASMR) sets the limit of six cycles per donor (Practice Committee of the American Society for Reproductive Medicine, & Practice Committee of the Society for Assisted Reproductive Technology, 2020). According to the guidelines of the ASMR, the age minimum should be set for donors “to ensure that the donor is mature enough to understand and provide true informed consent” (The American Society for Reproductive Medicine, 2017, p. 5). In Canada, it is illegal to purchase sperm or eggs from a donor (The official website of the Government of Canada, 2020). Institutional frameworks can encourage altruistic donations because such motivations are considered more appropriate for female donors than financial interest (Kenney & McGowan, 2010, p. 463). Donors may be driven by various motives, depending on the country and the legislation surrounding egg donation such as the regulations concerning donor anonymity and compensatory payments (Bracewell-Milnes et al., 2016, p. 461).



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The purpose of this study is to examine the motivations of Russian oocyte donors and the barriers to donation as well as the key socio-cultural factors that affect the potential donors' decision to donate or not.

The above-described aim of the study has determined the following research tasks: first, to describe the socio-economic characteristics of Russian oocyte donors; second, to survey the donors' preferences regarding anonymity or openness in donation, their willingness to inform their friends and relatives about their decision, and their perceptions regarding public attitudes to oocyte donation; third, to investigate the socially approved motivations for oocyte donation and the actual ones; and, finally, to identify the main barriers to oocyte donation.

## Materials and Methods

The study was conducted from December 20, 2021 to February 28, 2022. In total, we had 16 semi-structured interviews with prospective or actual oocyte donors. All of them were patients of two fertility clinics located in the city of Yekaterinburg (Russian Federation). The respondents were planning to become oocyte donors within the period from 2 weeks to 3 months. In one of the clinics, donor counselling was obligatory and was included into the donation program while in the other participation in the interviewing was voluntary. The rationale of respondent selection and sampling design corresponded to the purpose of this study and was typical of the majority of qualitative studies. Using M. N. Marshall's terminology, our sample strategy can be described as "convenience sampling" (Marshall, 1996). Nevertheless, our results not only shed light on the practices of oocyte donation in Russia but can also provide a theoretical framework for further studies, both qualitative and quantitative.

The main method of data analysis in this study is categorization. The main task at this stage of the research project was to identify, describe, and categorize the socio-cultural factors that determine the motives of oocyte donation and the barriers to it. The interview guide was developed in accordance with the Qualitative Research Guidelines for Health Care (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006). We also relied on the international research evidence, in particular that of (Pennings et al., 2014) and the systematic review *Investigating Attitudes Towards Oocyte Donation Amongst Potential Donors and the General Population* (Platts et al., 2021), which included 39 studies published in English peer-reviewed journals. Our main focus was the psycho-social aspects of oocyte donation, including the actual and potential donors' attitudes to this procedure and their motivations as well as the questions related to donors' preferences regarding the disclosure of their identity or anonymity. We developed three variants of the interview guide: for potential donors with no prior experience of donation, for donors with a one-time experience of donation; and for those who have already donated their eggs two or more times. The guide comprised five sets of questions covering the respondents' socio-demographic characteristics; family background and current family status; barriers to donation; motivation; and socio-cultural factors influencing the donors' motivation. All interviews were recorded with the prior consent of the participants, the interview data were anonymized and transcribed verbatim.

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### ***Socio-Demographic Profile of Oocyte Donors***

The mean age of oocyte donors was 26.6 years, ranging from 19 to 34. Four respondents had a complete higher education degree; five, incomplete higher education; the seven remaining women had a secondary vocational education. It should be noted that out of the five women with incomplete higher education, only two were pursuing a university degree at the moment of the interview and were planning to obtain a diploma of higher education. The rest have dropped out of the university for various reasons (“did not have enough money to pay the tuition fees”, “realized that my major was the wrong choice”, etc.).

A half of the respondents (8) were formally married (including 3 women who were in their second marriages) and 3 respondents were in a cohabiting relationship. 3 women were in a relationship but were not living with their partners and one respondent was a single mother. 11 women had children and 5 of them had two children, including 3 respondents who had children from different marriages. All of the 16 women denied having any bad habits, claiming that they don’t smoke and hardly ever drink alcohol. All of them described themselves as healthy, assessing their health at 9 or 10 on a 10-point scale. Interestingly, only two of them did exercise on a regular basis.

As for professional occupations, only two of the respondents are qualified specialists (a lawyer and a schoolteacher), while the rest are mostly employed in the services sphere, occupying the positions that do not require high qualifications: a bakery assistant, shop assistant, administrator, office manager and so on. Two respondents are working in a junior and middle medical position as a surgical nurse and a nurse. One of the women is on a formal maternity leave, another is temporarily unemployed, and one is a student of a medical academy. Two respondents stand out: one of them is a beauty blogger and the other makes her living by investing in real estate. The former is passionate about her job although her job does not provide enough money to make ends meet while the latter considers herself a successful investor admitting that her main source of income is unstable and risky. Only 5 out of 16 respondents said that their families were middle-income, the rest consider their income level to be low or extremely low.

Most of the donors (10 out of 16) are atheists. Five said that they believe in God but do not attend church services and do not observe any rituals. One of the respondents said that she “believes in cosmos and general harmony”.

4 out of 16 women have a prior experience of oocyte donation: 2 of them had a one-time experience and other 2—a two-time experience. One of the women who had a repeated experience of oocyte donation has also been a surrogate mother twice: she gave birth to two pairs of twins, all girls. One of the women with no experience of oocyte donation had an experience of surrogate motherhood—she gave birth to twins.

### ***Donor Anonymity and Disclosure Intentions***

Only 4 out of 16 respondents were willing to be open identity donors—they were ready to meet the recipients and if the recipients desired or agreed, to maintain contact with the resulting offspring. The reasons why respondents prefer not to know anything about the recipients of their donated material range from “what if I don’t like them” to

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“if I know who they are, I might not be able to keep myself from searching for them in social media to check how my child is doing”. The majority subscribe to the view that once they have donated their eggs, the recipients will bear the full responsibility for the resulting child and that too much information about the recipient family may create problems in the donor’s personal life. All of the respondents adhere to the view that the real mother of the child is the one who bore it, gave birth to it and raised it rather than the one whose biological material was used for conception.

14 women out of 16 had a husband or a partner and all the 14 women told their male partners about their intention to donate. In general, the men’s reaction was either indifferent or neutral. Only one of the respondents reported being upset by this while the rest thought it was normal. 14 out of 16 women would like to receive a financial compensation for their donation. A more detailed discussion of this situation with the respondents has shown that even though all of the male partners were aware of the women’s financial motivation, none of them offered to earn the amount of money equal to the donor compensation to spare her the health risks associated with the procedure. All of the women took this fact calmly. Moreover, they also said that even if their partners had suggested this, they would still go on with the donation. Only two women said that they would give up on the idea of donation if their male partners were against. 9 out of 16 respondents also informed their parents about their intention to become an oocyte donor. The rest have decided to conceal this fact from their families because they feared disapproval.

The respondents’ parents tend to have different, sometimes even opposite opinions regarding the question of donation. The parents mostly objected to their daughters’ becoming egg donors because of the health risks involved in the procedure. Nevertheless, the majority of the parents who knew about their daughters’ decisions (in 6 cases out of 9) have approved of the latter’s decision to donate. Mothers tended to be more supportive than fathers, who reacted either negatively or neutrally. None of our respondents, however, has changed their minds because of the lack of understanding or support on the part of their relatives. Other relatives or friends, when the respondents informed them about their decision, in general were quite understanding and supportive, especially in the case when they have faced fertility problems themselves.

The most interesting was the respondents’ concerns about the public attitudes toward oocyte donation. In respondents’ own accounts, none of them has actually faced any disapproval of donation or lack of tolerance towards it. Nevertheless, the majority of respondents chose not to disclose their intentions to anyone except for their partners, parents, and friends from whom they had initially received the information about oocyte donation. The reasons why they prefer to keep silent are described the following way: “I don’t think it is necessary to share this information with anyone, why would I do that?”; “there is a lot of negative stuff being written about donation, especially in social media—how can you give away your children and things like that”; “I have no clue who I could be discussing this with”. Remarkably, out of the four women with prior experience of donation, three have never told anyone about it, except for their male partners. The remaining seven respondents discussed oocyte donation in their close circle of friends and relatives or with their colleagues at work. They have

received some mixed reactions, but most of them were positive. In professional medical communities, donation is encouraged by high-level health practitioners, which was a very significant fact for the respondents. Two respondents discussed their decision to donate with their colleagues, who approved of it as a way of solving financial problems during the pandemic. In two other cases, among the respondents' colleagues, there were women struggling with infertility who ardently advocated the reproductive use of donor material. The beauty blogger said: "In our crowd it is a trend, everybody's talking about it, and everybody supports me."

### ***Oocyte Donor Motivations: Socially Approved and Actual Motivations***

Almost all of the respondents claimed that they wanted to help others: "help other people become parents", "help women who cannot get pregnant with their own eggs", "help give birth to a new life". Only two respondents said, however, that they are willing to donate for free. Both of them are very young (aged 19 and 20) and are related to the sphere of health care—one of them is working as a nurse at a department of assisted reproductive technologies while the other is a 3<sup>rd</sup>-year student of a medical university majoring in pediatrics. Interestingly, neither of these women has a male partner.

Three women reported that financial compensation is their primary motivation. Apart from the obvious motivations (financial compensation and altruism), respondents also mentioned other reasons: the full medical checkup (3 respondents); an opportunity to engage in a new activity transcending everyday routines (3 respondents); an opportunity for self-development and improvement of their family's quality of life (3 respondents); the desire to pass along their genes in the absence of financial resources to have more children of their own (1 respondent).

A significant motivating factor was the respondents' own experience of infertility (2 respondents) or having friends or relatives with such issues (7 respondents): "we were trying to conceive our first baby for about a year and I was really worried that we were both healthy but still I couldn't get pregnant"; "my only close friend had ovarian cancer and she now really wants a baby and they have already done IVF several times, [...] she's hoping for the best"; "my aunt, she is still young, is struggling to conceive her second baby, she's now thinking of doing IVF". Another important factor was the experience of friends and acquaintances who either already had an experience of oocyte donation (in 5 cases) or were planning to do so but had to give up on the idea for medical reasons or because of their age (2 cases). 3 respondents related to the sphere of health care (a nurse in an assisted reproduction department, a surgical nurse in a maternity hospital, and a student majoring in pediatrics) described their motivations the following way: "I heard from the chief physician in my department that oocyte donors were needed and started asking questions and he was so glad I would like to be a donor"; "in the maternity hospital I started noticing women who gave birth through IVF and I realized that this technology is actually working [...] they were so happy, these women". Many women reported that the opinion of their consulting gynecologist was significant: "I started thinking about it (donation) in earnest when my doctor told me that I had an excellent ovarian reserve"; "the doctor who examined me said that I was very good for donation and praised me for having so many follicles."

The majority of women (14 out of 16) in response to the question about their childhood and about the way their childhood experience and experience of their own families have affected their decision described various traumatising factors. These can be roughly divided into several categories.

Adverse childhood experiences include being raised in a single-parent family because of the divorce of parents (5 respondents) or death of one of the parents (2 respondents). This category also includes such situations as mother having multiple partners, being raised by a grandmother while her mother was working away from home and eventually got ill and died; alcohol addiction or suicide of one of the parents. One of the respondents described her childhood as “lonely”—her parents worked a lot and could not devote to her enough time and attention.

Another kind of trauma was associated with physical violence or the partner’s betrayal in the respondents’ own relationships: “I had to spend a month in hospital after my baby was born, our son was hanging between life and death while our Dad spent nights out partying—he was celebrating”; “I was 17 and when I got pregnant, he said the baby was not his although I suggested DNA paternity testing”; “when my husband returned from the army, he was a drug addict—he beat me, tried to suffocate me with a pillow, drew a knife at my father”; “my stepfather used to beat me since I was eleven, and my sister, and my mother”.

The next type of trauma is associated with the loss of loved ones: “one after the other I lost my mother and elder brother, they were both very young, our family’s line is deteriorating”. Undoubtedly, a significant traumatizing factor is abortion: 4 out of 16 respondents had to terminate their pregnancy because they were struggling financially. One of the patients found out about egg donation while being pregnant—she enjoyed being pregnant but shortly before that her mother had had a hysterectomy due to a late-term pregnancy loss. As a result, the respondent started thinking about the women who, like her mother, would like to have children but were having fertility issues.

A recurring motif in the rhetoric of many respondents is oocyte donation as a way to “rehabilitate” their family history, to get over the feeling of guilt after an abortion, and “to do something good and important”. One of the respondents, who lost her loved ones, clearly articulates the following reason behind her decision to donate: “to rehabilitate the family history, one needs to do a good deed—help others to become parents and transfer one’s genes—the genes of one’s family”. Two respondents pointed out that after their parents’ divorce, it became important for them to “be useful and needed”, “to make themselves useful”.

## Discussion

There is sufficient international research on the socio-demographic characteristics of oocyte donors. Some interesting results have been brought by a Dutch study of the donors’ socio-economic autonomy and self-esteem. The study involved an analysis of the demographic characteristics and donation motivations of 92 potential oocyte donors in Utrecht. The researchers came to the conclusion that “the typical oocyte donor at the UMC Utrecht is a well-educated, employed, 31-year-old woman living with

her partner in a completed family with two children, and donating on altruistic grounds” (Bakker et al., 2017). The donors showed higher autonomy-connectedness scores than the average female Dutch population. According to a study of Argentinian and Spanish oocyte donors, on average they are 25 years old, and their main motivation is financial (Lima et al., 2019). The majority of Argentinian donors have a secondary education, 38% of them are housewives, the rest work part-time or do odd jobs. The majority of Spanish donors are, on the contrary, stably employed (over 70%), are childless (74%), and their general education level is slightly higher (Lima et al., 2019). American researchers have built the following oocyte donor profile for their country: a 27-year-old unmarried woman with a higher education and middle income who has experienced at least one pregnancy (Klock et al., 2003). In Russia, as of 2014, a typical oocyte donor is a woman who is already a mother, she’s also on average younger than her counterparts from other European countries, she has a secondary vocational (technical) education (45.8%) and in over a half of the cases she has already had an abortion (53.1%) (Pennings et al., 2014, p. 1076). In our study, the profile of a Russian oocyte donor is as follows: she is on average 26 years old, married and has at least one child, she has a secondary vocational education and low income, she is most likely to be employed in the services sphere and is doing a low qualified job, she has no bad habits, but she also does not exercise regularly, she is an atheist.

There is vast research evidence pointing to the fact that the leading motivation of oocyte donors is altruism (Bakker et al., 2017; Gezinski et al., 2016; Pennings et al., 2014, p. 1076). In the UK, altruism has the main motivating influence on oocyte donors, who claim that their aim is to help infertile couples, and some of them even subscribe to the view that the prospect of remuneration can attract “the wrong kind of women” (Byrd et al., 2002, p. 175). The language of altruism has become quite pervasive in the international practices of reproductive donation (Cherro, 2018; Lafuente Funes, 2017), the Russian context being no exception. For instance, Russian reproductive clinics formulate the information for potential donors the following way: “Egg donation is a demanding and noble mission. By becoming a donor, you can make happy a couple who have been dreaming of having a baby”<sup>1</sup>; “The use of donated eggs (oocytes) gives a long-awaited chance, desired more than anything in the world to the families where women for one reason or another cannot use their own ovarian reserve or have experienced a failed IVF cycle”<sup>2</sup>. In the light of the above, it can be supposed that the respondents have voiced the socially approved and expected motivations—in our case 100% of women spoke of their desire to help infertile people become parents. A study conducted in Barcelona (Spain) has shown that “most ova donors emphasized simultaneously the altruistic nature of their action and the sort of symbolic motherhood that they wished to achieve by helping other women to be real (legal) mothers” (Pareja et al., 2003). The situation, however, is not that simple since it may be supposed that donors feel obliged to define donation as a primarily altruistic act due to the social

<sup>1</sup> *Stat' donorum ootsitov* [Become an oocyte donor]. (n.d.). Tsentr semeinoi meditsiny. <https://www.cfm.ru/donorstvo-spermy-i-jaicekletok/stat-donorom-ooctov-jaicekletok>

<sup>2</sup> *Donorstvo ootsitov* [Oocyte donation]. (n.d.). Mat' i ditiia. <https://tyumen.mamadeti.ru/services/eko/donorskie-programmy-i-surrogatnoe-materinstvo/egg-donation/>

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pressure while in fact, they may be very interested in the remuneration they are going to receive in exchange for what is presented as a “gift” of egg donation (Pareja et al., 2003). Another study has shown that most oocyte donors are young women that are socially and/or economically vulnerable. In other circumstances, they might not have agreed to go through this procedure (Lima et al., 2019). These findings agree with the results of our study: the majority of our respondents considered the income of their families low or extremely low and said that they are in need of extra money not only to invest in their personal development but also to meet their basic needs.

A significant motivating influence is the infertility problems faced by someone in the donor’s family or their friends (Bakker et al., 2017; Bracewell-Milnes et al., 2016; Kurlenkova, 2016; Purewal & van den Akker, 2009). This evidence was confirmed by our study: over a half of the women we interviewed reported having decided to donate because of the fertility problems encountered by their family members or friends.

An important role in oocyte donation is played by the donor’s partner, who can provide the woman with a psychological, physical and social support during the process of donation. The Russian legislation does not require that the donor’s partner should give their consent to donation even if the woman is formally married. Nevertheless, as our study has shown, all of the women who had male partners informed the latter about the procedure. The men’s reaction, however, was either indifferent or neutral. By our respondents’ accounts, their parents were much more supportive and genuinely concerned about their daughters’ health. The question *Would you become an oocyte donor if your partner strongly opposed this prospect?* was answered positively by all of the women. In this context, it would also make sense to consider the role of gender as one of the main categories of meaning-making surrounding gamete donation. Erica Haimes (1993) discusses the assumptions about gender and reproduction seen as a set of “ideas about the ways in which men and women are thought to behave more generally in relation to reproduction and the family” (Haimes, 1993, p. 85). She shows that these assumptions are different, and these differences lead to oocyte donation frequently being seen as an altruistic act in a familial, clinical, and asexual context.

Some of our respondents considered oocyte donation as a way to boost their self-esteem to a certain extent, an opportunity to look at themselves from a different perspective. Oocyte donation as an opportunity for the donor to assert her individual agency is also discussed by Rhonda Shaw in her study of New Zealand women taking part in donation and surrogate motherhood programs. One of her interviewees said: “I really felt the need to do something defining [...] and important”, adding that she wanted “to look back at my life and know I’ve done something good”. Another respondent stated that “she wanted to redefine herself through egg donation after her fiancé virtually left her waiting at the altar” (Shaw, 2008, p. 20).

To a great extent, our respondents have articulated the same experiences as the ones described by our Spanish colleagues (Orobitg & Salazar, 2005): for example, one of the Russian donors was forced by her family to terminate her pregnancy and she now perceives oocyte donation as a way to take an important decision on her own terms and to resist her family’s pressure. Four respondents also had to seek abortion because of the external circumstances.

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As an international study of oocyte donors in Spain and Argentina has shown (Lima et al., 2019), 74% of Argentinian donors and 84% of Spanish donors were ready to open their identities. In addition, a similar study conducted in the US has demonstrated that 88% of American donors told other people about their experience despite the fact that the procedure was conducted anonymously (Klock et al., 2002). Only 25% of women participating in our study, however, were willing to be open identity rather than anonymous donors. For the rest it was essential to remain anonymous. Many women feel uneasy about discussing their participation in donation programs because they are afraid of facing negative comments, criticisms and the lack of public understanding in general. The paradox lies in the fact that in reality none of our respondents by their own accounts has ever faced any public disapproval or criticism, which agrees with the evidence from the previous research (Symanyuk et al., 2021): 61% of Yekaterinburg residents have expressed a positive attitude toward oocyte donation and 22% describe their attitude as “neutral”.

Our findings confirm the results of a British study which has shown that 21% of the oocyte donors surveyed were medical professionals (Byrd et al., 2002). 19% of our respondents also work in the sphere of health care and two of them are willing to share their ovarian eggs for free.

## Conclusions

Ovarian egg donation is a complex phenomenon fraught with ethical concerns and still largely underexplored in research literature. On the one hand, the women who have decided to donate their oocytes are driven by the desire to help infertile people to experience parenthood and, on the other, donors themselves can be struggling both financially and mentally, which underlies their motivations for taking part in a such a complicated procedure. We found that a typical Russian oocyte donor is a 26-year-old married woman with at least one child. She has a secondary vocational education and a low income. In most of the cases she is employed in the services sphere and has a low qualified job. She does not have any bad habits, but she also does not exercise regularly. She is not religious and at least once she has faced neglect or abuse in her own family or in her parental family.

The majority of such women would like to help others become parents, but they are also interested in receiving a financial compensation, which is very important to them. In other words, the women we interviewed displayed a diversity of motivations. Each woman had on average at least three main motivations. Apart from their interest in a financial reward and altruistic motivations, for many women the decisive factor is their desire to help their friends or relatives struggling with infertility. Another important factor is these women’s own experience of fertility problems. Having friends or relatives who engaged in oocyte donation and gave positive feedback about this procedure is also a significant factor.

Interestingly, almost all of our respondents described their decision to donate as an attempt to move past a traumatic situation they once endured and to achieve some kind of closure by doing something really important and good. A recurring motif in the



rhetoric of many respondents is oocyte donation as a way to “rehabilitate” their family history, to get over the feeling of guilt after an abortion, and “to do a good deed”.

When interviewed in greater detail, women who intend to become oocyte donors reveal their personal situations. Despite having a partner, these women “can and wish” to rely only on their own abilities and resources. For many women, oocyte donation becomes a way to boost their self-esteem, to feel more significant and to promote their personal autonomy.

As for barriers to donation, one of the most important is associated with the donors’ unwillingness to make their identity known and to share this information even with their close circle of friends and relatives. For the majority of donors, anonymity is crucial while the disclosure of this information is perceived as a source of problems in the donor’s family and immediate circle of friends at present and privacy risks in the future. Moreover, some of the women are afraid of their emotions towards the offspring resulting from their donation and believe that anonymity can protect them from this risk. Some of the respondents prefer to conceal the fact of donation even from their parents and close friends. A significant factor in the donors’ decision-making is the perceived public reaction to oocyte donation. On the one hand, the respondent women consider donation as “a way of helping others”, “as a good and useful deed” and, on the other, they prefer to remain anonymous because they are not sure of the public approval of donation or at least that the reaction of the people in their community will be adequate.

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ARTICLE

## Social and Economic Factors of Violence Against Women in the South of Moldova: Identification, Estimation, and Mechanisms of Elimination

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### ABSTRACT

A surge in violence against women requires a better understanding of its causes and factors, which is the problem that this study seeks to address. This study aims to identify mechanisms through which these factors are reproduced on all levels of the gender system (individual, family, social milieu, professional milieu, state institutions). The focus is made on the case of the Autonomous Territorial Unit Gagauzia in Moldova. The study relies on systems analysis methods and approaches based on the institutional economic theory, systems theory, and gender economics to assess the impact of socio-economic factors on the likelihood of intimate partner violence (IPV) in this region. In Gagauzia, there is a decline in women's opportunities to realize their economic rights and ensure their financial independence. While the incomes of households are falling, gender discrimination, including physical violence, is perceived as justified by more and more people. Another contributing factor is the lack of effective mechanisms for IPV prevention. The factors contributing to IPV are related to the system of specialized institutions, which impose sanctions for violating the rules of gender stereotypical behavior. The study proposes a set of projects to promote more egalitarian norms on all levels of the gender system.

### KEYWORDS

women's human capital, gender system, gender stereotypes, factors, violence against women, systematic approach, institutions, sanctions, codes of behavior, gender education

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## Introduction

International organizations, researchers and representatives of public communities are increasingly drawing attention to violence against women as an obstacle to sustainable development due to its high economic, social, and political costs (Duvvury et al., 2013). The growing rates of violence are another cause for concern: according to the survey conducted by the World Health Organization (WHO), as of 2018, approximately every third woman in the world had experienced some form of intimate partner violence (IPV) in their life (Violence Against Women Prevalence Estimates, 2021). The prevalence of violence against women in the EU countries is slightly lower. According to the Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA), in 2014, 22% of women reported that they had been subjected to violence or abuse by an intimate partner (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, 2015).

As far as Moldova is concerned, the rate of violence against women increased almost by 13% in 2010–2018, reaching 73% in 2019 (Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, 2019; Statistica Moldovei & UNPD, 2011). Importantly, in that period, the country extensively implemented a set of laws and national strategies, including those aimed at preventing domestic violence, sexual harassment, sexual and physical violence, and ensuring marital gender equality in general. In this regard, it is important to identify a system of factors that influence the level of violence against women in the country.

Currently, the research literature identifies a wide range of factors that influence the level of violence against women. There is still, however, much uncertainty surrounding the relationships between these factor variables. There is evidence of the importance of women's economic independence (Sanders, 2015) and employment status on the labor market, the level and the form of wages (Chin, 2016), the stability of employment (Adams et al., 2012), the availability of housing (Johnson, 1992), and the level of education of women (Sanders, 2015; Scaricabarozzi, 2017; Shiraz, 2016). All these factors are considered to reduce the likelihood of violence and its severity.

The significance of the above-mentioned social and economic factors that reduce the likelihood of IPV has also been confirmed by the surveys on violence against women in one of the settlements of Autonomous Territorial Unit Gagauzia (ATU Gagauzia)—Chirsova village—and in Moldova<sup>1</sup> in general. These factors should

<sup>1</sup> For more information on the methodology of these qualitative studies, see Description of data for the study.

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be taken into account when developing tools to reduce violence against women in a particular region.

Interestingly, there is also evidence of the increased possibility of IPV in the case of women's employment (Terrazas-Carrillo & McWhirter, 2015), their increased income, higher professional status or level of education in comparison to their partners (Bott et al., 2005; Koenig et al., 2003). E. C. Terrazas-Carrillo and P. T. McWhirter explain the connection between violence and female employment by the fact that a woman's employment status is "embedded within the multiple contexts of her life, including individual factors, the influence of family, peer groups, culture, and local and global economic conditions" (Terrazas-Carrillo & McWhirter, 2015, p. 1144). M. L. Connerley and J. Wu, when systematizing the results of various studies on the relationship between various characteristics of women's employment and the level of violence, point out the need to take into account the entire range of data of unobservable variables in order to enhance the reliability of the results and the possibility of interpreting cause-and-effect relationships (Connerley & Wu, 2016).

A number of studies have shown that women who receive microfinance assistance experience spousal violence much more often than those who do not participate in such programs (Dalal et al., 2013; Hughes et al., 2015; Sinha & Kumar, 2020). Focusing on the case of Bangladesh, P. K. De and A. Christian have demonstrated that the dependence is influenced by the types of microfinance programs, the ability to control the use of the received financial resources, women's status and level of education, and the level of prevalence of traditional gender norms that justify the possibility of violence against women (De & Christian, 2020). Thus, violence is more likely to occur in families with strictly defined gender roles and less likely in relationships based on the principles of gender equality (for more detail, see Hughes et al., 2015). The impact of social acceptance of violence against women on its level and degree was also confirmed in the case study of some Indian regions (Sabarwal et al., 2014) and some regions in sub-Saharan Africa (Cools & Kotsadam, 2017). In this regard, researchers are increasingly emphasizing the importance of considering social environment as a factor that influences the level of violence against women.

In addition, the role of the macro-environment that determines the likelihood of violence against women is emphasized. For example, L. L. Heise and A. Kotsadam (2015) used linear and quantile regression methods to identify the direction and strength of the impact of the country's socio-economic development indicators on the prevalence of violence against women. For example, partner violence is less common in countries with a high proportion of women in the labor force, and, in contrast, the risk of violence against women increases in countries with low rates of women's employment. For our investigation it is significant that L. L. Heise and A. Kotsadam (2015) point out women's ability to implement *de jure* or *de facto* economic rights as factor variables. These rights include women's access to land, property and other productive resources. The ability to access these resources reduces the level of violence against women. The researchers, however, also

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highlight the importance of social environment—this factor is prevalent over macro-level factors, for example, the female employment rate in the country (Heise & Kotsadam, 2015). It should be noted that, in the countries with a high rate of gender equality, the possibility of discrimination cases is limited including those sanctioned by the state. These conclusions were also confirmed by S. Nevala (2017), who used the data of the Agency for Fundamental Rights (2012) to show that the level of gender equality in a country is one of the factors that determines the possibility of forced control over women (various forms of violence against women). S. Nevala stresses that gender equality helps to increase the level of disclosure of information about violence through the ability to practice frank conversation with other people (Nevala, 2017).

It appears that each of the above-described socio-economic factors is important because in one way or another they contribute to the increased IPV levels in society and, therefore, must be targeted in order to change the situation. In this study, these factors are systematized and analyzed from the perspective of institutional economic theory, systems theory, and gender economics. In our opinion, this, on the one hand, may bring more clarity into our understanding of how these factors influence IPV levels and how these factors interact with each other. On the other, this may give us a larger picture of the mechanisms of IPV risk reproduction at all levels of the gender system: the individual, family, social and professional milieu, state institutions (for more on the gender system levels see Ridgeway & Correll, 2004).

The following sections outlines the proposed methodological framework.

## **Methodological Framework**

According to institutional economic theory, the establishment of power relations between economic agents, when, in the language of gender economics, one (man) discriminates against another (woman), is possible only when certain codes of behavior for each of these sides are established through a system of institutions. These codes are realized in the process of interaction at different levels of the gender system (for more on this see Bazueva, 2015). The institutional system comprises the following elements: informal institutions that determine the codes of behavior in society through a system of “social control”; formal institutions in the form of a system of laws and economic contracts, officially enshrined in the rules of law and binding on all citizens and organizations (North, 1990). As shown in Bazueva (2015), in social development, this system of institutions supports the permanent reproduction of gender stereotypes and the system of gender inequality in general, which are the basis for the permanent reproduction of discrimination against women, including such extreme forms as violence. Table 1 generalizes the socio-economic factors that influence the likelihood of violence against women, depending on the type of institution and the nature of the sanctions applied in the case of violations of the codes of behavior established by each institution.



**Table 1**  
*Institutions That Support the Reproduction of IPV Risks*

Subjects of gender system	Institutions	Functions of institutions	Socio-economic factors of gender inequality	Mechanism of enforcement (types of sanctions)
State	Laws and regulations	Establishing fundamental rules of socio-economic behavior Enforcement of socio-economic and civil rights	Enshrining of formal gender equality in law Regulation of domestic violence, sexual harassment, sexual and physical abuse, and marital rape Priority state funding for “male” sectors of economy Women’s status of primary beneficiary of social services and workers ‘with caregiving responsibilities’ makes employers resistant to hiring or promoting them	State system of coercion (imprisonment, fines, community service, etc.)
Organisations	Contracts Ethics code	Defining the forms of organization of business activities Influencing directly the behavior of employees and candidates	Restrictions on women’s ability to exercise their social and economic rights (gender pay gaps, limited access to advanced training, career progression, etc.) Employers’ reluctance to hire women due to gender stereotypes The possibility of sexual harassment against women as a condition for their career promotion.	The system of coercion adopted in the organization (prejudice against women, cancellation of bonus, coercion, targeted commands, etc.)
Social environment	Code of conduct in society	Control over the behavior of group members	Reproduction of gender stereotypes that regulate standards of behavior for men and women	Public stigmatization
Family (represented by the head)	Code of conduct in the family	Men’s use of women’s resources to maximize their own benefit	Reproduction of gender stereotypes Gender-based division of household responsibilities Alienation of resources (goods) Restriction of access to goods Control over behavior (decision-making), interests and motivation	Sanctions in the form of physical violence, psychological coercion, targeted commands, etc.
Women	Code of personal conduct	Internal control of one’s own behavior	Compliance of one’s own behavior with gender stereotypes Gender gap in housework, childcare and family care, which affects women’s career opportunities in the public sector Women’s underestimation of their business qualities	Internal sanctions that depend on moral norms (remorse, guilt)

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The current situation of gender-based violence and the contributing institutional factors (for more on this see North, 1990) can be summarized as follows: while the current legislation formally guarantees women their economic and social rights and punishes the perpetrators of such violence, the current system of informal rules determines the conditions and opportunities for women to exercise their rights in the real world, establishes the permissibility and justification of violence against women at the level of their social environment, employers, and family. In addition, it is important to take into account women's acceptance of such violence and their acceptance of various forms of gender discrimination in general, because the degree of such acceptance determines women's internal control over their own behavior, modifying the structure of their goals and motivations (for more on this, see Bazueva, 2015). The above-mentioned methodological principles will be applied further to assess the risk of socio-economic factors and to propose a set of measures to reduce the likelihood of violence against women in one of the southern regions of Moldova—the ATU Gagauzia.

### **Description of Research Data**

The assessment of women's ability to exercise their economic rights and its influence on the level of IPV in Gagauzia includes the following:

- (a) analysis of the legislative documents of the Republic of Moldova regulating the issues of sustainable development, achievement of gender equality and manifestation of various forms of violence;
- (b) analysis of the results of the World Bank's *Women, Business and the Law 2020* study, which covers the laws and regulations that affect women's ability to get jobs, earn income, set up and run businesses in 190 countries around the world;
- (c) analysis of the structure and values of the Gender Social Norms Index (GSNI), which reflects the level of gender stereotypes in the country, calculated by the UN on the basis of questions from the World Values Survey;
- (d) analysis of the data of the National Bureau of Statistics of the Republic of Moldova, characterizing the dynamics of the main indicators of the regional labor market and income;
- (e) analysis of the results of qualitative research on the prevalence of violence against women *Well-Being and Safety of Women: OSCE-Led Survey on Violence against Women (Moldova)* and *Addressing Violence against Women in the Republic of Moldova: Exploring and Learning from Local Solutions* in Chirsova village.

Let us consider in more detail the methodology applied by these qualitative studies.

The OSCE-led survey was implemented in Spring/Summer 2018 and involved 15 expert interviews, providing an overview of the issues related to violence against women and conflict-related acts of violence. It also included a survey of

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a representative sample of 1,802 women aged 18–74 living in Moldova to establish the prevalence and consequences of violence through the multistage, stratified, random probability sample design. Eight focus groups with women from various backgrounds on their attitudes towards violence against women were conducted. These were followed by four in-depth interviews with women to review the impact of the violence they have experienced in more detail (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, 2015). To meet the basic requirements for collecting qualitative, reliable, and comparable data, the survey used probability sampling techniques, which are based on the methodology used by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) for its 2012 survey on violence against women in 28 European Union member states (for more on this, see European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, 2013).

The second study was conducted from August 15<sup>th</sup> to September 13<sup>th</sup>, 2018 by the UNDP team as part of the project *Addressing Violence against Women in the Republic of Moldova: Exploring and Learning from Local Solutions* (Addressing Gender-Based Violence in Chirsova Village, 2018).

To ensure the representativeness of the sample, we selected respondents according to the following criteria: gender and education; occupational status; and family status. The categories of interviewed persons were established in cooperation with the UNDP team, local and international experts. The snowball method was used for respondent selection. Local authorities of Chirsova village assisted with respondent recruiting. Focus groups and individual interviews with IPV victims were organized by the CBS-AXA sociological agency from Moldova. Semi-structured individual interviews with 23 local government stakeholders and NPO leaders were conducted by using a thematic questionnaire (see Addressing Gender-Based Violence in Chirsova Village, 2018; Appendix 1).

The guide for conducting focus groups was based on the social vignette approach. The topics for discussion included gender norms and roles, attitudes toward victims of violence, socially acceptable/desirable behavior in situations of domestic violence, examination of victims' needs and reactions to domestic violence, awareness of legislation regulating violence, services available for victims, and possible recommendations for improving the response to violence against women in the region. In total, 59 people representing different categories of the population participated in the focus groups. Focus groups with men were moderated by a male researcher, with women—by a female researcher. The duration of each focus group averaged two hours (see Addressing Gender-Based Violence in Chirsova Village, 2018; Appendix 2).

Individual interviews were conducted with eight female survivors of intimate partner violence using a semi-structured questionnaire to learn about their opinions and perceptions of gender-specific behaviors, to assess the quality of available services and forms of support, factors that prevent and facilitate referral to services that support victims of intimate partner violence (see Addressing Gender-Based Violence in Chirsova Village, 2018; Appendix 3).

Respondents participated in the qualitative research on a voluntary basis and gave their informed consent. Discussions took place in a comfortable and

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confidential environment. All FGDs and individual interviews with the victims were audio-recorded, conducted and transcribed in Russian. The transcripts of the FGDs in English are available upon request (Addressing Gender-Based Violence in Chirsova Village, 2018).

### **Risk Assessment of the Social and Economic Factors Contributing to the Increase in Violence Against Women in the ATU Gagauzia**

According to the logic of the study presented in the methodological section of the article, the task of prime importance is to determine women's ability to exercise their economic and social rights and to identify the regulated types of punishment for violence against women enshrined in the system of national legislation.

#### ***Analysis of the Legislation of the Republic of Moldova Regulating Gender Discrimination***

As far as the legislative framework is concerned, the Republic of Moldova has ratified the main international documents aimed at achieving gender equality in the main spheres of life. In 2015, the country adopted the UN's Sustainable Development Goals. In addition, a set of national strategies and laws were adopted, including those aimed at the prevention of domestic violence, sexual harassment, sexual and physical violence. The legislation also guarantees equal opportunities for women and men in the realization of their human capital on the national labor market, which refers both to the ability to engage in entrepreneurship and to the entitlement to equal pay for equal work (Women, Business and the Law, 2020). As part of the General Recommendations of the UN Committee on the elimination of discrimination against women and the Beijing Platform for Action, Law No. 5-XVI of February 9<sup>th</sup>, 2006 "Cu privire la asigurarea egalității de șanse între femei și bărbați" [On ensuring equal opportunities for women and men] and the national strategy for ensuring equality between women and men (2017–2021) were developed and approved. As part of the Soros Foundation project *Development of Civil Society in the ATU Gagauzia*, a working group was created to develop a Gender Equality Strategy in this region (Addressing Gender-Based Violence in Chirsova Village, 2018, p. 18).

In general, according to the World Bank's study *Women, Business and the Law 2020*, formally the country's legislation provides gender equality in the main spheres of human activity with the exception of the retirement legislation due to the differences in the retirement age of men and women. There is also a perceived gap in the labor legislation, which does not require employers to pay men and women equally for doing the same work and does not explicitly prohibit sexual harassment at work or specify any penalties for such acts.

However, in real life, women are facing a much wider range of problems when realizing their economic rights. These problems are reflected in the negative dynamics in the main indicators of the national and regional labor market as well as in the level and structure of household income. We will focus further on these factors since they, as was noted above, may contribute to violence against women.

### ***Analysis of the Efficiency of the Current Legislation from the Perspective of Women's Economic Rights and Opportunities in the Regional Labor Market<sup>2</sup>***

One of the main indicators that reflect the degree of participation in labor activity and employment opportunities enjoyed by women and men is the level of their economic activity (Table 2).

**Table 2**

*Changes in the Level of Economic Activity of Men and Women*

Activity rate	2007		2013		2019		2021	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
Age groups—total	41,6	37,1	34,6	32,9	36,5	30,3	34,8	28,6
15–24	18,1	13,8	17,5	14,1	15,5	9,1	13,0	9,4
25–34	43,5	42,7	33,8	33,9	45,2	36,5	41,8	37,8
35–44	53,8	60,5	44,6	57,6	45,2	56,4	53,6	48,5
45–54	62,9	63,3	50,6	56,7	54,4	58,6	49,5	55,1
55–64	61,6	34,0	47,5	26,5	42,5	26,8	44,3	28,4
65+	12,4	5,1	6,0	4,5	5,9	2,1	2,0	2,1

*Note.* The data describing labor market and population income dynamics are monitored by the National Bureau of Statistics of the Republic of Moldova for enlarged statistical groups. Due to the lack of data on the ATU Gagauzia, we use the data provided for the statistical region of the South, which Gagauzia is part of (National Bureau of Statistics, 2022).

If we evaluate the general level of economic activity for all age groups, it should be noted that it is significantly lower than in the EU countries. For example, in the EU countries the level of economic activity of women increased by 14.8% and was 78.5% from 2010 to 2021. Iceland (86.3%), Sweden (87.5%) and Switzerland (76.8%) had the highest values in this indicator (Eurostat, 2022). These countries are the leaders in terms of gender equality achievement (United Nations Development Programme, 2020).

The level of economic activity of women and men during the period under investigation is decreasing and corresponds to the fluctuations in the economic environment. The greatest negative changes are typical of the age groups that provide the maximum return on the implementation of human capital. This fact indicates the imperfection of regional labor market.

Overall, men's level of economic activity is higher than that of women. Similar trends are also typical of the dynamics of employment of men and women (Table 3).

Table 3 shows that the employment rate of women is lower than that of men. This is a consequence of the reduction in the number of working women, primarily in traditional sectors of female employment: wholesale and retail trade, hotels and restaurants; public administration, education, health care and social work. In the period from 2011 to 2020, the number of employed women in the region decreased by 192 people, while the number of employed men increased by 2,853 (National Bureau of Statistics, 2022), which might be a consequence of discrimination against women in the labor market.

<sup>2</sup> There is a lack of detailed information about female victims of violence, which is why these trends are described for women in general.

**Table 3**  
*Structure of Employment of Men and Women by the Level of Education*

	2007		2013		2019		2021	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
Level of education—total	39.5	36.3	32.3	31.3	33.7	29.1	33.5	28.0
Higher	66.4	67.7	48.5	54.2	45.2	55.8	56.2	61.9
Secondary specialized	50.1	57.4	43.4	46.9	38.4	39.8	33.5	31.6
Secondary professional	52.3	52.0	38.5	34.1	43.7	38.8	40.3	31.7
Secondary school	33.1	32.9	24.1	26.7	28.5	25.5	27.8	25.1
Gymnasium	31.3	27.3	26.0	21.7	26.1	17.1	27.3	17.9
Primary or no education	11.3	5.6	10.6	3.8	9.1	0.8	4.0	0.4

Moreover, Gagauzia is primarily an agricultural region, which means that the possibility to realize high quality human capital here is limited. The share of R&D enterprises in the region is lower than the national average (National Bureau of Statistics, 2022). The industrial park in Comrat is seen as one of the opportunities for economic development of the region. The park currently comprises companies specializing in growing and processing fruit products, a photovoltaic park for the production of solar energy, companies producing meat products and paper disposable cups. It is estimated that the park is capable of creating more than 2.5 thousand jobs. Unfortunately, there are reasons to believe that most of these workplaces will be occupied by men.

The higher levels of education among women (Table 3) may be explained by the differences in the educational paths chosen by men and women under the influence of gender stereotypes. Men’s professional choices are largely guided by their salary expectations, the prestige of the profession in society, and the payback period of investments in education. Women are guided primarily by their own preferences and the need to balance work with family interests (for more on this, see Bazueva, 2015; Rapoport & Thibout, 2018). In addition, the so-called socially useful career breaks connected to the birth of children and family care as well as limited opportunities for continuing education resulting from gender discrimination in the labor market lead women to invest more effort than men into obtaining higher education before starting a family. Men, on the other hand, are initially more interested in obtaining a primary or secondary vocational education in order to enter the labor market more quickly. Moreover, if necessary, employers are more willing to give men an opportunity to improve their professional skills regardless of their marital status and the number of children (Bazueva, 2015)<sup>3</sup>.

These negative trends and gender segregation in the regional labor market determine the need for projects such as the one provided by NGO “Association of

<sup>3</sup> These gender strategies of human capital formation in men are gradually beginning to transform under the influence of the modern economic conditions. However, as a result of the time lag between education and labour market entry as well as the agro-industrial specialization of the region, these changes have not yet had an impact on the structure of employment by education level.

Women of Gagauzia”, which offers career counselling as well as individual support for employment. In the period under investigation, this organization paid almost 400 beneficiaries for training in the following professional spheres: driver, computer user, accountant, hairdresser, masseur, manicurist. As a result, 217 people managed to find employment. This NGO mainly offered training in the so-called traditional female professions (Addressing Gender-Based Violence in Chirsova Village, 2018, p. 52).

Meanwhile, special attention is paid to women from socially vulnerable groups, including the victims of violence. For example, as part of the project *Ending Gender-Based Violence and Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals*, grants were provided to create or expand the activities of the existing organizations to enhance social and economic reintegration of women affected by violence, increase their economic freedom and financial independence from their partners. The projects are mainly aimed at providing various services in Chirsova village in Gagauzia. The services include computer maintenance, photo and video studio shooting, beauty services, and motorcycle repair. None of the projects is science-intensive and or involves high-quality human capital, i.e., they are focused on meeting the current, rather than strategic needs of the region’s economy. We found that it is typical of many projects aimed at helping IPV victims open their start-ups. Such projects are mainly implemented in the B2C (business-to-consumer) sector, since they are focused on the existing professional skills of women. In future, it may become an additional restriction for the economy focused on the high quality of human capital. It also increases women’s risk of becoming victims of domestic violence. Thus, according to the results of the OSCE-led survey on violence against women in Moldova conducted in 2018, university-educated women are less likely to be physically or sexually abused by a partner (22%) than those who have not completed higher education (36%) (Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, 2019).

Third, the above-mentioned negative processes that reduce women’s opportunities to realize their human capital on regional labor markets are accompanied by an increase in the gender pay gap (Table 4).

**Table 4**  
*Dynamics of the Average Salary in 2011–2020*

Regions	2011			2020		
	gross average salary, lei		gender pay gap <sup>5</sup> , %	gross average salary, lei		gender pay gap, %
	Women	Men		Women	Men	
Whole country	2,856.6	3,252.9	87.8	7,387.2	8,558.5	86.3
TAU Gagauzia	2,313.6	2,303.4	100.4	6,180.9	6,118.5	101.0

*Note.* Compiled by the author by using the data from the National Statistical Office of the Republic of Moldova.

<sup>4</sup> Gender pay gap is the ratio of women's salary to men's salary (Calculated by the author by using the data from: National Bureau of Statistics, 2022).

Larger gender equality in men's and women's wages in Gagauzia can be described as "equality in poverty", since the average salary in the region is significantly lower than in the country as a whole. Besides, the average salary does not provide any positive dynamics in the structure of consumer spending. In 2021, food and basic necessities accounted for 80% of consumer spending (National Bureau of Statistics, 2022).

Thus, it can be concluded that there is a variety of factors that contribute to the increasing violence against women in Gagauzia. Therefore, further in this article, the extent and level of prevalence of the certain types of gender stereotypes in relation to women in Moldova will be considered. As was mentioned above, these stereotypes influence women's ability to realize their rights in real life and reinforce the acceptance and justification of violence against women.

### ***Gender Stereotypes as a Factor of Violence against Women***

According to the 2020 UN report (United Nations Development Program, 2020), in the Republic of Moldova, 90.6% of respondents indicated the presence of at least one prejudice against women, and 67.21% of responders indicated at least two prejudices. Only less than 10% of the country's population support gender equality, which is almost 2% below the global average. It is a matter of concern that 65.2% of respondents believe that physical violence against women is justified. The negative attitudes towards women's economic and political empowerment are a significant factor since men enjoy the privileges if the number of vacancies is limited: 58.33% of respondents think that preference should be given to men and 60.33% believe that women are less capable than men in doing business. It should be noted that the percentage of men who support gender-based discrimination is higher than that of women in Moldova. The majority of men and women believe that physical domestic violence against women can be justified (61.16% of women and 69.70% of men). In addition, every sixth respondent thinks that higher education is more important for boys than for girls (United Nations Development Program, 2020).

The survey findings may be explained by the high level of patriarchalization in Moldovan society. According to the OSCE-led survey on violence against women in Moldova conducted in 2018, almost half of women (45%) believe that their friends would agree that "violence against women is often provoked by the victim" whereas only 15% of women in the EU share this opinion. Similarly, two out of the five (40%) women believe their friends would agree that "women who say they have been abused often make up or exaggerate claims of violence or rape" compared to 20% in the EU. Half of women believe that their friends would agree that "a good wife should listen to her husband, even if she doesn't agree with him" (Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, 2019).

Under these circumstances, people who constitute the social environment of the family often prefer not to interfere in the situations of violence, considering it a private matter. Thus, women are left to deal with these issues on their own. The prevalence of this attitude among women in Moldova is almost four times higher (55%) than in the EU countries (Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, 2019).



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It should be noted that these patriarchal attitudes are less common among young women. This fact brings us to the conclusion that there are some positive shifts towards the egalitarianization of the gender behavior norms in the family. This agrees with the findings of the study conducted in Chirsova village in Gagauzia in 2018 (Addressing Gender-Based Violence in Chirsova Village, 2018).

A number of projects have been implemented in Moldova to reduce the level of patriarchalization. For example, the NGO “La Strada” organizes the annual campaign “16 Days of Active Struggle against Gender-Based Violence” to raise awareness of violence against women and change the perception of gender roles (Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, 2019). Interestingly, according to the results of the above-mentioned survey of employers in Chirsova village, they are ready to provide jobs to victims of domestic violence (Addressing Gender-Based Violence in Chirsova Village, 2018, p. 21). However, the analysis demonstrates that despite the specialized projects aimed at changing traditional gender norms, the justification of discriminatory practices against women, including the extreme forms of physical violence, is still widely spread in Moldova. It stems from the high level of persistent gender inequality, which, among other things, is caused by the lack of effective legal sanctions for gender-based discrimination.

Based on the above-discussed findings, the following preliminary conclusions can be drawn.

In general, it should be noted that the current national legislation in Moldova is not conducive to the creation of an effective mechanism for promoting gender equality, including gender equality in the labour market<sup>5</sup>. There is evidence that many women in Moldova remain largely unaware of their rights, of men’s responsibility for their actions, and of the available assistance in the cases of gender-based violence. Only “around four in ten women feel very well or well informed about what to do if they experience domestic violence themselves (39%), and a further 28% feel somewhat informed, while 26% do not feel well informed or do not know what to do at all” (Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, 2019). In our opinion, this is due to the lack of consistency and low coverage of public awareness-raising activities.

There is a lack of coordination between different ministries and governmental agencies in implementing gender equality policies. The persons authorized by the national legislation to provide support to victims of violence are subject to different levels of government. For example, most of the specialists working in Gagauzia are subordinate to local authorities, while the social assistants and police officers are subordinate to the region’s Department of Social Assistance and the police inspectorate located in the city of Comrat, the region’s administrative centre (Addressing Gender-Based Violence in Chirsova Village, 2018, p. 8).

Moreover, the gender approach has not been integrated into the activities of all governmental agencies. Local authorities, including the administration of Chirsova

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<sup>5</sup> For more information on the principles of effective national legislation to prevent discrimination and violence against women, see: Beijing declaration and platform for action: Beijing+5 political declaration and outcome, 2015 (strategic aim D.1; iss. 19; iss. 201); UN CEDAW, 1988; Committee of Ministers, 2002.

village, have not been informed about the policy in the field of gender equality and countering gender-based violence. Thus, according to the study *Addressing Gender-Based Violence in Chirsova Village*, none of the 23 respondents from the local public administration and NGOs, except for one police officer, took part in any specialized trainings dealing with the domestic violence legislation, gender equality legislation, or regulations to prevent human trafficking (*Addressing Gender-Based Violence in Chirsova Village*, 2018, p. 17).

The government of the Republic of Moldova does not have a ministry or special experts responsible for ensuring gender equality in the country. Gagauzia, however, has a specialized commission to combat violence against women established in 2018 (*Addressing Gender-Based Violence in Chirsova Village*, 2018, p. 8). However, so far, the Commission has failed to deliver any real action.

The national legislation specifies only the penalties for physical violence while other discriminatory practices, including psychological abuse and sexual harassment, are not covered by any legal norms. Furthermore, the labour inspectorate has not been legally assigned the function of monitoring the employer's compliance with the principle of gender equality. Moreover, the level of development of forensic medicine in Gagauzia and in Moldova in general is insufficient and makes it difficult to prove the fact of psychological violence in court (*Addressing Gender-Based Violence in Chirsova Village*, 2018, p. 21). Under these circumstances it is difficult for victims to prove gender-based violence and/or discrimination. To address this problem, in many countries, the burden of proving gender discrimination is shifted from the victim to the perpetrator.

According to the OSCE-led survey on violence against women in Moldova, IPV victims reported the low level of effectiveness of perpetrator punishment. The key points made by the victims include the following considerations: (a) when fines are issued, they are paid from the family budget; (b) community service sentences for a minimum number of days does not protect the victim from the abuser; and (c) the attendance rates of the mandatory rehabilitation course are low (*Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe*, 2019).

In view of the above, for more effective enforcement of legislation on violence against women, it is necessary to create conditions for women's socio-economic empowerment and for IPV risk minimization.

### **Measures to Reduce Violence Against Women in the ATU Gagauzia**

The experience of developed countries demonstrates that the efficiency of the existing national legislation that ensures gender equality in all spheres of life depends on the strength of traditional gender-inequitable attitudes and beliefs that justify the use of discriminatory practices against women, including their most extreme forms. To this end, it is necessary to create a system of "gender equality education" on different levels, encompassing government employees, businesses and entrepreneurs, families and their social environment. From the perspective of the institutional economic theory, only in this case it is possible to establish and

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promote new norms of behavior. Moreover, if interactions on the basis of egalitarian norms of gender behavior are practiced by a large number of people, then, according to the coordination effect<sup>6</sup>, the number of those willing to interact on the basis of patriarchal norms of behavior will be minimal. In this case, adherence to alternative norms of behavior that support gender discrimination would be made too costly by the sanctions system and, therefore, not advisable. However, our analysis shows that the range of proposed measures does not involve all economic actors in the system of “gender education”. The focus is made primarily on IPV victims (Ahmed, 2005; McWhirter, 2006); small population groups (Buller et al., 2018), or women’s partners (Hughes et al., 2015; Kim et al., 2007). Consequently, at least two actors in the institutions that support the reproduction of IPV risks (see Table 1) are completely excluded from the process of building new norms of behavior. Others are involved only fragmentarily. The excluded categories usually comprise people who are the most capable of adopting egalitarian norms of behaviour. This, in turn, impedes the diffusion of the new norms in society and thus prevents the transformation of the existing system of sanctions maintaining the patriarchal norms (Table 1).

The following sections will describe the design of the system of gender equality education for all economic actors (representatives of state and local government, business, friends and acquaintances, family members). This system is based on the integration of effective legal mechanisms for achieving gender equality and the use of individual practices to strengthen the effectiveness of these mechanisms by eliminating the identified gaps in the compliance with the determinants of the institutional system’s quality (Bazueva, 2015). The success of the proposed measures depends on the level of the country’s socio-economic development and the possibility of their incorporation into the existing system of institutions in the region.

### ***Development of the Gender Equality Education System***

According to the recommendations for gender mainstreaming developed by the Committee on Gender Equality in Sweden<sup>7</sup>, it is necessary to provide gender equality training for regional and local government employees. Such training programs, among other things, should focus on the correspondence of gender equality education to the state development goals – the regulatory framework of the state, the ineffectiveness of the current dichotomy, possible results of work and the basics of gender analysis (Swedish Gender Mainstreaming Support Committee, 2007a, 2007b). It is possible to organize specialized training to enable government officials to work more effectively with IPV victims as part of programs for violence detection, rehabilitation, social assistance and support. In Gagauzia, specialized courses dealing with men’s violence

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<sup>6</sup> The effect of coordination means that the more consistently the norm is enforced in society, the more damage each particular individual suffers when he or she deviates from it. The design of the negative feedback mechanism in this case contains positive feedback: the more people follow the norm, the less expedient it is to deviate from it, the more people follow the norm (Polterovich, 1999, p.9).

<sup>7</sup> It should be noted that according to the comparative studies in the EU, the system of institutions for ensuring gender equality established in Sweden is one of the most effective. See, for example, European Institute for Gender Equality, 2013; Rubery, 2002.

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against women and domestic violence could be included in higher education programs at the Comrat State University (Comrat).

A productive approach could be to involve business into combating discrimination against women. This makes particular sense, since in the economic sphere, it is business that discriminates against women by underestimating the return on their human capital through the gender wage gap. In this case, interactive trainings for employers and employees could be organized to show how to apply the integrated gender approach more effectively. The International Labor Organization (ILO) has devised a gender audit methodology, which has proven to be efficient in tackling the problem of gender inequality at work (for more on this, see International Labour Organization, 2012). Following the example described in (Adams et al., 2012), it would be useful to develop a separate project aimed at creating and implementing specialized training courses for employers to encourage them to create a more sensitive workplace policy for IPV victims, to eliminate stereotyping and misguided preconceptions about women's lower productivity, and to prevent the dismissal of women during the rehabilitation period.

Less men and women would follow the patriarchal norms of behavior if an efficient system of institutions for gender equality education was developed. Awareness raising programs promote a more critical attitude to the existing patriarchal norms and values. The most successful forms of gender equality education include the following: (a) introduction of gender equality courses throughout the system of education from pre-school to university; (b) social advertising aimed at eliminating gender illiteracy; (c) development of special manuals explaining the main forms of gender discrimination and the mechanism for filing complaints; (d) production of demonstration films teaching the basics of gender equality in accessible and exciting forms; (e) introduction of sex education courses for schools.

Promotion of more egalitarian gender norms is impossible without gender education of media professionals since media influence social norms<sup>8</sup>. At present, in Moldova, gender-biased representations are common in the mass media. It would, therefore, make sense to launch a specialized project, which would include gender equity certification programs for journalists. This measure, however, is likely to have a short-term effect. To ensure a more long-term effect, media outreach activities must be systematic. To this end, the frequency of these activities should be specified in the corresponding regulatory documents, e.g., the Gender Equality Strategy.

The system of gender equality education in the region should be supported by specialized programs aimed at encouraging women from socially vulnerable groups to maintain and develop their human capital, to enhance their business skills and competencies, to challenge their self-limiting beliefs and boost their self-esteem. Only in this case it will be possible to eliminate the internal control orientation, which is one of the factors contributing to the persistence of the patriarchal system of values (Table 1).

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<sup>8</sup> This aspect was also discussed in Hidrobo et al., 2016. However, the authors only declared the need to encourage negative attitudes toward violence and to raise awareness of the unacceptability of discriminatory life-behavior practices in the media.

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***Development of IPV Victims' Personal Potential and Business Skills***

The analysis has revealed that women from socially vulnerable categories, especially IPV victims, often do not get the chance to develop their own competitive human capital as they have limited access to educational services. On the other hand, they tend to underestimate their personal potential and business qualities (e.g., behaviour stereotypes). This problem could be tackled through a system of specialized training for IPV victims. The trainings will contribute to the identification and promotion of their personal and economic interests, strengthening of their capacity and realization of their human capital to achieve financial stability and independence.

In this case the education technology “I—Corporation” implemented by business managers can also be used (Bazueva, 2015). It involves the situations when a person describes him/herself as a corporation assessing their strengths and weaknesses, including their external environment. On the one hand, it would reduce the influence of gender stereotypes on women's choice of areas for the application of their human capital. On the other hand, it would help determine the trajectory of their training. To this end, it would be productive to use the innovative tools of the *WE GO (Women Economic Independence and Growth Opportunity)* project financed by the EU (*WE GO 2 Against Violence*, 2018). These tools include the elaboration of individual plans for the development of IPV victims' social ties, regular monitoring of their needs and employment opportunities, development of individual career programs, job placement assistance, and trainings for potential employers (*WE GO 2 Against Violence*, 2018).

It would also make sense to launch a financial literacy project for those women who would like to open a startup. The aim of the project is to enhance IPV victims' financial security, to train them in implementing effective technologies of managing their personal finances, help them obtain the skills of economic and financial planning to achieve their goals.

The project can be also expanded to include low-income women who have a permanent source of income. This could be a separate project aimed at helping women develop individual savings programs similar to the MAP program. Unlike the project for stimulating startups, such project could accomplish the following: (a) help women achieve a wider range of financial goals; (b) encourage them to build their skills for wiser management of their family budgets, choosing a savings strategy to reach financial goals; and (c) help women accumulate personal savings. Participants of the IDA (Individual Development Accounts) or matched savings program open accounts in a certain financial institution and make regular contributions for a specified period of time. A certain proportion (depending on the state and program) of the resulting sum can be spent to achieve a financial goal, e.g., to buy a house, to start a business, etc. In this case, it is important to help low-income women discover their personal potential and become independent by providing them financial assistance in the form of a grant or social benefit (Sanders et al., 2007).

The impact of such microfinance projects on the prevention of violence against women in the region should be monitored (for more on this, see Hughes et al., 2015). Unfortunately, the project *Ending Gender-Based Violence and Achieving the*

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*Sustainable Development Goals*, which is currently being implemented in Gagauzia, does not involve such monitoring and assessment.

In Gagauzia, as our analysis has shown, the share of employed women with higher education is decreasing. The region's labor market is gender segregated. In the long term such situation may exacerbate women's discrimination in the labour market because the quality of their human capital in the emerging knowledge economy will be uncompetitive. In this regard, one of the projects aimed at helping women enhance their human capital is to offer them career guidance and encourage them to obtain higher education. The project can be implemented in schools among the students of grades 8 and 9. In addition, the project can also solve the problem of reducing the influence of gender stereotypes on women's choices of profession and career, encouraging their interest in STEM. Thus, this project can contribute to reducing gender segregation in education and, subsequently, in the labor market of the region.

The project can be supplemented with a program for the creation of innovative enterprises by a team of educated women from socially vulnerable groups. Such enterprises can become part of the industrial park in Comrat and offer competitive salaries to highly qualified specialists, thus preventing the latter's labour migration to other countries or regions. Graduates of the industrial college, which is being opened in the ATU Gagauzia with the support of the Turkish Government, and graduates of the Comrat State University can be involved in training personnel for this enterprise. Girls participating in a career guidance project can get practical training or internships at this enterprise with the opportunity to be employed there after completing their higher education. The operation of the enterprise should result in the production of high-tech products with high added value.

There is a need for a project to develop an effective mechanism for coordinating the efforts of various departments, institutions, agencies, employers, and the public to provide various forms of assistance and services to IPV victims. It should be based on the 'single window' principle, which increases the effectiveness of rehabilitation measures by minimizing transaction costs. Furthermore, this principle can be used to create methodological tools for more effective prevention of violence against women. The synergistic effects of the project can also result in promoting the gender-equality approach in public administration and in the creation of an institutional environment in the region that promotes egalitarian gender norms in the family and society as a whole.

The potential projects outlined above aimed at women's economic empowerment may be integrated into a single comprehensive project to prevent violence against women in Gagauzia.

## Conclusion

This study outlined and classified the social and economic factors that influence violence against women. Statistical analysis of the data from UNDP Moldova results and qualitative studies was used to estimate the likelihood of violence against women in one of the southern regions of Moldova—the ATU Gagauzia. It was found that violence against women stems from a wide range of factors, including the following.

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First, on the regional labour market there are limited opportunities for women to realize their economic rights. In general, women in Gagauzia are less economically active than men. Women's employment rate is also lower, including the traditionally female sectors of economy. There is also a decrease in the employment rate of women with higher education and a growing gender pay gap. This picture fits well into the overall socio-economic situation in the region where the income levels of households are falling and the problem of poverty is exacerbated.

Secondly, there is a high level of patriarchalization of the population's consciousness as people tend to justify discriminatory practices against women, including extreme forms of violence.

Thirdly, there is no effective mechanism for ensuring gender equality in the region. As a result, women are not informed about gender equality policies and responses to gender-based violence, about their rights and opportunities to receive assistance in cases of violence, as well as about men's responsibility for these actions. There is a lack of coordination between the ministries and state departments responsible for the implementation of the gender equality policy. Similarly, local authorities have not been informed about the policy in the field of gender equality and measures to counter gender-based violence, no experts or officials have been appointed on the national or regional level to oversee the realization of the gender equality policy. While there are relevant legal provisions and legislation on physical violence, other forms of discriminatory practices, including psychological violence, are not regulated by law, and there are no penalties for sexual harassment at work.

We have shown that these factors, which increase the risks of IPV, is supported by the system of specialized institutions, each of which applies its own system of sanctions for the violation of its rules of gender stereotypical behavior. Promotion of egalitarian norms of interaction and adaptation of economic agents to them is possible only if the existing mechanisms of enforcement are eliminated.

For this purpose, in the light of the recommendations given by the UN and the EU as well as the successful experience of developed countries, the following set of projects is proposed:

- development of the system of gender equality education of economic entities on different levels of the gender system (state and local authorities, business, social milieu, family and individuals), development of an institutional environment in the region that will be conducive to the establishment of egalitarian gender norms in the family and society as a whole and to the elimination of discrimination practices against women, including physical violence;
- implementation of a system of specialized programs to stimulate women to enhance their human capital and realize their personal and professional potential;
- development of an effective mechanism for coordinating the efforts of various departments, institutions, business, and the public to ensure the provision of various forms of assistance and services to IPV victims. The project should rely on the single window implementation principle of a "single window" for enhanced cooperation of all the authorities involved in the process.

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In the future, the proposed set of projects will create conditions for promoting the norms of egalitarian interactions between economic agents at different levels of the gender system. This will help prevent gender-based discriminatory practices, including the extreme forms of violence against women, through the formation of a self-sustaining system of gender equality institutions.

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ARTICLE

# Patriarchal Language Evaluation of Muslim Women's Body, Sexuality, and Domestication Discourse on Indonesian Male Clerics Preaching

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## ABSTRACT

This nested case study (multiyear research critical discourse analysis—in this case, the first year) aims to provide support in the form of linguistic recommendations to the law reform, particularly on the issues of Muslim women's bodies, sexuality, and domestication based on the textual analysis of the patriarchal language used by different Islamic strands: Muhammadiyah's, Nahdlatul Ulama's and Salafi's clerics in their preaching in Indonesia. This is significant because such a study is relatively limited in Indonesian cases. However, it also shed light on how discrepant linguistic manners of these male clerics were deployed to voice their noblesse oblige about Muslim women's body, sexuality, and domestication as regulatory

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discourse. The data—six videos of the respective clerics’ preaching—were taken from YouTube<sup>1</sup> using purposeful stratified sampling. It is found that Muhammadiyah’s cleric delineated this discourse based on the segregation of dubious religiously correct and incorrect propriety, whereas Nahdlatul Ulama’s cleric, the apparent religious normality, and Salafi’s cleric, the plausible religious propriety.

### KEYWORDS

appraisal and transitivity system, women’s body, sexuality, domestication, Muhammadiyah, Nahdlatul Ulama, Salafi

## Introduction

Research contributed to the scope of the text-oriented discourse analysis on Islamic clerics’ patriarchal language to the existing laws about Muslim women’s bodies, sexuality, and domestication in Indonesia remains scarce. One was found pertinent to a similar issue, such as Leiliyanti and Larasati (2019), who discussed the patriarchal language of the two Salafi clerics in two one-to-three-minute videos posted on Instagram<sup>2</sup>. They found that these clerics negatively judged propriety on their litmus test of Muslim women’s body, sexuality, and domestication. Relevant issues in these discourses arguably lie in the research on hijab, sharia law on women’s bodies, sexuality, and domestication, Islamic feminism, women’s bodies, sexuality, and domestication (Beta, 2014; Bhowon & Bundhoo, 2016; Yulikhah, 2016; Zempi, 2020), examines how young computer savvy Muslim women community (Hijabers Community, n.d.) in urban Indonesia through the use of fashion hijab and promote them on the blog, and social networking sites (SNS) successfully challenges western media representation of Muslim women, i.e., “domesticated and silenced” in a patriarchal society and the academic divide between “Islam versus Western capitalist”.

Referring back to the laws pertinent to the discourse of Muslim women’s bodies, in this case, from the issue of the hijab in Indonesia, this Muslim majority country implements three intersected laws—the Roman-Dutch law, Islamic law, and Customary law—at the same time. Islamic law, which is only applicable to Indonesian Muslims, in Boellstorff’s (2006) lens, is domesticated as it deals only with marriage, legacy, and kinship. Islamic law itself has its two divides: Sharia (the religious precept based on the Qur’an and Hadith) and Fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence based on the understanding and practices of Sharia). However, the implementation of Islamic law in Indonesia should also consider the national law’s perspective to avoid discontentment. Although no specific law regulates how to dress according to Islam, especially the use of the hijab, Article 28E section 2 of the 1945 Constitution<sup>3</sup> stipulates that the state guarantees the freedom of religion and expressions according to one’s faith/religion.

<sup>1</sup> YouTube™ is a trademark of Google Inc., registered in the U.S. and other countries.

<sup>2</sup> Instagram™ is a trademark of Instagram, LLC, registered in the U.S. and other countries. In the Russian Federation, it is recognised as an extremist organisation and its activity is prohibited.

<sup>3</sup> *The Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia of 1945*. (n.d.). Asian Human Rights Commission. <http://www.humanrights.asia/indonesian-constitution-1945-consolidated/>

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This disciplining act in the form of hijab donning is considered a personal and religious right, as it is based on a women's choice whether or not she is willing to abide by this religious ruling. However, these laws' enforcement fails to avert or minimize discrimination against Muslim women's bodies, sexuality, and domestication. Language is a storehouse of cultural ideas to describe a particular outside group. These ideas and the language in which they are encoded reflect power inequalities and related discrimination, such as sexism, racism, and age. Language can be manipulated to produce linguistic coverings coupled with verb choice to influence causality attributions, offering tools to apply discrimination while masking reality and reducing perceived conflicts of interest. Language normalizes discrimination by turning discriminatory scripts and practices into an accepted part of everyday discourse (Ng, 2007). Within these intersected laws, women still face discrimination, i.e., the prohibition of wearing a hijab in Indonesia. Hijab was seen as an act of resistance under Soeharto's administration, the symbol of transformation and self-security, and ownership (Smith-Hefner, 2007), and of symbolic negotiation that reflects the globalization of Islamic pop culture vis-à-vis piety, global Western influence, Islamic Middle East influence and the local everyday cultural practices (Nef-Saluz, 2007). Hijab was also forbidden in the university and school settings. However, most Indonesian Muslim women's inclination to use the hijab managed to lift the ban. Hijab in Indonesia is not always about expressing devotion to Islam and a lifestyle that is no longer confined to circumstances (Beta, 2014). Suardi (1995) also notes that the hijab plays as a "camouflage" that masks Muslim women's true identity. This masking continues Suardi and underpins how the Muslim women in Indonesia attempt to comply, conform and abide by this religious ruling.

The scrutiny of a similar phenomenon outside Indonesia, for instance, in Malaysia, has been conducted by concentrating on hijab to its relation to media and modernity (Grine & Saeed, 2017; Hassim et al., 2015; Sunesti, 2016). Hassim et al. (2015) discuss the importance of hijab culture in media and how it has become a media commodity and an integral element for Malaysian Muslims. The presence of fashion in Malaysia has modernized hijab and made hijab more visible in public places (Hochel, 2013). However, this modernization does not affect how Muslim women see hijab in Malaysia. For them, hijab still represents religiosity and a religious tool (Grine & Saeed, 2017), albeit some groups contradict these perspectives.

In contrast with Indonesian and Malaysian cases, Selby (2014) examined the conundrum of Muslim women wearing niqab and burqa in France and Québec, Canada, i.e., their act of donning niqab and burqa is perceived as public exigency as it violates the rule and regulation pertinent to religious practice in the public domain. Deploying Foucault's biopolitics and governmentality, Selby further found that this dialectical religious praxis's failure derives from how the donning act complies with Islamic prescriptive sexual politic representation and challenges the public regulation in accessing the Muslim women's body in the public sphere.

Research on the notion of the hijab has widely been conducted (Grine & Saeed, 2017; Hamzeh, 2011; Jackson & Monk-Turner, 2015). Neglecting the "spatial" and "ethical" hijab, Mernissi (1991) examines how the visual hijab becomes *comme il faut*

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to Muslim women, thus posing the subjective implication of patriarchal surveillance underlying the hijab discourse (Hamzeh, 2011). Although the definitions assigned to hijab vary in geographical, socio-cultural, and socio-political contexts, the widely shared interpretation is that the hijab covers, hides, protects and, connotes corporal piety and modesty (Gökariksel, 2009). Hijab thus means reverence, moral authority, honor, morality, femininity, and social status (Jackson & Monk-Turner, 2015). On the contrary, in a culture where visibility is the privileged means of awareness (Zelizer, 2001), the hijab is viewed by feminists and postfeminists as a symbol of patriarchal suppression (Alloula, 1986). Muslim woman with hijab is often problematically contested by the patriarchy. The degree to which “normal” bodies are revealed in Western culture and the emphasis on explicitly veiling the female body in Islam suggest that apart from dictating how the body should appear when visible to the males, the male gaze controls the body’s visibility. However, such visibility is contested in the case of the Hijaber above Community (Beta, 2014).

In this discourse, the male gaze, as a metaphor, plays a pivotal role in harnessing women’s subjectivity and corpora (Glapka, 2018). These discourses delineated the inferiority of women (physical and symbolic) and entailed that the “normalized corporeity” is characterized by the androcentric conceptions of gender, sexuality, and appearance in conjunction with the cultural construction of thinness and health (Ponterotto, 2016). This normality is then ossified in corporeality and sexual desire (Ponterotto, 2016). In this sense, women are not given space to express their sexuality, let alone the freedom to convey their desires, as they were positioned as seducers while men as predators.

The debate about the discourse on women’s bodies, sexuality, and domestication in Islam Indonesia cannot be isolated from its male-dominated religious leaders’ preaching (in this case, the clerics of Muhammadiyah, Nahdlatul Ulama, and Salafi). In the Islamic mainstream discourse, the female body discourse operates in a congruent manner, i.e., the body at all times “covered” to avert the male gaze, especially in the public sphere. This polysemous framework is closely related to the Foucauldian principles of knowledge and power, i.e., the female body is governed by patriarchal standards regulating women’s morality and roles (in this case, in conjunction with *fitrah* and *aurat*). Such regulation on woman’s corporeality is exercised by inculcating Islamic religious rules, laws, and teachings in their everyday praxis and institutionalizing these as the code of conduct and practice (Foucault, 1977).

As part of multiyear research (in this case, the first year), the study aims to provide input in the forms of linguistic recommendation to the law reform regarding linguistic and religious regulatory discourse in Indonesia, especially on the issues of (Muslim) women’s bodies, sexuality, and domestication based on the text-oriented discourse analysis of the scope of the patriarchal language used by Muhammadiyah’s, Nahdlatul Ulama’s and Salafi’s clerics in their preaching posted on YouTube (Assalamualaikum Channel, 2017; Audio Dakwah, 2018; Ceramah Pendek, 2018; Gus Muwafiq Channel, 2018; Ngaji Anak Indonesia, 2019; Santri Remu’an, 2020). This paper aims to compare and evaluate the scope of the patriarchal language of these clerics regarding these women’s discourses deploying the transitivity system



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postulated by Halliday (2004) and the language evaluation theory developed by J. R. Martin and P. R. R. White (2005). This paper is organized by discussing Muslim women's bodies, sexuality, domestication, Islamic feminism, methodology, results, discussion, and conclusion.

### ***Body, Sexuality, and Women Domestication***

The normalized domination of men in society legitimizes imposition in the forms of actions or restrictions on women. This then results in the form of women's domestication. Due to the notion of state power, Foucault (1990) contends that power is closely related to the body. Power over the body is divided into two entities: internal power in the form of desires and desires with power over the body that regulates individual attitudes and behavior through norms and rules. The relationship between power and body relates to Foucault's concept of governmentality, where the government has normalized power over the population for the state's benefit. The debate overpowering the body arises when the norms or rules are forged in training, torture, and coercion, thus narrowing the space for movement and the will over the body. The body acts as an object and subject worth more than a mere material entity, as the body determines the position of one individual in society.

In this sense, the body is the departure point of signification in womanhood that cannot be detached from its social and cultural context (Benedicta, 2011). In the Indonesian religious and cultural context, the patriarchal standards generate a hierarchy of corporeal significance: ideal and non-ideal, beautiful and not beautiful body (Prabasmoro, 2006).

### ***Islamic Feminism***

The genealogy of feminism is closely linked to "European intellectual and religious traditions" and its association with European modernity. Islamic feminism is part of Muslim women's assertion of equality (Chakrabarty, 2000). Moghadam's research on integrating Islam and feminism in Iran shows its benefits to Muslim women (Afsaruddin & Ameri, 1999). In 2008, Amina Wadud demonstrated this utility by using feminist tactics and distancing herself from feminist political hegemony. On the contrary, Marie-Aimée Hélie-Lucas (1999) investigated the intersections between Islam and feminism in a secular way and found echoing Afsaruddin and Ameri's confusion as cited by Wadud (2008) and her argument that Muslim women "need Islamic feminism." This indicates the imperative of the amalgamation of Islam and feminism and its various uses in the studies of Muslim women, which politically demonstrate Muslim women's unique identities.

Islamic feminism is more inclined to promulgate Islamic modernism to secular feminism and asserted equality. It preserved a fair representation of women and men in the public or private sphere. Without acknowledging total gender equality, its social justice praxis highlights the socio-political phenomena in which Muslim women are to be faithful and pious adherents to Islam which mirror their religious morality in their everyday religious praxis (Kahf, 1999). In this sense, women's integrity and reverence for their men and family are linked to women's adherence to Islamic moral principles.

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## Methodology

This text-oriented discourse analysis deployed a transitivity system by M. A. K. Halliday and three interacting domains of appraisal—attitude, engagement, and graduation—by J. R. Martin and P. R. R. White in investigating six transcriptions of preaching recorded on YouTube:

- Adi Hidayat, *Merias Wajah Apakah Termasuk Tabarruj?* [Does face makeup represent the display of (muslim) women's beauty?] (Ceramah Pendek, 2018);
- Adi Hidayat, *Mengukur Keimanan Perempuan Dari Hijabnya* [Measuring a woman's faith from her hijab] (Audio Dakwah, 2018);
- Gus Muwafiq, *Tips Menghadapi Istri yang Cerewet* [Tips for dealing with a fussy wife] (Gus Muwafiq Channel, 2018);
- Gus Muwafiq, *Membangun Rumah Tangga dengan Cinta* [Building a household with love] (Santri Remu'an, 2020);
- Khalid Basalamah, *Cara Berhias untuk Suami* [How to dress up for husband] (Ngaji Anak Indonesia, 2019);
- Khalid Basalamah, *Adab Suami dan Istri* [Adab husband and wife] (Assalamualaikum Channel, 2017).

They were deployed to construe how the male clerics' discrepant linguistic manner employed their language on Muslim women's bodies, sexuality, and domestication in their preaching.

The data (words, phrases, clauses, and sentences) were taken from the transcripts of these clerics' preaching and coded based on a transitivity-based coding matrix (Halliday, 2004) which would later be classified based on the issues of Muslim women's body, sexuality, and domestication. The preaching was selected based on stratified purposeful sampling. They were then identified to reveal the dominant topics and transcribed into six separate transcriptions. The data were then analyzed using appraisal theory by J. R. Martin and P. R. R. White (2005). This was conducted to evaluate how the clerics evaluate, grade, and examine their alternative stances and voices towards the discourse on women's bodies, sexuality, and domestication in their preaching. The data were then compared to point out, contrast, and synthesize the differences and similarities in the employment of patriarchal language on the regulatory discourse of Muslim women's bodies, sexuality, and domestication.

## Results

This section provides findings and discussion of the patriarchal language on women's bodies, sexuality, and domestication represented by Adi Hidayat (Audio Dakwah, 2018; Ceramah Pendek, 2018), Gus Muwafiq (Gus Muwafiq Channel, 2018; Santri Remu'an, 2020), and Khalid Basalamah (Assalamualaikum Channel, 2017; Ngaji Anak Indonesia, 2019). Focusing on the transitivity system of Systemic Functional Linguistic and Appraisal theory and the concept of knowledge and power, the findings are divided

into two sections, i.e., ideational analysis and interpersonal analysis. In comparison, the discussion is divided into three sections, i.e., lexico-grammatical features, logical structures, and social functions.

Table 1 demonstrates that the dominant process type of Hidayat's, Muwafiq's, and Basalamah's preachings are relational processes (respectively, 57%, 65%, and 45%). The relational process serves to identify (relational identifying) and characterize (relational attributive) entities (Halliday, 2004). In these six preachings, relational identifying is predominantly used to identify the moral principles of women. In contrast, relational attributive is employed to characterize women's physical appearance and the clerics' stances towards Muslim women's behaviors.

**Table 1**  
*Percentage of Process Types in the Six Preaching Videos*

Process types	Adi Hidayat		Gus Muwafiq		Khalid Basalamah	
	Merias Wajah: Apakah Termasuk Tabarruj?	Mengukur Keimanan Perempuan dari Hijabnya	Tips Menghadapi Istri yang Cerewet	Membangun Rumah Tangga dengan Cinta	Cara Berhisas untuk Suami	Adab Suami dan Istri
Behavioral	–	–	–	5 (1%)	–	–
Existential	4 (4%)	22 (10%)	14 (4%)	26 (4%)	27 (7%)	61 (5%)
Material	24 (22%)	53 (25%)	78 (23%)	102 (14%)	94 (26%)	400 (29%)
Mental	14 (13%)	34 (16%)	42 (12%)	74 (10%)	58 (16%)	213 (16%)
Relational	62 (57%)	94 (44%)	168 (49%)	474 (65%)	166 (45%)	554 (40%)
Verbal	4 (4%)	10 (5%)	40 (12%)	43 (6%)	24 (6%)	141 (10%)
Clause	108 (100%)	213 (100%)	342 (100%)	724 (100%)	369 (100%)	1369 (100%)

The second dominant process type of preaching is the material process (respectively 25%, 23%, and 29%). The use of the material process in this preaching represents the action of either complying or violating the moral principles of Muslim women as well as the clerics' dispositions.

Based on the interpersonal analysis, it is also found that the clerics evaluate women's behaviors and physical appearance by deploying patriarchal language.

Table 2 indicates that the three clerics focus similarly on appraising women. From the attitude domain, Adi Hidayat (Audio Dakwah, 2018; Ceramah Pendek, 2018) and Khalid Basalamah (Assalamualaikum Channel, 2017; Ngaji Anak Indonesia, 2019) dominantly used negative judgments to evaluate women's behaviors and physical appearances, whereas Gus Muwafiq (Gus Muwafiq Channel, 2018; Santri Remu'an, 2020) used positive ones. As for the engagement, the clerics generally delivered their

preaching in the form of heteroglossia utterances. This demonstrates the reliability of their opinions, i.e., not predominantly focusing on their sole perspectives. These are also reinforced by the intensification of quality in the aspect of graduation. The following tables below are the results of each three interacting domains of Appraisal.

Table 3 demonstrates that the aspect of judgment dominates the attitude branches. The clerics used favorable judgment of social esteem at 37%, whereas the negative judgment of propriety (social sanction) was 40%. According to Islamic regulation, the latter is directed at women’s actions in violating Islamic morality. For instance, *hanya karena malas* [merely due to her laziness—also read: selfish], *merasa tidak penting* [unfair], and *tidak peka* [insensitive] are the few judgments of propriety that are employed to appraise them.

**Table 2**  
*Total of Appraising Items*

Three interacting domains of Appraisal			Clerics		
			Adi Hidayat	Gus Muwafiq	Khalid Basalamah
Attitude	Affect	(+)	1	50	36
		(-)	10	30	61
	Judgement	(+)	53	258	282
		(-)	95	206	340
	Appreciation	(+)	2	59	40
		(-)	4	47	40
Engagement	Monogloss	17	62	82	
	Heterogloss	157	576	697	
Graduation	Focus	5	34	19	
	Force	146	527	704	
Total			490	1849	2301
			4640 Appraising Items		

**Table 3**  
*Classification of Attitude*

Classification of attitude		Frequency	Percentage	
Affect	Positive	87	5%	11%
	Negative	101	6%	
Judgement	Positive	593	37%	77%
	Negative	641	40%	
Appreciation	Positive	101	6%	12%
	Negative	91	6%	
		1614 Appraising Items	100%	

**Table 4**  
*Classification of Engagement*

Classification of engagement		Frequency	Percentage	
Monogloss		161	10%	10%
Heterogloss	Contract	1084	68%	90%
	Expand	346	22%	
1591 Appraising Items			100%	

Referring back to the notion of the cleric's reliable stances, this can be overtly seen in Table 4. Surpassing monoglots with the total percentage of 90%, heteroglossia dominates the engagement branches. The result demonstrates the gap between the two sub-branches, i.e., the heteroglossia points out that the clerics tend to limit the scope of alternative positions and voices regarding to how frequent the heteroglossia contract appears. It can be seen from affirmation *ini memang alamnya wanita* [This is the nature of women indeed] and *kalaupun laki-laki berbeda tentunya* [As for men, it is different of course] (Clauses 2–3, Ngaji Anak Indonesia, 2019), as well as pronouncement *Jadi persoalan pertama tabarruj yang paling utama ada pada bagian wajah* [So, the first main issue in tabarruj is the face] (Clause 70, Ceramah Pendek, 2018) and *Maka nilainya orang hamil itu kalau pagi dihitung puasa, kalau malam dihitung tahajjud* [So, the value of pregnant women is counted as fasting in the morning and as tahajjud (night prayer) in the night] (Clause 332, Santri Remu'an, 2020).

Table 4 also demonstrates the deployment of monoglots utterances (the preaching was delivered only based on the clerics' "bare declaration", i.e., their perspective with lack of references). However, the lack of references occurred intermittently since the Hadiths and Quran's religious quotations were utilized in their preaching. These results clarify that Adi Hidayat, Gus Muwafiq, and Khalid Basalamah used patriarchal language in delivering their preaching. They are the professionals who arguably attempted to seek balanced evaluation.

Based on Table 5, the force has wholly exceeded the focus with a percentage of 96% in graduation analysis. This result reinforces that the three clerics generate their religious teachings to convey the degree either for positive or negative assessments of, for instance, social sanction—*ini umumnya menampilkan bagian yang tampak terlihat indah* [This is generally to reveal parts that look beautiful] (Clause 48, Ceramah Pendek, 2018); *Yang penting orangnya baik...* [The important thing is the person has good character] (Clause 53, Ngaji Anak Indonesia, 2019), and social esteem—[...] *yang penting dompetnya tebal* [the important thing is his wallet is full of money] (Clause 54, Ngaji Anak Indonesia, 2019), as well as valuation—*Apalagi mahabbah itu bakal hilang pelan-pelan* [Moreover, mahabbah (love or affection) will slowly disappear] (Clause 414, Santri Remu'an, 2020). Since most of the graduation presence in the preaching is found in force-intensification, the clerics tend to intensify the quality in forming their opinions of the statements mentioned earlier (Martin & White, 2005).

**Table 5**  
*Classification of Graduation*

Classification of graduation		Frequency	Percentage	
Focus		58	4%	4%
Force	Intensification	1151	80%	96%
	Quantification	226	16%	
1435 Appraising Items			100%	

## Discussion

### *Muslim Woman's Body*

In *Merias Wajah: Apakah termasuk Tabarruj?* Adi Hidayat (Ceramah Pendek, 2018) presented this religious teaching about *tabarruj* (display of [female] beauty), which leads to how this Muhammadiyah's cleric positions the women's bodies under the (Islamic) cultural cleavage of *jahiliyyah* (the era of ignorance prior to the advent of Islam; this notion is also closely attached with the creed of stupidity) and *non-jahiliyyah*. From a total of 108 clauses, 62 relational processes dominated the preaching. It was employed to identify and characterize the actions of women and the cleric's stance. The followings exemplify this:

Hidayat opens his preaching by posing this question: *Salah atau tidak? Oh, belum tentu [Is it (tabarruj) right or wrong? Oh, it depends]* (Clauses 3–4, Ceramah Pendek, 2018).

The pronoun *itu* [it] on the above relational clause is used to represents the *tabarruj* functions as the carrier of attribute *salah atau tidak* [right or wrong]. The attribute operates as a statement that leads to the judgment of propriety, i.e., assessing the (Muslim) women's ethics. Hidayat continued to argue that if the woman enhanced herself to fulfill her husband's sexual desire, she would be considered virtuous. However, if it is intended for the woman's narcissistic end, i.e., becoming the center of the look, she will be considered mischievous. In this sense, Hidayat endeavors to propose this subject by debating the righteousness of women in adorning themselves while disclosing the outcome responses.

This then continues with his following argument: *[j]adi persoalan pertama tabarruj yang paling utama ada pada bagian wajah [So, the first main issue in tabarruj is the face]* (Clause 70, Ceramah Pendek, 2018).

By this, Hidayat aimed to point out the leading concern of *tabarruj*, i.e., the woman's face in a linguistic relational manner. Here, not only did Hidayat intensify the quality of his utterance by using the adjectives of *pertama* [first] and *yang paling utama* [central] to grade the phenomenon' (*tabarruj*), but this statement also implies that he tends to position women's face as the ultimate entity in woman's visuality the man cannot avert from looking.

The following statement seems to be used to justify the teaching: *[...] sehingga banyak kebiasaan orang-orang jahiliyyah ketika tampil membuka bagian atasnya [... so that the Jahiliyyah people used to open the upper part of their bodies in public places]* (Clauses 71–72, Ceramah Pendek, 2018).

These material clauses (represented by the vocal group used to open) indicate the propensity for *jahiliyyah* people. This vocal group exhibits the violation of Islamic moral principles, i.e., uncovering the woman's upper area. Not only is this addressed to the women who do not wear hijab, yet that it additionally manifests the pronouncement that doing such action will be viewed as committing *tabarruj* (Hidayat perceived *tabarruj* as one of the Islamic laws, while Wati and Saputra (2018) contended that it connotes an Islamic concept which regulates woman's body). At this point, it can be argued that the cleric endeavored to attach an indirect pejorative label towards women who chose not to wear hijab. By so doing, women are seen as enticing men, yet simultaneously demonstrating the control over men's speech to standardize women's bodies. If women do not comply with these, they are deemed *jahiliyyah*.

Similarly, in his second preaching, entitled *Mengukur Keimanan Perempuan dari Hijabnya*, Hidayat (Audio Dakwah, 2018) presented how to measure Muslim women's faith through their hijab donning. He built this argument by justifying the necessity of Muslim women to cover their upper body as such an act determines the degree of Muslim woman's spirituality. A woman does not wear hijab can be seen as God's faithless servant. In this sense, unlike Muslim men, women are overtly placed in a disciplined human condition in which they cannot be conformed to their desires, yet they are ostensibly rewarded with the "obedient" religious label. However, when one chooses to align with this reward (also read: this regulation), this arguably "male-based" conditioning and corporeal normalization will not be an issue, and vice versa.

From a total of 213 clauses, 94 relational processes dominated the preaching. This means that the cleric frequently attempts to identify and characterize women's actions as his basis in delineating this corporeal ruling. However, like Janus's face, such regulation has its other side, i.e., glorifying the "hijabed" Muslim women: *Dalam Islam, setiap perempuan beriman dialah ratu yang sesungguhnya* [In Islam, every woman of faith is the real queen] (Clause 57, Audio Dakwah, 2018).

This relational clause indicates that not only does the cleric measure the degree of Muslim women's faith from their daily practices—their daily physical public appearance is included in this praxis,—but that he also gives additional reward by attaching the attribute *ratu yang sesungguhnya* [the absolute queen]. In this sense, he tended to label this type of women as "the real queen" in order to show the religious honor they gained. However, at the same time, this also demonstrates his attempt to normalize such regulation. *Kalau sendirian tutup jangan kelebihan, jangan dibuka semua kalau di hadapan orang yang banyak* [**Do not over cover** your body in private spaces; **do not over reveal** your body in public spaces] (Clauses 149–150, Audio Dakwah, 2018).

The material clauses above indicate that this corporeal teaching applies only in public places. Muslim women have freedom over their bodies in the private spheres, but the attempt to cover is not as strictly off-limit as in public. The cleric then narrates the history of such regulation (derived from the era of Prophet Muhammad) as follows: *Jadi mereka kemudian pakai itu untuk menutup bagian kepala sampai*

*ke bagian lehernya* [So, they then **wear** it to cover their head down to their neck] (Clauses 214, Audio Dakwah, 2018).

This material clause indicates that when Muslim women at that time were initially given transcendent orders to cover up their upper bodies, they competed to find fabrics to cover their upper bodies. By this, Hidayat asserted that the fabrics are a mere symbolic entity, and the Muslim women's attempts to prove their faith become the cardinal signifier. This means he continues that these standards are inviolable and intolerable for Muslim women to gain a "pious" label.

### **Muslim Woman's Sexuality**

In discrepant linguistic tone with Adi Hidayat, Khalid Basalamah's *Cara Merias Wajah ala Suami* preaching (Ngaji Anak Indonesia, 2019) presents the religious teaching about Muslim women's sexuality that they should comply with their husband's standard on women as well as their woman's adornment. In this preaching, the mechanism of how Muslim women should fulfill their husband's satisfaction is apparent by standardizing and normalizing this regulatory discourse. This can be overtly seen from the total of 369 clauses. One hundred sixty-six relational processes dominated the preaching. They are as follows: *Ini memang alamnya Wanita* [This **is** the nature of women indeed] (Clause 2). *Kalau laki-laki berbeda tentunya* [As for men, it **is** different, of course] (Clause 3).

Basalamah (Ngaji Anak Indonesia, 2019) opens his argument by justifying the distinction between men and women, i.e., they share different realms. This can be seen from Clause 2. The determiner *ini* [this], which alludes to the activity of women adorning themselves, is identified with the identifier *alamnya wanita* [the nature of women]. Adorning is professed to be women's world, while men possess *berbeda* [different] realm (see Clause 3). The intensifier *tentunya* [of course] in Clause 3 demonstrates this cleric's initial yet ultimate stance on the Muslim woman's sexuality discourse. Not only does this clause affirm Basalamah's perspectives on woman's nature, but it also articulates his endeavor to regulate woman's body. Women cannot preen themselves following their desires and happiness, as it operates based on putting their marital partners as a social institution that should be complied with. Basalamah articulates this as signifying the wife's "good deed".

*Yang penting orangnya baik* (Clause 53), *yang penting dompetnya tebal* (Clause 54). [The important thing **is** the person has good character; the important thing **is** the wallet is full of money] (Ngaji Anak Indonesia, 2019).

*Fisik itu luar biasa bagi dia* [Physical appearance **is** remarkable for him] (Clause 56, Ngaji Anak Indonesia, 2019).

The two sentences above indicate that Basalamah tended to distinguish the essential priority between men and women. In the first sentence (Clauses 53, 54, Ngaji Anak Indonesia, 2019), the elliptic carrier follows suit with the attribute *yang penting* [the important thing]. This is deployed to represent women's temptation/priority in choosing their marital partner, i.e., *orangnya baik* [the person has good character] and his wallet full of money. Meanwhile, in the second sentence, the noun *fisik* [physical appearance] represents men's priority in choosing their spouses. The attribute *luar*



*biasa* [remarkable] and the circumstance *bagi dia* [for him] indicate that women are only interested in their future husband's financial condition and their moral virtues, while men tend to glorify the physical appearances of their future wife. This indirectly leads to the position of men as mere sexual predators of women.

This Salafi's cleric continues: *Pelacur jalanan itu tidak ada yang laku itu bu, kalau istrinya melayani benar suaminya*. [Those street prostitutes will have nothing to sell, Ma'am, if the wives **serve** their husbands properly] (Clauses 133–135, Ngaji Anak Indonesia, 2019).

The above statement was articulated when he discussed a contextual investigation of his friend's divorce because his wife refused to satisfy his friend's sexual desire. Not only do these two clauses (relational Clause 133 and material Clause 135) represent Basalamah's male-centric defense that the social phenomenon of street prostitutes was due to the women's reluctance to comply with their husband's sexual demands, but that they also signify the act of placing women as the catalyst behind the mushrooming of prostitution. Material process *melayani* [serve] with the intensifier of way *benar* [appropriately] as well as the conjunction *kalau* [if] represent the situation where women are expected to act depending on their shared qualities, i.e., conceiving an offspring and managing a household (Nisa, 2019). Simultaneously, this support implies the cleric's endeavor to control the woman's body (Anwar, 2008). Basalamah's following statement that men's basic instinct is their biology reinforces such regulation and justification. This demonstrates not only the power relation between man and woman or the cleric and his target audiences but also this figurative declaration discredits while reducing women as disobedient beings.

Similarly, in his second preaching, entitled *Adab Suami dan Istri*, Basalamah (Assalamualaikum Channel, 2017) presented the religious teaching about the etiquettes of managing a household. He conveyed the topic by drawing a firm demarcation line of husbands' and wives' rights, yet they should comply with and fulfill this line. From the total of 1369 clauses, 554 relational processes dominate the preaching. The example of the relational process (in bold) are as follow: *Maka salah satu karakter wanita yang saya bilang adalah pendendam* [So, one of the women's characters that I argue **is** vengeful] (Clause 385, Assalamualaikum Channel, 2017).

The above clause indicates Basalamah's stance on a marital problem that the husbands should not vilify their wives as it will scar their souls. The phrase *salah satu karakter wanita yang saya bilang* [one of the women's characters that I argue] is identified with the identifier *pendendam* [vengeful]. This identifier also operates as a judgment of propriety. At this stage, Basalamah aimed to condemn women as resentful beings as he argued that they tend to remember their husbands' mistakes, and will easily recall them once the same mistake reappears.

*Ibu-ibu, kalau mau suaminya tenang di rumah, penuhi tiga hal: tatapan matanya, perutnya, dan kemaluannya*. [Ma'am, if you want your husband to be comfortable at home, **fulfill** these three things: his gaze, his stomach and his genital] (Clauses 331–332, Assalamualaikum Channel, 2017).

The above statement was articulated when he continued to discuss the rights of wives in the household. The circumstance of *kalau mau suaminya tenang di rumah* [if you want your husband to be comfortable at home] can be interpreted as a condition where the wives can claim their rights once they have satisfied their husbands. It can be seen from the material process *penuhi* [fulfill] and the goal *tiga hal: tatapan matanya, perutnya, dan kemaluannya* [these three things: his gaze, his stomach, and his genital]. At this stage, the goal is closely related to “his gaze” (read: the husband’s), which leads to the sexual visual demand over his wives’ appearances; “his stomach” indicates that the wives have cooked for them; and “his genital” suggests the wives should please their husbands’ sexual desire. Basalamah then continues proclaiming that wives’ rights will be realized after properly addressing these desires.

*Biologis laki-laki nggak bisa ditunda* [Men’s biology **cannot be** delayed] (Clause 924, Assalamualaikum Channel, 2017).

*Bapak buat kejutan sesuatu apa ya yang membuat akhirnya dia gembira, sehingga biologis bisa terpenuhi* [You (the married Muslim men) should surprise (your wife/wives) or do something that will make them happy. This will lead to the fulfillment of your biological desires] (Clauses 1073–1074, Assalamualaikum Channel, 2017).

These clauses indicate Basalamah’s highlight of the distinction between men’s and women’s sexual tolerance. The phrase *biologis laki-laki* [men’s biology] represents men’s sexual demand functions as the carrier of attribute *ditunda* [delayed]. Simultaneously, the relational process (cannot be) is used to characterize this preserved delay. The phrase “cannot be delayed” also operates as a tenacity judgment. At this stage, Basalamah (Assalamualaikum Channel, 2017) labels men as “sexual predators”, yet he argues that it is their basic instinct. On the other hand, women are positioned as passive, patient, and submissive beings when dealing with their sexual desires.

Following this distinction, Basalamah attempted to suggest the actions the husbands can do to win their wives’ hearts. This can overtly be seen from the above statement (Clause 1073–1074, Assalamualaikum Channel, 2017). The material process *buat* [make and do] with the goal *kejutan atau sesuatu yang membuat akhirnya dia gembira* [surprises your wife or do something that will make them happy] represent the action of husbands fulfilling the material needs of their wives. However, this, at the same time, can be perceived as positioning women as materialist beings whose sexuality can be bought.

### **Woman’s Domestication**

*Tips Menghadapi Istri yang Cerewet* by Gus Muwafiq (Gus Muwafiq Channel, 2018) presented the religious teaching about the attitude to face some household difficulties. Muwafiq conveyed the topic of his preaching by evaluating women’s duties as wives. From the total of 342 clauses, 168 relational processes dominate the preaching. The example of the relational process (in bold) are as follows:

*Itu besok cerewet, sudah pasti* [She **will** undoubtedly **be** naggy] (Clause 7, Gus Muwafiq Channel, 2018).

The determiner *itu* (which refers to “she”—the wife—the carrier) is used to represent wives’ behavior, while *cerewet* [chatty/naggy] functions as the attribute. At the same time, the relational process (will be) characterizes the nature of the women as naggy/chatty persons. Referring to the preaching title, the intensifier *sudah pasti* [indeed] is used to affirm such behavior and reflect this N.U. Cleric’s stance over the roles, duties, and functions of wives and husbands reduces married woman’s nature to being chatty/naggy. Notwithstanding this, Muwafiq continues that this is due to:

*Perempuan itu kerjanya berat* [Woman **has** a tough job] (Clause 79, Gus Muwafiq Channel, 2018).

The above statement was articulated when Muwafiq discussed his experience of trying to be in his wife’s position for one day. This, he later claimed, was unbearable. The noun *perempuan* [woman] represents the wives’ functions as the carrier of attribute *kerjanya berat* [tough job] in this relational clause. The so-called “tough job” is described as the domestic duty of wives to take care of their children and household. At this point, Muwafiq demonstrates respect toward the “domesticated” women.

This cleric then attempts to praise the woman further by suggesting to men the following:

*Kalian pada posisi genting, laki-laki tidak boleh emosi* [Men **should not be** emotional in the precarious condition] (Clause 205, Gus Muwafiq Channel, 2018).

This relational clause deploys the noun “men” to represent husbands’ functions as the carrier of the attribute *emosi* [emotional], while the verbal, relational group *tidak boleh* [should not be] characterize the suggestion. At this stage, Muwafiq suggests that men be calm while arguing with their wives in any “precarious” condition. However, this plausible feminist stance is arguably unstable as it derives from the perspective that men/husband’s position is the “controller” of their family.

Similarly, in his second preaching, *Membangun Rumah Tangga dengan Cinta*, Muwafiq (Santri Remu’an, 2020) presented religious teaching about affection-based marriage values. He conveyed this subject by portraying women’s devotion to complying with their responsibilities as wives by deploying a total of 724 clauses—447 relational processes dominate this preaching. The following exemplifies the values in conjunction with the different physiological and psychological nature between men and women:

*Laki-laki kasar, perempuan lembut* [Men **are** rough, women **are** gentle] (Clauses 67–68, Santri Remu’an, 2020).

Muwafiq began his preaching by stating that marriage is a strange phenomenon that can unify two different individuals—men are labeled as *kasar* [rough], while women *lembut* [gentle]. This characterization becomes the fundamental principle in distinguishing the husbands’ and wives’ responsibilities. At this point, he also attempted to add that it is more suitable for wives to stay at home and take care of their children than for husbands who comply with such situations. In this sense, domesticating women is arguably normalized. The following material clause represents the parallelism between the reward given to the “domesticated” pregnant wife and their actions doing their proper domestic works:

*Maka nilainya orang hamil itu kalau pagi dihitung puasa, kalau malam dihitung tahajjud* [So, the value of pregnant women **is counted** as fasting in the day and *tahajjud* in the night] (Clause 332, Santri Remu'an, 2020).

Muwafiq (Santri Remu'an, 2020) claimed that there would be an exclusive reward from God for pregnant women. At this stage, Muwafiq aimed to pronounce that the value of such devotion is equal to fasting during the daytime and *tahajjud* [night prayer]. However, this pronouncement suggests Muwafiq's attempt to encourage women to remain devoted to their husbands.

### **Logical Structure**

All of the six preaching used analytical exposition as its genre. The orientation, arguments, and reiteration parts of the preaching are dominantly represented by employing relational and material processes and the negative judgment of propriety.

*Merias Wajah: Apakah termasuk Tabarruj?* by Adi Hidayat (Ceramah Pendek, 2018) sums up an Islamic concept called *tabarruj*, which leads to the employment of patriarchal language on a woman's body. In the orientation part, he suggested that it is all right for a woman to adorn herself as long as it is for her husband. However, if this act is intentionally conducted to expose her sexual desires, this will be seen as committing *tabarruj*. He contended that (a) the main feature of a woman's attractiveness lies on the face; (b) a woman wears jewelry to boost her appearance and to draw people's attention. As for the reiteration, Hidayat convinced his audience that women who do not wear hijab yet wear revealing garments and jewelry generate *tabarruj*. Hidayat (Ceramah Pendek, 2018) portrays these dubious incorrect religious women's behaviors firmly, which are closely related to the notion of *jahiliyyah*, while *non-jahiliyyah* represents the opposite.

Similarly, in his second preaching, entitled *Mengukur Keimanan Perempuan dari Hijabnya*, Hidayat (Audio Dakwah, 2018) presented religious teaching pertinent to the dubious religious perception of woman's faith measured, in this case, through her appearance. In the orientation part, he stated that the information was quoting the Quranic verses, which begin with the word *iman* [faith] as an indicator of the degree of Muslim women's faith. He argued that (a) women are only allowed to see and publicize good things/deeds; (b) women have to cover their upper body—from the head down to the chest—to keep them away from bad things; (c) the more women make efforts to cover up their body, the stronger their faith will be. As for the reiteration, Hidayat (Audio Dakwah, 2018) declared that there are no reasons for women nowadays to choose not to wear hijab due to any condition.

Unlike to Hidayat's preaching, Khalid Basalamah summarises his primary propositions of adornment that women must abide by adequately (Assalamualaikum Channel, 2017; Ngaji Anak Indonesia, 2019). In the orientation part, Basalamah argued that men and women share different spheres and that adornment merely belongs to women's sphere (Ngaji Anak Indonesia, 2019). He contended that (a) women are quickly intrigued by men's stable financial condition as well as their excellent ethics, while men the women's physical appearance; (b) it is the women's essential characteristics to satisfy men's biological needs; (c) it will be woman's responsibility

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if their husband has an affair. Basalamah reiterated the importance of women taking care of their bodies. The women's off-limit territories are the bosom and genital parts. He also argued that a woman's endeavor to care for her own body would obtain God's reward. It is also an absolute necessity for women to conform to the corporeal version of their husband's desires (Ngaji Anak Indonesia, 2019).

Similarly, in his second preaching, Basalamah (Assalamualaikum Channel, 2017) proposed plausible religious teaching about the etiquettes of managing a household. In the orientation part, Basalamah stated that it is crucial to establish a household based on Islamic principles to avert domestic saturation. He argued that (a) husbands and wives are allowed to ask for their rights each other politely; (b) the wives have the right to obtain appropriate treatment from their husbands; (c) in order to get these rights, the wives are required to satisfy their husbands' gaze, physical hunger (for food and sexual demands); (d) the husbands are allowed to act boldly towards their wives, yet hitting and vilifying the wives are forbidden; (e) As the *imam* of the house, the husbands are responsible for their wives' mistakes. As for the reiteration, Basalamah (Assalamualaikum Channel, 2017) emphasized that it is essential that husbands and wives fulfill each other's rights to avoid collisions.

On the other hand, Gus Muwafiq (Gus Muwafiq Channel, 2018; Santri Remu'an, 2020) sums up religious teaching about the typical religious attitude in dealing with household difficulties—focusing on women's domestic duties as wives. In the orientation part, Muwafiq (Gus Muwafiq Channel, 2018) positions the routine nature of married women as naggy/chatty. He contended that (a) the wives must take care of children a harsh/heavy-handed; (b) and the men should stay calm when dealing with their wives' arguments; and (c) men are the "controllers" of their family. Muwafiq reiterated that marriage is a part of worship, yet the principles in managing it are contingent upon the husband and wife who undergo the process (Gus Muwafiq Channel, 2018).

Similarly, Muwafiq proposed religious teaching about affection-based marriage values in the second of his preaching (Santri Remu'an, 2020). In the orientation part, Muwafiq contended that marriage is strange due to its capability to unify two different individuals. He argued that (a) marriage is one of the ways for Muslims to worship God; (b) men are rough, while women are gentle; (c) the value of pregnant women is counted as fasting in the daytime and *tahajjud* at night-time; (d) the domestic chores wives did for their husbands are considered as the realization of worshipping God and observance. As for the reiteration, Muwafiq reminded his target audiences of the importance of women caring for their children so that they become well-mannered (Santri Remu'an, 2020).

These three clerics' preaching is meant to regulate women's behaviors and ethics. They are aligned with their male-dominated cultural characteristics, i.e., women are biologically responsible for giving birth to offspring and maintaining a household according to Islamic law, especially in the domestic sphere. Thus, women's freedom to adorn themselves is only allowed to follow the principle of their husbands' pleasures. In this sense, women, their bodies, sexualities, and domestications are controlled and voiced by these male-centric religious regulations.

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## Conclusion

The study of hijab in Islamic discourse is the starting point for discursive studies evaluating this patriarchal language. Feminists and postfeminists view the hijab as the symbol of patriarchal suppression, as the veiled woman contradicts the normative non-Islamic patriarchal standards. In the lens of western feminists, the hijab is not taken by invitation but by coercion, while the Muslims signify the hijab as the representation of fundamental security for women's corporeality and safety. These can overtly be seen from how the three clerics voiced their religious stances on Women's Bodies, Sexuality, and Domestication discourse.

The sampled data demonstrate the scope of the discrepant linguistic manners the three male clerics deployed to regulate the discourse on the Muslim women's adornments, devotion, and obedience. Muhammadiyah cleric Adi Hidayat evaluated women's behaviors through their adornments' initial purpose (Audio Dakwah, 2018; Ceramah Pendek, 2018), whereas Nahdlatul Ulama cleric Gus Muwafiq focused on the devotion to engaging a household (Gus Muwafiq Channel, 2018; Santri Remu'an, 2020), and Salafi cleric Khalid Basalamah discussed the obedience towards their husband (Assalamualaikum Channel, 2017; Ngaji Anak Indonesia, 2019). Hidayat delineated the Muslim women's body discourse based on the segregation of dubious religiously correct and incorrect propriety, whereas Muwafiq, the apparent religiously normality, and Basalamah, the plausible religiously propriety. The patriarchal language on women's bodies, sexuality, and domestication in their preaching as their litmus test dominantly employed relational processes along with the negative judgment of propriety within intensified heteroglossia utterances to condemn women as mischievous, selfish, and unfair as religious cultural-based punishment when violating the teachings.

Paralleling these stances with the so-called general Islamic discourse on the position of women is arguably closely related to Syed's (2004) finding that the exalted position Muslim women had in 610 and 632 A.D. (as the result of Islamic reforms) was then resisted by patriarchal Muslim jurists/conservative framers in the 8<sup>th</sup> century A.D., as they attempted to preserve the tradition of Muslim patriarchal society that put women inferior to men. In the lens of Stowasser (1994), this was conducted through *ijma* [community consensus]. These patriarchal religious acts put the Muslim woman's body as the patriarchal male Muslim's machine of desire. They were disciplined and attached to religious attributes loaded with male-dominated female moral obligations.

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ARTICLE

## The Concept of *Mladostarchestvo* as a Tool for Criticizing Religion in Modern Russia: An Analysis of Rhetorical Strategies

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### ABSTRACT

This article analyzes the history of the term *mladostarets/mladostarchestvo* [young elder/young eldership], and at the same time classifies strategies of critical rhetoric within which it is used. The notion in question established itself as a particular type of “clerical” pejorative in the 1970–1980s in church circles in the Russian emigration. At the end of the 1990s, it gained popularity after Patriarch Aleksii II began to use it. Most worthy of note is the use of this term in the context of a *pastoral* rhetorical strategy, in which abuses in the practice of confession are exposed. Nonetheless, in the 2000–2010s *mladostarets/mladostarchestvo* began to be used in a series of other rhetorical strategies. Within the context of a socio-critical strategy in particular, this concept is used as a tool of criticism of post-Soviet religiosity as a social fact. In its contemporary phase, the notion is also included in an anti-hierarchical strategy, within which it is applied in a parodic vein. As a result, on the one hand, a sort of “oversaturation” of the term with meanings takes place, and, on the other, there is an intricate interlacing of intentions according to which it is used. The latter may indicate a kind of exhaustion of the semantic resources of the term.

### KEYWORDS

*mladostarchestvo*, young eldership, confession, religious leadership, rhetorical strategies, criticism of the clergy, anticlericalism

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The concept of *mladostarets/mladostarchestvo* [young elder/young eldership] is a rhetorical tool that is frequently employed in critical descriptions of various aspects of religious life within contemporary Russian Orthodoxy. The meaning of this term<sup>1</sup> is vague: those who use it rarely give it a definition, and if they do give one, then this is as a rule entirely determined by the logic of the critical statement; that is to say that, in essence, it does not go any way towards clarifying the situation. The combination of these two circumstances—uncertainty of meaning and demand for use—means that an analysis of the use of the term *mladostarets/mladostarchestvo* makes the problem of the employment of the notion *mladostarets/mladostarchestvo* significant for understanding processes in the sphere of religion: the question remains unclear who or what exactly is the object of a critical utterance each time one author or another uses the term in question as a tool. On the one hand, the very fact of the popularity of such an “indefinite” critical term to an extent characterizes discussion in the sphere of religion (or at least the current state of methods of its description), and is therefore in need of interpretation.

There are not many terms in the modern Russian language that may be referred to as professional clerical pejoratives, that is elements of critical rhetoric applied exclusively (or almost exclusively) to the priesthood. The term *mladostarets* [young elder] is one of the most notable and widely used of such terms. Rare is the public figure in contemporary Russian Orthodoxy who has not made statements using this word in one sense or another. *Mladostarchestvo* is a term used not only in the context of spoken language, journalism, and discussions on the net. The turn of the millennium was the moment when *mladostarchestvo* became an official term in church discourse: a close connection was established between a series of contradictory phenomena in church life and this notion. At the same time, discussions on *mladostarchestvo* clearly reached their peak during the 2000s; by the 2010s, a gradual decrease in interest towards this critical tool takes place. Here, an attempt will be made to explain the fall in “criticism of *mladostartsy*.”

## 1.

A study of critical rhetoric—and the term *mladostarets/mladostarchestvo* constitutes precisely a critical statement, for which it is almost impossible to discover a concrete social referent (nowhere in our sources is there any sort of concrete example of a *mladostarets*)—is significant for the study of any sphere of social relations. It is here that points of maximum tension are revealed between different groups functioning within a single social arena. Accordingly, a transformation of critical rhetoric—the emergence of new objects of criticism—testifies to a transformation of the boundaries of these groups or the appearance of new points of tension, which signals a development of the situation. This study is limited: it does not lay claim to being a general catalogue of critical tools that may be used to flag a situation of an unscrupulous attitude on the

<sup>1</sup> As with the meaning of many other “professional” clerical pejoratives: *pop* [priest (pej.)], *treboispolnitel'* [performer of religious rites], *sistemnyi* [a product of the clerical system], *kuteinik* [purveyor of kut'ia (a special dish commemorating the dead)], *batek* [little father], etc. To take a historical example see Zapalsky, 2021.

part of a priest towards his flock; on the contrary, its focus is on one particular term. In this regard, the article aims to reconstruct a history of this concept. The question of how to compile a history of this notion is solved by means of a classification of rhetorical strategies in which the term has been included at different stages.

This paper will adopt a methodological approach based on the study of rhetoric<sup>2</sup> and the functioning of concepts within it<sup>3</sup>. In the vast majority of cases, when using the term *mladostarets/mladostarchestvo*, our sources are expressing dissatisfaction with a certain situation that, in their opinion, is typical for one context or another. In connection with this, a methodological premise of this research paper is the assumption that the key “unit” for the definition of a *mladostarets/mladostarchestvo* as an element of critical rhetoric is not the archetypal image of a leader who has been unmasked as a *mladostarets*, but a rhetorical strategy whose analysis allows the author’s intention to be reconstructed—that is to say in fact the self-same thing against which the blade of criticism itself is directed.

## 2.

In all probability, the term *mladostarets* was born as an element of spoken language, “slang”: the layer of language that is most rarely reflected in the sphere of the written word. It is an element of “church jargon” used in an unusual play on words with the term *starets* “elder,” which acquired special connotations in the Russian language around the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup>–20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Possibly the first written source in which we encounter the term *mladostarets* are the memoirs of Metropolitan Evlogii (Georgievskii, 1868–1946), published shortly after his death:

Father Sergeenko works with enthusiasm. He has the gift of influencing people, which through his youth and inexperience causes him to lay claim to the role of *starets* [elder] One of the parishioners from Meudon calls him *mladostarets*[...] [young elder]. Father Andrei organizes meetings at his house, at which some of his female disciples are trained in meditation; they sit in silence, meditating on a subject that has been proposed to them, and do not dare move a muscle, “so as not to disturb father’s contemplation of the divine,” while he himself sits locked up in his office. (Georgievskii, 1994, p. 438; our translation—E. L., & A. C.)

<sup>2</sup> The research into critical rhetoric will draw on the work of the Cambridge school, in particular K. Skinner. This method of research into political language presumes behind every (serious) public utterance the potential for a political statement. A political statement, in its turn, presupposes a definite strategy; the question of which is decisive—the statement itself or the strategy—is secondary for this research. It is on this basis that the notion “rhetorical strategy” is introduced here, which exists on an intersubjective level. Of lesser importance is the political or social ideal of any one particular public figure. On the contrary, what matters here is the fact that different people criticize similar church, political, or social realia. And, if they use the term *mladostarchestvo* in a similar sense, it is possible to say that this term has established itself firmly as part of a certain rhetorical strategy (see Skinner, 2002).

<sup>3</sup> The study of those contradictory phenomena of church life that became referents for the concept of *mladostarchestvo* in the 1990–2000s is a task for another piece of research on a larger scale. Nonetheless, it should be mentioned that approaches to the problem of *mladostarchestvo* as a social phenomenon do exist. For instance, I. Paert (2014) talks about it in an article dedicated to a discussion of eldership in contemporary Russia (see also Rotach, 2011).

The priest Andrei Sergeenko (1902–1973) served in Meudon from 1929 to 1939. Overall, Metropolitan Evlogii gives this priest a positive write-up: “This inclination to mysticism does not prevent Father Andrei from being an active laborer” (Georgievskii, 1994, p. 438). “One of the parishioners from Meudon”—that is clearly one of Father Andrei’s own parishioners—also does not find anything worthy of condemnation in his specific practices, and it would seem that the words “through youth and inexperience” have to do with the critical attitude of Metropolitan Evlogii himself, evaluating from a distance the ministry of a priest under his jurisdiction. The hypothesis that the term *mladostarets* did not initially carry any negative connotations is confirmed by another early reference, to be found in the *Golden Age of Patristic Literature* (1967) by Archimandrite Cyprian (Kern, 1899–1960). Discussing St. Makarii of Egypt, he remarks: “His asceticism was so great that the skete-dwellers gave him the name παιδαριολόγων “*mladostarets*,” because he had progressed in virtue beyond his years” (Kern, 1967, p. 151).

It is essential to note that the term παιδαριολόγων already had a tradition of translation into Russian. For instance, in the same translation of *The Lausaic History* quoted by Archimandrite Cyprian παιδαριολόγων is translated as “boy-elder”<sup>4</sup>. This translation is closer to the original, and is based on the Latin tradition of translation παιδαριολόγων as *puer-senex* [child-old]<sup>5</sup>. Notwithstanding, in the arsenal of Archimandrite Cyprian, who taught patristics at the Saint Serge Theological Institute in Paris in the period from 1945 till his death in 1960, and who in all probability knew the above variation of the translation, the new, not entirely accurate, but nonetheless comprehensible word *mladostarets* was employed. Archimandrite Cyprian borrowed an already current expression from colloquial speech and used it to describe a situation with a specific source.

Lack of information makes it difficult to draw unequivocal conclusions on the existence of the term and the boundaries of its meaning up until the 1970s. It may be assumed that its original areal of diffusion was Russian Paris from the 1930–1950s. Where the etymology of the term is concerned, we may suppose that it was formed by analogy with one of two linguistic models within which the prefix *mlado-* was applied. Firstly, in the interwar period, the prefix/notion “*mlado-*” became fashionable at a socio-political level. An ethnonym preceded by the prefix “*mlado-*” meant a group of the most progressive representatives of the nation: those who felt a responsibility

<sup>4</sup> “First, I will tell of the virtues of Makarii of Egypt, who lived 90 years, of which he spent 60 in the desert. Having come to the desert at the age of 30, although he was younger than others, over the course of ten years he undertook ascetic labours with such courage that he was deemed worthy of a special distinction: he was called the “boy-elder,” because he excelled in virtue beyond his years. At the age of 40, he received power over spirits, the gift of healing illness and the spirit of prophecy, and was also found worthy of the estimable rank of priest” (Palladius of Galatia, 2015, pp. 60–61).

<sup>5</sup> On the topos of παιδαριολόγων/*puer senex* in late classical patristics (see: Giannarelli, 1988; Rotman, 2017). It should be noted that a corresponding topos, dating back to antique models, also exists in other European languages: “Knabengreis” in German, “enfant-vieillard” in French. It is noteworthy that in 19th century Greek, the term παιδαριολόγων referred not to a young monk who had achieved great heights of spiritual life, but on the contrary to an elder who demonstrated infantile irrationality (Korais, 1828–1835). In modern Greek, the term functions in a similar way to modern Russian, with the exception that it is not an exclusively ecclesiastical notion. See Παδαριολόγων, (2008).

for the political self-determination of their people. *Mladodvizheniia* [young movements] originated in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, but the first of them started to appear in the Russian press only during the First World War—*mladoturki* [young Turks], *mladopoliaki* [young Poles], *mladolatyshi* [young Latvians]. A “young national” movement also emerged in the emigration—the *mladorossy* [young Russians]. It is possible that all of this gave rise to the formation and circulation of the neologism *mladostarets* in the *émigré* community, typically with a positive connotation: it corresponded to the meaning of “a young, ascetically inclined priest” seeking to revive, in the new context of the emigration, a specific format of spiritual nourishment. Just as in the emigration the *mladorossy* breathe new life into the Russian national idea, the *mladostarets* revives practices of pre-revolutionary spiritual eldership. This, however, is no more than a hypothetical reconstruction.

### 3.

In spite of the above, it should be borne in mind that the term *mladostarets* also had the potential for development in a negative vein. In this regard, it is possible that the model that gave rise to this term was a word in which the prefix *mlado-* initially carried a negative connotation. The archaic concept of *mladoumie* was one such word. The notion *mladoumie* [young mindedness] may be encountered in Russian ascetic literature with the meaning “immaturity of mind characteristic of youth,” and here the connotations are unambiguously negative (Filin, 1982, p. 187; Avanesov, 1991, p. 550). There is no doubt that in later interpretations of the terms *mladostarets/mladostarchestvo*, the prefix *mlado-* would have a similar semantic function.

The concept of *mladostarchestvo* (the subject of discussion was clearly already a certain phenomenon, rather than an individual *mladostarets*) first appears in the introduction to I. V. Kontsevich’s work *Optina Pustyn’ and its Time*:

Let us note one more occurrence of pseudo-eldership that may also be observed in contemporary reality: modern spiritual guidance, as will shortly be seen, grew out of ancient monastic eldership and represents a secondary form of this. Owing to the relationship between these two phenomena, spiritual guidance and eldership, inexperienced priests who are familiar with ascetic literature on a purely theoretical level may fall into the temptation of an “abuse of power”—of transgressing the boundary of spiritual guidance in order to play the spiritual elder [*starchestvovat’*]—without possessing even the faintest idea of the essence of true spiritual eldership [*starchestvo*]. This “*mladostarchestvo*” (according to one apt expression) introduces discord into the life that surrounds it. It also conceals within itself irreparable harm for the soul of the person receiving guidance. (I. M. Kontsevich, 1970/2019, pp. 255–256; our translation—E. L., & A. C.)

Most probably I. M. Kontsevich (1893–1965), a graduate of the Saint Serge Institute in Paris, wrote his research on *Optina Pustyn’ and its Time* shortly before his death, when he was already living in the USA and working as a teacher of patristics at

the Holy Trinity Seminary in Jordanville. One may surmise that the “apt expression” was coined by him in the USA, although it is not fully clear when Kontsevich was working on the text of his introduction. Confirmation that an explicitly negative connotation of the term *mladostarets/mladostarchestvo* established itself not in Europe but in the USA may also be found in the fact that the next author to use it was Protopresbyter Alexander Schmemmann (1921–1983), who had also moved from Paris to the USA. In a note on Orthodoxy in Alaska, written in 1977, the following words may be found referring to Bishop Georgii (Afonskii, 1925–2008):

It did not occur to him to show off or flaunt his *tserkovnost'* [churchness]. For he had not read about it in books or learnt it by rote from some precocious *mladostartsy*, but it was in his “Levitical” blood, inherited by him from generations of simple and humble Russian pastors. (Schmemmann, 2009, p. 592; our translation—E. L., & A. C.)

Bishop Georgii was a student of Father Alexander from the Saint Vladimir Seminary. The opposition between “Levitical blood” and the teaching of the *mladostartsy* that Schmemmann uses does not appear to offer a great deal in terms of clarifying the meaning of this term. What is being referred to is probably a sort of “studied” *tserkovnost'* [churchness], the “pharisaical spirit” that Schmemmann frequently denounces in his diaries. It is highly likely that what endeared itself to Father Alexander was the experience of a traditional priestly family received by Father Georgii in pre-war Kiev<sup>6</sup>, which could be juxtaposed to experience in the emigration and also to those who found their faith later on—neophytes. In any case, the term *mladostarets* here is not used in direct connection with abuse of priestly authority, that is not in that context in which the concept was subsequently to function.

Several years later, Schmemmann uses the term in question in his diary, but already in a fully modern sense:

*Wednesday, 2 December 1981* [...] The youth of today are above all unhappy. Unhappy because they live in a world in which there is one criterion—success. A result of this is the incredible proliferation of all sorts of impostors, people posing as teachers or “leaders.” In the Church this leads to ever increasing “*mladostarchestvo*.” [...] A few days ago, I had the opportunity to read a letter from one such *mladostarets*. A student who had received it gave it to me, in doubt as to I don’t remember what “teaching” of this 32-year-old teacher of spirituality. What astonishing self-confidence, what absolutely total self-identification with the truth. (Schmemmann, 2005, pp. 602–603; our translation—E. L., & A. C.)

Here, for the first time, a coherent image arises corresponding to a series of stereotypical traits: youth, self-confidence, “self-identification with the truth.” It is noteworthy, nonetheless, that Schmemmann derives the genealogy of *mladostarchestvo*

<sup>6</sup> Bishop Georgii’s maternal grandfather was the priest-martyr Mikhail Edlinskii, executed in 1937 (Bozhko, 2021, p. 136).

from a specifically modern situation: a striving for leadership, at the base of which lies the cult of success among contemporary youth.

Hence, with regard to the concept of *mladostarets/mladostarchestvo*, the period between 1930–1980 can be named the time of, (a) its emergence, (b) its gradual transition from the sphere of church jargon to the sphere of church literature, (c) its gradual establishment in a prevalently pejorative usage; (d) after the concept stabilizes as a pejorative term, it becomes part of a rhetorical strategy within which an inexperienced priest is criticized who abuses his authority and, under the influence of ascetic literature, exceeds a permissible norm of influence on others. This rhetorical strategy may be characterized as *pastoral*. All the other strategies that will be discussed below will be directly linked to it.

#### 4.

A point of direct contact of discourse on *mladostarchestvo* with the Russian milieu that has been identified is a lecture by Metropolitan Antonii Surozhskii (Bloom, 1914–2003) on May 18, 1987 at the International Church Academic Conference on “Theology and Spirituality,” held in the context of the preparations for the celebration of 1000 years since the Baptism of Rus’:

A great danger run by a young inexperienced priest, full of enthusiasm and hope, consists in the fact that sometimes young people fresh out of theological schools imagine that ordination has endowed them both with brains, and experience, and “discernment of spirits,” and they become what in ascetic literature are called “*mladostartsy*”. (Surozhskii, 2017, p. 207; our translation—E. L., & A. C.)<sup>7</sup>

It is difficult to understand what exactly Metropolitan Anthony means when he speaks of “ascetic literature.” Possibly he is referring to Kontsevich’s work, which, however, constituted research into the history of monasticism, rather than an example of “ascetic literature” in a literal sense. As has been stated above, in this work the term *mladostarchestvo* is placed right at the beginning and appears as a key “programmatic” concept. Clearly, where Metropolitan Anthony’s lecture is concerned, a peculiar memory lapse has taken place: a term from the lexicon of a contemporary researcher has been attributed to the lexicon of his sources. Be that as it may, the *émigré* neologism, which Metropolitan Anthony may have heard in Paris (where he lived from 1923–1948), metamorphosed from Kontsevich’s “apt expression” to a testimony of “ascetic literature.” These factors—the authority of Metropolitan Anthony, and the authority with which he endowed the concept in question—have probably determined the nature of its further development in the Russian context.

<sup>7</sup> The effect of this lecture on the listeners may be judged from the following statement of a member of the audience: “The listeners literally held their breath. From out of the multitude of to some degree interesting, but nonetheless purely academic propositions, far from the real problems of the Church, suddenly a live and exceptionally honest word had been pronounced on a longstanding problem that had for some reason never been spoken out loud. With his typical fiery temperament, Archpriest Vitalii Borovoi then suggested the church hierarchy immediately be asked to publish the lecture as a brochure to be handed out on a signed-for basis to all priests entrusted with confessing the laity” (Balashov, 2006).



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## 5.

To all appearances, in the 1990s the concept of *mladostarets/mladostarchestvo* spread not only in exclusively church circles and not only in its “pastoral” interpretation. One of the earliest mentions was B. Liubimov’s article, “There is no prophet...,” dedicated to the work of Ion Druță and published in *Literaturnaia Gazeta* in 1996.

Ion Druță chose an inauspicious moment to write and publish a chronicle of early Christianity [...] The long-bearded *mladostartsy*, with no theological education and busy in their search for all sorts of heresies not only in works by people of equal rank to themselves, but even in the writings of hierarchs, will take umbrage at the very possibility that a layman might encroach on their own interpretation of Sacred History. (Liubimov, 1996, p. 4; our translation—E. L., & A. C.)

Apparently, the dissatisfaction present in this text is connected with public/printed statements by church figures which started appearing after 1991, directed not only against “non-Orthodox” theological texts but also against a series of cultural and social phenomena. Similar pathos may be found in a letter by Iu.I. Maletskii (1952–2018), also published in 1996 in another literary journal:

In any case, it is not for our *mladostartsy*, in their call for a rejection of wilfulness, to wilfully and short-sightedly take from a person the freedom with which God has endowed him, and endlessly to blame the intelligentsia for everything, who, not in the slightest out of malicious whim or empty caprice, but by their very nature live by free thought. (Maletskii, 1996, p. 377; our translation—E. L., & A. C.)

Both of the aforementioned sources postulate *mladostarchestvo* not as a pastoral, but rather as an ecclesial-societal problem. Here, a principally new rhetorical strategy emerges: a particular church leader is criticized for making a public statement aimed at limiting freedom of expression in the context of the ecclesial-political, political, social, or cultural spheres. But this statement is understood as a pastoral action, which indeed is what allows the term *mladostarets* to be used. This corresponds not to a presence or absence of pastoral experience, but represents an attempt to teach people how to live on the basis of dilettante knowledge in the field of asceticism. The exceeding of pastoral prerogatives, the most important factor in the *pastoral* rhetorical strategy, is not excluded in this view of the problem, but retreats into the background. This rhetorical strategy may be called *emancipatory*, as what is central is an intention of liberation from the power of a pseudo-spiritual leader.

The sources at our disposal do not present a clear conclusion on whether the above authors knew of Metropolitan Anthony’s lecture, or whether they drew their idea of *mladostarchestvo* from ecclesial or para-ecclesial jargon, which this concept became part of. An alternative genealogy may also have taken place; after all, the same Kontsevich’s works may have been available in the USSR even before 1987. Whatever the case, *mladostarchestvo* publicly condemning theological literature or

criticizing the intelligentsia became a new and creative reading of a notion which had previously had an exclusively pastoral character. The language of the 1990s was flexible: the emergence of a large quantity of new social and political phenomena called new concepts into being, as well as new readings of concepts whose meaning had not yet stabilized.

## 6.

The moment when *mladostarchestvo* began to be spoken about at the highest level was in a speech by Patriarch Aleksii II (1929–2008) on December 23, 1998 at the Moscow Diocesan Assembly. Here is how the patriarch introduces this concept:

A true *starets* [spiritual elder], above all owing to his great spirituality, approaches each individual person with great care. In virtue of his experience and gift of grace, he reveals the image of God in a person by means that harmonize with their spiritual disposition and age. A number of modern “*startsy*” [spiritual elders] (or rather it would be more accurate to call them *mladostartsy*), without possessing spiritual discernment, place on those entering into the Church burdens which they cannot bear (Luke 11: 46), apply to their pastoral activity *clichés* destructive to spiritual life, unreasonably apply to members of the laity who have for the most part not yet attained spiritual maturity forms of spiritual guidance that are only appropriate in monasticism. (Aleksii II, 2000, p. 76; our translation—E. L., & A. C.)

On the one hand, here is a clear example of the *pastoral* rhetorical strategy. Patriarch Aleksii II definitely uses the term *mladostarets* exclusively in a parish context: at one point he even introduces a distinction between *mladostartsy* and “the monastic clergy” (Aleksii II, 2000, p. 80). On the other hand, the genre of a New Year’s Eve, summatory speech itself did not presuppose a focus on any one problem; what was important was to present a spectrum of deformations of church life, against which the forces of the Church should be sent into battle. In this situation, the scope of critical statements using the concept of *mladostarets* widens. Thus, the Patriarch also has recourse to it when criticizing drawn-out confession:

These days many so-called *mladostartsy*, not having a proper understanding of the Sacrament of Repentance, turn confession either into a torture of the penitent, or into a conversation sometimes lasting up to an hour with each person, regardless of the fact that there is a whole mass of people wanting to confess. Consequently, as a rule the beginning of the Divine Liturgy is delayed, and many of the people who have come for confession leave without it. (Aleksii II, 2000, p. 79; our translation—E. L., & A. C.)

Another sad consequence of *mladostarchestvo*, in the opinion of the Patriarch, is a distortion of ecclesiological perspective within the worldview of the congregation. “People go to church in order to meet with their *batiushka* [father, priest], and not with

Christ.” The self-isolation of such communities leads to their “left-wing” or “right-wing” political orientation, which is also a problem for the Church (Aleksii II, 2000, p. 78; our translation—E. L., & A. C.).

Finally, the passages of the Patriarch’s speech adjacent to those where the term *mladostarets/mladostarchestvo* is used are also significant. In particular, one excerpt is aimed at protecting the church hierarchy from inappropriate criticism from certain “*startsyy*” [spiritual elders], who “criticizing the church hierarchy [...], in contrast to the spirit-bearing fathers of the past and present, by their criticism attempt to attract attention and thus to create authority for themselves” (Aleksii II, 2000, p. 76; our translation—E. L., & A. C.). The term *mladostarets* appears in the speech a little later on in the context of a smooth transition to problems of the abuse of confession. Nonetheless, the above quote seems very close to the emancipatory rhetorical strategy: the “*startsyy*” [spiritual elders] attract attention to themselves (obviously as a result of public statements) through criticism. If, in the first examples above, what was at issue was criticism of cultural and social phenomena, then here it is the church hierarchy which is the subject of the same criticism.

Hence, although in the Patriarch’s speech the concept of *mladostarets/mladostarchestvo* is used within a basic pastoral rhetorical strategy, it was nevertheless projected onto a whole set of different church contexts. Possibly this circumstance became a sort of “trampoline” which allowed this notion to “leap into” social discussion, where it would be employed for argumentation within different strategies of critical rhetoric.

## 7.

The earliest reaction to the Patriarch’s speech and the resolution of the Synod that followed it was an interview with Metropolitan Anthony (of Sourozh) conducted at the beginning of 1999 by Hieromonk Ilarion (Alfeev)<sup>8</sup>. In this interview, Metropolitan Anthony elaborates the pastoral rhetorical strategy and makes an attempt at a rationalization of the phenomenon of *mladostarchestvo*, developing his own argument from 12 years previously.

Of course, it is not a question of distinguishing between young and old madmen. The point is, as far as possible, to assess the spiritual maturity of a person, his ability to be a leader for someone else [...]. It seems to me that there are three degrees of confessorship. There is the parish priest, whose role is to perform the sacraments of the Church [...]. There is another degree. This is a more experienced or older priest who has greater knowledge and a vocation to give instruction on how to progress from earth to heaven [...]. And there is a further third level. This is spiritual eldership [*starchestvo*], a level for people who, so to

<sup>8</sup> On 29<sup>th</sup> December, literally six days after the Patriarch’s speech, the Holy Synod passed a resolution on the of late increasingly frequent number of cases of abuse by some pastors of the authority entrusted to them by God “to bind and to loose” (Mt. 18: 18) (Opredelenie Sviashchennogo Sinoda, 1999). The concept that is the subject of this research does not figure in this ruling, however unofficially in church circles it was called the “*mladostarchestvo* resolution.” (see further: Surozhskii, 2017, p. 219).

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speak, have almost completed the whole journey to the doors of the Kingdom of Heaven, perhaps, but have not entered, or maybe would have been allowed in, but were sent back to the earth, to us, in order to guide us to this Kingdom. (Surozhskii, 2017, pp. 219, 223, 225; our translation—E. L., & A. C.)

The distinction proposed by Metropolitan Anthony had great significance for discussions on the Orthodox clergy, as can be seen from the number of publications in the media referring to the 1999 interview<sup>9</sup>. The Patriarch himself indirectly quotes Metropolitan Anthony in a report to the Council of Bishops in 2000, emphasizing the inherent impossibility of linking *mladostarchestvo* with age:

The problem of so-called “*mladostarchestvo*” remains serious: a phenomenon not connected with the age of the clergyman, but with the absence in him of a sober and wise approach to spiritual practice. (Sbornik dokumentov, 2001, p. 15; our translation—E. L., & A. C.)

This highlighted indifference with regard to age was both a strength and a weakness of Metropolitan Anthony’s argument: in the past, age had been the only means of objectivizing a priest’s unreadiness to give confession. Now, the situation could be solved only in a process of interaction between a priest and a lay person. The priest and lay person should themselves be able to adequately distinguish the threat of *mladostarchestvo* as the non-correspondence of a priest to his “pastoral function.”

This final removal of objective markers, turning the problem of *mladostarchestvo* into an abstract theological schema, gave rise to an attempt at a “systemic solution” to the problem in question: “There is a root independent from our human sins and weaknesses—a root, so to speak, which is inherent in our very system itself” (Ozolin, 2009, p. 246; our translation—E. L., & A. C.). This is how Archpriest N. Ozolin speaks about the problem of *mladostarchestvo*, in defence of young priests who are obliged to hear confession in accordance with an established, flawed tradition. Taking his cue from the words of the Patriarch, he proposes that the office of special “ordination as a confessor” be reinstated in Russia:

to be performed by a ruling bishop on a priest possessing the gift of grace-filled pastorship; a tradition which was generally accepted in Rus’ in ancient times and is practised to this day in the Orthodox East. (Ozolin, 2009, p. 249; our translation—E. L., & A. C.)

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<sup>9</sup> According to a search on Yandex, a minimum of 270 publications quote Metropolitan Anthony’s words “there are three degrees of confessorship.” Such publications may be found on key portals devoted to Orthodoxy: Pravmir, Foma, Pravoslavie.ru, among others. One of Moscow’s oldest priests, Archpriest Vladislav Sveshnikov gave the following answer to the question, “What is a *mladostarets*?”: “I do not want to answer this question, only because this is wonderfully described by Metropolitan Anthony of Surozh in one of his brilliant lectures where he speaks about *mladostarchestvo*. I simply agree with every word he says.” (Sveshnikova, 2020; our translation—E. L., & A. C.)

The use of the term *mladostarets/mladostarchestvo* in the context in question was part of a different rhetorical strategy. To be precise, the author appears to combine two critical strategies within his statement: *pastoral* rhetoric against *mladostarchestvo*, and criticism of an ecclesial structure whose foundation went back to the Synodal period. Criticism of this structure began even before the Revolution<sup>10</sup>. Here, the object of criticism were the church authorities for permitting inexperienced priests to hear confession, and thereby giving rise to a situation where every priest became a “*mladostarets* by profession” (as follows from Ozolin’s argumentation). This rhetorical strategy may be termed as *anti-systemic*.

## 8.

In the 2000s, a whole stratum of literature emerges where, in one way or another, at the basis of a critical-rhetorical apparatus the notion of *mladostarets/mladostarchestvo* is to be found. One of the most prominent critics of this phenomenon was the priest Vladimir Sokolov. His text, “*Mladostarchestvo—a temptation typical of our time*”<sup>11</sup> defines *mladostarchestvo* (although this contradicts the title of the article) as an absolute: “The temptation of *mladostarchestvo* has existed in every age” (Sokolov, 2005, p. 17; our translation—E. L., & A. C.). It is important to note that, starting from the middle of the 2000s, the term in question is ever less frequently placed in quotation marks, which appears to signal a new phase in the existence of the concept<sup>12</sup>. While pointing out the unoriginate nature of *mladostarchestvo*, Sokolov does nevertheless give an account of its genealogy, explaining why especially modern Russia is a fertile breeding ground for this phenomenon:

It is not so long ago that the Church was subject to persecution. Her destruction was promised: churches were closed; the clergy were executed and exiled; the faithful were harassed in all sorts of ways; “godless five-year plans” were even carried out for the final destruction of religion [...]. But today all this has changed: the front lines have become fluid, and in some places disappeared altogether. It has become impossible to tell where the rear-guard is and where the vanguard, who is an enemy and who a friend, because attacks have begun to come from all sides. It has even become impossible to tell whether to defend or attack: does one have an enemy or an ally in front of one? Everything has become confused. A time of temptation is upon us. The enemy has changed his tactics; he has started to come in “sheep’s clothing” in the guise of a “good shepherd”. (Sokolov, 2005, pp. 9–10; our translation—E. L., & A. C.)

<sup>10</sup> See especially one work that Ozolin refers to—Smirnov (1913).

<sup>11</sup> This material became a central element of two books: *Iskusheniia Nashikh Dnei. V Zashchitu Tserkovnogo Edinstva* [Temptations of our time. In defence of church unity] (Dobrosotskikh, 2003) and his own, which came out two years later (Sokolov, 2005).

<sup>12</sup> Referred to here are specifically Orthodox media and publications.

*Mladostarchestvo* is thus incorporated into a global history of the conflict between good and evil, itself representing a manifestation of the latter on the historical stage as part of a specific historical situation. Sokolov does not appear to construct a new rhetorical strategy, taking to its most detailed a description of what is criticized within the *pastoral* strategy. Nevertheless, in his wide-ranging analytical article an attempt is contained at examining the situation from another angle. Taking as his starting point Kontsevich's argument, mentioned in passing above, on the responsibility of the pastorate for pastoral abuses, he develops this idea:

The first reason for the emergence of such confessorship is the psychology of the pastorate. Not wishing to change, we wish to transfer responsibility for everything that happens to us onto the pastor. Such flight from freedom and responsibility is sometimes expressed in a readiness to do anything at all. (Sokolov, 2005, pp. 22–23; our translation—E. L., & A. C.)

In Sokolov's work, a new configuration of critical argument is set out, in which *mladostarchestvo* obtains a fundamentally different interpretation. To start with, this has a very general form, but as it progresses attempts are made to historicize *mladostarchestvo*, understood as a characteristic predisposition of the pastorate towards a faulty type of obedience, and to root it in the specific social experience of the Soviet era. One of the first people to speak of this, A. Agadzhanian, called *mladostarchestvo* a "psychological syndrome of *homo sovieticus*" (Agadzhanian, 2011, p. 21)<sup>13</sup>. This argument is elaborated in an interview with A. Desnitskii:

It is no coincidence that all this *mladostarchestvo* flourished in such glorious technicolor specifically in the nineties. A huge number of people came to the Church at this time who had never heard anything about the Church before, and, most importantly, were used to the idea that the things that were most important would be "communicated" to them by the *partorg* [party worker, organizer] at a meeting. They rejected Soviet ideology (or rather, as experience has shown, laid it aside for the time being), but they still held on to a Soviet way of thinking and called this Orthodox: we are surrounded by enemies; we are the bearers of the one true, progressive doctrine and so on. (Desnitskii, 2015; our translation—E. L., & A. C.)<sup>14</sup>

Hence, the concept of *mladostarets/mladostarchestvo*, to the degree of its infiltration into church discourse, becomes a tool for criticizing things that are different and even directly opposed to its direct referent—the priest/clergy. *Mladostarchestvo* is

<sup>13</sup> Later on, the link between *homo soveticus* and *mladostarchestvo* was also articulated by B. Filippov (2019, p. 39).

<sup>14</sup> Abbot Petr (Meshcherinov) adopts a similar position in a multitude of texts and lectures on this topic. Later on, B Knorre (2018, p. 10) was to examine *mladostarchestvo* in the same manner as an example of "a flight from freedom," a concept E. Fromm uses to describe the phenomenon of the passive reaction of the masses towards the rise of the totalitarian regimes of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Archpriest Georgii Belodurov (2019) states directly: "*mladostarchestvo* is an error of the laity" (p. 345; our translation—E. L., & A. C.).

used as part of another rhetorical strategy that may be called *socio-critical*: the term itself leads us to a false *piste* that does not enable us to penetrate any deeper into the essence of the phenomenon. In actual fact, the above-mentioned trait of Soviet social policy (or even the specific nature of the political culture of Modernity, to use E. Fromm's argument) led to the degradation of the individual, who lost the ability to resolve his spiritual and practical problems independently, seeking a universal leader capable of giving an answer to all his questionings. Within the framework of this rhetorical strategy, the notion of *mladostarchestvo* visibly leaves the realm of the specifically clerical and becomes part of the toolkit of critique of post-Soviet religiosity as a broader phenomenon.

## 9.

Throughout the 2000s, Patriarch Aleksii II mentioned *mladostarchestvo* on a number of occasions in public appearances<sup>15</sup>. This, among other things, contributed to the development of a certain "theory of *mladostarchestvo*" that may be found in the article of the priest V. Sokolov, as well in both anthologies where this article was published during the 2000s. Here, *mladostarchestvo* finally becomes a fundamental category for describing church reality in ultra-critical tones. In the absence of precise criteria for distinguishing between a spiritual elder, an ordinary priest, and a *mladostarets*, such an element of critical rhetoric could be "wielded like a bogeyman by saying that everything everywhere was *mladostarchestvo*" (Kozlov, 2012, p. 491; our translation—E. L., & A. C.)<sup>16</sup>, as Archpriest Maksim Kozlov remarked, who was perhaps the first to draw attention to this problem:

*Mladostarchestvo* is a term currently much in vogue and which, aside from its own meaning, is often used as a label. Much as people have started to say "fascist" whenever they want to say something nasty about someone, in just the same way people have begun to say, "That is *mladostarchestvo*." A terrifying portrait has been painted of some sort of crazy priest, chewing sunflower seeds and handing out sweets, hitting people on the head, pulling them by their pony tails, saying to one person, "You marry that chap," and to another, "Off with you tomorrow to a monastery." (Kozlov, 2012, p. 489; our translation—E. L., & A. C.)

It is important to point out that Archpriest Maxim is describing abuses connected precisely with the use of the term in question. What he is after is an adequate vision of the problem, which, in his opinion, is distorted by a ubiquitous and inappropriate use of the pejorative *mladostarchestvo*. Further on in his presentation, he embarks on an analysis of pastoral abuses, mistakes at confession, and so on, but without mentioning *mladostarchestvo*: that is, in essence, he removes the concept

<sup>15</sup> Starting with a report to the Council of Bishops in the year 2000 (see, for example: Official Website of the Moscow Patriarchate, 2007; The press office of the Moscow Patriarchate, 2006; V Monastyr' Ne Ukhodiat, 2019).

<sup>16</sup> Included in Father Maxim's presentation was in particular his earlier text (Kozlov, 2008).

being researched here from the *pastoral* rhetorical strategy. *Mladostarchestvo* is removed from the argumentation because it impedes a “serious” consideration of the problem.

Judging from this strategy, at a certain point an ironic use of the term *mladostarchestvo* as something that it is obviously a clear exaggeration becomes part of the colloquial rhetoric of the white (non-monastic) clergy, who meet with accusations of exceeding their pastoral prerogatives with a certain degree of regularity. This colloquial rhetoric finds its way into the public sphere whenever there is an opportunity. Here is how the priest Dimitrii Terekhin uses this rhetorical device, polemicizing at a distance with his diocesan administration:

I know a great deal about our Nizhni-Novgorod “ecclesiastical courts.” The same courts that, in their view infallibly, decide which of our brethren “has a devil,” who has “got the wrong door,” who is an “idiot,” and who is “psychologically ill,” who is in a state of “*prelest*” [spiritual delusion], who is a “*mladostarets*.” (Terekhin, 2017; our translation—E. L., & A. C.)

According to this logic, the “system” sees a *mladostarets* in every to some degree active parish priest. What is more, having the support of the parish is the most reliable sign of the truth of an accusation of *mladostarchestvo*: “These speculators on the system have long since learnt to pass off the voice of the people, crying to heaven, as a broadcast of the opinions of their “disgruntled pastor- *mladostartsy*” (Terekhin, 2017; our translation—E. L., & A. C.). It is hard to say how widespread this type of critical rhetoric is, however one may make a judgement from the words of N. Skuratovskaia, a psychologist who helps clergymen in difficult situations, especially in situations of a sudden transfer from a parish. Speaking on potential conflictual developments, she remarks:

In such cases it happens that a priest is accused of gathering a sect around himself, that he is a *mladostarets*, and on this basis he can be denied the right to serve until he shows repentance, which finds its expression in the fact that all his spiritual children are dispersed. (Volianskaia, 2018; our translation—E. L., & A. C.)

Thus, one may speak of the incorporation of the concept in question into yet another rhetorical strategy, in which the blade of criticism is twisted in the very direction that earlier had acted as a conduit for the traditional *pastoral* strategy: the church hierarchy and officials, for reasons unrelated to the essence of the matter, place limits on the pastoral activity of a clergyman using the “bogyman of *mladostarchestvo*.” This rhetorical strategy may be termed *anti-hierarchical*.

As J. Agamben remarks regarding the existence of monastic rules in Early Modern society, where they are subjected to parody by “secular” authors, “the complete comprehension of a phenomenon is its parody” (Agamben, 2013, p. 18). To paraphrase this statement with relation to the *anti-hierarchical* rhetorical strategy, it



may be said that parody of an element of criticism destroys its critical potential. In this situation, the concern of the church authorities and experienced pastors for priests and lay people who have fallen into the “trap of *mladostarchestvo*” is not so much parodied as “made fun of”: the category of *mladostarchestvo* itself is placed within an opposite rhetorical context of hierarchical arbitrariness.

## 10.

Before concluding this research paper, one more traditional usage of the notion *mladostarets/mladostarchestvo* should be mentioned that clearly differs from the rhetorical strategies described above. This particular tradition testifies to the extraordinary distance of the “horizon of expectation” relating to the term *mladostarets* after the patriarch’s speech in 1998, and how global the phenomena could be that were encompassed by this element of critical rhetoric.

One of the earliest reactions to Patriarch Aleksii’s speech was an article by Natalia Babasian published in the *Russian Journal* in January 1999. It proposes an original connection between *startsy* [spiritual elders], who were the object of the Patriarch’s criticism in the section of his speech preceding the use of the term *mladostarets*, and abuses in parish life (discussed further on, where the Patriarch mentions *mladostartsy*):

Many *startsy* in the *lavras* keep in strict obedience—up to and including the complete deprivation of their freewill—not just future monks, for whom such a trial is appropriate by virtue of their rank. The same principal is applied to ordinary believers, who for the purpose of the salvation of their souls are literally turned into slaves, carrying out any whim of their *starets*. Moreover, the *startsy* have passed on this art to a whole generation of young priests, who have gone out into parishes and begun to integrate these principles into parochial practice, for which they have earned the nickname *mladostartsy*. (Babasian, 1999; our translation—E. L., & A. C.)

*Startsy* and *mladostartsy* are thus presented as two elements of a single milieu, where the pastoral abuses of *mladostartsy* represent direct consequences of the activity of *startsy*. Combined they constitute what may be termed a “political opposition movement”: “[...] in recent years *startsy* and ‘*mladostartsy*’ have gained in strength and become kinds of informal church leaders” (Babasian, 1999; our translation—E. L., & A. C.).

Babasian’s line of argument was continued and developed by V. V. Pribylovskii (1956–2016), who simultaneously introduced it into scholarly discourse:

The Patriarch came down on so-called “*mladostarchestvo*” with unexpected vehemence. Aleksii II spoke of the way the new *startsy* unjustifiably subjugate the wills of their spiritual children, place demands on lay people that are applicable only to monks, frequently politicize their activity, sharply oppose themselves to

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the church authorities, form closed, almost sectarian communities. It was clear to everyone that what was at issue was a wave of fundamentalism in the Church, but even in this case no names were named. (Verkhovskii et al., 1999, p. 100; our translation—E. L., & A. C.)

V. V. Pribylovskii paints (or even “constructs,” as may be asserted based on the absence of any sort of references other than to N. Babasian) a genuine ecclesial-political confrontation of different church groups:

Cut to the quick by the speech on “*mladostartsy*,” the leaders of the Union of Orthodox Brotherhoods could not help approving the Synod’s resolution, but immediately retaliated by accusing liberal journalists of attacking monasteries and demanded that, as a symmetrical response, measures be taken against “general confession,” baptism without immersion and other deviations from tradition. (Verkhovskii et al., 1999, p. 100; our translation—E. L., & A. C.)

N. Mitrokhin develops the argument on the equivalence of *startsya* and *mladostartsy*. He reproduces Babasian’s idea on the genesis of *mladostartsy* almost word for word:

In the second half of the 1990s, the growing influence of *startsya* began to worry the hierarchy and parish priests. In imitation of well-known spiritual fathers, many priests, especially priest-monks, started setting up their own communities of disciples. (Mitrokhin, 2004, p. 103; our translation—E. L., & A. C.)

According to Mitrokhin’s interpretation, *mladostartsy* are a peculiar type of agent of “eldership opposition”: by denouncing inexperienced pastors, the patriarch was in actual fact striking a covert blow at church fundamentalists:

At the Moscow diocesan assembly, the patriarch made a long programmatic speech against a phenomenon that he characterized as *mladostarchestvo*. He denounced young priests who were copying their teachers badly or had taken on a task that was not for them. Notwithstanding, what was cast doubt on was essentially the entire activity of *startsya*. (Mitrokhin, 2004, pp. 103–104; our translation—E. L., & A. C.)

In all likelihood, what may be seen here is a development of the *emancipatory* strategy. Nevertheless it is clear that, if the intention of the latter consisted in unmasking the obscurantism of pseudo-spiritual religious leaders, then here there is a different intention: before us is a desire to denounce a large, poorly controlled fundamentalist network that apparently exists within the Russian Church; it is coordinated from the monasteries, but its adherents are ordinary priests; it is not subordinate to the authority of the patriarch and practices total control in relation to its flock. This rhetorical strategy may thus be labelled *denunciatory*.

Incidentally, the authors who had recourse to this strategy were shortly afterwards to reject using the term *mladostarets/mladostarchestvo* altogether. This may be explained by the fact that the use of this notion as part of the *pastoral* strategy becomes routine and ceases to be of interest for a *denunciatory* strategy<sup>17</sup>.

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The history of the concept of *mladostarets/mladostarchestvo* may be summed up as follows. It emerged in an *émigré* context. It was there that it became an element of a *pastoral* rhetorical strategy aimed at combatting abuses in the practice of confession. The specific religious situation in the 1990–2000s in Russia gave rise to its adoption and introduction into active circulation. As an interesting neologism and a tool for criticizing undesirable ecclesial-social phenomena, it was espoused by part of the intelligentsia: the appearance of the notion in question as part of an *emancipatory* rhetorical strategy may be interpreted in this way. In the 2000s, in the process of a rapid growth in use of the term *mladostarets/mladostarchestvo* in public discussion, it was integrated into a series of other rhetorical strategies directed at criticism of problems in church life. These were, in the first instance, *anti-systemic* criticism of the practice of confession, which was entrusted to young priests, rather than to experienced clergymen. Within the context of a *socio-critical* rhetorical strategy, criticism was transferred from the clergy to the pastorate, or more precisely to the nature of religiosity in post-Soviet Russia, which as a result of various factors created preconditions for flawed relations between the pastorate and the clergy. An *anti-hierarchical* rhetorical strategy resorted to parody of hierarchs, employing the pejorative *mladostarets* with the aim of limiting the independence of parish clerics. Finally, at the beginning of the 2000s the term *mladostarets* was also used in a *denunciatory* strategy, whose aim was to expose internal struggles within the church organization.

In the period from 1980–2010, a continuous “growth in demand” for use of the term *mladostarets/mladostarchestvo* may be observed, which was incorporated into ever more new strategies of critical rhetoric. Furthermore, the role of the concept itself changed from one critical argument or another, depending on the context: authors tried to identify different objects of criticism that might either be hidden behind the phenomenon of so-called *mladostarchestvo*, or conceal the intention of those using this term. Consequently, on the one hand, a sort of “oversaturation” of the term with different meanings takes place, and on the other, there is an intricate interlacing of intentions according to which this notion is used. The fact that, in its final stage, the term is used with parodic intention within an *anti-hierarchical* strategy may bear witness to a kind of exhaustion of its semantic resources.

This problem is most relevant today to the basic *pastoral* rhetorical strategy, incessantly in search of ever more objects of criticism from the area of parish life, which

<sup>17</sup> N. Mitrokhin (2006) indirectly testifies to this in a later text: “General reflections on the inadmissibility of *mladostarchestvo* that have been heard in the last six years from part of the episcopate (especially permanent members of the Holy Synod) do not single out *startsyt* (*staritz*) who are not priests as a separate phenomenon” (p. 127; our translation—E. L., & A. C.).

itself grows ever more transparent and minutely scrutinized in public discussion. In all probability, it is precisely the inability of the concept of *mladostarets/mladostarchestvo* to reflect abuses in the parish context with its former force and urgency that has given rise to a new pejorative—*dukhovnyi ab"iuz* [spiritual abuse] (Slovokhotova & Shchedrin, 2021), which may be found with increasing frequency at the spearhead of critical rhetoric.

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## RESEARCH NOTE

# Perceived Discrimination of Old Settlers in Sikkim

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### ABSTRACT

The old settlers in Sikkim are a community of mainland Indians whose ancestors had settled at least 15 years before the merger with India in 1975. At present, the total population of the community is less than three thousand individuals, comprising various ethnicities. This qualitative study focuses on the perceived discrimination of the old settlers, who form a demographic minority in the state. Data was collected using telephonic interviews from a sample of 11 old settlers. Thematic analysis indicated racial differences between the northeastern indigenous community and mainland Indian old settlers as a major reason for perceived discrimination. The participants expressed the experience of negative emotional reactions, such as anger and disappointment, when they faced discrimination. The participants also felt betrayed by the government of India because they did not

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receive adequate protection for their rights when their identity in Sikkim changed from foreigners to citizens. Reactions to discrimination included migrating out of the state, experiencing negative emotions such as anger, disappointment and fear, and learned helplessness.

**KEYWORDS**

discrimination, Sikkim, race, old settlers, perceived discrimination, Northeasterners

**Introduction**

The Rajya Sabha (Upper House of Parliament in India) Committee on Petitions in 2013 acknowledged that the Government of Sikkim had passed multiple laws that discriminated against a community known as the old settlers (Committee on Petitions, 2013). The Rajya Sabha committee suggested the state government take affirmative action and protect the old settlers as they are the racial minority in the state (Committee on Petitions, 2013; Thatal, 2015). The committee mentioned that the old settlers in Sikkim are treated as “second class citizens in their own state” (Committee on Petitions, 2013). This acknowledgement of discrimination against the old settlers is important in providing validation to the feelings of the disenfranchised group. However, the perspective of the old settlers and attribution made by them concerning their discrimination experience requires deeper analysis.

Since the merger of Sikkim with India in 1975, many welfare schemes, such as exemptions from paying income tax, scholarship funds, land purchasing regulation, and healthcare facilities have been provided to the domiciles of the state (Income Tax Department, 1961; Land Revenue & Disaster Management, 2011; Law Department of the Government of Sikkim, 2008a, 2008b, 2008c; Malu, 2019). Domicile status in Sikkim is provided only to the former subjects of the king per the Sikkim subject regulation, 1961 (Home Department of the Government of Sikkim, 1995). However, before the merger, 400 Indian families, known as old settlers, had lived in Sikkim but did not become Sikkim subjects. Since these individuals are not registered as Sikkim subjects they are not considered to be domiciles of the state. At present, these families have had a settlement history of more than 75 years in Sikkim (Thatal, 2015). Despite their length of settlement, the old settlers are not considered domiciles and are ostracized from availing many of the aforementioned welfare facilities. Their status in Sikkim is that of outsiders since they are not part of the indigenous ethnic groups and belong to various mainland Indian communities such as Biharis, Marwaris, Bengalis, Punjabis, and Malayalis.

In the Indian context, race-based discrimination is considered a phenomenon that occurs against Northeasterners when they migrate to the mainland cities of India (Sohi & Singh, 2015). Several studies have attributed this experience to different racial, ethnic, cultural, and linguistic systems (Hutchison et al., 2007; Sitlhou & Punathil, 2017;). Further, the Northeasterners in mainland India are a minority with limited socio-economic or political power and experience discrimination.

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In Sikkim, however, the demographic situation is reversed where the Northeasterners form the majority and the mainlanders comprise the minority (McDuié-Ra, 2015). As such, the mainlanders in Sikkim, and the Northeasterners in mainland India, are discriminated due to similar reasons such as being the demographic minority, and having different racial, ethnic, cultural, and linguistic systems. Further, based on the conclusions drawn by the Rajya Sabha committee on petitions, the mainlanders are treated as second class citizens in the state (Committee on Petitions, 2013). Several theories of intergroup conflict support this conclusion.

The social identity theory states that intergroup conflict can result from the minimal group paradigm where the separation of people into groups is enough for in-group preferential treatment to occur (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). The creation of identity differences such as locals vs old settlers or Northeasterners vs mainlanders would result in such conflict. Further, the realistic group conflict theory states that if groups compete for resources such as land, labour, or gold, then intergroup conflict would also occur (Sherif, 1966). The old settlers, and the locals in Sikkim, are competing for resources. Based on these theories and the position of the old settlers as a minority or non-dominant group, it can be discerned that discrimination occurs against the old settlers in Sikkim. However, the perception of such discrimination and the reasons they attribute to it requires deeper analysis.

Perceived discrimination is considered as a psychosocial stressor, linked with many negative effects such as higher stress levels, anxiety, depression, hostility, psychoticism, and higher dropout rates (Okazaki, 2009; Ong et al., 2013; see, Dion & Kawakami, 1996; Ramiah et al., 2010). Experiences of discrimination can lead individuals to appraise themselves as targets leading to higher threat perception. Stress is further compounded as discrimination experiences are unpredictable, leading to greater adaptation costs. Further, discrimination may not always result from belonging to oppressed groups and any arbitrary characteristic, when used to perpetuate discrimination, can lead to higher stress levels. Similar conclusions have been found in the studies among visible minorities such as the Chinese in Canada, African Americans, Hispanics, and Asians in the USA (Crocker & Major, 1989; Dion, 2002).

According to the attribution viewpoint, individuals experiencing discrimination are in a dilemma in ascribing the reasons for their negative experiences. To explain the experience, they either decide that the source is prejudiced against them due to their group membership or the experience was due to a personal failing. These evaluations affect their understanding of the self and can cause negative self-assessment and decreased self-esteem (Jiloha, 2010; Kardiner & Ovesey, 1951; Panchanadeswaran & Dawson, 2011). These self-evaluations can also lead to positive buffering effects on the victim when they attribute it to their group membership. For instance, an experiment by Dion (1975) on women in Canada showed that participants who thought they were competing against men felt higher levels of prejudice and identified more with female stereotypes than those who believed they were competing with women. Results indicated that individuals show increased identification with existing in-group stereotypes while perceiving discrimination from an out-group, attempting to buffer

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negative effects on self-esteem. The strength of these positive buffering effects varies across groups.

Considering the paucity of literature around race-based discrimination occurring within northeast India and the importance of understanding the discrimination experiences of visible minorities, we sought to understand the perceived discrimination of old settlers in Sikkim. Old settlers in Sikkim were focused on due to the acceptance of discrimination by the upper house of parliament and the unique citizenship situation in Sikkim. The study findings would also create an understanding of racial discrimination in India in a bi-directional manner, where demographic and political strength are important variables to consider while understanding discrimination.

## **Method**

### ***Sample***

The sample included eight men and three women, old settlers from Sikkim. The total number of old settlers in Sikkim is less than 3000. Among the participants, six were senior citizens (above 65), four were in their early adulthood (20–40), and one was in their middle adulthood (40–60). According to the prevailing demographic situation of the old settlers, the number from each community was proportioned, where eight participants belonged to the Marwari community, two from the Bihari community, and one from the Punjabi community. Six participants were business owners, two were salaried employees, two were retired workers, and one was a homemaker.

### ***Data Collection***

The data used in this study was a part of doctoral research work on racial discrimination in Sikkim. The Institutional Review Board approved this study. Data was collected using telephonic semi-structured interviews. Before the interview, the investigator informed each participant about their rights and gave a brief overview of the study and its implications. The interview started after obtaining verbal consent to collect data. Interview guides in English and Hindi were developed and validated by three experts from the field. Questions posed included queries on their understanding of discrimination, perception of being discriminated and probable causes. Seven participants gave the interview in Hindi and four in English. Each interview lasted 30–50 minutes and was transcribed by the first author. The transcribed interviews were sent back to the participants for their perusal. These were considered for the analysis only after their confirmation of the content. Before the analysis, the first author translated the interviews from Hindi into English.

### ***Analysis***

Thematic analysis was employed as the study required the development of previously unexplored aspects. Three authors independently coded the transcribed interviews. Basic, organizing and global themes emerged after assessing similarities between the codes (Braun & Clark, 2006). The second author functioned as an objective assessor of analysis, and only after consensus amongst all the authors the themes were finalized.

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### ***Trustworthiness***

In studies with sensitive populations, trustworthiness is essential (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Nelson, 2008). Keeping this in mind, audit trails of the study methods and procedures were continually conducted by subject matter experts to ensure the confirmability of the research. Independent coding and construction of the themes by the authors were done to enhance the trustworthiness further and ensure investigator triangulation (Denzin, 1978). Confirmability, dependability, and credibility of the research were maintained by triangulation. The member check strengthened the confirmability and credibility. The first author is a part of the old settlers and continually engaged in reflexivity that helped avoid the biases.

### **Results**

The results revealed 13 basic themes, two organizing themes, and one global theme.

Perceived reasons included insecurity and threat, racial differences, prejudice and outsider status, revenge, democracy and minority politics, divided community, fear, and locals and politics.

### ***Racial Differences***

The racial division between the old settlers and the locals formed a major reason for discrimination. The old settlers claimed that all Northeasterner featured individuals are considered locals, even though many individuals from that group are not Sikkim subject holders.

When I say about old settlers, there are Marwari, Bihari families also and there are few people from Nepalese origin also who have been staying in Sikkim for the past, maybe 30-40-50 years also and they are not the subjects. But what happens is that they mingle around easily because of their face cutting however, we are segregated because of our face cutting. (SN, personal communication, April 10, 2020)

### ***Insecurity, Jealousy & Perceived Threat***

Participants claimed that the locals felt insecurity and threat in the presence of old settlers. This insecurity stemmed from the fact that the old settlers are economically competent. Threat perception resulted from the racial similarity between old settlers and mainland Indian politicians. “When you engage in business activities and are successful and earn money [...] some people feel jealous. They say that these people (mainlanders) have come from outside and captured our trading and business opportunities” (AB, personal communication, May 21, 2020).

### ***Prejudices and Outsider Status***

The participants believed that the state’s indigenous population did not accept them. Irrespective of the length of settlement, they were considered outsiders.

There is this big prejudice against our community that we were outsiders and that we came from outside, and we came here to rob the people or something like that [...] They feel that we guys are robbing them or we've been robbing them for years. (AA, personal communication, August 9, 2020)

### ***Revenge***

Many locals who migrate to other parts of India for education or employment purposes face discrimination. When they return to Sikkim, they discriminate against the old settlers as revenge.

When these people go down to the plains, they do face discrimination. So, when they come back, they also have that feeling that when we are in the plains, we face all these things, so they try to give it back. (BB, personal communication, June 25, 2020)

The participants also acknowledged that not all locals who return have revenge on their minds and become more sensitive after returning from the mainland with better education.

### ***Democracy, Politics & Minority Status***

Participants also acknowledged that the merger of Sikkim with India and the introduction of democracy created more problems for the old settlers. As a minority with less than three thousand votes, the old settlers make no difference in the political landscape. "Democracy is a numbers game, and our numbers here are very less. We are settled here but our numbers are less and therefore, discrimination is taking place against us" (AB, personal communication, May 21, 2020).

### ***Divided Community***

All the participants commonly agreed that old settlers were not united. They were weak in supporting each other when a need arose. "We have not yet learned how to stay together as a community. In fact, if we did stay together as a community, we could have procured for ourselves some sort of decent rights and all of that" (AA, personal communication, August 9, 2020).

### ***Fear***

The participants stated that they fear taking a stand against discrimination experienced as they have led to unfortunate consequences in the past. "We are scared also. Even if we want to, we can't go and fight. They are in such high numbers and we are so small. We can't do it" (BU, personal communication, April 1, 2021).

### ***Locals and Politics***

The participants held that the people of Sikkim were not prejudiced, but the politics of polarization created this situation. "The people of Sikkim are with us. They did not do this. Nor did the King. It was the Government and their people for political gains" (PT, personal communication, April 11, 2020).

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### ***Reactions to Discrimination***

When faced with discrimination, the participants reacted in multiple ways. They included feeling negative emotions, feeling of statelessness, betrayal from the central government, learned helplessness and out-migration.

### ***Negative Emotions***

Participants felt negative emotional reactions such as anger and disappointment due to discrimination. The impact lasts for a long time and is not easily forgotten. “We feel like we have been here for so many years and still the state is not ours. Even our kids, who are growing up here, feel negatively and keep feeling like what is the future prospect here” (BB, personal communication, June 25, 2020).

### ***Feeling of Statelessness***

The participants felt they do not belong to any state because they do not have access to the state welfare facilities. “I had cousins who were brilliant and wanted to utilize the quota seats for medical from the state through merit, but because of discrimination they couldn’t, even though they were meritorious. We have no state welfare for these things” (SA, personal communication, February 11, 2021).

### ***Betrayal***

The participants felt betrayed by the Central Government. They felt that the Government of India had failed to take care of their rights since the merger. “We were weak. The Indian Government was not with us. They betrayed us” (PT, personal communication, April 11, 2020).

### ***Learned Helplessness***

Some of the participants accepted discrimination as part of their lived reality. An element of learned helplessness was noticeable. “In Sikkim, discrimination still exists. But the law itself is discriminatory. If you have made the law in such a manner, what can one do?” (AB, personal communication, May 21, 2020).

### ***Out-Migration***

An increasing number of emerging adults among the old settlers leave Sikkim because they do not want to live in a discriminatory environment.

The younger generation of our community do not come back to Sikkim because of the number of restrictions that are put here. You are a young person, the world today is open for you. Why would you come and live in such a place? Anywhere else if you put the same hard work you will soar. (PT, personal communication, April 11, 2020)

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## Discussion

### *Perceived Discrimination*

Findings indicated that old settlers attributed perceived discrimination to the racial difference between themselves and the locals. This attribution is based on racial differences between mainlanders and Northeasterners and the issue of Sikkim subject citizenship. For the old settlers, groups exist on two levels—one, based on the citizenry issue where the in-group comprises of the old settlers, and the out-group comprises Sikkim subject holders. Two, based on the issue of race where the in-group is comprised of the mainlanders and the out-group is formed by the Northeasterners. In both cases of group-based identity conceptualization, the old settlers are part of the minority and non-dominant group, creating a double jeopardy situation, which leads to discrimination (Sherif, 1966; Tajfel & Turner, 1979).

Irrespective of their varying ethnicities, the old settlers consider themselves as one group and find commonality in their identity conceptualization based on their history of settlement in Sikkim and their membership in the business community. The attribution of discrimination in the case of old settlers can therefore be considered a result of their group identity over personal traits, as suggested by the personal/group discrimination discrepancy phenomena (Dion, 2001). An interesting aspect that emerged during the analysis was that five participants were not involved in business-related work and yet considered themselves as a part of the business community. This stereotyping of their identity could buffer the negative effects of perceived discrimination (Dion, 2002).

In the Indian context, non-conforming religious or tribal groups that are settled within states have often been considered as outsiders (Oommen, 1982). The creation of the outsider identity is due to the transition in the policy of the Government of India for state creation. Initially, states were created based on linguistic commonality. However, over time the policy transitioned towards creating states based on religious or tribal status. Thereby shifting the conceptualization of in-groups and out-groups from linguistic commonality to religious or tribal group membership (Oommen, 1982). This categorization ignores the duration of settlement of the minority and their positive impact on the region (Ramiah et al., 2010). As a result, old settlers in Sikkim are considered outsiders, although their families have settled in Sikkim for more than a century. In line with the social identity theory, the passing of resolutions such as article 371F (Legislative department, n.d.) and the finance bill of 2008 (Income Tax Department, 2008), whilst attempting to protect the in-group, led to the formulation of the old settlers as outsiders, even though linguistic commonality was present (Amin, 2012).

The privileging of the in-group can also be seen in the following example. In 1988, the Government of Sikkim claimed to the Indian Parliament via their Member of Parliament, that there were individuals residing in Sikkim who were stateless since they did not have Sikkim subject or Indian citizenship. The state government claimed that these were genuine omissions since these individuals lived in remote areas of Sikkim were not informed about the Sikkim subject regulation and therefore remained without the Sikkim subject (Home Department of the Government of Sikkim, 1989b).

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A request was made to the Government of India to convert these individuals to Sikkim subjects as they were settled in Sikkim for many years. Converting to Sikkim subjects would automatically make them Indian citizens based on Sikkim Citizenship Order, 1975 (Home Department of the Government of Sikkim, 1989a). The conversion, first to Sikkim subjects and then to Indian citizens was astute, as to be a domicile of Sikkim, an individual would need to have a Sikkim subject. The conversion of these stateless citizens to Sikkim subjects first would then also allow them to be domiciles. However, a curious criterion was inserted into the regulation stating that registration as a stateless citizen would not be applicable for individuals living in the notified bazar areas of Sikkim. The bazar areas mostly comprised of the old settlers and due to this clause, they were excluded from registering as stateless citizens and claiming that they too did not know about the Sikkim subject regulation of 1961 (Home Department of the Government of Sikkim, 1989a). This was an important event that showcased the in-group favouritism towards the indigenous community. Seventy-seven thousand people became Sikkim subjects, 14 years after the merger. Understanding the legality of retrospectively granting Sikkim subject without the existence of a monarchy by a democratic nation such as India is beyond the scope of this paper but should be focused on by future studies.

The geopolitical changes in Sikkim would affect the identity conceptualization of the locals, as they had to adjust to the new normal of being citizens rather than subjects (Todd, 2018). This transition could lead to higher levels of threat perception and insecurity (Rousseau & Garcia-Retamero, 2007). According to the participants, locals perceive that the racial commonality of mainlanders with the politicians of the central government puts them in a more advantageous position and their social links in mainland India help them conduct business, showcasing higher threat perception. The success of the petition to the Rajya Sabha also proved to be counterproductive for the old settlers as the locals perceived the conclusion reached was a result of partiality. This finding is interesting as it brings to light that threat perception based on race-based identity differences remains high in Sikkim after 45 years of merger (Sheriff, 1966).

A reason cited by the participants for perceived discrimination was the jealousy felt by the locals by the economic success of the old settlers. According to the participants, the locals did not have knowledge about conducting business or have networks in mainland India to assist them in the process. Therefore, they discriminated against the old settlers by curtailing other aspects of their lives, such as restricting domicile status, reservations, and other benefits. According to the realistic group conflict theory, dominant groups discriminate against non-dominant groups when there is competition for material resources (Sherif, 1966). Further, in line with the social identity theory, the in-group members attempted to protect their members by providing exclusive control on state government jobs, land ownership, and other welfare programs (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Similar examples of discrimination can be noted in the northeastern state of Assam during the early 1980s, where the locals, threatened by the economic success of Punjabis, Marwaris, and Bengalis formed a movement to remove these “outsiders” from the state (Oommen, 1982; Singh, 2021).



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An interesting theme that emerged was the participants' claim that the locals did not tend to discriminate. They stated that politics of polarization as a means to garner votes was the major reason for discrimination. Studies have shown that polarization between communities and creating the "us vs them" mentality feeds vote-based, anti-minority politics (Liu, 2012; Thatal, 2015). According to Ramiah et al. (2010), voting for anti-immigration parties is a form of expressing passive discrimination by the majority group. Therefore, the claim of the participants that the locals do not discriminate but discrimination is an outcome of politics is valid in so far as active discrimination is concerned (Ramiah et al., 2010). The existence of anti-immigration and discriminatory laws against the old settlers showcases that the locals might be passively discriminating since political parties that discriminate based on group differences win elections and pass the above-mentioned resolutions.

The participants felt that their contribution to improving the state's economy was not acknowledged. The old settlers helped establish modern economic systems of taxation and banking in the kingdom. Chogyal (King) and the British political officers invited them for this purpose (Kharel & Bhutia, 2013). A participant elaborated on the hardships of trade in the kingdom in the early years to make the point that the old settlers suffered similarly to the locals and deserved equal treatment.

The participants claimed that the old settlers were easy targets for discrimination as they were not united. For instance, the petition filed in the Rajya Sabha Committee on Petitions (2013) was the work of a single individual and not the entire community. Trust issues due to ethnic differences in caste, religion, language, and culture affect their ability to act collectively. Similar to the Northeasterners in Delhi, collective action suffers due to their heterogeneity (Sohi & Singh, 2014). Further, their migration experience, prejudice, minority status, and lack of role models in the socio-political scene negatively affect their ability to take collective action (Sohi & Singh, 2014). Literature on conformity further explains how group cohesion can be affected by even one non-conforming member (Parida & Gupta, 2017).

### ***Reactions***

Anger, disappointment, and fear were the predominant negative feelings associated with the experience of discrimination (Matheson & Anisman, 2009). The participants could not express this anger as they were fearful of the consequences due to their minority status. Previous incidents of standing up against discrimination resulted in violence from the locals, thwarting new efforts. One of the participants shared an incident where an old settler was harassed on social media and threatened with lawsuits after arguing with the police. The incident was perceived from a racial lens rather than a common issue between citizens and police. Locals expressed racial slurs, including calls for expulsion of the old settlers and other mainlanders from the state.

The participants felt betrayed by the Central Government for not taking care of their interests or providing protection to them. The old settlers claim that they chose to continue as Indian citizens, rejecting the offer to become Sikkim subjects, and now they are facing discrimination due to the same reason. They referenced the parity system, where reservations were provided to the tribal community in the state legislature due

to their minority status to provide security and representation to them (Kazi, 2009). They claimed that none of these benefits were given to the old settlers, who were also a minority in the state. This decision still causes disappointment as the state uses the Sikkim Subject Certificate (SSC) to discriminate. State-sponsored welfare facilities and domicile status are only available to individuals with SSC (Land Revenue & Disaster Management, 2011; Law Department of the Government of Sikkim, 2008a, 2008b, 2008c). Due to these circumstances, the old settlers feel stateless even though they are voters in Sikkim.

Passive acceptance and learned helplessness result from feelings of uncontrollability to create change (Green, 1982). The development of self-defeating attitudes and passive acceptance are the consequences of long-term discrimination (Uomoto, 1986). A participant claimed that the majority dictates democratic functioning, and in Sikkim, this has resulted in the creation of discriminatory laws. Since old settlers are a minority, they can never get a representation in the state legislature, and hence there is no solution apart from the passive acceptance of the current status.

Out-migration is another coping strategy adopted when an individual feels targeted (Sithou & Punathil, 2017). The younger population of old settlers widely used this strategy. They claimed that they did not want to lead restricted lives in Sikkim. The recent reverse migration of the Northeasterners from major cities in India results from similar circumstances (Sithou & Punathil, 2017).

## Conclusion

A double jeopardy situation exists for the old settlers in Sikkim as they are in the minority and racially different. The phenomenon of out-migration due to discrimination is a cause of significant concern as it highlights a form of subtle ethnic cleansing. Future studies could follow the quantitative method in assessing the levels of distress felt by the old settlers. They could focus on assessing the negative effects of discrimination regarding healthcare, employment, and dropout rates. A limitation of the present study was that females were lesser in number. Further studies are recommended focusing on the experiences of females and other genders from the old settler community as they are often in triple jeopardy situations where discrimination could be worse. This study helps to understand the regional nature of discrimination where policymakers can focus on demography and political strength when creating laws for affirmative action.

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## BOOK REVIEW

# Ivan Strenski (2022). *Muslims, Islams and Occidental Anxieties: Conversations about Islamophobia*. Ethics International Press Ltd.

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Ivan Strenski, Distinguished Emeritus Professor, University of California, Riverside (USA) has organized his recent book *Muslims, Islams and Occidental Anxieties: Conversations about Islamophobia*, in the form of a dialogue between two imaginary people. One of them is Yannick, a recently retired lycée professor living in Meudon-Bellevue, France. The other is Malou, a French-born retired lycée professor of economics in Brussels. Strenski characterizes Yannick as a cosmopolitan person cherishing fidelity to the traditions of Renaissance Christian humanism and interested in a comparative study of religions. Unlike Yannick, Malou “counts herself a faithful Roman Catholic, enthusiastic Francophone nationalist and moderately conservative in her politics” (p. ii). Certainly, the mindset and background of the disputants forms a context for their attitude towards Islam.

The imaginary conversation seeks to engage the readers into the presumptions, complexities, and concerns associated with Islamophobia in the USA, European Union, and France, in particular, where Islamophobia is much more acute than in any EU member state. France has been the most recent site for ISIS murders, such as those of 17 Charlie Hebdo journalists, 86 Riviera vacationers in the 2016 Nice truck attack, and 90 concert-goers in the Bataclan music hall incident.

However, the book is not an introductory survey on Islam across the globe, although containing numerous facts and reflections upon the history and present status of various Islamic countries. As Strenski notes, the book is written for common readers and students, rather than for Islamicists or other sorts of professional specialists. At the same time, the level of expertise demonstrated

by both disputants is much higher than that of the average Western citizen. In order to understand the widespread anxieties about Islam and to guarantee authenticity, Strenski bases the disputants' arguments on materials on Islam collected from the press, various expert commentaries, Islamic scholars, etc.

The main point of the conversation in first chapters is *essentialism*—namely, an essential set of Muslim fundamental beliefs and practices that have always been found in Islam and among Muslims. According to common fears (shared by Malou), Islam is “patriarchal, misogynist, warlike, violence-prone, intolerant of other religions, given to barbaric practices like honor-killing and cliterodectomy and so on” (p. 13). Moreover, Islam is not just a system of beliefs—it is implemented by Muslims into everyday practice. In turn, Yannick calls into question such essentializing generalizations, due to their tendency to eliminate the complexity and diversity of Islam communities, to make simplifying generalizations about complex things, and to pretend to know the fundamental nature of Muslims. However, Yannick insists that his personal experience of communicating with Muslim friends and students in several Muslim countries where he travelled has taught him “to be careful about making hard and fast judgments about people and the ways we think they live—especially religious people” (p. 8). In reality, he continues, there is no uniformity for 1.5 billion of the world's Muslims, as well as for the two billion of Christians living worldwide. In Christianity, Protestants and Catholics in the West, Copts in Egypt and Ethiopia, St. Thomas Christians of Kerala (India), Bulgarian, Georgian, Serbian, Greek, Russian, Ukrainian Orthodox Christians, among others, the Armenian Apostolic Church, etc.,—all believe to have captured essential Christianity. In the same vein, the Salafis and especially Saudi Wahhabis have dominant ideas about the essence of sexes, good “society”, and so on. Anyway, they “do not have an objective monopoly on anything that could pass as the one, true and good—essential—Islam. Their saying so, doesn't make it so, either” (p. 23).

Yannick concludes that it is also hard to speak of some essential or archetypal Muslim—either good or bad—because, in people's real lives, their religion beliefs differ, perhaps radically, from those proclaimed in books and scriptures. Moreover, religions, like other actors in human history, are equally open to criticism despite being commonly thought of as necessarily good things. It is better “to be more modest about thinking that we can capture the unchanging kernel of Islam's true identity. The reason we cannot, is because religions are *works-in-progress*. Because they are *historical* entities, we cannot absolutely know Islam *invariably and constantly really is*” (p. 15).

In the next part of the book, the issue of Islam in the context of politics, religion, and civil society is discussed. Strenski, through Yannick, tries to overcome labeling differences between Islam and the West as good versus bad. In comparing Western and Muslim values, he refers to the concept of anthropologist Talal Asad who opposes Western individualism and the Muslim preference of a life defined by a stronger communal good, or, in other words, the ideal of the “self-owning” individual versus the self as belonging to another. According to Asad, “for Muslims, the self has value because it belongs proximately to the *ummah* and ultimately to Allah” (p. 46). Reflecting on the understanding of equality and liberty in the Western world and



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Islam, Strenski notes that the Muslim commitment to equality of all male believers is fundamental to Islam where “race, age, wealth or poverty, national origins mean relatively less than they do in many other social arrangements” (p. 92). Equality comes with the powerful reality of “belonging to a community that loves and supports you—the ummah. Muslims see causing alienation from one’s relationships the most grievous moral and religious offense. One expects to have one’s liberty lived out within a set of rules that apply to all—equally” (p. 97). Conversely, westerners are supposed to be autonomous, free-standing individuals, suspicious about groups and mass discipline. And they pay a great cultural price in terms of the epidemics of loneliness and alienation for their preference for individual freedom over communal responsibility. Thus, Strenski concludes, even though Islam and the West differ with respect to communal versus individual values, these differences need not lead to a hostile opposition of good and evil. Instead, these differences introduce diversity into the world of goods. According to this logic, Islam is seen as a locus of goods that offers a world of alternate goods to the individual liberty: “Because we hold to the truth of the individual as self-owning, doesn’t mean that the Muslim truth of the individual as belonging-to-another is false” (p. 45).

An interesting supplement to the discussion on the compatibility of Western and Muslim values is the reference to Tariq Ramadan, a Swiss Muslim theologian and Oxford professor, the author of *To Be a European Muslim* (2013). Ramadan argues that “being a Muslim is not the same as ‘dressing up Muslim,’ so to speak” (p. 119); in other words, Muslims can be culturally European, while being faithful Muslims at the same time. Moreover, for Ramadan, Islam can contribute constructively to the moral betterment of the Christian West presenting another kind of “good” that Europeans might come to respect. Beneficial Muslim moral influences imply that “our selfish, acquisitive, consumer capitalist society could use an injection of those Muslim values of modesty, self-restraint, social justice or serving the poor!” (p. 129).

A significant part of the book is devoted to the *Islam and Women* issue. Yannick and Malou elaborate on the question of sexual equality versus complementarity, the meaning of “covering” or veiling, the practice of FGM (female genital mutilation or clitoridectomy) in different Muslim countries, and the way in which honor-killing may be or may be not sanctioned by Islam. Here again, Yannick warns about the discrepancy of essentialism in a sense that there could be no single explanation for all these topics due to the variety of real cases in the Muslim world both domestically and in diaspora. Both disputants agree that Islam presents a rather different approach from the liberal West to such matters as sex/gender relations, the nature of marriage and family and, therefore, some Muslim values might be incompatible with the essential Western ones. The question consists in whether the approaches could be reconciled. In any case, as Yannick argues, in actual practice, even in an egalitarian society, males and females do not live as equals, and “we in the egalitarian West can benefit from the insights of Muslim cultures about the ‘good’ of complementarity” (p. 203). Not to say that women are not always treated as equals in the West, and there is a lot of hypocrisy among westerners on sexual equality: “Male chauvinism is as much a Muslim illness as a Western one” (p. 178).

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In their conversation, Yannick and Malou have discussed the sharpest problems of the perception of Islam in the Western world. However, the overall purpose of the book seems to go beyond this particular subject. In the *Foreword*, Ivan Strenski (on his own behalf) expresses his main concern for the possibility of tolerating contradictory opinions, when the opposing sides are convinced of their own truth. Surely, this applies not only to the possibility of a mutual understanding between Islam and Western cultures. Strenski strives to demonstrate not just a “tolerant” dialogue, which is built around a common search and discovery of a single truth. His concept is a “pluralist” dialogue, resting on the co-existence of plentiful and diverse truths: “Pluralism means that rather than one option excluding the other, both may sometimes be true. When they [disputants—E. S.] cannot resolve differences, they note their differences and move on. They agree to disagree and draw the conclusions appropriate to each incident of disagreement” (p. xvii). At present, such a dialogue seems to be acquiring a greater significance in terms of ensuring a peaceful future for the humankind.



## BOOK REVIEW

**V. V. Lapin, A. I. Miller (Eds.). (2021).  
Simvolicheskie aspekty politiki pamiati  
v sovremennoi Rossii i vostochnoi Evrope  
[Symbolic aspects of the politics of memory  
in modern Russia and Eastern Europe].  
EUSP Press<sup>1</sup>**

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Memory studies are increasingly attracting research interest as an effective strategy for interpreting the past. Following this global trend, several Russian research centers have focused on producing the public discourse of the politics of memory, including the Russian Military Historical Society (RMHS), the Russian Historical Society (RHS), the Center for the Study of Cultural Memory and Symbolic Politics at the European University in St. Petersburg (EUSP.org) and others. Furthermore, Russian researches with diverse affiliations and provenance

<sup>1</sup> This review is an abridged and revised version of Rusakova O.F., Gribovod E.G., & Moiseenko Y.Yu. (2022). Diskurs politiki pamiati: Issledovaniia simvolicheskikh aspektov [Discourse on the politics of memory: Studies of symbolic aspects]. *Discourse-P*, 19(2), pp. 154–171. [https://doi.org/10.17506/18179568\\_2022\\_19\\_2\\_154](https://doi.org/10.17506/18179568_2022_19_2_154)

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have started to address commemorative practices with the purpose of unraveling manifestations of the politics of memory in different contexts (e.g., Kovba & Gribovod, 2020; Miller & Efremenko, 2020; Rusakova & Rusakov, 2019). Nevertheless, symbolic aspects of the politics of memory still remain for the most part on the periphery of contemporary academic discussions, which is the reason why our major concern has become to identify those prominent works revealing symbolic aspects in the structure of *memory studies* as a discipline. That is why we undertake a brief analytical review of the collection of scientific papers entitled *Symbolic Aspects of the Politics of Memory in Modern Russia and Eastern Europe*, published in St. Petersburg in 2021, edited by V. V. Lapin and A. I. Miller.

The “Introduction: Symbolic Politics and the Politics of Memory” to the collection written by O. Iu. Malinova and A. I. Miller, both acknowledged authorities in memory studies, continues debates on a methodological dilemma that has been plaguing researchers in the field of the politics of memory for decades. This dilemma is generally presented in terms of an enduring speculation on the hierarchy between politics of memory and symbolic politics; the issue of distinction between these two concepts has been repeatedly raised in previous publications (e.g., Malinova, 2015, 2018). In particular, a correlation scheme for such categories as historical politics, politics of memory, and symbolic politics was previously proposed by O. Iu. Malinova (for further details, see Malinova, 2018).

According to the presented hierarchy, the broadest concept here appears to be symbolic politics. Both O. Iu. Malinova and A. I. Miller claim symbolic politics to be a public activity aimed predominantly at producing different ways of interpreting social phenomena. It is important to highlight that both authors associate symbolic politics with an activity of competing to interpret reality in one particular way (Malinova & Miller, 2021, p. 11), i.e., there is a symbolic battlefield taking place where different mnemonic actors struggle against each other using different symbolic weapons to establish their dominance in the order of things. However, if anyone conducting research adheres to such a definition of symbolic politics, the question naturally arises: How does the concept of symbolic politics differ from the concept of political discourse? After all, if researchers are guided by Malinova’s interpretation, then they are bound to attribute the characteristics of symbolic politics to the political discourse as well. In this situation, it may be relevant to mention J. Torfing’s work, where a number of similar statements relate political discourse, rather than symbolic politics, to a certain way of producing interpretations of reality, with a competition emerging between these interpretations (Torfing, 2005, pp. 10–17). Similar features of political discourse may be discovered in works of Russian researchers (e.g., Rusakova & Rusakov, 2011, pp. 98–99).

It turns out to be rather unclear how to delimitate political usage of the past, politics of memory, and historical politics. According to O. Iu. Malinova, the former of the three concepts seems to be wider than the others and includes politics of memory. At the same time, historical politics should be treated as a particular case of politics of memory. Defining the concept in greater detail, O. Iu. Malinova and A. I. Miller suggest that politics of memory be perceived as a “governmental (non-governmental) activity aimed at asserting ideas about the collective past and forming the cultural

infrastructure to support these ideas, educational policy and sometimes legislative regulation” (p. 15). From our perspective, any conceptual distinguishing here seems rather irrelevant, since traditional historiography uses these concepts interchangeably (Achkasov, 2012, p. 137; Nelina, 2020, p. 249).

At the same time, we consider that politics of memory should be characterized mainly by its general focus on managing the collective memory. Whether it is by the state or by non-governmental mnemonic actors, the produced interpretations of the past aim to construct images, meanings, symbols, myths, or narratives, which are significant for a given society in terms of political values. This is why the national identity is established predominantly through commemorative practices, whereas social and cultural resources provide an infrastructure for governmental legitimacy.

It can be reasonably argued that politics of memory should be understood as a complexity of managing collective ideas about the past, which bears those specific elements of symbolic politics in its internal structure, and not vice versa. In this regard, we believe that the title of the collection of papers under review is entirely justified, since only politics of memory provides a background for any discussion of symbolism, including its entire repertoire of ideas, images, narratives, monuments, rituals, etc.

It is quite remarkable that a number of articles in this collection confirm the antagonistic trend established in some post-Soviet countries towards Russian politics of memory. Unfortunately, this governmental trend appears to monopolize the official political discourse in Eastern Europe, with any other interpretation of the historical past being perceived as an ideological sabotage of unity and national security. Miserable consequences of this trend include legislative activity, which has been intensified in many post-Soviet states, imposing legal limitations on any attempts to challenge the governmental politics of memory. Due to such governmental policy, the destiny of post-Soviet nations has been deliberately victimized in reference to their experience of the Soviet past, with myth-making of the *Holodomor* being one of the most illustrative examples. This toxic discourse of victimization, which appears to be invulnerable to any constructive criticism, works simultaneously for ensuring the national security of a state (Miller & Efremenko, 2020, pp. 13–14).

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## BOOK REVIEW

# A Theology of History: In Search of a Method

**Review of the book by Priest M. V. Legeyev (2021). *Bogoslovie istorii kak nauka. Metod.* [Theology of history as a science. Method]. Sankt-Peterburgskaia Dukhovnaia Akademiia.**

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The monograph *Theology of history as a science. Method* (2021) is the result of the meticulous work of Priest Mikhail Legeyev, an Associate Professor of the Department of Theology at St. Petersburg Theological Academy. The author is already quite well-known to the Russian reader for his writings focusing on the problems of the theology of history (the book under review is the last in the research triptych<sup>1</sup>) as well as for his publications on patristics and ecclesiology.

In the monograph under consideration, M. V. Legeyev continues to realize the objective he set in the previous works. Namely, his task is “to form a new direction of scientific and theological thought” (p. 7), which, in his opinion, is the theology of history. The book consists of four chapters. The first two chapters are the programmatic basis of the highlighted problems. Chapters three and four are rather more supplementary in nature although they are closely related to the subject matter of the monograph, which will be discussed later.

Chapter 1 “What is Theology of History Today?” emphasizes the role of the Church as “the connecting link between all historical processes” and defines the theology of history itself as a kind of self-reflection of the Church. Thus, theology of history enters the disciplinary boundaries of ecclesiology, or, in the author’s words, is a “satellite” of ecclesiology (p. 13). It should be immediately noted that M. V. Legeyev follows the traditional orthodox understanding of the Church, which is based on the patristic heritage, the provisions of the first seven Ecumenical Councils as well as the later Eastern Christian tradition. He sees signs of deviation from the foundations of the true Tradition in the historical divisions of Christianity. At the same time, this study does not offer an explicit opposition

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<sup>1</sup> In addition to the work under consideration, the following monographs of the author came out: Legeyev M. V. (2018); Legeyev M. V. (2019).

between Eastern and Western ecclesiologies, and the author's task is obviously not the apologetics for the Eastern Christian ecclesiasticism against alternative concepts of the Church (except the intra-Orthodox discussion presented in Chapter 3).

The author discriminates between the field of the theology of history and historical knowledge with its methodology. According to M. V. Legeyev, theology of history belongs to systematic, not historical theology. Dissimilar to historical science, theology of history is focused on comprehending the matrix of *total*, or *universal* history, and not on studying individual historical processes or even "the entire totality of events" (p. 14). Its subject matter is, according to the author, "the pivotal points of history", which have a transcendent source. In this regard, theology of history uses "globally general concepts" [...] it can even discourse on what does not yet exist [...], considering and analyzing the general meanings of historical processes" (p. 17). The author admits that at present there is no developed methodology of the theology of history, but he believes that it should belong to the field of dogmatic theology.

I would like to remind the reader that the problem of opposing the historical method to the dogmatic method in academic theology has existed for over a century. The famous German thinker E. Troeltsch analyzed it most clearly in his short essay *On the Historical and Dogmatic Method in Theology* (Troeltsch, 1913) in 1898. In this work Troeltsch, on the one hand, carefully analyzed the difficulties in applying the historical method to theology (relativism and so on). On the other hand, he pointed out the decline in the interest in the "old dogmatic method"<sup>2</sup>. The reason for the latter process, according to Troeltsch, was the rooting of the dogmatic method in beginnings completely disengaged from history.

The problem of the correlation and coexistence of these two methods seems truly fundamental since it is included in the antinomic sphere of the basic problems of theology, namely the correlation of the transcendent and the immanent, the temporal and the eternal, the divine and the human.

First of all, the author of the monograph sets himself the objective of defining the key aspects of the theology of history. These, in his opinion, should be the acting forces (subjects) and the scale of historical processes as well as a range of issues related to identifying the patterns of these processes and their systematization. Drawing on the biblical and patristic thought, the author proposes a classification of the subjects of history. Each subject is a dichotomous unit divided into two antipodes: (a) the Church and the world, (b) secular (worldly) society and church community, (c) secular and church individuals. M. V. Legeyev calls this a "mirror-ternary" classification since there are three different-scale acting subjects of history contrasted at each level (p. 21).

The study emphasizes that the emergence of historical patterns from the earliest stage of Christian thought to the XX<sup>th</sup>–XXI<sup>st</sup> centuries was supposed by theologians to depend on "an inner-trinitarian arrangement, in the life of God Himself" (p. 26). In this regard, the author identifies two key trajectories in history: (a) the Revelation of God

<sup>2</sup> "Ist für den historisch Empfindenden die alte dogmatische Methode ungangbar" (the old dogmatic method turns out to be unsuitable for a person with a sense of history) (Troeltsch, 2013, p. 737). An analysis of the historical and dogmatic methods E. Troeltsch discussed in his essay can be found in the paper by Lavrentiev (2012). Additionally, the same publication provides a further rethinking and elaboration of the methods performed by another major German theologian and a theorist of the modern theology of history.



in history and (b) “the reflection of this image of the trinitarian revelation in the life of man and the Church” (p. 26). It also raises the question about the relationship between the laws of history and man’s free will, which, in M. Legeyev’s opinion, is resolved in the theology of Maximus the Confessor (VII century) with the help of the logoi doctrine. Based on the model of Revelation in history and its reception in the world, the author defines the following key principles of the patterns of historical processes: trinitarian, christological, ecclesiological, and cosmological.

In the conclusion of the first chapter, the author speaks of the “scientific and theological models of history.” The researcher himself mainly develops a *three-stage* model (the shadow of the image, the image, the mystery) in his work. Nevertheless, he also schematically outlines a *sevenfold* model (based on the text of the Book of Revelation of John the Apostle) which, in his view, remains an “unsurpassed paradigm” of scientific and theological history modeling (p. 40).

Chapter 2 of the publication (“Typology of History”) is central in terms of content since it is here that the methodological principle of the theology of history is proposed. As noted previously, the trinitarian and christological modes of God’s action constitute its basis. M.V. Legeyev believes that grasping God’s *modus operandi* makes it possible to understand the logic of historical processes and as a result to model universal history.

It should be noted that modeling the history of creation in the image of inner-trinitarian life is a rather difficult task since the compared ontological dimensions are fundamentally different<sup>3</sup>. Nevertheless, since the Creator is the source of creation, it is still possible to speak of their connection. From this perspective, the point at issue is, in the first place, the mode of God’s revelation and God’s mode of action in the world (for the author of the monograph, this concept – τρόπος τῆς ἐνέργειας – is one of the core ideas, p. 54). The revelation of the One God in the Old Testament era, the prophecy of Christ and His soteriological action within history, the promised action of the Holy Spirit in the world—all these stages can be traced both in the biblical and in subsequent Christian discourses. It goes without saying the ecclesiastical aspect of history is also relevant here since it is the Church that is the main bearer of the divinely revealed Revelation and the guardian of Tradition. Therefore, it is not surprising that the author of the monograph considers the Church to be the central subject of history.

It is particularly remarkable that to M.V. Legeyev both the modern idea of development (“the process of the development of church dogmatic thought”, p. 32) and the idea of static character inherent in classical theism are equally relevant. According to the latter, history moves along already given transcendental patterns. The researcher combines these ideas defining the “progress of the Church” as a change of epochs, “characterizing its internal maturation” (p. 33). This progress is based on transcendental principles which are prototypes of mundane reality (above all, the reality of the Church, but also, to a certain extent, the reality of the world).

<sup>3</sup> Implicitly, the work touches upon the problems of immanent and economic triadology which the author interprets drawing on ancient sources. Nevertheless, he does not demonstrate familiarity with modern discussions on this issue. See, for example, the papers by Olson (1983) and Lavrentiev (2014).

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Actually, these ideas set the agenda of the study, namely the search for the *patterns* of history revealed while correlating the historical stages of the Church formation with divine ontological predicates. M.V. Legeyev calls this method of correlation (correspondence) *typological* (derived from ancient Greek τύπος – image). Based on the knowledge obtained from Revelation (the Holy Scriptures and Sacred Tradition), the author believes it is possible to model the course of history. At the same time, the dialectic of the transcendent (the sacred prototype) and its embodiment in the earthly reality (the image), which the researcher calls the “two-trajectory model”, is supplemented by the internal dialectic of the opposition within the framework of the historical process itself, i. e. the opposition of the world to God.

The author’s line of thought regarding the implementation of history modeling (and in this regard, in a sense, forecasting the future) resembles the logic of already well-established historiosophical conceptions. This is classical Christian providentialism, according to which the action of Divine Providence predetermines the course of history. One can also see similarities to the secular concepts of historical determinism which implies rigid causation of the ongoing world processes (from global to individual). As a result, the course of history turns out to be predetermined, regular and, in principle, computable. In both cases, the problem of an individual’s freedom and unpredictability remains unresolved, which destroys the harmony of both theistic and secular historiosophical models of predestination. I consider this issue to be also problematic for the model proposed in the work under review.

According to the researcher, the law-making principles of history are *logoi*, i. e. “the meanings of everything that exists”. They are associated with the hypostatic wills of God (more precisely, the second divine Person of the Holy Trinity) with which “God the Son[...] organizes history” (p. 62). However, the main difficulty lies in the reconciliation of divine wills with the free wills of particular individuals. Basically, M.V. Legeyev (following Augustine of Hippo) names two possible options: either there is an agreement between the human and the divine wills (synergism) or opposition of the former to the latter. In any case, however, the outcome of history is predetermined by its eschatological completion which will summarize the historical existence of mankind in general and of each individual in particular.

The bottom line is that two entities are of interest: God and man. In this context, according to the conception provided in the book, the mode of human existence is realized at different levels, namely individual, social, and universal. This mode can be synergistic (consistent with divine will). In the work reviewed it is also called *ecclesiological* since its implementation takes place in the Church (the image of the Holy Trinity). On the other hand, it can be “*ecclesiofugal*”, i. e. occurring outside the Church and opposed to divine teleology. In general, the typological paradigm of history created by the author really fits into the framework of traditional Christian dogmatic theology (soteriology, asceticism, ecclesiology, and eschatology) while demonstrating a specific systematic elaboration

Chapter 3 (“Ecclesiological Issues of Modernity and the Theology of History”) is an excellently developed and engrossing, but at the same time quite autonomous study focusing on the issues of the existence of the Church and its self-reflection.

Nevertheless, it is undoubtedly related to the problems of the theology of history and in a sense is a further elaboration of one of its aspects, namely the historical nature of churchness.

Chapter 4 (“The Methodological Significance of Tradition in the XXI<sup>st</sup> Century”) does not focus on the problems of the theology of history directly, but again it rather refers to developments in ecclesiology. According to M.V. Legeyev, “ecclesiology itself will act here [...] to a greater extent as a historical example illustrating the laws of functioning of Tradition as the driving force of history” (p. 204).

The scientific nature of the theology of history, according to the provisions of the reviewed work, consists in finding the *laws*, or *consistent patterns* of history. In the light of revealing and viewing such patterns through the prism of the theological perception of reality, it is indeed possible to speak of an attempt at developing a scientific (albeit purely theoretical) approach to history. However, whether this is sufficient to create a separate discipline within systematic theology (truly systematic, not historical, according to M.V. Legeyev) remains an open question. I believe the emergence of the theology of history as a separate discipline is unlikely on account of the already established architecture of theological knowledge.

It is also worth noting that the theology of history can hardly be called a “new development in scientific and theological thought” as the monograph argues. Moreover, this is true even in the context of the modern theology era. The point is that in Western academic theology this approach has been developed for about two centuries. Strictly speaking, it dates back to F.C. von Baur’s writings. Moreover, it experienced something of a renaissance in the second half of the XX<sup>th</sup> century in the works by W. Pannenberg, J. Moltmann, J. Daniélou, H.U. von Balthasar and many others. However, this research direction can indeed be considered a new trend in the context of scientific theology in modern Russia. Its relevance and novelty lie, perhaps, not so much in the explication of such already known problematic oppositions as history and dogma, time and eternity, God and creation, transcendence and immanence, but in new perspectives of understanding historicity, i.e. through the prism of the patristic tradition, in the contexts of both the specific features of Eastern ecclesiology and the Russian philosophical and theological tradition.

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## INSTRUCTION FOR AUTHORS

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Act	<i>Mental Health Systems Act</i> , 41 U.S.C. § 9403 (1988).
Audio and visual media	Taupin, B. (1975). Someone saved my life tonight [Recorded by Elton John]. On Captain fantastic and the brown dirt cowboy [CD]. London: Big Pig Music Limited (place of publication is optional). Author, A. (Producer). (2009, December 2). <i>Title of podcast</i> [Audio podcast]. (The website name) <a href="https://www.w3.org">https://www.w3.org</a> Producer, P. P. (Producer), & Director, D. D. (Director). (Date of publication). <i>Title of motion picture</i> [Motion picture]. Country of origin: Studio or distributor. Smith, A. (Writer), & Miller, R. (Director). (1989). Title of episode [Television series episode]. In A. Green (Executive Producer), Series. New York, NY: WNET. Miller, R. (Producer). (1989). The mind [Television series]. New York, NY: WNET.
Database	Author, A. A., Author, B. B., & Author, A. A. (2002). A study of enjoyment of peas. <i>Title of the Journal</i> , 8(3). Retrieved February 20, 2003, from the PsycARTICLES database.
Dataset	Author. (2011). <i>National Statistics Office monthly means and other derived variables</i> [Data set]. Retrieved March 6, 2011, ( <i>The website name</i> ) <a href="https://www.w3.org">https://www.w3.org</a> If the dataset is updated regularly, use the year of retrieval in the reference, and using the retrieval date is also recommended.
Computer program	Rightsholder, A. A. (2010). <i>Title of program</i> (Version number) [Description of form]. Location: Name of producer. Name of software (Version Number) [Computer software]. Location: Publisher. If the program can be downloaded or ordered from a website, give this information in place of the publication information.

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