GLOBALISATION, GEOPOLITICS, AND GENDER IN PROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATION

Edited by
Louise Mullany and Stephanie Schnurr

Globalisation, Geopolitics, and Gender in Professional Communication

This edited collection investigates the linguistics of globalisation, geopolitics and gender in workplace cultures in a range of different contemporary international settings. The chapters examine how issues of globalisation, gender and geopolitics affect professionals in different workplace contexts, including domestic workers; IT professionals; teachers, university staff; engineers; entrepreneurs; CEOs of different corporates including locally based businesses as well as multinationals; farmers; co-operative leaders; NGO leaders; bloggers; healthcare assistants and caregivers.

Taking different sociolinguistic approaches to exploring language and the geopolitics of gender at work in Dubai, Kuwait, Kenya, Uganda, Morocco, Nigeria, Malaysia, Turkey, Belgium, Switzerland, New Zealand, Uganda, the UK and the USA, each chapter focuses on a range of salient geopolitical issues which often have global applicability, but which may also be subject to more localised socio-cultural variation. The chapters critically discuss issues of gendered language, perceptions and representations of workplace cultures, discrimination, the role of gendered stereotyping and deeply ingrained socio-cultural myths about gender and the importance of examining the intersections of identity – all of which continue to persist as barriers to equality and inclusion in workplaces worldwide.

Despite the variation and diversity in professions and geopolitical contexts captured across the chapters, remarkably similar issues of gender discrimination and persisting inequalities are identified and critically discussed, thus pointing to the global nature of these issues.

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Stephanie Schnurr

To Chris and Ted (L.M.)
To Gaby and Kurt (S.S.)

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Acknowledgements

1 Globalisation, geopolitics and gender

Key issues for professional communication

Louise Mullany and Stephanie Schnurr

1. Introduction

As co-editors, we initially conceptualised this collection before the COVID-19 pandemic began. The disruptive effects of the pandemic across all workplaces globally in terms of gender relations have been rather unprecedented. COVID-19 has presented all of us, in every corner of the world, with very stark reminders of how gender, globalisation and geopolitics are deeply intertwined in complex and nuanced ways. Regardless of the geopolitical context, multiple advancements towards gender equality have been lost with astonishing rapidity. It is working women who have been most often called upon to manage households and provide childcare and schooling, whilst taking on other caring responsibilities (McKinsey 2020, 2021). This role-allocation has most often been deeply embedded in traditional sex-role stereotyping (Mullany, Howard, and Vere 2020; Warren and Lyonette 2021), which manifests itself through a wide variety of communicative practices, based on deeply engrained and inaccurate binary stereotypes of what constitutes 'women's' language and 'men's' language (see Holmes and Stubbe 2003).

Women who have continued to work around the world have reported significant mental health problems in trying to juggle multiple role responsibilities and identities (Almeida et al. 2020). Others have been forced to leave their jobs or have ended up considerably minimising their working hours. In a global survey of the impact of the pandemic on women in the workplace, Deloitte (2020) discovered that almost seven out of ten women worldwide have experienced negative shifts in their workplace routines, which will hamper their career progression as a result. The report describes a 'heavy toll' (Deloitte 2020, 12) for women in the workplace, with 70% reporting serious concerns of long-term damage to their career prospects and 35% seriously considering leaving their professional careers due to lack of work–life balance. Overall, 82% of working women reported that the pandemic has negatively affected their lives. On the other hand, studies investigating the impact of the pandemic on men in the workplace have consistently shown that they have been far less

affected, particularly in terms of career progression. For example, Rogers (2020) found that, in the USA alone, men have been promoted three times as much as women during COVID-19.

Whilst there are observable similarities between the bias and discrimination faced by women globally, as illustrated earlier, it is also critical to consider how experiences will differ based on the geopolitical situation, within different socio-cultural contexts. Furthermore, it is also important to recognise that the intersectionality of our identities will affect our workplace experiences. This is part of a broader theoretical shift towards intersectionality in the field of language and gender studies. We would argue that it is critical for gender not to be seen in a vacuum, but instead to be seen as part of an intersecting matrix of identity features that influence how we are given access to work, and how we are perceived and evaluated at work, including race, ethnicity, sexuality, social class, educational level, religion and disability, alongside any other characteristics that may be deemed to be relevant, which may also depend on geopolitical context.

McKinsey (2021) investigated elements of intersectionality in a study of the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on women at work. They reported that three groups of women have experienced the greatest challenges during COVID-19: working mothers, women in senior management positions and black women. Women in these groups were most likely to leave their career if they had children under 10. Women in heterosexual, dual-career couples with children also reported large increases in their time spent on household tasks.

There have also been notable increases in reports of gender-based violence globally during the pandemic (UN Women 2020), including increases in domestic violence, and it is important to highlight this as part of an overall changed picture of the workplace, in relation to geographical space, at a local level. Some physical workplace spaces became inaccessible to many women, with legal mandates to work only at home, online. The denial of physical access to workplaces and workplace peer-groups has thus arguably closed off an important area for accessing support and providing respite from potentially abusive situations. Additionally, women who have had their job roles change to working solely online have reported increases in online abuse, marginalisation and discrimination (Rights of Women 2021, 3).

Taken together, all of this evidence points to an annihilation of many of the advancements and progress made in workplace gender equality, as a global trend, which is particularly worrying. The speed with which these changes have taken place across all sectors of the global workforce has arguably thrown long-planned gender and workplace equality goals, such as the United Nation's *Sustainable Development Goals 2030*, into disarray.

Although the chapters in this collection do not focus directly on empirical professional communication data during the pandemic, the themes that we draw on will figure heavily in workplace practices worldwide

within the backdrop of COVID-19 and subsequent pandemic recovery for many years to come. The pandemic has exacerbated what were already challenging issues relating to globalisation, geopolitics and gender and the most crucial of these issues are focused on as key themes in this book. We argue that the interconnectedness between gender, geopolitics and globalisation has been brought to the fore like never before – this collection thus provides a timely exploration of the critical issues of gender, globalisation and geopolitics through an intersectional lens, taking stock of key issues and looking again at how we can genuinely work towards making progress with global gender equality in the world of work.

2. Key themes and definitions

All of the chapters in this volume are united by their focus on the linguistics of globalisation, geopolitics and gender in workplace cultures through original, empirical data taken from those working in a range of professional workplaces. We aimed to bring together a plethora of professional communication data from different geographical regions including Australasia, Africa, Europe, North America, the Middle East and South-East Asia, covering rural as well as urban geopolitical contexts. Our collection incorporates data from Dubai, Kuwait, Kenya, Uganda, Morrocco, Nigeria, Malaysia, Turkey, Belgium, Switzerland, New Zealand, Scotland, England, Wales and the USA.

We also aimed for a broad coverage of different types and sizes of professions. Our collection thus includes a variety of workplace domains: large multinational corporations, small and medium-sized businesses, NGOs, co-operatives, farming, IT organisations, engineering, healthcare organisations, including hospitals and nursing homes, political institutions, and educational establishments, including schools and universities, amongst others. In terms of how we are defining the category of 'professional' working within these different workplaces, we follow the definition of Mullany (2020, 2), who expanded on Gunnarsson's (1997) initial work – in this volume, a 'professional' is defined as follows:

> Any individual who has a workplace responsibility including all interactions between lay person(s) and those who occupy professional role responsibilities . . . [enabling] studies of those who engage in non-paid work, including voluntary occupations with charities and NGOs to be included, as well as those who engage in work but who do not know with any degree of certainly that this will be financially rewarded.
>
> (Mullany 2020, 2)

Application of this broader definition of the identity category 'professional', to include unpaid or unrewarded work, is important to ensure

that different workplace practices globally are considered and that a traditional Western view of the professions and corporations is not used to universalise experience. It also enables work that takes place within any global domestic spaces to be included. In the subsequent chapters, workplace data are analysed from professionals with role responsibilities in the following roles: domestic workers, IT professionals, teachers, university lecturers and professors, university administrative staff, engineers, entrepreneurs, CEOs of different corporates, including businesses in specific local contexts, as well as multinationals, operations and communications managers of corporates, communications managers, NGO leaders, bloggers, politicians, healthcare assistants and caregivers. By focusing on such different workplace domains and a variety of professional roles, we are able to move well beyond the dominance of older studies in the field of gender and professional communication which have solely focused on white, middle-class, white-collar, corporate workplaces.

In the collection, we are defining geopolitics in a broad sense to refer to relationships between nation-states as well as inter-state relations, in terms of how gender and other intersecting identity characteristics bring inequality and a lack of social and political justice through the lens of professional communication. From a feminist perspective, our authors can all be seen to be examining issues of harm caused by gender-based social division and a lack of social justice and equality (Hyndman 2000), based on gender and its intersections with other categories that bring discrimination, bias and violence, including race, ethnicity, age, social class, religion and tribe (see also King this volume, for a more detailed discussion of 'feminist geopolitics').

Taken collectively, the chapters critically discuss issues of gendered language, perceptions and representations of workplace cultures, discrimination, the role of gendered stereotyping and deeply ingrained socio-cultural myths about gender and the importance of examining the intersections of identity, all of which persist as barriers to equality and inclusion in workplaces worldwide. The authors all demonstrate how an understanding of the mechanisms of linguistics and professional communication can be of applied practical use and benefit to those professionals and organisations who are the focus of the research. Each chapter examines a range of salient geopolitical issues which can have global applicability, but which may also be subject to more localised socio-cultural variation, dependent upon geographical place and space, including the laws, customs and cultures of particular workplace contexts. As an overall summary, the key issues of contemporary concern for language, gender and professional communication researchers explored in the volume are as follows:

1) Sex-role stereotyping within professions and within the home. Sex-role stereotyping perpetuates the status quo in terms of the types of

professional roles that individuals are socially conditioned to see as socially and culturally applicable to them. It leads to negative evaluation of communicative competence if the gender category of the professional does not match the expected professional role stereotype (e.g., women as nurses versus men as senior consultants).

2) The interrelated leadership stereotype 'think leader, think male'. This accords both with the perspective of reifying stereotypes and myths of what it means to be effective, productive and credible professionals. It also reinforces gender as a binary category, leading to the negative evaluation of those positioned from non-traditional groups as 'interlopers' (Eckert 2001).

3) The impact of migration and displacement on workplace identity, including the intersections of gender, race, ethnicity, religion and social class, and how this can be negatively exacerbated by stereotypes and myths.

4) The language of gender discrimination, bias and exclusion, including from an intersectional perspective, when gender intersects with race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, nationality, social class, disability and any other protected characteristics, exacerbating the levels of bias and discrimination that can be experienced at the interface of identity categories. The levels of bias, prejudice and discrimination will vary greatly geopolitically – for example, homosexuality is still illegal in 69 countries in the world; the experiences of lesbian, gay bisexual and transgender people in these geographical locations will be different from others where sexuality is a protected characteristic under equality law, for example, in the UK, though having legal provision does not mean that discrimination no longer takes place.

5) The sociolinguistics of family and work, including additional role responsibilities of being a parent or caregiver.

While some chapters celebrate the successes of those professionals who have broken into environments where sex-role stereotyping is strong, others remind us of dominant and persistent gender stereotypes, myths and powerful ideologies that complicate and, in some geopolitical spaces, prevent flexibility and crossing of gendered expectations and norms for different delivery of professional workplace roles. Gender, alongside other identity categories, remains a critical issue – in all of these domains and across a wide variety of different professions.

Despite the variation and diversity in professions and geopolitical contexts captured across the chapters, similar issues of gender discrimination and inequalities are identified. This provides us with evidence of global gender issues which persist, despite geopolitical context. These issues include the unmarked use of gendered language, the persistence of gendered perceptions and representations of workplace culture, as well as widespread experiences of gendered expectations, stereotypes, and

discrimination. Although the forms and experiences of these issues often differ due to the specific geopolitical contexts and professional domains in which they occur, the larger gender ideologies and gender stereotypes they orient to are global in nature. It is precisely this interaction between local practices and everyday lived experiences, on the one hand, and global ideologies and assumptions, on the other, that the chapters in this book capture, unpack, and critically discuss.

This collection brings together compatible methodological and analytical approaches, with authors drawing upon contemporary linguistics methods. It is notable that four of the ten chapters in the collection draw on interviews as a data collection method, where authors have captured professional life histories and linguistic evaluations of lived workplace experiences, either personal or vicarious, through reflective interviewing. All interviews in the collection are co-constructed forms of discourse production between interviewers and interviewees. In terms of linguistic analysis, this enables the content of what is said to be analysed alongside the interactions themselves, as the interview data becomes spoken interactional linguistic data in its own right, thus providing fruitful analysis from a sociolinguistic or discourse analytical perspective. Therefore, in this volume, we have interview data analysed via sociolinguistic narrative analysis (Chapters 3 and 4), via conversation analysis (Chapter 6), and via interactional sociolinguistics (Chapter 8). Other data collection sources include those based on digital technologies, through mediatised, global online broadcast discourse from YouTube (Chapter 2), and digital discourse analysis of online discussion forums (Chapter 5). We also have the analysis of spoken professional interactions, a more traditional and established data source for professional communication, using interactional sociolinguistics (Chapters 7 and 9) and linguistic pragmatics (Chapter 10).

All chapters broaden out their focus from the language that takes place within workplaces as specific geopolitical spaces, with their own geographies, economies and demographic challenges, to investigate broader political issues of gender politics, directly relating to globalised workplaces. These workplaces have all been disrupted further by COVID-19, thus exacerbating some of the issues drawn upon here, including the intersections of gender, ethnic and social class stereotypes; gender migration and displacement, and the sociolinguistics of family and work.

3. Overview of the chapters

We begin our exploration of contemporary issues in gender, geopolitics and globalisation in the workplace in Chapter 2, where Stephanie Schnurr brings together a range of different geopolitical workplace sites through the medium of mediatised discourse from the TEDx global broadcasting platform. Schnurr explores the complex global issue of the

sociolinguistics of family and work in stories told by prominent leaders in TEDx talks, reaching both local and global audiences. The speakers are employed as professional women across a range of different geopolitical contexts, all with high-status leadership positions, including Asia, the Middle East, Africa, and North America; they also work across different sectors including as CEOs of large multinational corporates, and as successful entrepreneurs. These women narrate their professional workplace experiences from their culturally based positions, and all have been asked to focus their narratives specially on gender-based issues in the workplace. However, what emerges in the analysis is that their experiences of gender discrimination and bias bear remarkable similarities. In sharing their experiences with global mediatised audiences, the women recount their often-localised responses and strategies to overcoming the global challenges experienced by women around the world when attempting to combine family and work. While some of the women's stories identify and criticise the global nature of these issues and problematise underlying gender ideologies – such as the prevalence of hegemonic masculine discourses of leadership and gendered expectations about role segregation in the family – other stories firmly remain within the localised experiences of the storytellers and serve to reinforce rather than challenge local and global gender stereotypes and discriminatory practices.

Chapter 3 focuses on the geopolitical space of East Africa, with Masibo Lumala and Louise Mullany exploring narrative representations of gendered leadership told by East African women in Kenya and Uganda, two key country members of the East African Community (EAC). The EAC was established in 1967 and currently aims to unify attempts at gender equality across nation-state boundaries. Their data focus on women who have attempted political candidature for their respective national parliaments in both rural and urban districts and counties. This chapter identifies and analyses key challenges of addressing gender inequalities in the political domain, experienced by professional women at different career stages and in different leadership positions. The narratives are analysed using frameworks from the sociolinguistics of identity, focusing on the life history narratives of political candidates, MPs and NGO leaders who have previously stood for national parliament; the linguistic analysis identifies global gender issues, such as the enduring global stereotype 'think leader, think male', alongside socio-cultural issues that are part of current East African tribal and cultural practices. The damaging experiences of gendered-based violence in the political workplace are also explored. The authors highlight setting up a website and book resource of narratives from women leaders in East Africa, to be used as training tools and information sources for policy makers, NGOs, educationalists and gender-based charities. Some of the key challenges that these women describe are evident as broader patterns and appear in different geopolitical contexts, as the next chapter further illustrates.

In Chapter 4, Işık-Güler and Erdoğan-Öztürk draw on the sociolinguistics of gender, language and leadership in Turkey to explore the leadership negotiations and discourses of women in academic leadership positions at the intersection of their professional and gender identities in a university context. Analysing the narratives of leaders in this Higher Education context, this chapter illustrates how academic women construct, negotiate and reflect on their leadership practices and identities in their personal narratives, and also how they navigate and envisage gendered dynamics and conflicts within their own workplace cultures in the discourses they produce. Observations from this localised setting reflect and often contribute to the persistence of global gendered stereotypes, representations and biases in academic leadership discourses. By focusing on the personal experiences and practices in the local context, a promising path is opened up to rethink the global.

In Chapter 5, Melissa Yoong elaborates on the gendered issues first described by Schnurr in Chapter 2 around the sociolinguistics of family and work, this time in the south-east Asian context of Malaysia. Focusing on low-paid female migrant domestic workers, she examines how these vulnerable and often-exploited women regularly experience multi-layered forms of discrimination – by the law as well as the household in which they work – on the basis of their gender, class, race, nationality and the type of labour they perform (Elias and Louth 2016). Focusing on digital data, Yoong analyses digital language through posts on an empowerment website for women working in Malaysia. She discusses these posts in relation to research reports on gender gaps in workforce participation and leadership in Malaysia. This chapter identifies the challenges that women face as they navigate their way into leadership positions and how this intersects with gendered, classed and racialised inequalities in societies that marginalise and too frequently ignore women working as domestic workers. Findings show how these websites communicate a veneer of equality of privileged (Malaysian) women by drawing on the language of female empowerment, diversity and inclusivity, while at the same time excluding and silencing the migrant domestic professionals who are not deemed to have enough capital-enhancing potential and who instead experience significant discrimination. Yoong's work neatly illustrates the importance of not viewing women working in the same geopolitical space as a homogeneous mass, but instead looking at the more complex and subtle ways in which women are discriminated against on the basis of other, intersecting identity characteristics including social class, race, nationality and job roles.

Chapter 6, co-authored by Catho Jacobs, Dorien Van De Mieroop and Colette Van Laar, investigates the complex relationship between migration, gender, ethnicity, religion and professional identities. In particular, they analyse narratives of professional women with a Turkish or Moroccan migration background, living and working in Belgium. The authors

describe how these women 'fight against a set of prejudices and stereotypes in order to ascertain their position and construct themselves as competent professionals in the workplace' (Clifton, Schnurr, and Van De Mieroop 2019). Focusing on the experiences of this under-represented group of professionals, Jacobs et al. identify gender, ethnic and religious stereotypes these women are faced with in their workplaces and describe some of the discursive processes through which some women manage to successfully navigate these stereotypes. They also conduct interviews and elicit narratives with men migrants, and they observe how women who are successful may find it easier to navigate stereotypes and prejudice than men from migratory backgrounds. Nevertheless, they argue that this is due to the very specific occupational segregation of the migratory job market particular to Belgium, and they conclude that the experiences of migrants in other geopolitical contexts are likely to be much different.

In Chapter 7, Janet Holmes and Meredith Marra identify and critically discuss unrecognised gender bias in everyday workplace talk. Analysing authentic audio-recorded and video-recorded interactions that occurred in a range of different workplaces in New Zealand, they illustrate the impact of the gender order (Connell 1987) and what Holmes (2018) has coined the 'culture order', as well as the intersection between the two in everyday workplace interactions between colleagues. The authors focus on corporate settings where behaviours stereotypically associated with masculinity are the norm, as well nursing and aged care, which are often described as gender-segregated occupations, based on traditional sex-role stereotyping. They demonstrate that gender bias and gender stereotyping remain problematic issues in local and global contexts, and they suggest, as a way forward, concrete means of identifying unconscious biases which continue to impact on workplace practices.

Chapter 8, by Joelle Loew, explores the experiences of gender discrimination experienced by women in the male profession of 'agile' IT-based workplaces in Switzerland, the UK and the USA. A particular focus of this chapter is on identifying discursive strategies through which the notion of work is re-gendered in the narratives of these IT professionals. Although the professionals who participated in this study live and work in different geopolitical contexts, the issues and gendered practices that emerged during the interviews are remarkably similar and include gender stereotyping, bias and discrimination. In recounting their experiences, the interviewees draw on the underlying gender order, which they both *defy* and *reify* simultaneously, as they do – or do not – make gender relevant in their accounts.

Chapter 9 focuses on the profession of teaching, in particular, to children aged 4–11, known as primary school children in the UK setting where the research has taken place, through the work of Joanne McDowell. Whilst the data focuses on the UK context, its findings have much broader applicability to the global workplace domain of teaching, where

deeply entrenched patterns of sex-role stereotyping have resulted in very few men entering the profession in a primary school age setting. McDowell draws on authentic, real-life data by recording classroom interactions, and she analyses these using the tools and techniques of interactional sociolinguistics. She assesses how male teachers are often employed due to the biologically essentialist view that they will be better disciplinarians in the classroom; the reverse of this is that men cannot effectively communicate affectively in terms of giving pastoral care to children, as affective talk is stereotypically associated with women's speech styles. As McDowell points out, it is critical to increase public awareness of the stereotyping of speech styles in the professions to break down these deeply ingrained global patterns of who is 'most' suitable for particular professional careers – instead of using gender stereotypes of perceived communicative behaviour, it is crucial for recruiters within schools and all members of wider society to examine empirical evidence from authentic classroom discourse and other workplaces to firstly realise and then accept that the communication of teachers is based upon the environment in which they work and the skills required for the job role, and not on inaccurate, essentialist notions of how 'all men' and 'all women' speak.

In Chapter 10, Victoria Howard explores geopolitics, gender and intersectional identities in the field of politics, focusing on the interplay between national identities, gender and social class in the UK parliament. Her data are taken from the politicians in the upper chamber of the UK's House of Lords, where politicians choose to deliberately invoke national identity categories as Scottish, English or Welsh to make particular arguments based on their own national identities in their political speech delivery. Although the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland still exists, since 2014, relationships have become increasingly fraught and fractured geopolitically, following the Scottish referendum in 2014 and the UK's European Union (EU) 'Brexit' referendum which resulted in a vote to leave the EU in 2016. All countries are represented in the House of Lords; however, many politicians in the Lords are not elected, but are instead born into these seats of political power due to being members of the aristocracy and/or the British upper-classes, known as Hereditary Peers, with seats automatically passed on from generation to generation. Whilst Scotland stayed part of the UK in 2014, since the UK left the European Union following the Brexit vote of 2016, calls for new referenda are firmly on the political agenda – Scotland and Northern Ireland both voted to stay in the EU, but the majority vote in England and Wales was to leave the EU, which eventually happened in 2020. Howard focuses on the pragmatic linguistic strategy of humour to examine how politicians invoke humour in ways that foreground their national, gendered and classed identities in complex and nuanced ways when engaging in professional political communication. She critically examines the House of Lords as a masculinised social space, and as a domain that is

still very heavily male-dominated, thus restricting the types of discourse strategies that women politicians can use to be evaluated successfully and legitimately in these powerful spaces. Howard also considers the wider implications of her work for global political spheres.

In the final chapter, Brian King provides a critical reflection and discussion of the global issues identified across the previous chapters as an Epilogue. He discusses the local and global implications of the observations made about gender at work in different geopolitical contexts. This chapter thereby continues the discussion of contemporary issues at the interface of gender, globalisation and the workplace. By referring to the key recurring themes around navigating gender stereotypes and discrimination across the different cultural, linguistic and geopolitical contexts, this chapter spells out the implications of the empirical evidence provided in the previous chapters and explicitly links them to current discussions of the geopolitical dimensions of language, gender and sexuality scholarship in increasingly fractious, global workplaces and domains, many of which are still undergoing substantial change and transitions as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The epilogue concludes by outlining future directions for research.

4. Emergent issues and wider implications

Employing a variety of different methods and approaches and drawing on different empirical data have enabled us as editors to identify recurring themes around navigating gender stereotypes and discrimination across the different cultural, linguistic and geopolitical contexts. Such an endeavour, in turn, provides important evidence to inform current discussions of the geopolitical dimensions of language, gender and sexuality scholarship in increasingly unpredictable global workplaces, exacerbated by the COVID-19 global pandemic and interrelated financial insecurities.

Within the collection, there is an emergent emphasis on the importance of taking a different sociolinguistic approach to exploring language and the geopolitics of gender at work. By employing a range of different analytical approaches, including narrative analysis, conversation analysis, interactional sociolinguistics, discourse analysis and pragmatics contributors pay particular attention to identifying recurring themes around gendered stereotypes, discrimination and bias across the different cultural, linguistic and geographical contexts. The observations and findings reported in each chapter demonstrate that, in an increasingly globalised and globalising world, gender issues prevail in workplace domains across different geopolitical landscapes. Some of these issues are responded to with localised strategies that are specific to the geographical, economic and demographic space in which they have occurred, while others would benefit from and in some cases, demand more global responses, as we now discuss in more detail.

Taken together, the findings presented in this volume result in emergent discussions of geopolitical dimensions of language, gender and sexuality scholarship at a crucial time in the development of these issues in global workplace environments. Many of the issues reported in these chapters are long-known and yet change has still been remarkably slow. That said, there are examples of local initiatives and small-level changes in particular professions, which have resulted in a positive difference. However, at a macro level, too many of the dominant socio-cultural gendered practices persist, particularly in terms of gender and racialised stereotypes, the sex-role stereotype of 'think leader, think male', childcare and household labour viewed primarily as women's responsibility, as well as continued harassment and bias against women in professional spaces, leading to attrition and damage to health and well-being. In geopolitical contexts where changes have had some positive impact (e.g., the number of women at work and in senior leadership positions, as in the number of women MPs in Rwanda), this is too often limited. Moreover, such positive change has often been quite dramatically impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, which illustrates how volatile and fragile changing demographics are, with women far from being truly incorporated and accepted into many workplaces as legitimate and fully recognised professionals with equal status.

Moreover, the position of migrant women workers and those working in jobs with very little social status, due to social class and ethnic inequalities, persist. These issues have a significant impact on mental and physical health, and a series of missed opportunities exists here in terms of building in diversity to enhance business growth, staff retention and staff well-being (McKinsey 2015, 2020, 2021). There are deeply ingrained socio-cultural issues at play, as part of difficult geopolitical relationships in terms of xenophobia and racism that intersect with gender-based stereotypes and prejudice, resulting in hostile workplace environments for migrants, regardless of their previous professional experiences and status. Despite research consistently showing the benefits of diversity to workplaces that have greater equality and diversity in their workforce, regardless of sector, workplace practices are not moving in the direction that they should be at the speed they should be (Bonet 2016), even though a series of different initiatives have been created. In our view, the post-pandemic recovery period that will span at least the next decade offers a critical global moment to recalibrate and take a deeper approach to bringing equality into workplaces both locally and globally. As a fundamental part of this recalibration, researchers and practitioners need to take into account the communicative challenges that come along with migration and displacement in intercultural communicative contexts (see also Holmes 2020).

Many of the issues described in this book are of a global nature, and so the question is: do we need global responses in addition to the largely

local responses and strategies to address and deal with these issues? One global response that we would argue comes through clearly in several chapters of this book is the power of narratives to act as tools of social change. Either through the creation of websites or training materials (Chapter 3), global broadcast media channels (Chapter 2), and/or through academic publication and feeding back to these who have participated in the research (Chapters 4, 6, 8 and 10).

In terms of our roles as academic researchers, we would argue that professional communication researchers who examine gender have a social responsibility to not just report on local issues of gender inequality and discrimination in the professional (and other) domain(s), but to also use research findings to change current practices in local and global contexts by sharing best practices and bringing together the local and the global. Wherever our research sites are located, we can learn from each other's local solutions to local issues, while considering and then applying their implications on a more global scale. Mullany (2020) has mapped out three different roles and routes for the role of the researcher who is engaged in socio-political professional communication work: the consultant, the advocate and the activist – these all offer different routes and levels of engagement with socio-political action, which will depend upon what is permissible, desirable and ethically/legally possible to researchers and research teams in very different geopolitical settings.

The key point here is that when bias, discrimination and unfair practices are unearthed in our data analysis, which is the case in every chapter in this collection, researchers of gender and professional communication should at least be able to disseminate the findings they have made at a local geopolitical level to relevant stakeholders, which can include local, national and international policy makers, NGOs, think tanks and charities, in order to make our professional communication research 'applied professional communication' and a form of applied linguistics 'applied' (see Roberts and Sarangi 2003; Mullany 2020).

As part of this commitment, looking ahead we need to put forward local and global solutions which learn from each other, regardless of where the research took place. Every geopolitical situation that has figured in this book has something to offer to another in order to address the roles that language and communication play in maintaining and perpetuating inequalities faced on the grounds of gender for different ethnicities, racial groups, ages, social classes and religions across geopolitical contexts. As part of this, as Schnurr points out in her contribution (Chapter 2), social change can be brought about through narrative as a research and interventionist tool, as it constructs new contexts and also proposes alternative realities and interpretations (see also Clifton et al. 2019, 28; De Fina and Georgakopoulou 2015). The power of narrative should be more systematically utilised and facilitated by academic researchers (see Chapter 3 for a practical example of this), enabling and supporting

those who have the opportunity to share their stories on local and global stages. Elevating storytelling on the broadest platforms possible, using narrative analysis, conversation analysis and interactional sociolinguistics to develop interpretations and understandings, add significant value to the power of storytelling, where the core purpose is to use stories and personal experiences to inspire others and to bring about socio-cultural changes to gender-based relations by learning from each others' locally as well as globally based experiences.

We also need to bring the local and the global together much more coherently, both theoretically, in order to more fully understand how local issues in geopolitical contexts in every continent are lived and experienced, and at the same time practically, by feeding this into discussions and mainstream discourses around gender more globally. Traditional definitions such as the 'developing' world, and the 'developed' world should be abandoned in favour of looking at what works – where there is notable success, what practices have enabled this success to take place, and what can the rest of the world learn from this? How can we as linguists help others to use tools and techniques from our discipline to facilitate social change in terms of gender equality? We also need to examine this further from a more practical perspective, in terms of how we can address and change local issues by drawing on their global nature, whilst at the same time being reflexive enough to see that, in some geopolitical contexts, the global nature of many of these issues (e.g., 'think leader, think male') can work to prevent us from changing local issues. We hope that our collection provides a solid foundation for starting these conversations and that it provides scope for practical, applied linguistic solutions to gender-based inequality. In our view, the tools and techniques of linguistics are core to unpicking hidden power relationships, bias and discrimination in the wide range of geopolitical contexts that we cover in this volume.

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2 "A financially independent woman is a gift to any nation"

Exploring the sociolinguistics of family and work in leadership stories around the world

Stephanie Schnurr

1. Introduction

This chapter explores the sociolinguistics of family and work in leadership narratives told by successful and famous leaders[1] in different geopolitical contexts in mediatised TEDx talks and interviews. Situated at the interface of gender, globalisation and the workplace, these stories provide an opportunity for the tellers to share with a wider audience how they experience(d) gender discrimination and stereotyping throughout their careers, and how they successfully combine(d) the different demands of family and work in their everyday working lives. The stories thus provide evidence of how these women skilfully negotiate the complex relationship between traditional gender roles and a patriarchal gender order which continue to position women in the home domain and as being responsible for the family. Although these women live and work in different geopolitical – including Asia, the Middle East, Africa and North America – the issues they describe are remarkably similar, thus providing further evidence of their global nature.

As I will illustrate in more detail below, in and through their stories the tellers highlight global hegemonic – and largely masculine – Discourses of leadership and provide different responses to them. Some stories challenge traditional gender roles (see also Clifton, Schnurr, and Van De Mieroop 2019) and problematise the patriarchal gender order, which often contributes to a marginalisation and exclusion of women in the professional domain (e.g. Acker 1990; Crawford and Mills 2011; Baxter and Al A'ali 2016). But other stories merely illustrate these issues without any criticality, and by telling and re-telling them to a wider audience, the underlying gender ideologies which often discriminate against women in workplaces around the world are not challenged but may actually be naturalised and even reinforced.

In what follows I briefly outline the background to this study before introducing the methodological and analytical approach, together with a brief overview of the data on which the study draws. This is followed by

the analysis of five excerpts from stories about family, work, leadership and gender. The chapter ends with a critical discussion of the findings with particular emphasis on their relevance in the context of globalisation, geopolitics and gender.

2. Background: global issues of leadership, gender and discourse

Several global issues of leadership and gender have been identified in the previous literature. Among the most prevalent and persistent issues are the observation that the notion of leadership is inherently gendered (e.g. Fletcher 2004), and that in the professional domain the 'think leader, think male' Discourse[2] continues to tenaciously prevail in many geopolitical contexts (e.g. Holmes 2006). This is also well illustrated in the anecdote told by Noor Al Qatami, a successful entrepreneur and CEO in Kuwait who has won several business awards. During a TEDx talk[3] she recalls the following incident:

Extract 1

  1.   **NAQ:** When I was working [at] the steel company (.)
  2.   people would come in (.)
  3.   they would pop (.) their heads into my office in there
  4.   and they would ask (.)
  5.   where's the manager? (.)
  6.   [Some audience laughter]
  7.   **NAQ:** And it says manager outside the door
  8.   [Some audience laughter]
  9.   **NAQ:** But they'd still ask where's the manager?
 10.   Never in their mind had it occurred
 11.   that the person in front of them is the manager

The storyteller's experiences about 'people's' perceptions and expectations that managers are by default male are also well documented in the literature (e.g. Bierema 2016), which attests that this 'male bias' of leadership (Hoyt and Burnette 2013) is deeply ingrained in traditional notions of leadership. It is further reflected in mainstream leadership Discourse which, according to Alvesson and Spicer (2014, 51), 'is a masculine discourse that celebrates masculine norms such as competition, aggression, and individualism' and contributes to traditional conceptualisations of leaders as 'tall, handsome, white, alpha males (of) privilege' (Grint 2010, 69).

   This 'male bias' of leadership (Hoyt and Burnette 2013) seems to prevail widely around the globe in spite of a 'feminisation' of leadership and a 'female advantage' (Eagly and Carli 2003; Eagly, Gartzia, and Carli

2014) in some professions and geopolitical contexts. According to this 'female advantage', some of the practices and attributes typically associated with femininity, such as 'caring, nurturing, and sharing', (Ford 2006, 81) are highly valued for leadership – especially when displayed by men (Eagly and Carli 2003; Fletcher 2004; Appelbaum, Audet, and Miller 2003). As Clifton et al. (2020, 144) have argued,

> [a]s a consequence of this male bias of leadership and the prevalence of masculine Discourses of leadership, other Discourses – such as the Discourses of work-life balance, motherhood and femininity – tend to be overlooked and are simply not part of the hegemonic mainstream leadership Discourse which continues to portray leaders as white, middle-class, male heroes.

This chapter addresses these issues by exploring a largely overlooked aspect of leadership and gender, namely the sociolinguistics of family and work. Analysing some of the stories told by famous leaders in different geopolitical contexts, including the Middle East, India, the USA, Kuwait and Nigeria, and taking a narrative as social practice approach (Clifton et al. 2020), I analyse and critically discuss how these stories challenge traditional views of leaders as 'tall, handsome, white, alpha males (of) privilege' (Grint 2010, 69). Focusing on stories and exploring the ways in which people talk about leadership and what it means to be a successful leader, is a rewarding undertaking as stories constitute an important site where the 'social construction of leadership takes place' (Clifton, Schnurr, and Van De Mieroop 2019, 146). By telling these stories, the tellers problematise – and often resist – global hegemonic masculine Discourses of leadership, which contribute to a marginalisation and exclusion of women (e.g. Acker 1990; Crawford and Mills 2011; Baxter and Al A'ali 2016).

3. Data and methodology

In this chapter, I take a narrative as social practice approach (De Fina 2008) and focus on what the stories *do* in the context(s) in which they are produced and reproduced. Located within the socio-constructionist paradigm, this approach to narratives acknowledges that, by telling stories, the narrators perform various actions (De Fina and Georgakopoulou 2008). Narratives are thus powerful tools that assist their tellers in 'advising, accounting, and blaming, and above all they do morally accountable identity work so that the teller is talked into being as a particular kind of leader' (Clifton et al. 2020, 13).

The analysis below draws on some of the structural elements of a narrative as described by Labov and Waletzky's (1966) seminal work. According to them, narratives typically (but not necessarily always) consist of (at least) five phases: orientation, complication, evaluation, resolution,

and coda. During the orientation phase, the storyteller sets the scene, for example by providing information about the story characters, and the place and time in which it is set. The complication is the main body of the narrative and is usually made up of a series of events presented in sequential order. The point or moral of the story is then revealed in the evaluation phase, which also indicates the attitude of the storyteller towards the events. The resolution phase sometimes coincides with the evaluation and states the result of the events recounted in the story. The subsequent coda enables the storyteller to leave the story world and return to the present.

Taking a narrative as social practice approach and considering what stories *do* – both in the local context in which they are told, and in the more global context in which they are reproduced – enables researchers to combine 'a focus on local interaction as a starting point for analysis' with 'an understanding of the embedding of narratives within discursive and sociocultural contexts' more widely (De Fina and Georgakopoulou 2015, 3). These socio-cultural contexts construct hegemonic Discourses (Kiesling 2006) about gender, family and leadership to which the localised narratives of the storytellers respond, by either supporting and reinforcing available master narratives (Bamberg 2005) or challenging and resisting them and producing counter-narratives (Bamberg and Andrews 2004).

Although which Discourse is considered to be hegemonic is of course context dependent, there is nevertheless a remarkable consistency across geopolitical contexts with regard to hegemonic Discourses of leadership, which – as outlined earlier in more detail – are largely based on the 'think leader, think male' mantra. Since 'stories are never innocent [as] they always promote a particular (normative) way of seeing the world and behaving in the world' (Clifton et al. 2020, 10), analysing what these stories *do* with regard to these hegemonic Discourses of leadership – both in the local context in which they are told, and in the more global context in which they are reproduced – helps us identify and empirically capture some of the underlying gender ideologies which often discriminate against women in workplaces around the world.

This chapter analyses some of the stories told by famous, celebrated and highly successful women who have been described as leaders by the media. Their stories occurred during mediatised events – including TV interviews and TEDx talks – and were delivered to a local audience (in the studio) as well as to a global audience (who have access to their talks or interviews on YouTube and other social media). According to its own website, TEDx is 'a grassroots initiative' that aims 'to research and discover "ideas worth" spreading', and many of the talks are framed as ideas sharing and advice giving. The TEDx talks analysed here were broadcast between 2015 and 2017. They are supplemented by mediatised interviews accessible via YouTube. When selecting these events, the main

aim was to identify easily accessible events that took place in different geopolitical contexts and featured speakers from different professional industries. Analysing these videos and the Discourses around family and work that they propagate is a worthwhile undertaking as it helps identifying a range of local as well as global issues, and also demonstrates different ways of addressing them.

The stories that I focus on in this chapter are narratives of personal experience (Clifton et al. 2020) – that is, stories that are framed as reflecting the narrator's past experiences of juggling family and professional life. Although I do not want to claim that these stories are representative of the experiences of successful women in general, it was interesting to observe that such stories around family and motherhood regularly feature in these mediatised events involving very different kinds of professionals in different geopolitical contexts. These stories – and the gender issues they respond to – thus address local as well as global issues, and perform several important social practices for the different – local and global – audiences that they are targeted at.

4. Analysing stories about family and work told by celebrity leaders

The examples of narratives analysed later come from two TEDx talks and three mediatised interviews in which the speakers make explicit reference to family and work. The stories evolve around the demands and expectations of combining motherhood and professional careers, and some directly address issues of household and family responsibilities. In line with the narrative as social practice approach, the focus of the subsequent analysis will be on identifying and discussing what these stories *do*, that is, identifying and critically discussing the practices that they perform. I first look at stories that discuss the demands and expectations around motherhood and professional careers and then look in more detail at stories around household and family responsibilities.

4.1 Demands and expectations around motherhood and a professional career

Although, as Liamputtong (2006, 27) maintains, '[i]t is possible that women from different cultural backgrounds may have different perceptions and experiences of motherhood', nevertheless remarkable similarities exist with regard to how they (have to) juggle the demands and expectations of motherhood and their professional career. In the stories shared by successful women about their own struggles, they often lament and respond to the well-researched observation that 'motherhood still limits women's career progress' (McIntosh et al. 2012, 342; Halpern 2008). While some of the stories that the women share have a humorous

element (Extract 2), others have a more serious tone (Extract 3), and all of them are framed as advice-giving. The first story that I will look at is told by Huda Kattan during a mediatised interview. Huda Kattan is an Iraqi American entrepreneur who runs a successful beauty business in Dubai. She is also a very influential blogger with over 35 million followers. The extract below occurred in response to the interviewer's prompt 'as a fellow working mum, the challenges that come with that and the balancing you know can be quite tricky (.) do you feel pressure?'

Extract 2

HK: Huda Kattan; **IR**: interviewer

```
1.   HK: I do [drawls]:erm: (.) I always think
2.       about my daughter every step of the way
3.       you know honestly, I never wanted to be a mother
4.       to be honest [inhales] and when I ended up
5.       having a child I got very serious about it and
6.       I asked her often you know
7.       do you want me to just be your mum (.)
8.       >do you want me to quit everything
9.       and just be your mum<
10.  IR:  Mm
11.  HK: And she said nope
12.  IR:  [laughs throughout HK's turn]
13.  HK: She said I want you to be (Head of) beauty,
14.      and I said Okay [laughs] I'm taking that
15.      very seriously and I and I do realise that
16.      >you know< she looks at < what I do (.) and
17.      [drawls]: she: looks at women > very differently
18.      than the [drawls]: way: >you know<
19.      we thought about women growing up
20.      where feminist was a <u>bad</u> word, she sees it as
21.      a <u>positive</u> word she sees (.) you know it's
22.      a very different world um that I think she's
23.      experiencing
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In this brief narrative of personal experience (Clifton et al. 2020), Huda Kattan recounts an interaction with her daughter in which she asked her whether she would prefer for her 'to just be your mum' and to 'quit everything' (lines 7 and 8). By juxtaposing these two options, Huda Kattan constructs them – at least initially – as incompatible opposites. This

'either or' choice reportedly arose out of her own decision to 'get very serious about' being a mother (line 5). At this point in the narrative, she directly orients to global expectations about motherhood and the widely perceived 'tension between motherhood and employment' (McIntosh et al. 2012, 356; Van Engen, Vinkenburg, and Dikkers 2012; Lewis et al. 2015).

This choice and the problematic exclusivity of either being a good mother or being a successful professional feature prominently in many of the stories told by celebrity women leaders. For example, during her TEDx talk, Ameera Sha, an award-winning Indian entrepreneur and Managing Director, shares several stories about how her male senior partners and investors repeatedly asked her when she was going to get married and what would happen to her company when she had children. During what she calls 'story number four' – the second last of five stories that she shares with the audience – she quotes her male business partners as saying: '*fantastic you know we want to invest (.) but tell me something (.) in a couple of years when you have babies (.) how're you gonna run this business? I'm assuming you're gonna quit? And then what?*' Although Ameera Sha does not provide an explicit answer to this question (as she moves on to tell the final story), it also directly orients to and makes visible the assumption that for women being a mother or a successful entrepreneur are mutually incompatible options. What she describes here has elsewhere been referred to as 'the maternal wall' (Crosby et al. 2004) and 'motherhood bias' (Van Engen et al. 2012, 652).

While Ameera Sha merely identifies this issue at this point in her talk, Huda Kattan in extract 2 goes further, and with her narrative, she challenges the hegemonic Discourses of motherhood and entrepreneurial success. This takes place in the climax of the narrative when reporting her daughter's reply to her earlier question: 'and she said nope' (line 11). This concise and clear statement is responded to by laughter from the interviewer, who continues to laugh throughout Huda Katta's next turn in which she elaborates on her daughter's response further, followed by explaining her own reaction. In this 'evaluation' stage (Labov and Waletzky 1966) of the narrative, the point of the story becomes clear, namely that Huda Kattan views herself as a role model whose actions are 'look[ed] at' (line 16) and closely observed by her daughter (and by implication, other girls). It is also at this point in the story that the main practices that it performs is shown, namely to challenge hegemonic Discourses and underlying gender ideologies which severely restrict life choices for women, and to tell a counter-narrative (Bamberg and Andrews 2004; Clifton et al. 2019) thereby proposing an alternative

option and rejecting the assumption that successful leaders cannot be good mothers.

In what follows, Huda Kattan moves away from recounting her own life decisions to talking about women more generally. She thereby moves the story from the concrete to a more abstract level. In this 'resolution' phase of the narrative (Labov and Waletzky 1966) she creates a 'she versus us' dichotomy in which she sets her daughter's (more recent) experience (reflected in her choice of pronoun 'she') in opposition to the experience of women in her own generation (reflected in her choice of the inclusive pronoun 'we' – used here to refer to herself, the interviewer, and I would argue women in her generation).

In this phase of the narrative, we also find the moral of the story, namely that times are changing, and that, as a consequence, the roles available to women and the ways in which those, who decide to be both a mother and a professional, are perceived also change. This is succinctly summarised in the last sentence of the extract above: '*you know it's a very different world um that I think she's experiencing*' (lines 21–23). Although this statement is to some extent hedged by the pragmatic particles 'you know' and 'I think', it nevertheless is a strong claim about a new reality in which arguably 'feminist' is 'a positive word' and non-traditional roles are readily available to women.

Huda Kattan with her story thus challenges the underlying ideologies and discriminatory assumptions that offer (or at least used to offer) only very limited role choices to women. By acknowledging her responsibility as a role model – for her own daughter and also presumably other young women viewers – she transforms her own challenging situation into a positive experience appreciated by others. She thereby positions herself as part of this new, 'very different world' (line 22) in which traditional gender stereotypes and restrictive role models for women have lost validity.

The next story further challenges traditional views about the incompatibility of motherhood and professional career. Rather than viewing motherhood as an obstacle to a professional career, this story portrays work as a facilitator of and driver for success. This narrative of personal experience occurred during a TEDx by Julie Gordon-White, who is a US American award-winning entrepreneur and bestselling author.

Extract 3

JGW: Julie Gordon-White

1. **JGW:** I kept trying and trying and trying (.)
2.   and fortunately in 2004 (.) I got lucky (.)

3.   I found the idea that was my winning idea,
4.   it was hatched (.) and I decided that
5.   [drawls]: I love: the idea of selling (.) and buying
6.   businesses and helping people do that,
7.   so I started my own [drawls]: boutique:
8.   mergers and acquisition firm (.)
9.   and I grew it from zero to five million dollars (.)
10.   so then I got really curious about you know
11.   why this isn't happening, and why women
12.   aren't doing this because
13.   at this point now I had my third kid (.)
14.   so I was [drawls]: really: embedded
15.   in the idea that by knowing how to make
16.   my own money I could raise now this
17.   <u>third</u> kid the way I wanted to (.)
18.   I could make as much or as little
19.   as I wanted to, but what I knew was
20.   that by making money
21.   I had the choice to <u>live the life</u> of my own destiny (.)
22.   so I went forward and I learned that (.)
23.   <u>every single day one thousand women</u> (.)
24.   start businesses (.)
25.   but only 5% of them every grow past
26.   a hundred and fifty thousand dollars.

In this narrative, Julie Gordon-White recounts how she came up with her 'winning idea' (line 3). In the 'orientation' of the story, she provides a concrete year ('in 2004') and describes her professional activities including starting her own 'mergers and acquisitions firm' (line 8) which became very successful ('from zero to five million dollars' (line 9)). This setup of the story is followed by the complicating action, which is initiated by 'so then' which signals the shift to a new phase in the narrative. Like in the previous two examples, Julie Gordon-White here links her own experience with bigger, more abstract gender-based career issues when she states that 'I got really curious about you know why this isn't happening, and why women aren't doing this' (lines 10–12). Repeatedly using 'why' when expressing her surprise at the relatively low number of women entrepreneurs who have children and the observation that many women drop out of their profession when having children, she challenges the taken-for-granted assumption that motherhood and entrepreneurship cannot be easily combined (Lewis et al. 2015). Her narrative of personal experience is in line with previous research which has described self-employment and entrepreneurship as alternative career models enabling women to combine 'a meaningful engagement with

economic empowerment and the maintenance of familial obligations' (Lewis et al. 2015, 23).

This questioning of the current situation is further strengthened when the narrator provides evidence of her own experience of having three children and being a successful entrepreneur. Using the conjunction 'because' (line 12) she links and establishes a causal connection between the general situation and her own experience. In what follows, she outlines several benefits of combining entrepreneurship and motherhood (lines 13–20), which culminates in her claim that 'by making money I had the choice to <u>live the life</u> of my own destiny' (lines 20–21). The added emphasis on 'live the life', together with the parallel syntactical structures ('I wanted to'), and specific lexical choices ('my own destiny') render this a strong statement about the potentially liberating and empowering effect of combining a professional career and motherhood. She thus challenges mainstream Discourses of the incompatibility of motherhood and professional career and the underlying gender ideologies. Rather than acknowledging that it may be difficult for women to combine motherhood and a professional career, Julie Gordon-White constructs and propagates an alternative counter-narrative based on her own experience.

However, in spite of the benefits of this career model as outlined by the storyteller, previous research also identifies several issues – especially with regard to traditional role expectations. Studies conducted in different geopolitical contexts describe the numerous difficulties that women entrepreneurs often encounter. For example, Kim and Ling (2001) in a study of female entrepreneurs in Singapore discuss some of the many conflicts that these women – especially when married – encounter, namely job-spouse conflict, job-parent-conflict and job-homemaker conflict. Similar observations are made by Lee, Young Sohn, and Han Ju (2011), who found that women entrepreneurs in Korea experienced housework and childcare as limitations for their professional career (see also, for example, Roomi and Parrot 2008 about women entrepreneurs in Pakistan; and McElwee and Al-Riyami 2003 about women entrepreneurs in Oman; and also Mullany and Lumala this volume).

The evaluation and resolution of Julie Gordon-White's story are introduced by the utterance initial 'so' (line 20) and include a rather bleak picture about women entrepreneurs. Putting emphasis on the temporal expression 'every single day' (line 23) and setting 'one thousand women' in opposition to 'only 5% of them' (line 25), the narrator establishes a link from the story world to the 'here and now' and the way she positions herself (Bamberg 1997), namely as someone who successfully combines motherhood and entrepreneurship.

However, with her story, Julie Gordon-White not only positions herself as a successful entrepreneur and mother, but also re-tells traditional

stories around motherhood and work which typically evolve around mothers neglecting their children. But in her story, she challenges this ideology and the patriarchal gender order it orients to, and instead portrays herself – and by implication, working mothers more generally – as enabling rather than neglecting their children. A similar point is made by Nike Ogunlesi, the founder and CEO of a children's clothing company in Nigeria, who in a mediatised interview with CNBC Africa argues the following:

Extract 4

NO: Nike Ogunlesi

1.   **NO**: I always believe that a (.)
2.   a financially independent woman
3.   is a gift to any nation (.)
4.   because she can make decisions and choices
5.   that will propel not only her forward
6.   but her children as well,
7.   and when you're able to to make decisions
8.   that that take children forward
9.   get children educated
10.   get more people educated,
11.   you begin to build a society
12.   where you can reason where you
13.   can articulate
14.   where you can talk where you can have
15.   discussions for <u>the benefit</u>
16.   of the common good.

With their stories of struggles combining motherhood and professional careers, Huda Kattan, Julie Gordon-White and Nike Ogunlesi thus move beyond their own personal experience to more widely challenge hegemonic Discourses of gender and leadership and the underlying gender stereotypes and ideologies. Like the women interviewed by Bailey (2000, 53) in the UK, the storytellers 'do not necessarily experience conflict between these two sources of identity', but rather describe them as sources of motivation and strength. Similar to the female school principals in South Africa studied by Lumby and Azaola (2014), these women also view their mother role as an enabler rather than an obstacle for leadership and professional success (see also Cheung and Halpern 2010; Schindehutte, Morris, and Brennan 2003).

In the next section, I analyse stories in which celebrity leaders talk about their experiences with regard to household and family responsibilities. However, in these stories, unlike in the narratives discussed earlier – the tellers do not explicitly challenge underlying gender ideologies or the gender order but rather reinforce them.

4.3 Household and family responsibilities

The family has been described as 'the ideological site in which gender roles are constructed and legitimized' (McIntosh et al. 2012, 433). This is also reflected in the stories around family and work told by celebrity leaders. The difficulties experienced by many professional women – especially those who are married and have children – with regard to juggling the different expectations and responsibilities between family and household on the one side and their professional career on the other is well documented (e.g. Asiedu et al. 2018; Heath and Weber 2020; Coombe et al. 2019). These issues and the observation that 'women are not usually relieved of household responsibilities when starting a venture, but remain the primary parent, emotional nurturer, and housekeeper' (Schindehutte, Morris, and Brennan 2003, 96) hold true for many different geopolitical contexts (e.g. Saher et al. 2013, Marks and Houston 2002; Bacik and Drew 2006; Roomi and Parrott 2008).

The first story that I analyse here (Extract 5) was told by Leila Hoteit, a celebrated business leader in the Middle East who received many international awards for her work. The extract below is part of her TEDx talk, and at this point, Leila Hoteit shares how she manages to successfully combine family and household responsibilities with a professional career.

Extract 5

LH: Leila Hoteit

1.   **LH:** To achieve this (.) I have found
2.   >the hard way< that you need to apply
3.   your hard earned professional skills (.)
4.   to your personal life (.)
5.   you need to work your life (.)
6.   here is how I do this in my personal life (.)
7.   one thing to know about the Middle East (.)
8.   is that nearly every family
9.   has access to affordable domestic help (.)
10.   the challenge therefore then
11.   becomes how to recruit effectively (.)

12.   just like I would in my business life,
13.   I have based the selection of
14.   who would support me with my children
15.   while I'm at work on a strong referral (.)
16.   Christina had worked for four years with my sister,
17.   and the quality of her work was well established (.)
18.   she is now an integral member of our family
19.   having been with us since Alia [her daughter]
20.   was six months old (.)
21.   she makes sure that the house is wor-
22.   is running smoothly
23.   while I'm at work and I make sure to <u>em</u>power her
24.   in the mo- in the most optimal conditions
25.   for her and my children
26.   just like I would my best talent at work (.)
27.   this lesson applies to whatever your
28.   childcare situation (.)
29.   whether an au pair (.) nursery (.) part time nanny
30.   that you share with someone else (.)
31.   choose very carefully (.) and empower (.)

This narrative starts with an abstract in which the storyteller summarises the sequence of the events that follow (Labov 1997) and which explain why the story is worth telling (Labov 2006). In this case, the advice 'that you need to apply your hard earned professional skills (.) to your personal life' (lines 2–4) frames the subsequent narrative as advice-giving. This is achieved, for example, by the use of the second person singular pronoun 'you' during this phase of the narrative. This shifts in line 4 when Leila Hoteit establishes a link to her own 'personal life'.

In what follows the narrator provides the necessary background information – as part of the orientation, which involves commenting on the location ('the Middle East') and common practice ('access to affordable domestic help'). The shift to the subsequent complication phase is indicated by a clear statement of the problem ('the challenge therefore then becomes', lines 10 and 11), which is then followed by a series of events that are presented in sequential order: recruiting a child minder, benefits of the child minder, responsibilities of working with the child minder. This crucial role of domestic help is also reported in previous research – for example in Singapore (Kim and Ling 2001) and Malaysia (Yoong this volume) – although it is not available to women everywhere (e.g. Lumby and Azaola 2014).

It is noteworthy that, during this phase of the narrative, Hoteit uses the first-person singular pronouns 'I' and 'my' not only to recount her own

experience but also when talking about 'my children' (rather than 'our' children). With this choice of pronouns, she thus portrays childcare and household chores as her responsibility, and by implication as the domain of women. Throughout her description of the childcare arrangements, her husband does not feature once (except perhaps in the inclusive pronoun in 'our family' (line 18)). Rather, the narrative describes how the two women – the storyteller and Christina – complement each other: one working in the home so that the other one is able to pursue a professional career 'at work'.

Throughout this part of the story, the narrator draws – more or less explicit – parallels between her 'business life' and her 'family life', for example, with regard to recruiting her domestic assistant, as well as empowering her. These parallels are often made explicit – and the child minder is compared to 'my best talent at work' (line 26). This drawing on the Discourse traditionally associated with 'one space in the realm of another' is referred to as 'inter-spatiality' (Bailey 2000, 58). This phase of the narrative is followed by the evaluation and resolution in which the narrator, once more, explicates the 'lesson' learned from this story, namely to 'choose very carefully (.) and empower' (line 31). Here, too, Leila Hoteit draws on lexical choices from the professional domain and applies them to her childcare situation at home.

With her story about how she juggles and successfully combines the demands of family life and a professional career, she thus reinforces – rather than challenges – traditional views and assumptions according to which childcare and household chores are women's responsibilities. She gives advice on how to skilfully manoeuvre through this double-bind, but she does not challenge the underlying gender ideologies and gender order. For example, she does not seem to struggle with the fact that her husband 'seldom help[s] out in household chores and childcare' (e.g. Kim and Ling 2001, 217). Thus, unlike Huda Kattan and Julie Gordon-White in aforementioned Extracts 2 and 3, the storyteller here does not question or resist hegemonic Discourses of traditional labour segregation between men and women. Rather, she portrays this as taken-for-granted or naturalised (Fairclough 1989) and instead focuses on providing advice on how to successfully combine the different demands and play (rather than disturb and challenge) the system.

The same applies to the next story told by Indra Nooyi, who is a famous and very successful Indian American business leader. She was the CEO of PepsiCo and has several times been included in the Forbes List of the most powerful women in the world. The excerpt below is taken from the beginning of a mediatised interview for a TV show. At this point, Indra Nooyi recounts the story of what happened when she came home the night she was promoted to CEO. This is a well-known story

that she has publicly shared on several occasions. She re-tells it here after the interviewer started telling it before handing over to her saying 'well maybe you could tell the story better than I could'.

Extract 6

IN: Indra Nooyi

1.   **IN**: [drawls]: Well: >you know<
2.   it was way back in two thousand
3.   and I was just informed about (.)
4.   >nine thirty in the night< (.)
5.   from a phone call that I was gonna be <u>president</u>
6.   of the company
7.   and (.) so I went home
8.   because I was working on the Quaker Oats deal,
9.   to tell my <u>family</u> that I was gonna be
10.   <u>president</u> of PepsiCo
11.   and I walked into the house,
12.   and mom opens the door,
13.   she was living with me at that time, and (.)
14.   I said mom I got news for you
15.   and she said well before your news
16.   go get some milk (.)
17.   I said it's ten o'clock in the night
18.   why should I get milk
19.   and I noticed that my husband's car
20.   was in the garage,
21.   I said why didn't you tell him to get the milk,
22.   she said well he came at eight he was very tired,
23.   so I let him <u>be</u> >now you go get the milk<,
24.   and >you know< you <u>never</u> question your mom (.)
25.   so I went and got the milk came back
26.   sort of banged it on the countertop
27.   and I said, <u>I had big news for you</u> (.)
28.   I've just been appointed <u>president</u> of PepsiCo
29.   and [drawls]: all: that you care about
30.   is the milk,
31.   and she just looked at me and she said
32.   what are you talking about she said,
33.   when [drawls]: you walk in: that door (.)
34.   just leave that crown in the garage because
35.   you [drawls]: are:

36.   the wife the daughter the daughter-in-law and (.)
37.   the mother of the kids
38.   and that's all I want to talk about,
39.   anything else just leave it in the garage,
40.   so <u>don't</u> even try this with me anymore,
41.   so (.) I think with mom you don't try <u>anything</u>

This is a canonical narrative according to Labov and Waletzky's (1966) structure. The utterance of initial pragmatic particles 'well' and 'you know' are followed by an orientation in which Nooyi sets the scene by providing information about the details when the incident to be told happened, including the time ('back in two thousand' (line 2); 'nine thirty in the night' (line 4)), her behavioural action, and her location (which her audience can deduce as being her office because she 'was working on the Quaker Oats deal' (line 8)). The complicating action, which partly overlaps with the orientation of the narrative, is initiated with the utterance initial particle 'so' (line 7) and consists of a series of events that are recounted as following each other. Nooyi recounts how following a phone call she went home to share the news about her promotion with her family. The details she provides in sequential order ('and I walked into the house, and mom opens the door' (lines 11 and 12)) as well as the direct speech in which she recalls her own words ('I said "mom I got news for you"' (line 14) and the reply of her mother ('well before your news go get some milk' (lines 15 and 16)) make the story more animated. Moreover, the pause following the mother's speech adds suspense and emphasis to what follows.

The ensuing dialogue between mother and daughter takes an 'I-said-she-said' form, which is interrupted by a brief aside in which the narrator tells her audience why she questioned her mother ('I noticed that my husband's car was in the garage' (lines 19 and 20)). The reconstructed dialogue is tellable because it reflects the mother's view on role distributions and responsibilities within the family. After Nooyi questioned her mother's instructions and challenged her for not asking her husband to do this household chore, she signals defeat by admitting '>you know< you <u>never</u> question your mom' (line 24). The pragmatic particle 'you know' and the emphasis on 'never' render this statement as a universal and unchangeable truth. It is interesting to note here that at this point in the story Nooyi does not question her mother's traditional views on role responsibilities of husband and wife, nor the underlying gender ideologies or gender order to which they orient. Rather, by acknowledging 'you <u>never</u> question your mom' (line 24) and using the generic pronoun 'you' rather the more personal 'I' she frames her experience as a general fact with wider applicability.

However, her recounted physical reaction after buying the milk ('banged it on the countertop' (line 26), which is mitigated by the preceding pragmatic particle 'sort of' (line 26)), and the emphasis put on 'I had big news for you' (line 27) express Nooyi's annoyance over her mother's demands. This is further intensified by the subsequent accusation that 'all you care about is the milk' (lines 29 and 30). At this point, the narrative reaches its climax, which is immediately followed by the evaluation and resolution in which the narrator's attitude towards the story is shown and the result of the event is presented. Rather than acknowledging her daughter's achievement and possibly congratulating her on her promotion, and/or apologising for insisting on the milk, which would have all been preferred responses, the mother reportedly 'just looked at me' and produced another dispreferred response. More specifically, she challenged the narrator's attitude with a rhetorical question ('what are you talking about?' (line 32)) and subsequent explanation in which she reminds the narrator about her primary identity roles through the directly indexicalised gendered terms as 'the wife the daughter the daughter-in-law and the mother of the kids' (lines 36–37). All of these roles are those traditionally available to women, and all of them are closely linked to a husband and family in the domestic domain – none of them is located in the professional domain. Her mother thereby positions Nooyi firmly in the domestic domain and denies her any other role or position – including the one that she has just been assigned by her company as its new president. Moreover, referring to the narrator's accomplishments as her 'crown' (line 34), her mother's clarification 'that's all I want to talk about' (line 38), and her final warning 'so don't even try this with me anymore' (line 40), she further draws on and reinforces traditional gender stereotypes according to which professional success is irrelevant ('just leave it in the garage' (line 39)) and does not mean an exemption from those domestic duties and family responsibilities associated with the traditional roles for women in the domestic domain mentioned before.

This part of the story is followed by the coda, in which the narrator steps out of the story world and returns to the storytelling world. By acknowledging that 'with mom you don't try anything' (line 41), Indra Nooyi seems to give in to her mother's views and stance. Rather than explicitly questioning her mother's traditional role expectations and challenging the underlying rather limiting gendered assumptions, with her final words, she – like Leila Hoteit in excerpt 5 – highlights some of the challenges that she faced when combining different roles, thereby reinforcing – rather than questioning and resisting – the gender order. Thus, although it is well documented that the 'disproportionate or uneven burden of family life responsibilities, childcare and other domestic duties are

important factors that make it difficult for women to manage all their domestic responsibilities with their work life' (Saher et al. 2013, 32), this gendered inequality remains unmentioned and hence unchallenged in the last two stories.

5. Discussion

The examples discussed earlier nevertheless illustrate some of the key recurrent issues of gender, work and leadership that many women around the globe experience in their daily work lives. These stories clearly demonstrate that issues around the sociolinguistics of family and work – in particular, leaders' struggles to combine the various demands and expectations when combining the two – are pressing issues in various geopolitical contexts.

Perhaps not surprisingly, the stories analysed here illustrate that remarkable similarities exist in the experiences (and the framing of these experiences) by women in different geopolitical contexts, including the Middle East (Examples 2 and 4), India, the USA (Examples 3 and 6) and Nigeria (Example 5). These observations are further supported by previous research, for example in Ghana (Asiedu et al. 2018), the UK (Bailey 2000; Ford 2006), Hong Kong and China (Cheung and Halpern 2010). It thus seems that the gender ideologies underlying and informing these experiences of stereotyping and sexism override potential cultural differences and point to 'pancultural gender role norms that create opportunities and constraints for all women leaders' in different geopolitical contexts (Cheung and Halpern 2010, 191).

By sharing their stories with different, often local and global audiences, and placing their personal experiences in a specific local context while at the same time drawing on and orienting to larger global Discourses around gender, work and leadership, the storytellers present the sociolinguistics of family and work as coloured by geopolitics and globalisation. The relevance of the geopolitical context with regard to these experiences, on the one hand, becomes relevant in the specific ways in which the storytellers deal with and navigate around the issues they experience – as reflected, for example, in the availability of domestic support in the Middle East (and other regions) as mentioned by Leila Hoteit. The globality of their experiences, on the other hand, is reflected in the similarity of the issues the storytellers describe. For example, their struggles with traditional role distributions and expectations of what are considered to be a woman's responsibilities with regard to housework and family (e.g. as experienced by Indra Noyi, Leila Hoteit and Ameera Sha), and traditional expectations of women and motherhood (recounted by Huda Kattan, Julie Gordon-White and Ameera Sha).

By talking about and thereby bringing these issues to the fore and to a global stage – not least via the mediatisation of the talks and interviews

in which the stories were constructed – it could be argued that the storytellers challenge hegemonic – and largely male-dominated – notions of leadership (see also Clifton, Schnurr, and Van De Mieroop 2019) and entrepreneurship. Most notably, the stories by Huda Kattan (Example 2), Julie Gordon-White (Example 3) and Nike Ogunlesi – challenge the general assumption that 'conflicts between home and family demands constrain business growth' (Schindehutte, Morris, and Brennan 2003, 95). Quite the opposite – in their stories these highly successful leaders not only redefine their roles as including and skilfully combining both work and family (as did the women researched by Cheung and Halpern 2010)), but they actually construct their family and childcare responsibilities not as obstacles that need to be overcome or circumnavigated on the way to success but rather as a strong motivator and source of inspiration enabling them to perform exceptionally well. A similar observation was made in Lumby and Azaola's (2014) work on Head Teachers in South Africa, who also observed that these women considered their own experience of motherhood as an advantage and an enabler rather than an obstacle to their professional success. These success stories – at least to some extent – could thus be read as counter-narratives (Bamberg and Andrews 2004) to mainstream or master narratives (Bamberg 2005) according to which having children is considered to negatively impact the professional careers of women but not men, as evidenced by much previous research (e.g. Halpern 2008; Huopalainen and Satama 2019).

However, taking a more critical angle to the stories analysed in this chapter, one could argue that the storytellers – although they identify important and highly relevant issues of gender discrimination at work – do not go far enough and leave much of the potential transformational power of their stories untapped. More specifically, the main social practice performed by these stories is giving advice to the audiences, but they do not explicitly criticise or challenge any of the underlying traditional gender ideologies that lead to these experiences in the first place. For example, although previous research has identified that 'the reconciliation of competing personal, family, and career orientations of female entrepreneurs challenges them in a significantly differently way than their male counterparts' (Lewis et al. 2015, 28), this imbalance and systematic disadvantaging of female entrepreneurs is not made a topic or talked about explicitly in any of the stories. Rather, with a few exceptions, the stories mainly remain on the personal level, thereby constructing the tellers' experiences as localised and individual. They do not explicitly orient to the global scale and widely shared nature of these experiences, and thus they do not realise their critical and transformational potential.

However, given that narratives may trigger social change by constructing new contexts and proposing alternative realities and interpretations (Clifton et al. 2020, 28; see also De Fina and Georgakopoulou 2015),

the power of these speech events should be more systematically utilised by those who have the opportunity to share their stories on local and global stages. Telling stories that challenge the status quo of hegemonic leadership Discourses provides concrete alternative options and constructs alternative realities for women entrepreneurs where they successfully combine domestic and professional domains which are traditionally perceived as separate. Telling such stories thus has a huge potential for de-gendering the notion of leadership. Clearly, storytelling is a powerful enterprise, and it could be used more strategically in the fight for gender equality in workplaces around the globe.

Appendix

Extract 1. TEDx Talk by Noor Al Qatami. A Woman in a Man's World. www.youtube.com/watch?v=wuwpHW9Gjl8 (20 April 2015)

Extract 2. Interview with Huda Kattan. A conversation with Huda Kattan: Business, Beauty and Babies. www.youtube.com/watch?v=HLucEc2QHHAandt=315s (05 July 2019)

TEDx Talk by Ameera Sha. Entrepreneurship: A Journey in Self-Discovery. www.youtube.com/watch?v=mYxdg9ywwMU (21 May 2015)

Extract 3. TEDx Talk by Julie Gordon-White. Why women entrepreneurs need to raise girl entrepreneurs. www.youtube.com/watch?v=XXN7kKjOEOA (07 July 2017)

Extract 4. Interview with Nike Ogunlesi. Nigerian Women Who Beat All Odds to Succeed in Business. www.youtube.com/watch?v=i481ocoVjWo (29 January 2016)

Extract 5. TEDx Talk by Leila Hoteit. 3 Lessons on Success from an Arab Businesswoman. www.youtube.com/watch?v=b28brIs1OmMandt=613s (17 August 2016)

Extract 6. Interview with Indra Nooyi. The David Rubenstein Show: Peer-to-Peer Conversations. www.youtube.com/watch?v=5lm3Q5AzQg4 (23 November 2016)

Acknowledgements

Notes

1 I will from now on only use the term 'leader(s)' rather than 'women/female leaders' because I believe that adding the gendered descriptor 'women' or 'female' further contributes to the gendering of the notion of leadership.

2 I use the term Discourse (with a capital D) to refer to the ways in which power relations, assumptions and ideologies inform standardised or taken-for-granted ways of talking about leadership and gender.
3 A list of links to the different video clips can be found in the appendix.

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3 Narratives of identity and gendered leadership in East African workplaces

Intersectionality, global development goals and challenging boundaries

Louise Mullany and Peter Masibo Lumala

1. Introduction

This chapter draws upon the sociolinguistics of narrative to investigate the identity constructions of women who have stood as political candidates for national parliamentary positions in East Africa. Data are taken from a unique corpus of narratives elicited from professional women in different geographical locations in the East African countries of Uganda and Kenya during 2018. The narrative corpus was collected as part of a larger global research networking grant, the Global Challenges Research Fund, in the UK.[1] We focus upon analysing verbatim narratives of personal experience (Labov 2013) and vicarious experience (Norrick 2012) to investigate the interplay between geopolitics, globalisation and gender in the previously male-dominated profession of parliamentary politics, where women have recently entered these professional roles in greater numbers (IPU 2021). In particular, we investigate sociolinguistic representations of identities to examine what the most significant challenges are in bringing gender equality to political domains. The life histories of women who have worked as political parliamentary candidates and MPs will be analysed; this will also include a focus on other roles that these women have occupied in their professional careers as NGO leaders, entrepreneurs and also home schoolers (see also Schnurr this volume; Yoong this volume, for the fusion of the boundaries between public and domestic spheres).

We focus upon stories of workplace leadership, including narratives where things did not go to plan, as well as successes, to ensure that a full range of experiences is captured and analysed. We consider the role of how geopolitics and global development affect gendered representations of women as leaders in their political settings. We also examine gender-based violence, discrimination and gender bias in political domains and how these negatively affect women leaders and place a significant barrier to gender equality being achieved in political domains.

Through our sociolinguistic analysis, we examine emergent, intersectional identity constructions of East African women in their own words,

analysing constructions of identity through narrative report, following Schiffrin's (1996) seminal work. The intersections of identity are examined through age, family background, tribe and culture, all emerging as relevant categories from participants themselves, alongside gender. This chapter adds to a growing number of studies focusing on language and gender in the Global South (see Ostermann 2021; Schnurr this volume, Holmes and Marra this volume) and African settings in particular (see Atanga et al. 2012, 2013), including the field of gender and professional communication, for example, Chimbwete-Phiri and Schnurr's (2021) health communication work in Malawi, Lumala and Mullany's (2020) analysis of the narratives of women farmers, co-operative leaders, entrepreneurs and NGO leaders in Uganda and Kenya, Jones' (2015) study of women politicians in Ghana, and Kammoun's (2015) analysis of gender and political leadership in Tunisia.

We conclude by discussing how the analysis of representations of identity through verbatim narratives can effectively result in getting women's voices heard across regional and national boundaries in Kenya, Uganda, East Africa and beyond, to women in other locations as a form of global community empowerment online. This activity reaches beyond nation-state boundaries, as a form of research advocacy and activism (Mullany 2020; Lumala and Mullany 2020). We argue that the analysis of representations of identity through verbatim narratives can help reach members of the public, policy makers, and large global organisations, so that sustainable workplace practices for women across different geopolitical settings can start to be more effectively implemented, if gender equality in political domains in the developing and the developed world is ever going to be achieved.

2. Background

2.1 *The global landscape: United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals*

In 2015, the United Nations (UN) launched a set of 17 *Sustainable Development Goals* (SDGs) to be achieved by 2030 (United Nations 2015). A globalised approach lies at the heart of the UN's mission as an international organisation. It self-identifies as 'the one place on Earth where all the world's nations can gather together, discuss common problems, and find shared solutions that benefit all of humanity' (United Nations 2022, 1). All UN states signed an 'Agenda for Sustainable Development' in 2015, and the 17 SDGs were a core part of this agenda. The global nature of the SDGs is emphasised in the following UN manifesto, which states that SDGs should be viewed as follows:

> An urgent call for action by all countries – developed and developing – in a global partnership. They recognize that ending poverty

and other deprivations must go hand-in-hand with strategies that improve health and education, reduce inequality, and spur economic growth.

(United Nations 2015, 2)

The notion of a 'global partnership' is critical, with the idea being that all nations work towards the same goals, within the same time frames, regardless of whether countries are developing or developed. Bringing about gender equality is a visible part of the SDG agenda, with SDG Goal 5 explicitly named 'Gender Equality'. The global SDGs have informed and directed research council funding allocations for academics in many international locations, including the *Global Challenges Research Fund* (GCRF) in the UK, the funder of the project in this chapter. The SDGs have also played a significant role in influencing the work of NGOs, charities and other organisations, including our project partner, the *Institute for Social Transformation* (see below) and multiple members of our global research network.

As part of the funding application for our Network, we were required to align the bid with all relevant UN SDG goals. These then operated as foundational principles to drive research and networking activities. In addition to Goal 5, we also included Goal 3: Good Health and Well-Being; Goal 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth; Goal 10: Reducing Inequalities; Goal 16: Peace, Justice and Institutions and Goal 17: Partnerships for the Goals. A critical part of gender equality is the need for good health and well-being, including the importance of education around women's and girls' health. Decent Work and Economic Growth are key to the professional workplace leadership focus of the Network, and Goal 10, Reducing Inequalities, enables space for the intersectional nature of identities to be brought to the fore. Goal 16 is critical to addressing issues of gender-based violence, and in Goal 17, our vision was that some of these partnerships for the goals will be created by the Network itself.

Whilst the term 'goal' connotes achievability, the hugely ambitious 'goal' of bringing about Gender Equality by 2030 has been rightly criticised for being a utopian ideal (see Briant Carant 2017; Bashford-Squires, Nyashanu, and Gibson 2022). Indeed, the World Economic Forum has consistently reported that gender equality is well over 100 years away (WEF 2021). We agree that Goal 5 is not going to be achievable – an end to gender-based discrimination, bias and inequalities in the workplace (or any other discourse domain for that matter) is much further away than 2030. However, in terms of global approaches, the SDGs deliberately go beyond geopolitical differences and tensions to take a more unified, global approach, presenting potential collaborative solutions, thus moving beyond nation-state boundaries towards interventions from

which hopefully citizens of many countries can collectively and simultaneously benefit.

As sociolinguists and communication studies specialists, we see our role to be using our analytical linguistic skills to highlight the power of language and storytelling in perpetuating and challenging gender stereotypes, bias and discrimination in the professions to work towards the long-term SDG of Gender Equality. Although idealised, SDGs are useful at the very least in raising awareness of previously neglected issues of gender-based inequalities, providing motivation, direction and a common global aim through a unified campaign. The SDGs are also useful in keeping the fight for gender equality visible and proactively on public agendas in domains including academia, government, charities and NGOs in developed and developing countries, evidenced through explicit foci on SDGs in multiple organisations (UN 2022), including all of the organisations that belong to our Language, Gender and Leadership Network.

2.2 Geopolitical borders and boundaries: the East African Community

To be eligible as a project location for funding from the UK's GCRF, nation-states were ranked according to the UK's 'Overseas Development Assistance' (ODA) list, with an accompanying list of 'lower-middle-income countries' (LMICs) in receipt of ODA. These categories of 'grading' a country's eligibility are nation-state bound and based on economic rankings, assessed within official geographical borders. Part of the categorisation is based on scales of individual nation's economic productivity. Uganda and Kenya are both listed as in receipt of ODA and are classified as LMICs. Nation-state boundaries are thus an important part of the research funding criteria, though it is essential to take into account that these countries are also unified by the East African Community (EAC), established in 1967.

Indeed, we follow the geopolitical category of 'East Africa' defined by the EAC as 6 'Partner States': the republics of Uganda, Kenya, Rwanda, Burundi, South Sudan and the United Republic of Tanzania. The EAC was initially established in 1967 by Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania. The focus of our data analysis is on the first two of these three founder countries. As part of its overarching mission, the EAC (2022) positions itself geopolitically as committed to widening and deepening cooperation among and between the Partner States, going beyond country boundaries in political, economic and social spheres, prioritising collective action.

In 2018, the EAC devised its own gender policy (EAC 2018), to work towards gender equality collectively and simultaneously across nation-state boundaries, so that the different countries of the EAC pursue the same equality goals. Of critical importance to our focus on women in

politics is the following observation from Mary Makoffu, Director of Social Sectors at the EAC Secretariat. She argued that gender equality was a key principle of the EAC integration process:

> Despite various accomplishments by Partner States in educating the girl child, and possessing various skills by women and girls, there was poor representation of women in the employment sector and more so in political representation . . . this lack of accountability delays progress in advancing gender equality and the empowerment of women, girls and other marginalised groups.
>
> (EAC 2018, 1)

Therefore, despite having national geographical borders, drawn up as part of geopolitical relationships imposed post-colonially, the EAC strives towards coherent economic, political and social advancement across all six countries. Additionally, our official project partner for Network, the *Institute for Social Transformation* (IST), has a similar, cross nation-state ethos, where instead of participants and organisations identified just by their country, IST's gender-based leadership training is collectively presented as belonging to seven East African countries: Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda.

2.3 Identities, intersectionality and political domains

In addition to the classic model of adopting Butler's (1999) view of gender as a performative social construct, performed within the 'gender order' (Connell 1987), we also follow Bucholtz and Hall's (2010) model of sociocultural identity construction to examine the roles of indexicality, stance and subject positioning of our narrators in relation to representations of their professional and gendered identities, and how these interact with other intersectional categories indexicalised by participants themselves as a part of their narrative representations. We follow Hill Collins and Bilge (2016, 25), in defining intersectionality as 'a way of understanding and analysing the complexity in the world, in people and in human experience', which can be used as an analytical tool to examine a series of critical lines of enquiry including 'inequality, relationality, power, social context, complexity, and social justice'. From a sociolinguistic perspective, we examine gender inequality by examining gender in relation to the social variables of age, culture, tribe and family status to analyse how our narratees position themselves in relation to gender-based power structures and the specific social context of being a political candidate standing for parliament. Through narrative representations of sociolinguistic identities, we examine evidence of gender ideologies at play to assess how these ideologies maintain gender-based stereotypes, which perpetuate gender discrimination and bias within workplace

cultures. As part of this, we will examine the enduring global stereotype 'think leader, think male' in politics, as a profession that is still male dominated, despite active movements of affirmative action in East Africa.

If we go broader geographically, in sub-Saharan Africa, many nation-states have been proactive about redressing gender inequalities in terms of critical mass, creating quota systems to get more women into parliaments (Arendt 2018). In the latest global statistics of the overall number of women in parliaments, compiled by the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU 2021), the East African country of Rwanda has the highest number of women parliamentarians, with 61.3% of women occupying parliamentary seats. Both Uganda and Kenya have adopted a quota system for women MPs – in Uganda, all districts have two seats – one is a woman's only seat and the other is a general MP's position, which can, in theory, be occupied by a man or woman. The quota system in Uganda has been in place as far back as 1989, which has led to an increase in women in parliament from 12.6% in 1989 to 40% in 2018. In Kenya, a quota system was bought in from 2010 and has led to increases in the overall number of women occupying parliamentary positions, from 9.8% in 2010 to 21.4% in 2017. However, despite increases in raw numbers, critical mass does not simply result in equality, and often new problems of inequalities can emerge. Berry, Bouka, and Muthoni Kamuro (2021) point out that women MPs who have been elected via quota systems experience negative evaluation and are not taken as seriously as their male counterparts who were elected via traditional means. The system of having a distinctive woman's MP in districts and counties where there is also another, 'main' MP may also result in women MPs being seen as solely responsible for 'women's issues' and perceived as tokenistic, less serious and less important.

Our examination of gender identity intersecting with other identity variables which narratees invoke will also focus on gender-based violence as a key issue of social justice in the professional workplace. UN Women (2019) makes the following observation:

> Everyone has the right to live and work free from violence and harassment. In spite of this, violence and harassment against women, including in the world of work, is pervasive. It is present in all jobs, occupations, and sectors of the economy in all countries across the world.
>
> UN Women (2019, 15)

We will assess evidence of the pervasiveness of gender-based violence in the political domains of Uganda and Kenya, and consider the overall impact that this may have on the SDGs 2030 for achieving gender equality, good health and well-being and bringing peace justice and security to East Africa. We now move on to discuss the specifics of the methodological choices and the narrative data.

3. Methods and data

The initial remit of the Network was to establish a dataset of 100 narratives from professional women across different workplaces and career stages in rural and urban Uganda and Kenya (in addition to hosting Network conferences in these two countries). A core commitment of the Network was to place women's voices at its centre; we elicited verbatim life histories from participants to analyse issues of gender inequality in the professions, along with questions that enabled us to bring in other relevant SDGs (see Section 2.1). We aimed to examine how sociolinguistic identity constructions of gender and its intersections with other identity variables emerge through the life stories told. Schiff and Noy (2006) emphasise the importance of eliciting narrative life histories as data, arguing that such narratives demonstrate how tellers use stories to engage in the complex processes of sense-making and development of shared meanings. They characterise life history production as follows:

> A consequence of growing up in a family, a peer group, a time in history, a language community and a culture . . . we inherit the values and stories that are esteemed in these contexts through our participation with others.
>
> (Schiff and Noy 2006, 399)

We should thus be able to map the cultural values shared by the language communities where narratees grew up, including drawing attention to the dominant hegemonic gendered discourses and ideologies that exist in these settings (cf. Sunderland 2004; Schnurr this volume).

By focusing on narrative life histories, also referred to as 'big' stories (Clifton, Schnurr, and Van De Mieroop 2019), it is important to point out that, although we are valuing reflection on ones' professional life experiences, we are not ascribing to the view that we are gaining access to a particular 'truth' about leadership or gendered experiences in doing so – what we have elicited is a constructed experience, told by the narratee in the context in which the narrative was produced; all narratees, regardless of which method they used to share their stories (discussed later), were aware of the audiences for their narratives, comprehensively documented as part of the ethics process – future audiences include academics, those working in NGOs, charities, educationalists, policy makers and members of the global public, including East African women and girls. We included narratives of leadership success and stories where leadership career goals did not work out to analyse a range of experiences and to avoid only presenting stories of success, so that a more realistic picture is given – it is just as important to learn from narratives where narratees tell of things that do not go to plan as it is from stories of success.

The narratives have been collected through 3 different elicitation methods: 1) narratives elicited in interviews, 2) written narrative reports,

produced by those who wished to share a life story who either did not want to be verbally interviewed or did not have time for us to interview them; 3) oral life story narratives delivered as part of oral conference presentations at our networking events in Kampala and Eldoret in 2018 – presenters consciously embedded narrative life histories into their presentations to align with the Network's overall aims and objectives of capturing narrative data collection. By taking this eclectic and wide-ranging approach to narrative data collection, our overall dataset incorporates a broad range of professionals, including narratives from participants occupying roles in many male-dominated professional spaces.

To ensure that we captured narratives from women in different geographical spaces, we worked closely with our project partner, our project consultant and with Network members in local geographical locations. This enabled us to gain access via trusted gatekeepers within local communities. Interviews were conducted by core members of the network (see Mullany forthcoming for more detailed discussion). All interviewees were fully informed of the overall purpose of the narrative data-gathering through the ethical consent process. The interviews were semi-structured, interactive and questions were clustered across three interrelated themes: 1) current career; 2) career aspirations and gender, family and community; and 3) gender politics, leadership and culture. These themes were used as prompts for written textual production and were also shared with conference presenters in advance of their presentation.

The power of narrative-sharing to work towards social change is key, with narratives operating as tools to show alternative routes, sharing similar experiences and enabling women to learn from one another to find their own ways of seeing and interpreting the world – as Schnurr (this volume) points out, narratives can 'trigger social change by constructing new contexts and proposing alternative realities and interpretations'. There is a clear case for the use and implementation of narratives as powerful linguistic devices for advocacy and activism (see also Clifton, Schnurr, and Van De Mieroop 2019; Mullany 2020; Lumala and Mullany 2020). One of the target aims of the LGLN was to develop narratives as more strategic global tools to work towards gender equality, which can provide invaluable information to policymakers, NGOs, workplace practitioners, educationalists and others who are involved in women's advocacy and activism towards eradicating gender inequality within workplaces.

There are a number of different approaches used to analyse narrative data in this edited volume. In this chapter, we draw on the sociolinguistics of identity, bringing together lexico-grammatical features including pronouns, metaphor, in-group/out-group identity markers and reported speech, along with agency. Agency is an established linguistic feature to analyse when studying narratives of identity. As De Fina (2006, 353) observes, agency can be examined by looking at the 'linguistic choices indexing particular roles, such as action verbs and referring expressions'.

We will now move on to the data analysis, focusing on the narratives of women political candidates who were trying to get elected to either the Ugandan or Kenyan parliament.

4. Data analysis

We analyse women's narrated experiences of political candidature by examining 4 narratees who have all stood for parliament, two in Uganda and two in Kenya, which are representative of the dataset as a whole. First, we focus on Regina, who stood for the Ugandan parliament aged 33. She is talking on the topic of the district of where she stood. Her narrative was elicited in dyadic interview. When she gave her interview she was working as an NGO leader:

Extract 1 (NAR= Narrator; INT= interviewer)

1. **NAR**: Where I contested is the community where I was born
2. and where I lived for long because I was born there . . . they
3. have known me from childhood and now getting to work with
4. them but the challenge was a factor was the issue of my
5. marriage district because they say in Uganda they will tell
6. you 'if you're married in another district you have to follow
7. your husband and contest where you've been married'
8. **INT**: Oh okay
9. **NAR**: That was also a factor in my life because they say
10. 'now you are married you are no longer our own you were
11. our child we understand we also have women married,
12. you see that?' That is where the culture now comes in 'we
13. have women whom we have married from other cultures who
14. are supposed to contest in these constituencies and therefore
15. they should you know take the position so you go where you
16. are married and contest from there' so that also another factor
17. that probably limited my votes to some level
18. **INT**: Okay yeah (.) will you still go back and contest the same
19. community?
20. **NAR**: Erm I'm still trying to weigh but most likely I'll have to
21. leave there move to the next community, where I am married
22. I am trying to establish networks again at my husband's home,
23. so that come 2021 I can contest in that location not at my father's
24. home anymore

Extract 1 highlights Regina positioning herself as an unsuccessful candidate, retelling how her votes may have suffered because she was not regarded as legitimate due to the patriarchal cultural practice that, on

marriage, her family identity transfers to the husband's family. She uses third-person plural pronouns 'they' and 'them' (lines 2 and 4) to describe an unidentified, pluralised voice, which uses the reporting verb 'say' – 'they say in Uganda' (line 5) rendering her agentless to this collective voice directly aligned with the voice of the country. It is notable that Regina's use of first-person active voice in lines 1 and 2, 'I contested', 'I lived' disappears from line 3. The 'they' continues voicing the view that Regina was not a legitimate political candidate through indirect speech (lines 4 and 5), framed meta-discursively by the modal imperative 'they will tell you'; she also repeats 'they say' (line 9) and produces speech presentation for the unidentified, authoritative source, which tells her she cannot stand in this constituency. This is made clear in the direct, on-record command from the disembodied collective authoritative voice 'you go to where you are married and contest from there'. Regina thus positions herself as an outsider, as someone who has become an illegitimate political candidate due to a combination of the gender order and the culture order (Holmes 2018), held in place by powerful patriarchal ideologies which deny her the opportunity to stand as a fully credible candidate in the constituency of her birth, childhood and where she works.

The identity categories invoked by Regina show how she positions herself in reaction to the rejection of a previous legitimate identity category for her by others. There is a shift in verb tense, emphasising the change in identity relationship, further contrasted by verb transition from the present progressive 'you are no longer our own' to past progressive, 'you were our child' – she is told that her time belonging in the constituency has passed, with her space instead replaced by 'women married' in the constituency instead. This is followed by a tag question of reported speech ('you see that?', line 12), presumably functioning to attempt to seek her agreement in the community's rejection of her. Extract 1 thus brings to light identity restrictions placed on Regina in spite of her knowledge, experience and expertise (lines 1–3). Regina is explicitly told that she no longer belongs and is positioned as an outsider who now needs to identify with her husband's family instead. Regina describes this as where 'the culture comes in' operating as an intra-state geopolitical barrier to gender equality within different regions of the country. It is notable that she uses the noun phrase 'the culture', with the definite article arguably operating as a distancing device – it is not a 'culture' with which she aligns herself; instead, it is part of a powerful gender order and cultural order at play, which denies legitimacy to her as a credible woman candidate.

In Extract 2, Regina develops the idea of candidate legitimacy and this time explicitly negatively evaluates this gendered cultural practice, alongside highlighting the intersectional identity category of age as another contributing factor to her lack of success:

Extract 2

1. I was the youngest in the race I was the youngest I was 33 (.)
2. it is culture pulled me down to some extent like I explained the
3. issue of marriage being a girl 'you are a girl you are young this
4. is a race for women it's not for girls too young' you know? So
5. they look at you as too young (to be) returned as woman
6. member of parliament 'you are not a woman' and yet I have
7. two boys so I was like 'how do you define a woman?'

Regina directly indexicalises her age through the comparative adjective 'youngest' and combines this with the gendered culture of marriage, using a metaphor of movement 'pulled me down' (line 2) to describe how both issues negatively affected her chances of success. She describes how a combination of her gender and age worked against her, with her perceived age positioning her outside of the adult female category 'women' (lines 3–5) – she reports how instead she was positioned as part of the directly indexicalised gender category 'girl', again by the disembodied pluralised voice 'they' (line 5), who assessed her as 'too young'. She again assigns reported speech to the unidentified 'they', stating that those opposing her denied her a legitimate adult gender identity; this view is articulated by a declarative operating as an indirect accusation from the disembodied 'they', delivered in quotative form 'you are not a woman'. She negates this proposition of identity denial, using conjunctive 'yet' (line 6) to state that she is already mother to two boys – she delivers a challenging interrogative, questioning the very nature of adult gender identity itself: 'how do you define a woman?'(line 7).

   In Kenya, Pascaliah reports a similar personal experience to Regina when she decided to run for a seat in the Kenyan parliament. Pascaliah was also a successful NGO leader working on gender equality and eradicating gender-based violence in her local community at the time of data capture. She tells the following story:

Extract 3

1. I vied to be the MP for {constituency name}. Being the only
2. woman and a young person who is not married in the area
3. it was not even easy campaigning. During my campaigns,
4. I rarely slept in the house because of too many threats. I
5. used to run at night. Every day I felt like sleeping in my
6. house. I slept on trees. I ran in my night dress.

Pascaliah directly indexicalises her gender, age and marital identity in Extract 3 through the noun phrases 'the only woman', a 'young person who is not married in the area' (lines 1–2). She combines her gender

identity, age and lack of marital status in the right geographical area as reasons why her campaigning was evaluated as 'not even easy'. Although there are now 47 women's representative seats in Kenya, brought in by a new law in 2010 as a direct quota to redress gender imbalance, unlike Regina, Pascaliah stood for one of the constituency seats open to men and women. She believes that she was not elected due to a combination of her gender, age and traditional cultural views on family and marriage.

She also highlights how she experienced 'too many threats' (line 4) due to her candidacy, resulting in her expressed fear of not feeling safe enough to sleep in her own home, despite her desire to sleep. She describes nights running or sleeping in trees. Despite reporting her fear of these 'threats' of gender-based violence and feeling forced from her home, it is notable that Pascaliah retains at least some agency in her narrative telling, as she positions herself as the active subject of the utterances through the use of the first-person pronouns (lines 4–6).

The third narratee we focus on is Miriam, another candidate unable to break through and become the political candidate in the district she targeted in Uganda. Like Pascaliah, and Regina, Miriam also runs her own successful NGO. In Extract 4, she looks back on her candidature and reports a constant fear of gender-based violence in her everyday experiences of political campaigning:

Extract 4

1. Being a woman there was always a threat (.) a threat of being
2. harmed physically (.) erm there were rumours of women being
3. raped (.) erm those who were in politics at that time (.) and so
4. constantly you're watching my back (.) and constantly being
5. careful where I am (.) and sometimes cancelling erm (.)
6. campaign like if a community was waiting for you and you
7. felt like you were endangered sometimes we said no (.) to the
8. invitation (-) um (.) to y'know which I don't think is a threat to
9. men (.) erm we were seven candidates for the seat (.)
10. I was the only woman.

Miriam links the threat of violence explicitly to her gender identity (line 1), using a directly indexicalised term, declaring that 'being a woman there was always a threat': Miriam articulates the ever-present 'threats' of gender-based violence on campaigns through adverbials: 'always' and use of 'constantly', twice in short succession in parallel structures (line 4) to emphasise the fact that these threats were always there. She labels as 'rumours' reports of women in politics 'being raped' and how the fear of sexual and physical violence sometimes resulted in 'cancelling' a campaign and declining an 'invitation' if there was a sense that you were 'endangered' (lines 5–7). In lines 8–9 she directly points to the gendered

inequity of this, stating her view that she does not think this is a 'threat to men', which solely affected her ability to campaign as she was 'the only woman' standing for the seat. Furthermore, developing this point of being the sole woman candidate, Miriam tells of negative evaluation of why she was vying for the consistency seat instead of the women's seat – like Pascaliah, Miriam actively decided to contest the general constituency seat and explains why she took this decision in Extract 5:

Extract 5

1. It was a hard task because they kept telling me 'oh you should be
2. running for the women's seat'. I thought the direct seat for
3. {district name} is also open (.) and so there is no rule about a
4. woman (.) running (.) against erm an attorney general and so
5. I ran for the main seat and I thought we need more representation
6. on the main seats of members of parliament and so I ran for the
7. {district name} seat.

Miriam negatively evaluates her lived experience of this candidature, using the noun phrase 'a hard task' because an undisclosed 'they', as a part of the dominant culture order, kept 'telling' her, through second-person pronoun use and deontic modality, that 'you should be running for the women's seat'. However, Miriam positions herself as resistant to this subject position created by the unspecified 'they', arguing that 'the direct seat' was her preference – she clearly evaluates it as 'the main seat' (line 5) and also describes her motivation via thought presentation 'I thought we need more representation on the main seats'. Miriam draws attention to her own perception of difference between the 'women's seats' and the 'main' seats here, indicating that the 'main' seats are superior.

Miriam also discusses changing roles, altering work-home balance and the role of parenting when recollecting her lived experience of deciding to stand for political office:

Extract 6

1. It was completely out of the box because before then I had
2. decided to home school four of my children (.) and I was
3. home-schooling them (.) but then I got restless.

She describes her recollection of her political career motivation as 'completely out of the box', drawing on this metaphor to emphasise the depth of the transition from 'home-schooling' four of her children to become a political candidate. She navigates her changing identity as going from a stay-at-home educator to political candidate, because she was 'restless' as a home educator and needed a different identity for herself.

In Extract 7, Miriam draws directly upon stereotypical notions of women's and men's speech styles and picks up again on the topic of gender-based violence towards political candidates in a story she tells of being on the campaign trial:

Extract 7

1. A woman was part of our team an older woman just started
2. engaging a man and after she engaged him a couple of
3. minutes after he'd driven off this was like boda-boda y'know
4. one of these boda-boda riders . . . he called her back he'd
5. taken her number he called her back and said 'please don't
6. get into that restaurant' and we had already sat down and
7. so she said (.) she just stopped the order and said 'give me
8. a minute' and she went out of the restaurant and she said
9. 'Why'? He said 'you going to be poisoned you don't book
10. (.) you don't book for your food on a campaign you just go
11. straight in and eat' . . . but I felt it is out of that engagement
12. if that older lady did not engage this boda gentleman (.)
13. there is no way that we would have known that we were
14. going to be poisoned (-) and so in retrospect when we are
15. doing the evaluation we felt (.) we should have more women
16. on the campaign trail (-) um we should have more (-) um (.)
17. conversations going with the community because women will
18. initiate in conversations (.) and they are more relational men
19. do have a role (.) there were times when our tyres were bust
20. completely like somebody y'know pierced tyres (.) and the
21. men come in handy to sort those sort of things out or to push
22. a car that is stuck in a slum area (.) er where y'know the road
23. network is terrible (.) so there is a role that men play um in
24. advancing women.

Miriam directly indexicalises gender and age through noun phrases in the 'abstract' (Labov 2013) of her story (lines 1–4) describing 'an older woman', part of 'our team' – she uses the verb 'engage' twice to emphasise the older woman's communication with the boda-boda driver. She then goes on to tell how the driver rang the woman to warn her that they were 'going to be poisoned' at the restaurant he had just left; Miriam uses reported speech of the dialogue between the woman and boda-boda driver for dramatic effect. She uses the story as evidence of her view of the gender-based advantages of having women on her campaign team (lines 11–14); she then issues the declarative that 'women will initiate in conversations and they are more relational'. These gender-based communicative observations accord directly with early language and gender research findings of differences between women's and men's speech styles,

with women being labelled as more relational interlocutors; these stereotypes are still popular perceptions of how women and men communicate, and their presence here shows they are not just a Western stereotype, but also one that is alive and well in the Global South, in East Africa (see Holmes and Stubbe 2003; Mullany 2007 for further discussion). Miriam goes on to declare that men do have a role, drawing on sex-role stereotyping of men as practical and responsible for car maintenance, where men 'come in handy' (line 21) for getting campaign vehicles back on the road when they have been either attacked or affected by bad road conditions in slum areas. Miriam declares that 'there is a role' for men to play in 'advancing women' towards gender equality.

Miriam then brings intersectionality and geopolitics within nation-state boundaries to the fore by describing her stance in relation to the chosen district, through evaluation of her thought processes of where she should stand:

Extract 8

1.   I weighed the options should I go back to my home country um
2.   my home erm (.) village and I thought no I am a city girl and this
3.   is where I would stand {district name} is a cosmopolitan place
4.   so there are many many tribes in there many tribes have sort
5.   of migrated into that space (.) so I felt that language was
6.   important it's just y'know understanding the languages of different
7.   people (.) but also not feeling castigated because you're from a
8.   particular tribe was (.) a real bonus for me that I was running
9.   in an area where tribe didn't really matter . . . so that was significant.

Miriam positions herself as positively evaluating the directly gendered identity label 'I am a city girl' (line 2), rejecting the 'option' of going back to her 'home' village. Miriam stood for election in a district of the capital city Kampala and she provides a positive stance towards the district by evaluating it as 'a cosmopolitan place'. She declares that there are 'many many tribes' and thus 'tribe' is not as important as it is in more rural locations (such as Regina's geographical location). Here, Miriam expresses her stance through a positive evaluation of 'not feeling castigated', because tribes have 'migrated' into the space; this is positive as she 'was running in an area where tribe didn't really matter', due to migration patterns of resettlement. This is unusual, but it points to an alternative way of going beyond the tribal politics that held Regina and Pascaliah back (Extracts 1–3). However, although Miriam describes different tribes living alongside each other as 'significant' (line 9), it is notable that she still did not win the election; although she did not perceive tribe to be a factor in her defeat and positions herself positively in relation to her

interpretation of what was happening with the tribes in her constituency, the fact remains that it was not enough to win.

However, one reason that Miriam does highlight for her loss is the role of the media:

Extract 9

1. The media did not do a good coverage even though they were
2. being paid some were being paid to do that . . . like three days
3. before the election (.) they brought out this whole article that
4. says the beautiful woman running (.) and that was very
5. annoying (.) it was really annoying . . . here being presented um
6. (.) as just running for a beauty and y'know (.) so in a very subtle
7. way they are saying 'no brains (.) y'know it's just your beauty
8. that we see' (.) um (-) and again (.) it just points out to the
9. disadvantage of being a woman sometimes in a society that
10. esteems men more.

In Extract 9, Miriam's observations point to the critical and influential role of the media, which relate directly to global findings for women in politics that have been reported by numerous researchers elsewhere in the world (e.g. Wilson and Boxer 2015; Mullany and Yoong 2016; Romaniuk 2016). Miriam negatively evaluates the media's coverage of her candidature, directly declaring that they 'did not do a good coverage' (line 1). Despite paying the media (standard practice in East Africa), she reports that three days prior to the election, they produced a 'whole article' about 'the beautiful woman running'. She negatively evaluates this, using intensifiers 'very' and 'really' with the past progressive 'annoying' repeated for negative effect (lines 4–5). Miriam's evaluation of these journalistic language choices describes the stereotypically gendered practice adjectivally as 'very subtle', but one that is reductive to her; Again, she uses the pluralised unspecified 'they', as representing women having 'no brains', just 'beauty'. Miriam rejects this view and voices her alternative position, through reported speech, that text producers are drawing on outdated sex-role stereotypes dichotomising beauty and intelligence (see Mullany and Yoong 2016 for similar examples in Malaysian politics). Miriam then gives her own evaluative summary of power dynamics and gender relations, pointing out that this experience is a 'disadvantage of being a woman' as we live in a world that 'esteems men more'. There is clear evidence of the gender order at play here, operating to keep women at a distance from positions of real political power.

Our final data extract comes from Kenya and is a told by a woman leader who was successful in both gaining political candidature and also

succeeded in being elected as an MP. However, despite being a narrative of eventual leadership success, this journey was not without its hurdles – this narrative of personal experience was told as part of a plenary conference presentation:

Extract 10

1. I'm a politician. I got in last year in the election. I had more
2. votes than both the presidential candidates – I had more
3. votes than them in Nairobi. But it was my fourth attempt
4. in politics. My first attempt was to be mayor of Nairobi
5. fifteen years ago and my name wasn't presented by the
6. current president. So immediately after, somebody died,
7. a Member of Parliament, I ran again, and I won but I
8. was rigged out. Africa has a problem with free, fair and
9. credible elections. Elections are decided in the
10. boardrooms, not by the ballot, so we've got a long way
11. to go to get our democracy right. Then I tried again in
12. 2013 for the woman's representative seat where I was
13. up against a woman, but at that particular time, I think
14. tribal politics and partisan politics played a key role and
15. I lost. But last year was when I got in and I got in with
16. a bang!

In line 1, Esther takes a positive stance, aligning herself with the identity category of politician, using the first-person pronoun to make the bald on-record statement 'I am a politician', though she then goes on to state that this was her 'fourth attempt in politics' (lines 3 and 4). She goes through the various reasons why she did not succeed, including vote-rigging and a lack of democracy. Her attempt in 2013 for the 'woman's representative seat' is described as being thwarted by 'tribal politics' and 'partisan politics', again bringing us back to tribal politics as a reason for a lack of political success. Nevertheless, it is notable that Esther celebrates her victory with the exclamatory onomatopoeic description 'I got in with a bang!' We will now move on to discuss the consequences of the analytical findings in relation to the broader political picture of gender inequalities in political candidature in East Africa.

5. Discussion

A key issue that has emerged from the data analysis is the intersection of gender with tribe and family membership and how this works to restrict women's freedoms, decision-making and legitimacy in terms of how they are evaluated and judged as 'authentic' parliamentary candidates, heavily influenced by the gender and culture order. Our linguistic analysis has

revealed the deeply ingrained, traditional patriarchal cultural practices within tribes in East Africa which dictate that, despite having knowledge, expertise and established connections in particular communities, and/or often being born and growing up in that geographical space, women can be rendered unsuitable as parliamentary candidates post-marriage, as they are no longer viewed as part of their birth families, thus they occupy a geographical space that no longer belongs to them. It is notable that Regina, Pascaliah and Esther all chose to stand in locations where they highlighted this as an issue, citing tribal cultural norms as a factor that affected their ability to succeed. It is also noteworthy that Miriam draws a distinction between urban and rural spaces, arguing that, because she had selected an area to stand in the capital city where migration is high and different tribes co-exist alongside one another, the dominance of one tribal practice over another is not present. That said, Miriam still did not succeed in her candidacy, but she does not evaluate this as a contributing factor; instead, she views this community fusion as a positive of her campaign, with different tribes co-existing alongside one another.

Another significant issue that has emerged is a constant fear of gender-based violence and a perception from women candidates that these threats of violence unduly affect their ability to campaign and their health and well-being in a way that is not experienced by men. Fear of rape and other forms of gender-based violence on the campaign trail have emerged as issues in public spaces when interacting with communities and in public locations such as restaurants, as well as affecting feelings of safety in one's own private, domestic space (Extract 3). The lived reality of always having to negotiate this constant fear, and how this is not something that male candidates experience in the same way, points to a damaging example of significant gender inequality through violence. If women candidates are being denied platforms and opportunities to meet voters due to fear of gender-based violence, then this hampers their ability to interact and thus negatively affects their chances of success, effectively rendering them silent in some geographical spaces within constituencies where violent threats are really high.

The topic of stereotypical gender-based speech styles was also emergent in the analysis through Miriam's observations that women are more 'relational' and will 'engage' more with the voters. Miriam describes this as a positive quality; in her reflections on her campaign she reports that she wishes to have more women on her campaign trail next time, not least because of the interaction that saved her and her team from being poisoned. She then draws on sex-role stereotypes of gender-based occupations, arguing that men are 'handy' to have around on campaign teams to keep vehicles on the road, implying that all men have an inherent practical pre-disposition to be able to fix cars.

Other gender-based stereotypes can be seen as enacted and perpetuated by the mass media. We are told of Miriam's experience of being reduced to a beauty object, with her heterosexual attractiveness to men focalised on at the expense of any serious political discussion. This accords with substantial research evidence of the global pattern of gender-based stereotyping as part of the 'think leader, think male' ideology, with professional women objectified and reduced to objects of beauty for the male gaze, perpetuated by the mass media globally (e.g. see Kanter 1993; Baxter 2010; Mullany and Schnurr this volume).

The issue of women quotas as forms of affirmative action is also emergent through the narratives. Miriam openly rejects the idea of standing in the women's representative seat, stating her view that women are needed in the 'main' seats. Esther refers to one of her four opportunities as standing in a women's representative seat but was unsuccessful due to the tribal issue discussed above. Regina also describes how she stood for a woman's seat, but her perceived young age and questions of her tribal legitimacy worked against her. Furthermore, it has been well-documented globally that the creation of women's representative seats, or those with all-women shortlists for candidates, whilst driving up critical mass, bring a new set of gender-based discriminatory issues. In East African countries like Uganda and Kenya, these elected women MPs are evaluated as rather tokenistic contributors, viewed as just present to deal with women's issues, and not serious political topics. Critical mass does not mean equal representation and there is a danger of a two-tier system developing (Berry, Bouka, and Muthoni Kamuro 2021).

6. Conclusion

Overall, through our sociolinguistic narrative analysis, we have demonstrated that East African women standing for parliament are subject to a series of geopolitical, gender-based inequalities which intersect with patriarchal tribal traditions, age discrimination and cultural practices as part of the dominant gender order and cultural order. These issues, along with the constant threat of gender-based violence and the fear that comes along with this, can seriously affect women's ability to fulfil their professional role and have a significant impact on their health and well-being (SDG Goal 3). In terms of all of the SDGs, we are a long way off the utopian ideal of gender equality, decent work and peace and justice in institutions, though there is some evidence of attempts to reduce inequalities, including women quotas, though this comes along with a new set of challenges and prejudices.

However, on a more positive note, there are patterns of resistance shown here by our women leaders to deeply ingrained gender-based prejudices and their linguistic representations do show resistance, agency

and an ability to break gender-based restrictions and stereotypes through agentive action. Esther was eventually successfully elected and is still in her parliamentary post at the time of writing. Miriam, Regina and Pascaliah continue their successful work as NGO leaders and advocates of gender equality whilst they consider whether to stand for their respective parliaments again. In terms of our Network, by launching a freely available, globally accessible website of narratives, producing a book of stories and training materials based on the verbatim stories themselves, our aim is that women's lived experiences, told in their own voices, can be heard across regional and national boundaries in Kenya, Uganda, East Africa and beyond, to other women in global locations as potentially powerful forms of global community empowerment online for anyone with Internet access.

The long-term aim is for our research to reach beyond nation-state boundaries, as a form of global research advocacy and activism for applied sociolinguistic studies of professional communication (see Mullany 2020; Lumala and Mullany 2020). These narratives and the linguistic analysis which accompanies them can play a role in bringing about social change by raising awareness of the role of language in perpetuating gender and intersectional-based inequalities, based on the power of storytelling, and how sociolinguistic analyses of stance and positionality through identity representations can uncover damaging language and linguistic stereotypes which perpetuate gender inequalities. In addition to continuing to draw attention to issues of gender-based violence and discrimination, which blights the freedoms, health and well-being of women and girls, this evidence can hopefully reach more members of the public, policy makers, charities and NGOs so that more sustainable workplace practices for women wishing to pursue careers in politics across East Africa, the African continent and beyond can become a lived reality in the years to come.

Note

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4 "Gender equality discourse is the glass ceiling we hit here"

Women's academic leadership narratives in a gender-sensitive university context in Turkey

Hale Işık-Güler and Yasemin Erdoğan-Öztürk

1. Introduction

Three decades after Connell's (1987, 168) introduction of the seminal concept of the *gender order*, referring to the 'historically constructed patterns of power relations between men and women and definitions of masculinity and femininity', it is now widely accepted that gender operates as a constitutive element forming social structures, processes and relations of power. It is not considered 'an addition to ongoing processes conceived as gender-neutral but an integral part of those processes' (Acker 1990, 146). In this sense, gender signifies asymmetries, hierarchies and power relations. This nuanced conceptualisation of gender reflects the complexities and multifaceted power dynamics in work organisations and allows us to capture how gender inequalities persist in institutions.

Departing from this conceptual framework of gender, contemporary sociolinguistic research has significantly contributed to exploring the interwoven relationship between gender, language and leadership in different workplace settings on a global scale (Baxter 2017; Clifton, Schnurr, and Van De Mieroop 2020; Holmes 2006; Ilie and Schnurr 2017; Mullany 2007, 2011; Schnurr 2009). By focusing on the questions of how gendered practices in workplace settings are performed, reified and represented, sociolinguistic research has highlighted the substantial role of language in both manifesting and performing gendered identities, representations and stereotypes in the workplace, particularly with respect to the notion of leadership. In this line of research, dominant discourses of leadership are observed to be gender-biased and to involve globally prevailing gender stereotypes (Baxter 2017). Leadership is defined as gendered and as a stereotypically male-dominated concept (Marra, Schnurr, and Holmes 2006). Yet, it has been well documented that women's discursive and narrative practices have the power to navigate or challenge such gendered discourses of leadership in creative and

strategic ways around the world (Clifton, Schnurr, and Van De Mieroop 2020; Holmes 2006; Holmes and Schnurr 2006).

Among various leadership positions in different workplace settings, women's academic leadership deserves closer attention for two main reasons: First, women's academic leadership is still an under-researched phenomenon in the sociolinguistics of gender and leadership. Second, despite their self-presentations as 'gender-neutral meritocracies' and as the central realms of 'scientific, objective knowledge' (O'Connor 2011, 168), universities embody realities of the outside world and are shaped as 'a microcosm of society' (Burkinshaw 2015, 25). Hearn (2004, 61) similarly describes them as 'incredibly hierarchical gendered institutions'.

Despite an increasing level of awareness about equity, universities continue to privilege practices and qualifications identified with masculine traits and continue to be shaped as highly masculinised contexts (Blackmore 2002; Burkinshaw 2015; Burkinshaw and White 2017). This prioritisation of a masculinised organisational culture becomes more salient in leadership norms, values and practices in higher education (hereafter HE). The available literature on leadership culture at universities reveals that senior administration in HE is dominated by men and designed as a *boys' club* which is unwelcoming for women (White 2003, 45). Women's global under-representation in HE management, particularly at policy and decision-making levels, implies a resistance to the transformation of the HE cultures dominated by a masculine hegemony. Even when women accomplish to reach higher administration positions through elections or appointments, they are confronted with a hegemonic culture involving gendered division of labour, stereotypes and powerful male networks/alliances. Women entering HE management roles often find themselves as *the other* who do not belong to the masculinised organisational culture as opposed to men's entitlement and privileged positions (Morley 2013).

Drawing on the sociolinguistics of gender, language and leadership, this chapter explores the leadership negotiations and discourses of women academic leaders at the intersection of their professional and gender identities by focusing on a particular case of a *gender-sensitive* university context in Turkey.

The research questions guiding our study are as follows:

(i) How do women in academic leadership positions construct, negotiate and reflect on their leadership practices and identities in their personal narratives?
(ii) How do they navigate and envisage gendered dynamics or conflicts within their own workplace cultures in the discourses they produce?

The focus of the chapter is on women's narrative experiences of cultural practices, norms and mindsets surrounding their lived experiences in

academia as well as on the global relevance of their locally produced narratives.

The reasons why we chose this particular setting are multifold: First, we want to find out how a gender-sensitive agenda involving policy documents and principles favouring gender equality influences gendered relations and experiences in leadership positions within a particular university setting on the most localised level. Second, we aim to gain a deeper insight into a specific context, Turkey, in its own locality to understand how gender operates in academic leadership stories in relation to its geopolitical, socio-cultural dynamics. Third, most of the existing research on gender, language and leadership communicates with the global North by concentrating on primarily European and North American contexts except for a few notable exceptions (see Schnurr and Mak 2011). In this respect, our study aims to underline the fact that there is an urgent need for more research in different geopolitical contexts around the world. Lastly, we attempt to understand in what ways our findings in a local setting relate to the globally persisting gendered stereotypes, representations and biases in academic leadership discourses, and whether our participants' narratives travel beyond local settings across different contexts. We believe that through focalising on the local, one might open up a path to rethink the global.

2. An overview of gender and higher education leadership research

Earlier approaches dwelling on the question of why the numbers of women in top senior leadership positions remain low in academia tended to explain the issue at the individual level and thus neglected the wider organisational and social culture (O'Connor et al. 2015). Individual-level explanations defined women as the problem and suggested fixing women's deficits such as their 'lack of career planning or lack of ambition' rather than the systemic power hierarchies as problematised by O'Connor et al. (2015, 572). Such positions failed to understand the complex dynamics of women's under-representation in academic leadership and to embrace a critical perspective informed by the contemporary theories of gender, feminism and masculinities.

More recent conceptualisations of academic leadership considering gender as a central constitutive force take a more sophisticated approach. The focus of attention moves from a need of fixing women towards fixing the organisation itself (Burkinshaw and White 2017). In this view, university leadership is conceptualised as a *community of practice of masculinities* (Burkinshaw 2015). Leadership communities are established through shared norms, relationships and knowledge. Membership to the (leadership) community of practice is realised through performances of masculinity. While these historically shared and learned performances of

masculinity grant full membership to some, they label some others as the outsiders, *the others* who do not belong or who are 'an outlier, on the margins and sometimes not even tolerated' (Burkinshaw and White 2017, 3).

The studies investigating women's experiences and narratives as senior academic leaders highlight marked similarities in gendered leadership experiences across different countries on a global scale. They underscore the fact that women face barriers, resistance and even hostility when they enter leadership positions in different geopolitical and cultural contexts. In her study exploring the experiences of vice-chancellors in different UK universities, Burkinshaw (2015, 130) concluded that a gendered leadership culture in UK HE still persists and women leaders struggle 'fitting into an inhospitable culture'. In a later study, Burkinshaw and White (2017) compared UK and Australian HE settings and found that women in senior leadership positions in both contexts experienced precarious leadership careers.

The recognition of *micropolitics* within university leadership cultures to sustain gendered inequalities has also provided an insightful lens to analyse how gendered practices persist through day-to-day encounters and interactions. Departing from her study on UK HE leadership, Morley (1999) conceptualised *micropolitics* as the mechanism of exercising power in a systematic and subtextual way by means of networks, alliances, and influences to perpetuate gendered structures. In their study with women academics as senior university leaders in Hong Kong, Aiston and Fo (2020, 7) similarly observed that exercises of power in academic leadership are mostly conveyed through a set of small, subtle and informal practices or micro-inequities which are 'hard-to-prove, covert and often unintentional'. Despite the intangible nature of micro-inequities, their cumulative influence often results in women's withdrawal and silence. O'Connor (2014) also reported that senior women managers in Irish HE described their gender identity as marked and visible to their male colleagues on a day-to-day, interactional level. These cases reveal that globally micropolitics serve to resist change, protect male dominance and ensure an alliance-building while reinforcing stereotypes about women in academic leadership cultures.

In addition to the organisational cultural climate, family remains to be a primary factor affecting women's career paths. Women suffer from conflicting demands of work and family (Burkinshaw 2015; see also Schnurr this volume, Yoong this volume), particularly when they are in the early stages of their career. Due to their conflicting roles, academic women advance in their careers later than men and are more likely to have interrupted careers compared to their male colleagues (Bagilhole and White 2011). The idea that academia is constructed as a 'carefree zone which assumes that academics have no commitments other than that to their profession' (Morley 2013, 122) has direct negative implications for women's participation in academic and administrative positions.

3. A closer look at Turkey

The discourse of Turkey's geopolitical exceptionalism has been pinpointed within many different domains such as politics, history, media and everyday communication. Located at the juncture of Europe and Asia, Turkey is very commonly described with reference to a *bridge* metaphor (Yanik 2009). This convenient metaphor refers to the fact that Turkey connects the continents of Europe and Asia and symbolises Turkey's multiple belongings both to the West and to the East in regard to its socio-cultural history. Turkey's self-association with geopolitical uniqueness makes it worthwhile to look closely at how women's university leadership is affected by this geopolitical dynamic.

According to the statistics published by the Council of Higher Education of Turkey in 2020, women hold 45% of academic positions (including research assistants and lecturers), 32% of the professorial academic positions, 17.9% of senior leadership positions (i.e., deans and presidents) and 8% of the presidential level positions. Despite the significant percentage in the portion of women as academics, there still seems to be a discrepancy between the representation of women in academic positions and their participation in senior management within HE.

Although there is a growing body of literature concentrating on the relationship between academic leadership and gender, particularly in the European contexts (e.g. Burkinshaw 2015; O'Connor 2014), studies concerning women's leadership experiences in Turkey are very limited. Yet, a handful of notable studies highlight a number of context-specific patterns and discourses as well as globally valid commonalities. In their comprehensive cross-national study investigating the reasons of women's low involvement in senior leadership positions in HE across nine countries (i.e., Australia, Finland, Ireland, New Zealand, Portugal, South Africa, Sweden, Turkey, and the UK), Özkanlı et al. (2009) underlined that role conflicts between professional and family lives appeared as the most distinctive barrier for Turkish women in senior management positions as opposed to the respondents from other countries. In a different study, Özkanlı and White (2008, 57) stated that Turkish women's academic and administrative careers are 'seriously affected by role conflict', which often leads to the decision 'not to compete for senior management positions because of family responsibilities'. They also highlighted a lack of awareness of Turkish participants who expressed that there are no gender-related challenges in academic promotion and management processes, in sharp contrast to Australian participants, who expressed an open hostility towards women in senior management positions. In line with the findings above, Neale and Özkanlı (2010, 556) listed three major organisational barriers articulated by their interviewees with respect to achieving senior management positions. The participants in their study expressed (i) the organisation of time, (ii) the structure of

senior management roles 'which do not allow for a balance in work/life balance', and lastly, (iii) the perceived high parameters demanded for senior leadership roles in universities as major obstacles affecting the equity of representation. These studies broadly demonstrate that areas of conflict and challenges in relation to gender in HE leadership are evident beyond geographical and cultural boundaries and have global relevance, while at the same time possibly being subject to some context-specific variations.

4. Methodology

4.1 Research setting and participants

Our *case* university where the participants work is among the first universities established in Turkey and is a nationwide symbol for the research/intellectual capital with the highest academic rankings. More importantly, this urban university has significantly contributed to the development of gender studies and a gender-sensitive perspective within university settings in Turkey. Official policy documents, principles and strategies for a gender equality agenda have been in effect in the institution in addition to academic programmes and studies of gender. The participants in the study include six women academics who have held senior leadership positions within the university context described above. Participants have worked either in the first-tier leadership positions as vice-presidents or in lower deputy positions as vice-deans or vice-directors. All of the participants also had previous administration experiences in lower (e.g. deputy or head of department) or higher (e.g. dean) ranks in the university before occupying their last administrative positions.

4.2 Narrative framework

In line with the narrative turn in gender and leadership studies (Clifton, Schnurr, and Van De Mieroop 2020), our study adopted narrative analysis as its methodological approach. Considering the performative and constitutive power of narratives, we understand narratives as discursive and as a social practice rather than static texts (Clifton, Schnurr, and Van De Mieroop 2020; Georgakopoulou 2007). Personal narratives provide insight to understand 'how people make sense of their lives and experiences' (Cubillo and Brown 2003, 283). Despite their variation in genre or mode, narratives constitute rich sources to create, perform and communicate one's identity. They are particularly enlightening sources for studies on gendered leadership in the sense that they provide access to the realities of women academic leaders. By story-telling and sharing personal narratives, identities are negotiated and constructed through 'the projection, representation, and re-elaboration of social roles and

relationships' (De Fina 2003, 22). In our case, narrative inquiry helped us to better understand how women as university administrators make sense of their lived experiences and the broader organisational cultures surrounding them.

Personal narratives were elicited through in-depth, semi-structured sociolinguistic interviews of 70–90 minutes in length. Interviews were conducted in the participants' and researchers' native language of *Turkish*. They included different sets of prompts/questions concerning (i) background/demographic information; (ii) motivating and discouraging dynamics affecting the decision of entering senior leadership positions; (iii) barriers and challenges encountered in the workplace; (iv) work–life balance; (v) leadership styles and (vi) workplace relationships. These prompts/questions were formulated to encourage participants to tell their 'stories'. The interview recordings were transcribed by adopting simplified transcription conventions (see the appendix) and were later translated to English. Names, institutions and any potential identificatory indicators were anonymised. Voluntary participation and consent were sought for taking part in the study. Ethical approval was granted by the authors' affiliated university.

5. Analysis

In the analysis, we have selected seven interview excerpts as representative of the dataset to scrutinise how the notion of gendered leadership is negotiated by our participants on the basis of their own experiences and perceptions. We will first illustrate how participants reflect on their workplace culture and access to senior leadership positions. Second, the discourses around emotional labour and their gendered leadership experiences on the day-to-day level will be explored. Third, the discourses around leadership styles and stereotypes will be explored. Lastly, we will concentrate on participants' meta-discourses about potential discursive transformations regarding gender equality.

5.1 Problematising access to leadership positions by selection

The global underrepresentation of women in senior academic leadership positions and hierarchical barriers privileging men and hindering women from having access to such positions have been problematised for a long time (Morley 1999; O'Connor et al. 2015). The well-known metaphor of the '*glass ceiling*' reveals that these invisible hierarchical barriers exclusive to women in a systematic pattern are still very much alive on a global scale (McConnell-Ginet 2000; Mullany 2007). Women still suffer from an established societal gender order excluding them from reaching senior management positions in very different workplaces and geographical locations around the world. Even if women might break through the

glass ceiling, the social and organisational order privileging men persists in many institutions (Mullany 2011).

Our participants' narratives regarding the assignments to leadership positions are consistent with earlier research suggesting that in most cases women are invariably located within middle management positions and stay in their appointed ranks rather than advancing further (Morley 2014). The first example discussed here points out the perseverance of the glass ceiling:

Excerpt 1 [Participant 5]

1. ben de atanmış biriyim bu arada
2. seçilmiş biri değilim dekan yardımcılığı atanmış bir görev
3. ama seçilmişlerin kadın olmasının <u>çok çok</u> önemli olduğunu düşünüyorum
4. (. . .) atanmışlarda bir eşitlik var seçilmişlerde eşitlik yok
5. ve seçilmişlerde eşitliğin olmamasının temel nedeni de
6. kadınların bu alanlarda yarışmak ve seçime girmek konusundaki
7. tereddütleri çünkü çok cesaret kırıcı, çok caydırıcı, zorlayıcı
8. olabiliyor bu süreçler kadınlar için
9. . . . mesela şunu ben gözlüyorum dekanlarımız bir kadın bir erkek
10. atamaya dikkat ediyorlar yardımcılarını atama konusunda bu böyle
11. rektörlük temelinde de buna benzer bir yaklaşım görüyoruz
12. yardımcılar konusunda toplumsal cinsiyet eşitliğine dikkat edilerek
13. atamalar yapılıyor ama bence kadınlar neden seçimlere aday olmuyor
14. sorusunu sormak gerekiyor

English Translation

1. *I am also an appointed vice dean by the way*
2. *not an elected one because vice-dean positions are appointed posts*
3. *but I think leadership by election is <u>very very</u> important for women*
4. *. . . there is equity in number between appointed male and female leaders*
5. *but it is not the case for positions of election*
6. *and the reason why there is no equity between the selected*
7. *is women's hesitancy in entering this competition and election*
8. *because these processes can be too intimidating, too discouraging*
9. *and too compelling for women*
10. *. . . for example I observe this, our deans pay attention to*
11. *appointing one male and one female vice dean as their deputies*
12. *we see a similar approach in university presidency as well*

13. *deputies are appointed by paying attention to gender equality*
14. *but I think we should ask the question*
15. *why women don't run for elections in (university), we need to ask this*

Participant 5 works as the vice-dean of an undergraduate faculty and has done so for four years. While explaining her own position as the vice-dean, she clarifies she is an appointed administrator in line 2. From this point on, her narrative shifts from a *personal history* to a broader *metacommentary* on how administrators are recruited to senior positions in the university and emphasises the significance of reaching 'leadership positions by selection' for women. By making an essential distinction between appointed and elected positions and acknowledging women's absence in elected positions in lines 5–9, she displays a high level of awareness about the broader organisational structure discouraging women from top leadership positions that requires running for candidacy. The lexical choices made by the respondent to define the process of running are noteworthy. By describing the process as 'intimidating, compelling and tiring only for women', she actually makes an implicit reference to the glass ceiling women academics face. In lines 10–12, the respondent grants agency to the deans and the president with the verb *pay attention* and hints that the particular university culture has an equity-based principled attitude in appointing deputy positions. Yet, she uses her observations of equal appointments to reveal the contrasting picture between the appointed and elected positions in terms of equity. This piece of data echoes Mullany's (2011, 298) cautious note pointing out that 'just because some women are breaking through the glass ceiling this does not suddenly mean that equality has been achieved'.

Participant 2, who worked as a vice-president for three years, also refers to the existence of inequal barriers in access to leadership positions:

Excerpt 2 [Participant 2]

1. bizim okul herhalde Türkiye'deki diğer kurumları kıyasla cinsiyet eşitliğine
2. en çok önem veren kurumlardan birisi ama şunu söyleyemem
3. yani cinsiyet eşitliği burada vardır (.) kadınlar da erkekler kadar
4. rahat rahat yönetici olabilirler diyemem
5. . . . en başta kadınlar çok gönüllü değiller bu işlere
6. bakıyorsunuz hani rektörlüğe talip olan yok
7. genelde erkek egemen pozisyonlar bunlar
8. yani çoğunlukta ekipler pozisyonlarda yer alanlar erkek olunca biraz
9. daha o pozisyonlara soğuk bakıyor bence kadınlar

10. yani ben de öyleydim hani hala da mesela rektör olmak ister misin deseler
11. <u>yok aman</u> kalsın derim *((laughs))*
12. şu anda rektör yardımcısı olmak ister misin deseler
13. <u>aman o da kalsın</u> derim ((laughs))
14. erkekler erkeklerle kendilerini daha rahat hissediyorlar
15. kadınlarla böyle bir huzursuz halleri oluyor ((laughs))

English Translation

1. *our university is one of the most gender-sensitive institutions*
2. *compared to other institutions in Turkey but I can't say this*
3. *I mean I can't say (.) we have gender-equality here*
4. *or I can't say women can become senior leaders as easily as men do*
5. *. . . first women do not volunteer for these positions*
6. *you see there is no women running for the university presidency*
7. *these are usually male dominated positions*
8. *when the majority of senior positions in teams are predominantly*
9. *occupied by men women feel cold about it*
10. *I was like that and if they ask me today if I want to be the president*
11. *I would say <u>no way</u> I don't want to ((laughs))*
12. *if they ask if I want to be the vice president*
13. *I would say I <u>don't want that either</u> ((laughs))*
14. *men feel more comfortable with men*
15. *they get restless with women administrators ((laughs))*

In the excerpt, it is explicitly stated in line 7 that top-tier leadership positions are mostly occupied by men and more unwilling to accommodate women. Despite an institutional gender-sensitive policy, participant 2 highlights women's minority status in top leadership positions such as the presidency. In lines 10–13, she resorts to her personal experiences and feelings to convey the unfriendly leadership culture towards women. By stressing her negative reactions to the hypothetical proposals of presidency or vice-presidency (i.e., her past position) accompanied by laughter, participant 2 hints at a negatively experienced, personal leadership story. What is striking in this excerpt is the strict opposite grouping of male and female leaders through defining men as the majority community of leaders and in-group members in lines 14–15.

The meta-awareness and critical approach adopted by the two respondents indicate that women in senior leadership positions are fully conscious of the underlying gendered dynamics in women's career trajectories. Pointing beyond an individualistic view, the aforementioned participants question and debunk the myth of genderless and equal access to senior leadership in their context. At this level, women's under-representation is

not seen as their own failure but a symptom of an exclusionary organisational structure that does not provide equal conditions for men and women. The emphasis on the strong male networks in leadership practices and processes signifies a key factor in women's leadership experience. As respondent 2 has personally experienced, women are very likely to feel *othered* and *overwhelmed* by such powerful and influential male networks, which might lead to women's total withdrawal or discouragement. This finding is very much in line with many other studies across the world, showing that othering and exclusion of women leaders are globally valid issues. Similarly, the conceptualisation of leadership as *a community of practice of masculinity* (Burkinshaw 2015) is well evident in the sense that women lack the power to have access to the leadership community which is framed by shared masculine networks and privileges, starting from the entrance phase.

5.2 Discourses of emotional labour

Emotional labour is proven to function as a significant barrier observed globally for women in senior leadership positions at universities as well as other institutions (Acker 2010, 2012; Fitzgerald 2014; Morley 2014). There is a major affective aspect of women's administrative experiences, which involves dealing with a substantial amount of emotional labour. The narratives of the participants have brought out multiple forms of emotional barriers within their leadership practices, which are primarily experienced in relation to (i) familial responsibilities and role conflicts and (ii) gendering of work (see Schnurr this volume). Challenges in both realms are observed to be loaded with a great deal of *emotion-work*. In our dataset, the discourse of family emerged as an overriding source of emotional struggle. Respondents reported that they were the primary caregivers at home and had to sacrifice spontaneity, leisure times and hobbies to balance familial responsibilities, especially if they had younger children, as exemplified as follows:

Excerpt 3 [Participant 4]

1. mesela sürekli bir şeyler için suçlu hissediyorsun
2. şimdi işini yapmazsan işin kalıyor
3. mesela şu anda bir bölümün bir hocası bana bir şey sordu
4. ona email atacağım ama kızımla oynamam lazım
5. kızımla oynarsam X hoca bekliyor
6. X hocaya bir saat mailde dert anlatacağım
7. en az 40 dakikada *compile* edeceğim
8. çünkü çok zor bir konu (.) bu sefer kızımın uyku saati gelecek
9. yani *you are always guilty of something*

English Translation

1. *for example you always feel guilty of something*
2. *If you don't finish the task now, it remains unfinished*
3. *for example a professor asked me something just now*
4. *I have to send an email back to him but I also have to play with my daughter*
5. *if I play with her then professor X will keep waiting for an answer*
6. *I have to spend at least an hour to respond to professor X*
7. *it will take at least 40 minutes to compile the email*
8. *because it is a very difficult issue (.)then it will be my daughter's bedtime*
9. *so you are always guilty of something*

To depict how leadership experience affects her daily life, participant 4 starts talking about feeling '*guilty*' caused by her role conflict as a mother and as an administrator. Her narrative is characterised by conveying a small story unfolding as part of the interaction (Georgakopoulou 2007). While we were interviewing participant 4 in her own house in the evening, she had to take breaks to take care of her kindergarten-aged daughter and to answer many phone calls. Referring to her 'routine hustle and bustle' as we could also observe, she explains how she cannot manage the evening because she is expected to carry out simultaneous tasks as a mother and as an academic leader. Therefore, she suffers from an inevitable feeling of guilt for both sets of responsibilities, attached very much to a sense of unjust inadequacy.

This excerpt is in line with previous studies conducted in different geopolitical contexts. The flow of the workload is arranged in a way to reflect the patriarchal role divisions in the society and according to an idealised male administrator figure who has no familial commitments, no children or whose children are taken care of by a wife at home (Morley 2013). The most common examples mentioned during the interviews for such gender-blind arrangements were weekend duties, long hours of meetings, frequent travels, etc., which required total commitment and did not consider any other responsibilities. It was noted multiple times that the norms of university leadership were not built in a way to create a more parent-friendly environment or to regard work–life balance. Other respondents also expressed that they often feel *guilty* and experienced leadership as *sacrifice*. In addition to the emotional labour resulting from role conflicts, it also appeared as a manifestation of a gendered division of work:

Excerpt 4 [Participant 4]

1. yani normalde biz işleri ortadan ikiye bölecektik ama zaman içinde

2. *student affairs* direk bana geldi
3. çünkü işte ağlayan geliyor
4. dosyası kaybolan geliyor
5. orada fenalaşanın yanına gidiyorum
6. yani benim gördüğüm gerçekten *nurturing* roller

English Translation

1. *normally we agreed to split the workload in half but in time*
2. *students' affairs became my job*
3. *because the ones crying come to my office*
4. *the ones whose files are lost comes to my office*
5. *I go beside, take care of the ones who fainted*
6. *I mean what I have seen are nurturing roles*

In excerpt 4, the respondent shares her experience of how she was left with the tasks requiring direct contact with people and providing emotional support to them despite an earlier decision of splitting all types of tasks with the other deputy who is a man. The way she describes such types of work (i.e., *nurturing roles*) serves as a marker of her meta-awareness of the gendered work division. Other respondents have also referred to this covert division of labour and their belief that matters of people and educational affairs were given to women, whereas positions related to finances, funding and research were mostly awarded to men. As strongly proven in the literature, women in leadership positions worldwide are expected to carry out tasks or duties consisting of emotional workload which build on the traditional and stereotypical roles of mothering and caring, such as 'nurturing students, volunteering for committee work and preparing reports requiring detailed data-gathering' (Acker 2012, 420). In excerpt 4, emotional labour was also involved in the interviewee's task or duty mimicking stereotypical roles of women as mothers and caregivers, which involved frequent meetings with students, staff members, academics; reconciliation of conflicts and providing emotional support.

5.3 Negotiating leadership styles and challenging stereotypes

Discourses of leadership styles embraced by men and women in senior positions is a significant site where both normative, hegemonic indexes of leadership are created as in the case of the globally persisting *think leader-think male* or *heroic leader* perspectives (Holmes 2005); or alternative discourses reformulating the notion of leadership and contesting stereotypes might emerge (Clifton, Schnurr, and Van De Mieroop 2020; Schnurr this

volume). In the narratives of our participants, women and men as senior leaders in the same teams were positioned in opposite stances with regard to leadership styles. Leadership discourses are also discussed as sources of controversy and conflict, as illustrated well in excerpt 5:

Excerpt 5 [Participant 2]

1. karar benim uzmanlık alanımda ise ben ne dersem
2. teşvik ediyorlardı, kabul ediyorlardı,saygı duyuyorlardı
3. Karar konusu hiç kimsenin uzmanlık alanına girmiyorsa
4. genelde günlük yaşanan olaylar vs. gibi
5. O zaman tabi bu gruplanmalar oluyordu
6. ve kadınlara şu gözle bakılıyordu 'çok gerçekçi değilsiniz çok softsunuz
7. yani "aayy hiçbir şey zarar görmesin" ' falan (alaycı)
8. 'bir erkek iradesi lazım şimdi buraya bir erkek otoritesi
9. istiyor bu durum kadınlara kalsa ohoo hiçbir şey yapılamaz' gibi
10. ve giderek de bu erkek dayanışması dediğim şey çok fazlalaştı
11. . . . çünkü kadınlar biz biraz daha liberal biraz daha özgürlükçü
12. biraz daha cesur davranan bir tarz izliyorduk
13. erkekler belki kendince biraz daha gerçekçi biraz daha pragmatik
14. yani biraz daha kaba davranabiliyorlardı
15. orada işte ciddi bir fay hattı kırılması

English Translation

1. *if a decision was discussed on my area of academic expertise*
2. *whatever I say was encouraged, accepted and respected by the team*
3. *but if the topic of the decision was no one's expertise*
4. *these are usually social events, everyday issues, etc.*
5. *then the team was split (into gender groups)*
6. *and women were seen like 'you are not realistic you are too soft*
7. *"ooh (you think) nothing/no one should be hurt" ' ((mimicking of a sarcastic tone))*
8. *'what is needed in this case is a men's will and authority'*
9. *'nothing can be done if it's up to the women' they said*
10. *and what I called men's solidarity has started to increase more and more*
11. *. . . because as women we were following*
12. *a more liberal more egalitarian more brave style*
13. *men behaved in their own view in a way they regarded as more realistic*
14. *more pragmatically oriented well more rudely*
15. *well a serious fault line break at that point*

This excerpt offers a rich source to observe how female leaders reflect on their own leadership practices as well as men's evaluations of women's leadership styles. In lines 1–10, participant 2 explains that the decision-making mechanisms can become sites of conflict between men and women leaders within the same team of vice-presidents. She often resorts to a *direct speech* form *(e.g. 'you are too soft')* to mimic the voice of the male leaders as shown in lines 6–10. Direct quotations have important discursive functions in the narrative. The participant achieves to narrate her small story in a more realistic way by shifting to the men's voice. By using a sarcastic and disbelieving tone in the direct quotations, she simultaneously narrates the leadership traits attributed to women leaders and disrupts the negative predications attributed to women's leadership styles by male leaders. Line 7 is particularly interesting for observing how intertextuality is displayed in one quotation. The sentence *'ooh nothing/no one should be hurt'* is actually articulated by men in the team and mimics women leaders. It functions here to criticise and ridicule women's efforts to conciliate the controversial issues with the least harm for the institution and its members. But in this narrative, our participant re-contextualises this mimicking sentence and re-uses it in a subversive way to mimic men's unreasonable authoritarian approach. Therefore, reconciliation as a leadership skill that was first denigrated by men is reformulated as a valuable skill through the linguistic strategy of direct speech-narration. A similar move is observed in line 12, wherein the participant first lists qualities that she attributes to women's leadership (*liberal, brave, egalitarian*) in her experience and compares it to men's attributed leadership skills such as being *realistic* and *pragmatic*. Yet, with the phrase '*in their own view*', she downplays the general validity of this argument. In short, participant 2 reclaims the leadership characteristics once negatively attributed by the men in their team, subverts the negative connotations such as softness, overthinking and mediation and finally reframes those qualities as valuable and essential to leadership by renaming them as brave, egalitarian and liberal.

In short, women's everyday communication with their male colleagues in leadership teams was found to be a delicate site where normative performances and views of leadership are perceived by women administrators through mundane interactions. In the interviews, narratives of open criticisms, jokes and comments about women's leadership characteristics by male colleagues were frequently reported especially when a social issue was discussed on the board. While male leaders were reported to label women's leadership practices negatively in decision-making processes, the women in our study challenged the stereotyping of their leadership skills and redefined their qualities as valuable (Clifton, Schnurr, and Van De Mieroop 2020; Ille and Schnurr 2017; Schnurr this volume). They described their own leadership styles

as more democratic, meticulous, patient, emancipatory and tolerant as opposed to men who were depicted as more authoritative, sharp, shallow, hasty, rude and intolerant.

5.4 Meta-discursive awareness: calling for discursive transformation

Resisting masculine leadership stereotypes and reclaiming women's leadership practices in a contrastingly positive way, as illustrated earlier, once again reminds us of the fact that leadership should be conceptualised as ongoing, discursive processes (Ille and Schnurr 2017). Such elaborate discursive moves around the concept of leadership are powerful steps towards transforming normative discourses of leadership. As a key finding, we encountered overt discussions of discursive change in our interview data, which moves the discursive leadership negotiations to a meta-discursive level. Some of our respondents explicitly stated a need to transform leadership cultures in their context at a discursive level:

Excerpt 6 [Participant 5]

1. kadın çalışkansa hırslı ve kariyerist oluyor
2. hemen negatif iki tane sıfat orada ekleniyor
3. ne yapsa burada olumlu bir tepki almadığı bir sistemin içinde
4. . . . ben o yüzden çok çok önemsiyorum dönüştürmenin yolu
5. bu pozisyonlarda olup biraz dikkat çekmek bunlara
6. yani mesela 'aa ne kadar kariyerist kadın' dediğinde birisi
7. bir diğer kadın için 'kariyerist değil çalışkan kadın olduğu için
8. böyle diyorsun' demeliyiz
9. yani sürekli, ben mesela bunu hep yaptım
10. 'bir dakika, bir dakika, sen bunu sırf kadın olduğu için söylüyorsun'
11. . . . diğer kadınlara ilişkin bu tür yorumlarda çok tepki gösterdim
12. ve dilin dönüştüğünü ve değiştiğini düşünüyorum
13. zihinsel bakış ya da oradaki mindset değişti mi onu bilemem
14. ama en azından dil düzeyi de çok önemli bence
15. söylemsel düzeyde bir dönüşüm olduğunu düşünüyorum

English Translation

1. *if a woman is hardworking, she becomes too ambitious and careerist*
2. *two negative adjectives are immediately attached*
3. *she is in a system where she doesn't get a positive reaction whatever she does*
4. *. . . that's why I care so much about the ways of transformation*
5. *the way is to occupy these positions and call attention to such issues*

6.   *when someone says 'wow she is such a careerist' for a woman*
7.   *we have to correct: 'no she is hardworking, not careerist*
8.   *you say this because she is a woman'*
9.   *I mean I always did this*
10.   *'wait a minute you say that just because she is a woman'*
11.   *(. . .) I always reacted to such comments about other women*
12.   *I think that the language has changed around me*
13.   *I don't know if the mindset has changed*
14.   *but the language level is very important I think*
15.   *I believe there is a transformation on the discursive level*

Respondent 5 draws attention to a frequent practice in academic leadership circles, which is the attribution of contrasting meaning to the same leadership qualities according to the gender of the actor. She problematises biased lexical choices, particularly adjectives (*careerist*) conditioned by gender to depict leadership performances when they were exhibited by women, which would otherwise be characterised by positive adjectives (*hardworking*). She reflects on the importance of women's agency and intervention to transform the normative, gendered discourses characterising women and men contrastingly for the very same action/trait. Her metalinguistic awareness is also manifested through grammatical agency. The respondent grants agency to herself as the primary social actor for changing existing gendered discourses as exemplified in lines 4, 9 and 11. The pronoun *I* which indexes her grammatical agency shifts to *we* in line 7 to represent a collective voice of women in academia. Direct quotations are frequently used within this narrative as well. While the strategy of using direct quotations to convey the narrative helped the previous respondent to retell men's own speech in a subversive way, respondent 5 uses direct quotes from her own interactions instead to stress her social agency in transforming the existing discourses. In lines 14–15, the centrality of language and discourse in changing the gendered workplace environment is explicitly addressed. This reflection becomes evidence of a very high degree of awareness, involving not only a resistant discourse but also a transformational meta-discourse. In Excerpt 7, the same participant discusses the nuances of terminology related to gender:

Excerpt 7 [Participant 5]

1. (üniversite)'de ne yazık ki en büyük cam tavan da
2. '(üniversite)'de eşitlik var' <u>cam tavanı</u>
3. biz buna çarpıyoruz (.) bunun üstünde durmamız gerekiyor
4. o yüzden hani nerelerde o eşitsizliklerin olduğunu ortaya çıkarmanın yolu da

5. 'bu üniversitede eşitlik var' demek yerine
6. '(üniversite)bu konuda çaba sarf eden bir üniversite' demek
7. evet bu böyle kesinlikle çaba saf eden bir üniversite
8. toplumsal cinsiyet konusunda duyarlılık sahibi bir üniversite

English Translation

1. *the biggest glass ceiling in (our university) is unfortunately*
2. *the glass ceiling of 'there is gender equality here'*
3. *this is the glass-ceiling we hit (.) we have to think about this*
4. *that's why the way of exposing where the inequalities lie can be*
5. *possible by saying '(the university) is making an effort on gender equality'*
6. *instead of saying 'there is equality here'*
7. *and yes it definitely is a university making an effort on equality*
8. *it is a university with a gender-sensitive approach*

By referring to the well-known concept of the *glass ceiling* in lines 1–3, the respondent expresses her expertise in the field of gender studies and therefore assigns agency to herself again. She makes a terminological distinction between *gender equality* and *gender sensitivity* to describe her university setting in lines 2–8. The assumption that gender equality has already been achieved in this particular university with its action plans, policy documents, academic departments on gender studies and the egalitarian cultural climate is questioned by the respondent. Strikingly, she names this assumption, or the equality discourse as the actual *glass-ceiling*, since it makes the gendered barriers, practices, experiences and perceptions invisible and non-existent. The terminological differentiation and calling for discursive transformation allow the respondent to demonstrate her awareness at a meta-discursive level.

5. Discussion and conclusion

This chapter has explored the ways in which gender inequality perseveres in academic leadership through a detailed qualitative analysis of women's narratives of their own personal trajectories within the geopolitics of the Turkish context. The lived experiences and reflections of women who work(ed) as senior administrators in a specific gender-sensitive university context revealed that women experience university leadership as a vulnerable, challenging and precarious path because of a community of practice of masculinity, favouring stereotypical distributions of the workload and powerful alliances of men. The discussion throughout this chapter contributes to the existing literature in the sense that it presents empirical evidence invalidating the assumptions of universities as the sites of gender neutrality, objectivity and meritocracy.

The most salient manifestations of gendered barriers emerged in the form of an excessive amount of emotional labour resulting from role conflicts between family and work and an unwelcoming circle, or a *community of practice of masculinities* (Burkinshaw 2015). Women seem to continue to feel othered, particularly when they work closely with men in senior management teams. A key finding was that women's alienation and exclusion from the leadership community was ensured through micro-inequities operating at an everyday level. Micropolitics served to build a normative way of reinforcing masculine leadership and stereotyping women as incompetent administrators (Morley 1999).

Yet, the analysis of women senior administrators' personal narratives revealed that they displayed a very high level of meta-awareness of the gendered nature of senior leadership and globally valid masculine discourses around leadership (Acker 2010; Baxter 2017). Respondents were fully aware of powerful male networks and male-dominant workplace cultures intimidating women from getting into selection processes. This result sharply contrasts with Özkanlı and White's (2008) study pointing to a lack of awareness of Turkish women in senior administration roles as opposed to Australian women. This contrasting finding is very likely due to the gender-sensitive organisational structure in this particular context, to which our participants have greatly contributed as senior leaders. Our participants' narratives, with their high degree of meta-awareness, are very much in line with the findings of other studies in many geographically and culturally diverse contexts (Morley 2013; Acker 2012).

While the narratives navigated gendered discourses and stereotypes around leadership, which are found to be globally persisting, they also included significant reflections of agency and call for transformation as evidence of resistance to traditional forms of leadership (Clifton, Schnurr, and Van De Mieroop 2020). Narrative accounts of women are observed to have power on expressing awareness and agency; challenging gendered mechanisms of the workplace; transforming the discourse and stereotypes at discursive and material levels through linguistic and discursive strategies (Schnurr this volume). Commonalities of women's shared narratives with reference to the literature suggest that persistent gendered barriers are experienced in very similar ways across the boundaries of local contexts on a global scale. As we have suggested in the introduction, a closer look at the local provides an analytical perspective to reflect on and rethink the global. In our case, women academic leaders shared very similar narratives with those in a great range of different geopolitical contexts. This observation reinvokes the question of why women in senior university leadership positions in the UK, Australia, Hong Kong or Turkey do not 'find a comfortable home in the academic field' (Acker 2010, 132) and argues in favour of a globally prevailing gender habitus in academia.

Despite this gendered academic habitus in which women mostly 'drown' while men swim like 'the fish in the water' (Acker 2010, 132), the narratives we have explored in this chapter promise hope and discursive transformation of academic leadership. Women academic leaders achieve to reverse the normative discourses of leadership and construct their agency in leadership discourses, particularly through their storytelling practices. In the small stories unfolding in interactions, the notion of leadership becomes a discursive site where women open up the norms, practices and ideas around leadership for discussion. Storytelling allows women to subvert the normative leadership discourses by using multiple interactional and discursive strategies as our analysis revealed. In this sense, narrative approaches to leadership research with a particular focus on small stories have the potential to significantly contribute to future research studies at the nexus of gender, leadership and language.

Transcription Conventions (simplified from Jefferson 2004)

[]	Overlapping utterances
(.)	Short pause
?	Rising, 'questioning' intonation
((NOTES))	transcriber's comments and paralinguistic features
(. . .)	Words or lines omitted
underline	Emphatic stress

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5 Women's empowerment, employment and exclusion. Discourses in economic competitiveness initiatives in Malaysia

Melissa Yoong

1. Introduction

This chapter takes an applied linguistics perspective to examine the promotion of women's workforce participation for geopolitical competitiveness. It looks at how a hollowed-out language of women's empowerment is used in Malaysian state-linked websites to attract caregivers on career breaks to return to formal work. In doing so, it uncovers the ways in which regional and local issues at the intersections of gender, employment, family care and migration are reinforced through initiatives to optimise women's productive capacity and the crucial role that language plays in this.

Caregiving in many East Asian[1] societies has been predominantly embedded within the family system, where women are expected to be the primary care providers by both the state and society (Ogawa et al. 2018). This family ideology is maintained by cultural norms, legislation (e.g. Singapore's Maintenance of Parents Act) and an 'Asian values' discourse that represents elderly care outside the home as a form of 'Westernisation' that weakens the family. However, with shifts in gender roles, family structures and attitudes towards intergenerational responsibility, women are increasingly unable or unwilling to devote themselves to caregiving (Chan and Wong 2018; Elias 2020a). Additionally, as with elsewhere in the world, women's unequal care load prevents many of them from entering and progressing in the workforce. In Malaysia, where this study is situated, workforce participation is high among young women, but declines as they enter their 30s, which coincides with their childbearing and early childrearing years (KRI 2018a). As of March 2021, only 55.2% of prime-age women are in the labour market in contrast to 81% of working-age men (Department of Statistics, Malaysia 2021). The majority of women who leave their jobs do so because of difficulties combining their domestic and professional roles. In a 2018 survey, 60.2% of women outside the workforce cited housework and family responsibilities as their reason for not engaging in wage work compared with only 3.6% of men (KRI 2019).

Raising female employment numbers is a matter of considerable concern for many East Asian governments. In their drive to be competitive, higher-income states within the region have identified women's increased participation in the productive economy as vital to secure growth. Consequently, various policies and programmes have been introduced to harness women's 'under-utilised' labour to serve the economic objectives of the state. These are often packaged in a language of women's empowerment. For example, Japan's 'womenomics' policies are presented in the government's website as a strategy to 'create an environment where women can demonstrate their power to the fullest extent'. Nevertheless, despite their seemingly pro-woman stance, the state initiatives are ultimately motivated by national competitiveness. In positioning women as 'untapped' resources, they also exhibit a productivist bias that fails to recognise the significant reproductive work that many women perform on a day-to-day basis (Elias 2020a).

To mitigate the 'care deficit' and improve women's availability for paid employment, South Korea and Japan have developed social care systems for children and the elderly, but other states are reticent to increase spending in this continually undervalued area. Malaysia, Hong Kong, Taiwan and Singapore have introduced live-in migrant domestic workers through lenient migration policies, thus creating regional care chains between these middle- and high-income states and their poorer neighbours (Ogawa et al. 2018). In 2016, there were 3.34 million (predominantly female) transnational household workers in the Asia-Pacific region, whose main countries of destination were the four above (ILO 2016a). The gender order in families has thus expanded to a regional level where women continue to perform the lion's share of domestic and care work (Ogawa et al. 2018).

Migrant domestic workers (MDWs) encounter difficult trade-offs between economic gains and violations of their human rights. They are highly vulnerable to physical violence and sexual abuse due to the private nature of their site of work. Additionally, because their social reproductive labour takes place in a home environment, it is often regarded not as real professional work, but an extension of women's 'natural' domestic duties. This means that they are frequently unprotected by employment laws and, consequently, face exploitation such as non- or under-payment, long working hours and inadequate rest time (Elias 2010a, 2020b; Liang 2018). In Ladegaard's (2012, 2019) research on MDW narratives in East Asia, the women repeatedly spoke of dehumanising experiences of physical and sexual assault, verbal abuse, starvation, overwork and isolation. The trauma often resulted in self-blame, depression and despair. However, host governments have shown reticence in legislating against their citizens on behalf of these foreign women. Equally, sending countries rarely protect them even though outward migratory flows of domestic workers are often encouraged for the remittances they provide (Elias

2010a, 2020b). Media discourses further contribute to these women's dehumanisation and exclusion. Examining a corpus of news articles published in Hong Kong, Ladegaard (2013, 138) found that the reader 'is led to believe that FDHs are raped, abused and exploited because they do not act, or, even worse, because they deserve it'.

In Malaysia, too, MDWs are marginalised from the society to whose well-being and development they make important contributions. Finding affordable, quality daycare remains a challenge for many parents. Care shortages are in fact a global problem. As a result, most working families in Malaysia rely on informal sources of childcare such as MDWs, grandparents and babysitters (KRI 2019). Officially, around 300,000 households (4%)[2] hire MDWs (ILO 2016b), but there are likely more. Anecdotal evidence suggests that large numbers of irregular household workers without proper documentation are employed across the country (Crinis and Bandali 2017). Given the inadequacies of non-home-based care options, the patriarchal division of domestic labour, and a long work hours culture, engaging MDWs is an important solution for many wage-earning women. Thousands of poor women continue to arrive in Malaysia each year to take up work as live-in servants (Elias 2020a), which putatively 'frees' middle-class women to pursue paid work. Notably, Malaysian women's increased engagement in economic activities has led to some unease about child neglect, the role of MDWs in child-rearing, and the disintegration of family life (Elias 2020a). They are caught in a tension between competing discourses that emphasise their productive capacities on the one hand and position them as morally responsible for family care on the other.

Clearly, the marginalisation of care labour occurring at the interface of gender, race, nationality and class has serious ramifications for women as workers, mothers and daughters, and researchers have explored these across social classes and regions. The present study brings an applied linguistics perspective to investigate the ways in which these systemic injustices are obfuscated, depoliticised and shored up by gender and competitiveness initiatives that draw on the language of empowerment, that is, a language that conveys feelings of strength, autonomy, confidence, ability and self-worth. As mentioned previously, women's empowerment and agency are often articulated in efforts to widen women's productive economic participation. Such practices by state and development actors have been criticised by scholars within gender studies, development studies, anthropology and political economy (e.g. Batliwala 2007; Cornwall and Rivas 2015). Wilson (2015, 807), for example, argues that the selective appropriation of feminist terms within approaches to development deepens gender inequality by constructing 'hyper-industrious, altruistic, entrepreneurial female subjects' while erasing questions of gendered divisions of labour. Despite the problems surrounding how women's empowerment is spoken and written about, there is a paucity of linguistic

analyses examining this (e.g. Eyben and Napier-Moore 2009) and none known to the researcher in the East Asian geopolitical landscape. This chapter contributes to filling this gap through a critical discourse analysis of two websites that constitute the Malaysian state's initiatives to maximise the female workforce, *Flexworklife.my* and *Talent Matters*. More specifically, this research examines a curated set of articles about women who have returned, or wish to return, to the workplace after taking a career break to raise children. These 'career comeback stories' are framed as narratives of empowerment, with their aims being to inspire women to 'live a fulfilling life' and 'realise their potential', as stated in the *Flexworklife.my* and *Talent Matters* websites respectively. The goal of this study is to shed light on how the use of the language of equality and emancipation by a government agency reinforces and obscures power relations of gender, ethno-nationality and class as well as the hegemony of productive over reproductive labour. This adds to global conversations on workplace cultures and family-friendly employment, the intersectional discrimination of women workers, and the social and professional consequences of the cultural myth that women are natural caregivers.

This chapter first presents the theoretical lens for this research, namely neoliberal feminism, before describing the study's data and analytical approaches. The subsequent section conducts a linguistic analysis of the discourses within the career comeback stories to uncover what is conveyed about gender, employment and social reproduction, what practices are promoted and which are rarely spoken of, and what is left unproblematised. Lastly, this chapter discusses the implications of the findings for practice, applied linguistics research and social change.

2. Neoliberal feminism

This study uses neoliberal feminism as a critical concept for interrogating the key discourses in the career comeback stories. Before discussing neoliberal feminism, it is necessary to first define neoliberalism. Traditionally, neoliberalism has been understood as an economic ideology and policy model that advocates privatisation, marketisation, free trade and maximisation of competition and competitiveness while challenging welfarism. The East Asian care chains and state measures to raise female workforce participation operate within this economic framework. The latter are profoundly driven by the neoliberal imperative of national competitiveness. And as more women citizens are brought into the service of economic competition, societies in this region have become highly reliant on privatised market solutions to meet their care needs such as 'buying-in' MDWs. Such practices relieve increasingly neoliberal states of their responsibility for public welfare provision. This includes the sending countries since the migrant women's remittances provide vital support for poor communities (Elias 2020a, 2020b). Government involvement in

the regional care chains is minimal beyond loose inter-state agreements that facilitate the flows of 'human capital'. Worker recruitment is typically conducted through the private sector in a market-oriented system (Wickramasekara 2015).

Neoliberalism has now extended far beyond economic policy realms to become a governing rationality that subjects every aspect of human life to market principles and considerations of profitability and productivity. Human beings are regarded as entrepreneurial actors who seek to maximise their personal advantage through rational calculations of cost and benefit. Their moral probity is measured by how well they are able to provide for their individual needs and aspirations regardless of their circumstances (Brown 2005). Neoliberalism is thus a depoliticising ideology that individuates people and elides structural inequalities.

In recent years, researchers have begun to examine the growing neoliberal rationality within feminism. The present study draws on Rottenberg's (2018) conceptualisation of neoliberal feminism as a new variant of feminism that acknowledges continued gender inequalities but transmutes emancipation as individual women's ability to combine a successful career with a fulfilling family life. Aspirational middle-class women are incited to pursue work–family balance and personal happiness through self-tailored solutions. It is this turn inward, away from collective action and toward the self, that differentiates this strand of feminism from other variants. Neoliberal feminism holds out a happy work-family balance as an achievable ideal for women. However, in reality, a satisfying equilibrium is elusive and difficult to gauge and, therefore, requires constant fine-tuning. Hence, neoliberal feminism engenders a subject who is not only individualised, but also entrepreneurial, 'oriented toward optimizing her resources through incessant calculation, personal initiative, and innovation' (59).

The neoliberal feminist subject is expected to take it upon herself to manage issues of childcare and family life and not demand anything from the state or men as a group. In consequence, the burden of reproductive labour remains on the shoulders of individual women. As discussed earlier, privileged women do offload some of their care responsibilities to their low-income counterparts. However, neoliberal feminism's address is only directed to 'high-potential' women. Rottenberg (2018) argues that this erases the poor and migrant women whose underpaid, precarious and exploitative work allows professional women to pursue balance in their lives. By prioritising the pursuit of happiness and a well-rounded life over social justice, this new variant of feminism re-centres the middle-class and accelerates the splitting of female subjecthood into 'the worthy capital-enhancing feminist subject and the "unworthy" disposable female "other" who performs most of the reproductive and care work', thereby producing new forms of class-based and racialised gender stratification (20).

Neoliberal feminist ideas have been detected in numerous Western professional and policy contexts, including in career guides for women (Rottenberg 2018), business women's conferences (Mickey 2019), interviews with senior professional women (Yeomans 2019), policy-making (Berggren 2020) and political speeches (Dangoisse and Perdomo 2020). In contrast, the body of research on neoliberal feminism in East Asia is small but developing (Kim 2019; Peng 2019; Yu 2018). Although these studies mainly focus on popular culture, they indicate the growing individualisation and marketisation of feminist concerns in this part of the world. As yet, there has been very little scholarly work on neoliberal feminism in Malaysia. However, a recent study (Yoong 2020) examining career advice and interviews with successful women in Malaysian media shows that neoliberal feminism has highly influenced representations of employed motherhood, which suggests that its logics have gained considerable traction here.

3. The career comeback stories and analytical approaches

The career comeback stories examined in this study are drawn from *Flexworklife.my* and *Talent Matters*. Both websites are developed by Talent Corporation Malaysia (TalentCorp), a government agency that was established to attract and retain 'talent' to fuel Malaysia's transformation into a high-income economy. Since its inception in 2010, TalentCorp has introduced a range of market-friendly initiatives to facilitate highly educated women to return to the workplace, including encouraging (but not compelling) organisations to implement work-family integration practices. *Flexworklife.my* and *Talent Matters* are part of TalentCorp's efforts to engage with employers and the country's 'human capital'. *Flexworklife.my*, as its name suggests, promotes the provision of flexible work arrangements (FWAs) and family-friendly benefits. Its top menu provides the reader access to five major sections, namely, 'Tax Incentive', which explains tax deductions for employers who implement FWAs; 'Employers', which offers reasons why companies should hire returning women and adopt FWAs; 'Women', which presents motivations for women to return to the workforce; 'Resources', an archive of case studies, toolkits, guidelines and news articles on FWAs; and 'About', which describes the *Flexworklife.my* initiative. The *Talent Matters* website describes itself as 'a repository of resources on career and personal development for youths, professionals and women'. Its homepage features articles about various career-related topics arranged reverse-chronologically. These texts are repeated across the other main sections of the website, which are 'Stories', 'Resources' and 'News'. The 'stories' are organised into sub-sections according to their target audience (professionals, employers, youth and women), allowing each group to retrieve articles that are most relevant to their interests and needs. Through dedicated web pages

for women, *Flexworklife.my* and *Talent Matters* explicitly position this group as an important target for government interventions to enhance Malaysia's 'talent pool'. These 'Women' sections play the crucial function of persuading the reader that contributing to the market economy as workers is a good idea. Notably, career comeback stories comprise almost the entirety of their content. Hence, these articles serve as a key resource to examine state-backed messages to women and how these messages are conveyed.

This case study analyses all 41 career comeback stories in the two websites, 29[3] in *Talent Matters* and 12 in *Flexworklife.my*. It also examines the webpage introducing the stories in *Flexworklife.my*. The data were retrieved in May 2020. They largely feature women who have decided to return to corporate life after taking a career break, though several articles in *Talent Matters* also showcase TalentCorp's Career Comeback Programme and companies that support women returnees through family-friendly policies. The role of the articles is to provide women with exemplars of model behaviours in order to maximise their workforce participation. Although the writers make frequent use of direct and free indirect speech to present the returning women's experiences, it is assumed that the speech presented has been edited by TalentCorp to emphasise certain themes to fit the purpose of the stories.

The career comeback stories are approached from a critical discourse analysis (CDA) perspective to examine their ideological and persuasive properties. This study takes the premise that the articles are saturated with the ideologies of those with the power to define what is normal, acceptable and ideal for women. These ideologies serve the interests of some and sustain unequal relations of power. This does not mean that knowledge is intentionally manipulated to reinforce forms of subordination. The language choices of the text producers are shaped by their cultural, economic and geopolitical contexts which make certain propositions and views more likely than others. The stories provide a microcosm of these wider issues which colour gender and development initiatives in Malaysia. Undoubtedly, the reader is capable of resisting the perspectives conveyed in the texts, but the assumption in the present work is that these messages may not be obviously problematic – and could even seem progressive – because they are wrapped up in a vocabulary of diversity, inclusion and women's empowerment. The intent of the analysis is to demystify the dominant ideologies expressed through seemingly emancipatory language.

The articles are scrutinised from two converging angles. First, the analysis uncovers the discourses produced to encourage high-potential unemployed mothers to rejoin the workforce and thereby improve the country's global competitiveness. To gain further insights on asymmetries of power at the intersection of geopolitics, gender, production and social reproduction in Malaysia, the analysis then turns its focus to

the discursive absences around MDWs. Absences here refer to instances where information that is arguably relevant to the discourse context is omitted or under-emphasised, or where certain interpretations of events are suppressed (Ehineni 2018). These absences arise from a process of choosing what merits communication and perception. In other words, 'they are the other side of the coin that results in the presence of the chosen'. These choices may not be made with the deliberate intention of producing a particular order of discourse, but they contribute to it (Schröter and Taylor 2018, 7). To locate the absences, the analysis looks at naming choices, the use of nominalisations, transitivity patterns, vague characterisations of social actions, and backgrounding.

4. Analysis

4.1 Balance and empowerment

The analysis shows that the career comeback stories coalesce around a neoliberal feminist discourse that construes the individual achievement of work-family balance and well-being – that is, feelings of fulfilment, self-confidence and personal growth – as the ultimate goal for women. Certainly, it is important to be able to combine care and paid work and lead a satisfying life. However, this has become an end in itself within the discourse, which detracts from the need for broader social changes for greater gender equality. This discourse is articulated through a 'can do' language that endows individual women with agency and self-determination and, in so doing, takes attention away from the systemic barriers that hinder women as a group from having equal opportunities to pursue a career. In the examples as follows, a combination of epistemic and boulomaic modality presents the happy work–family balance ideal as attainable and desirable for women. Epistemic modality indicates the possibility of a state of affairs being the case, while boulomaic modality expresses the wish or liking for a state of affairs.

(1) **You can have the best of both worlds.** We know it won't be easy. But **it can be done** . . . Be inspired by hearing the hardship and dedication of women in following their passion to live a fulfilling life without sacrificing their loved ones. ('Women', *Flexworklife. my*, emphasis added)

(2) 'Most importantly, I want to show my children that women can do everything – be successful on the home front and have a promising career as well' ('Making a career comeback – TalentCorp's programme participant shares her story', *Talent Matters*)

The modal auxiliary *can* in the clauses in bold expresses certainty that women are able to *have the best of both worlds*. These clauses, therefore,

have the illocutionary force of a promise to women, as though balance is within their grasp. They are also tinged with boulomaic meaning since balance is clearly the desired outcome. They interpellate a subject who is aspirational, empowered and autonomous. Similarly, extract 2 combines boulomaic desire for balance (*I want*) with epistemic certainty that women can achieve it (*women can do everything*). In (1), the desirability of combining a meaningful profession with a strong commitment to family is reinforced through the imperative which calls upon women to emulate those who are *following their passion to live a fulfilling life without sacrificing their loved ones*. By describing the joint pursuit of career and motherhood as *a fulfilling life*, the excerpt links happiness to work–family balance.

The stories repeatedly mobilise a vocabulary of positive affect to reinforce the message that stay-at-home mothers are most likely to find happiness by joining the labour market. This is illustrated as follows:

(3)   I actually **enjoy** working life! It was something that I missed during my career break. Working made my life **more fulfilling** and it is challenging which gives me **a sense of satisfaction** for every achievement that I had accomplished. ('Verena Chin', *Flexworklife.my*, emphasis added)

(4)   'I missed **the feelings of self-worth and self-satisfaction** that you get from having a career. After all these years of looking after my family, I think it's time that I do something for myself'. ('TalentCorp's Career Comeback Workshop equips women with skills, confidence to return to work', *Talent Matters*, emphasis added)

(5)   If resuming your career will boost your **self-esteem, confidence**, and make you **happier**, then why not do it? ('Return of the working mother', *Talent Matters*, emphasis added)

These excerpts contain implicit evaluations about having a career, where the evaluative elements in bold constitute a semantic field of well-being. This lexicon indirectly indexes empowerment given that emotional and psychological well-being has become 'the master signifier of the successful (neoliberal) subject', whereas the inability to experience well-being denotes individual failure (Rottenberg 2018, 114). From this perspective, then, by portraying employment as the route to confidence and contentment, the stories also present re-entering the workplace as a process of empowerment. Importantly, in enticing women back to the workforce with the promise of affective empowerment, the stories encourage a depoliticised and individualised mindset since they orient women toward the goal of reaching their personal eudemonia within the status quo, and away from imagining gender roles, systems of care and the world of work in new ways that would benefit society collectively. The extracts interpellate an 'empowered' subject who takes charge of her happiness (*it's time*

that I do something for myself, why not do it). Such stories may, at least at first sight, appear to encourage women to exert control over their life trajectories, but it is clear that a particular choice is expected of them and it is one that hitches 'the dream of women's emancipation to the engine of capitalist accumulation' (Fraser 2013, 110–11) rather than to social transformation.

Consonant with sociocultural views and national policies that see mothers as 'best able to raise the next generation of productive and morally upstanding citizens' (Elias 2020a, 5), the 'mother as main parent' discourse features strongly in the data, whereas traces of 'shared parenting' are rare. In both websites, women are expected to negotiate the delicate balance between career and mothering through a combination of personal initiative, ceaseless calculation, home-based care arrangements and flexible work benefits. All this contributes to the sustenance of the dominant ideology in East Asia that caregiving is a female and private matter. Several stories valorise work–life practices premised on female caregiving by harnessing them to buzzwords that encode women's empowerment and equality:

(6)   today's progressive and competitive business environment means that many companies offer **family-friendly policies that enable women to pursue their career paths, while adequately taking care of their family responsibilities at the same time**. PwC Malaysia is one such company that embraces a strong diversity and inclusion culture, one that empowers women who seek to return to work. ('Empowering women returnees through the career comeback programme', *Talent Matters*, emphasis added)

(7)   A company looking to continue its focus on identifying issues and initiating change efforts to create an inclusive work environment, Maybank also strives to accommodate women's workplace issues and hopes to continue building **practices that can help women better balance their personal and professional responsibilities**. ('Malaysia's financial tiger is keen on making work-life balance possible in the banking sector', *Talent Matters*, emphasis added)

In the noun phrases in bold, *women* are the sole 'beneficialised' social actor (van Leeuwen 2008) who profit from *family-friendly policies* and *practices that can help better balance personal and professional responsibilities*. There is no mention of men benefiting from such arrangements, which implies that they do not need to carry their fair share of care load, thus leaving the family status quo unchallenged. At the same time, these *policies* and *practices* are articulated with the key liberal terms *progressive*, *diversity*, *inclusion/inclusive*, *empower* and *change*. Such an articulation aligns the *policies* and *practices* with ideas of gender equality, social reform and egalitarianism. The feel-good connotations

of these buzzwords can potentially obfuscate the fact that women are still expected to assume the traditional role of the primary caregiver. The sanctification of work–life initiatives also flattens out class differences between women. While family-friendly practices are undoubtedly important and necessary, they remain the preserve of professional middle-class women. Positioning them with diversity and inclusion as if they are adequate measures foreclose discussion on more comprehensive solutions that could benefit women across classes and are not reliant on corporate goodwill.

Although the stories normalise childcare as women's responsibility, they are largely silent about the actual reproductive labour that career mothers perform alongside their paid work. This has long been a worldwide issue where the significant time and energy that women spend on caring work and household chores are routinely ignored and unaccounted for. When the articles do describe the strategies that women employ to manage their 'double burden' (Hochschild 1989), it is to illustrate that FWAs can empower women with greater control over tensions between the demands of care and career, as exemplified as follows:

(8) With this FWA, Sharnila was able to schedule her work responsibilities around her fixed family duties. She would start work as early as 7 am then take longer lunch breaks so she could pick up her children from school, then settle their meals and after-school routines. By 6 pm, she would stop to focus on her family again, though at times she would work nights to meet deadlines. ('We asked Mums how they would make workplaces better for mothers. Here's what they said', *Talent Matters*)

(9) Another important factor in her story is the support from her former boss who understands her family situation and needs. This support comes in the form of flexible working hours. When her son has to attend therapy session(s) or hospital appointments, Lorraine gives her boss advance notice and compensates by either working late or earlier than usual. ('Lorraine Anne Scully', *Flexworklife.my*)

In these extracts, Sharnila and Lorraine are the sole Actors carrying out caregiving actions and adjusting their work schedules to meet their parenting and professional obligations. As with (6) and (7), the linguistic absence of references to fathers manifests 'mother as main parent'. By positioning the women as active agents of the various processes, the stories depict them as entrepreneurial subjects who, enabled by FWAs, are 'consciously choosing to create the life they desire and proactively crafting such a life through continuous labor and perseverance' – behaviour that signifies empowerment and achievement within neoliberal feminism (Rottenberg 2018, 136). The accounts of the women's long working hours offer a glimpse of how flexibility subverts its promise of freedom

and the empowerment of individual workers 'by compelling them to adapt to the demands of the market and employers and by enabling work to envelop life' (Chamberlain 2015, 101). Nonetheless, uncoupled from social-structural considerations, these depictions fetishise flexibility and individual efficiency and encourage employed mothers to cultivate a spirit of self-optimisation. Positive representations of FWAs prevail in state, organisational and media discourses around the world (Allen et al. 2013; Gregg 2011). Global feminist scholars have argued that this diverts attention away from governments in resolving the 'unpaid care impasse' (Nash and Churchill 2020, 837). It keeps women 'tethered to caring and the domestic sphere in ways that men still are not' (843) while placing the onus on them to manage their professional and family responsibilities. Writing from Australia, Gregg (2011, 35) argues that FWAs do not change workplace or household cultures, but 'merely enable[ ] the opportunity to move long hours around'.

4.2 Discursive absences around Migrant Domestic Workers

According to key reports on gender, employment and care in Malaysia, MDWs provide an important option for women seeking to navigate both career and family responsibilities (e.g. Choong et al. 2018; KRI 2018b; World Bank 2012). Hence, we can reasonably expect MDWs to be present in the career comeback stories since they are relevant to the context. However, they are mentioned in merely five articles and only very briefly. Therefore, it can be argued that there is a salient absence around these migrant women. The handful of stories that allude to them are devoid of any particular attention or detail regarding them, as these examples show:

(10)   [My supervisor] was also very understanding when I needed to work from home on a number of occasions when I was in between maids or had family issues to deal with. ('Jasmin Amirul', *Flexworklife.my*)

(11)   Shazrina shared that halfway through the course, she had a mini crisis as her domestic help had run away, leaving her to balance between taking care of three kids and completing the programme. Her husband stepped up to extend extra support, which she admitted was tremendously important in easing her career comeback journey. ('Empowering women in Cyber Risk', *Talent Matters*)

In (10), the prepositional phrase *in between maids* casts MDWs not as full human beings, but as commodities that are indistinguishable from and interchangeable with each other. The term *maids*, which is widely used in Malaysia and other countries in this region, strips them of their 'personhood' as it 'invokes the live-in maids that were once prevalent in Chinese culture [and] were regarded as the property of their masters'

(Liang 2018, 147). Extract 11 presents the fact that Shazrina's employee *had run away* as trivial contextual information in a causal adjunct. In Malaysia, recruitment agencies often retain MDWs' passports when they arrive in the country. Live-in workers who leave their place of employment lose their legal status, income and home. They also risk arrest and deportation. Thus, by backgrounding this serious event and describing it as *a mini crisis*, the text suppresses the worker's perspective. In fact, grammatically, the possessive relationship (*she had a mini crisis*) is encoded from the point of view of Shazrina, who is the Possessor. There is no indication of any concern for the worker's well-being. Instead, the subsequent clauses focus on Shazrina and her husband's neoliberal qualities of resilience and adaptability. The suppression of the experiences of MDWs constitutes a pattern of absence in the data. The brief segments that mention them are always from the standpoint of the needs and convenience of middle-class women. This reproduces social understandings of the migrant women as disposable means for capital-enhancing Malaysians to achieve their ends. Both aforementioned extracts not only de-emphasise the MDWs but also cast them as the cause of problems or 'villains' of the narratives. In (11), Shazrina's husband is given to play the role of the 'knight in shining armour' who helps her to regain *balance* and complete the career comeback programme.

Notably, Shazrina's employee is labelled as *domestic help* instead of a domestic worker. This naming choice reinforces the perception of social reproduction as non-work and renders the women's important social and economic contributions to households and the wider society invisible. The pervasive blindness to the labour that MDWs perform is a key human rights issue in Malaysia. Because reproductive activities are not acknowledged as work, MDWs do not have the same rights as other workers under the Employment Act 1955 (WAO and JAG 2019). NGOs have demanded that the state recognises MDWs as workers,[4] 'emphasizing how the subordinate status of this group of employees is perpetuated by the view that they are mere household "helpers"' (Elias 2010b, 848). Indonesia, one of the main sending countries of MDWs in East Asia, has replaced the official use of the term 'domestic helper' with 'domestic worker' as part of their efforts to offer more protection to their citizens, arguing that the former positions the women as someone whose rights can be ignored (Munir 2015). Nonetheless, Malaysia and other receiving countries in the region continue to refer to MDWs as *domestic helpers*, as further reflected in these excerpts:

(12)   'Establish a good support system, be it with your in-laws, relatives or domestic helpers. Come to terms with yourself that you can outsource the housework and entrust someone else to help raise your children'. ('How one woman's health scare inspired her career comeback', *Talent Matters*)

(13)   Mary, whose two children are now 19 and 16 years old, said that it was 'somewhat difficult' for mothers to thrive in the legal profession unless they have a very strong support system such as a responsible and understanding spouse, a reliable domestic helper and a capable mother/mother-in-law (in that order!). ('How to create a better workplace for Mums – according to Mums', *Talent Matters*)

Here, the repeated use of *helper(s)* once again obscures MDWs' physical and emotional labour. However, it is also crucial to recognise that the meaning of the word is subject to socio-cultural circumstances. Ladegaard's (2017) study of MDW narratives in Hong Kong shows how the women consistently use the term 'helper' for self-reference and associate it with service to God, their families and the people of Hong Kong. According to Ladegaard, 'helper' is a meaningful identity position that gives these women purpose. Hence, we are 'disempowering them if we argue that "they are not helpers, they are workers" ' (440). What the women in this and other national contexts want is to be respected (see de los Heros [2017] on how Peruvian household workers assert their expertise and identity as a skilled worker).

In (12) and (13) above, the nominalisation *support system* focuses on the generalised action of supporting, thereby hiding the demanding work involved and the agency of the Actors. It is not only the day-to-day family care that is invisibilised. Both excerpts use three-part lists (*your in-laws, relatives or domestic helpers*; *a responsible and understanding spouse, a reliable domestic helper and a capable mother/mother-in-law*) which, as Jeffries (2010) tells us, can give the impression of completeness. Although there are other care options that could relieve women of their double burden, the fact that these lists contain three parts invites the reader to interpret them as comprehensive, which undercuts the possibility of imagining alternative ways of caregiving. On the whole, only two articles advocate for workplace crèche services and the data is silent around universal care for children and the elderly. This mirrors the 'ongoing carelessness in many countries', where ideas about social welfare and community care have been cast aside and care is relegated to 'something we are supposed to buy for ourselves on a personal basis' (Chatzidakis et al. 2020, 1–2). Interestingly in (13), the *spouse* appears first on the list and we are told that this arrangement is significant (*in that order!*). This seemingly promotes fathers as important caregivers, but their role is ambiguously described as being *responsible* and *understanding*. There is a lack of explicitness with regard to what they actually do, thus sustaining traditional gendered roles in family life.

The discursive invisibility of MDWs and their reproductive work is only part of their marginalisation. As the excerpts below show, they are also reductively stereotyped as unreliable, which is a common typecast of transnational household workers in Malaysia:

(14) 'I did not have a support network in Kuala Lumpur and **I was not willing to leave my child with a maid** while I was at work'. ('Making a career comeback – TalentCorp's programme participant shares her story', *Talent Matters*, emphasis added)

(15) I recall spending most of my first day back at work, constantly checking my mobile CCTV . . . just to make sure [my youngest child] was ok. It was an extremely nerve-racking day for me, but it improved over time, now I hardly check at all (not sure if that's a good thing!) ('Jasmin Amirul', *Flexworklife.my*)

Excerpt 14 renders MDWs temporarily visible but only to imply their untrustworthiness. This stereotypical information is not stated explicitly, but a reader familiar with the local context can be relied on to draw this inference in order to make sense of the clause in bold. In (15), which comes from the same story as extract 10, the migrant employee has been erased from the text even though she is pertinent to the issue at hand. The reader is left with suggestive traces of her from the implicature that she may be a threat to the child. Her textual absence suppresses the contribution of her housework and childcare to her employer's ability to pursue a career. Ironically, by implicitly encouraging the reader to regard MDWs as a potential threat to the family, the extract legitimises spying on them and violating their own privacy rights. This accords with activists' arguments that the discourse of domestic workers as untrustworthy feeds into 'highly exploitative regimes of labour control within the household' (Elias 2010b, 849). This also echoes an MDW returnee's account in Ladegaard's (2019) study that her employer in Taiwan had installed a CCTV camera to monitor her every move and prevent her from practising her religion, which illustrates the global nature of the problem.

5. Discussion and conclusion

Using *Flexworklife.my* and *Talent Matters* as empirical sites, this chapter sought to examine how a government organisation instrumentalises the language of empowerment to attract more women into the workforce in order to strengthen Malaysia's position in the global market. As the analysis reveals, the career comeback stories in these state-linked websites articulate the neoliberal feminist 'happy work-family balance' discourse which encourages women to improve their personal well-being by combining motherhood with professional accomplishment. Deploying neoliberal feminism as a discourse strategy safeguards both the national economic competitiveness project and 'Asian values' that dictate that childcare is the responsibility of the family, principally the mother. By inscribing balance as the ideal for progressive womanhood, the discourse bolsters state measures to enhance women's productive capacity while ensuring women continue to play the central role in child-raising in line

with traditional and moralistic gendered discourses in Malaysian society. Crucially, the individualistic empowerment expressed in the language of the discourse eliminates from view the gender inequalities underlying the career comeback initiatives. The pressure on women to be both present mothers and ideal workers whose productivity is unimpeded by caregiving duties is repackaged as emancipation, self-care and efficiency rather than being questioned. This helps to keep social disenchantment in check and produce an industrious, self-motivated workforce, which is good for economic growth. From a social change perspective, however, the idealised representations of contented, productive, self-actualising career mothers are problematic as they implicitly confirm the 'empowering' potential of measures which, in actual fact, deepen rather than undermine gendered arrangements in Malaysian households. This is both a local problem and a global one. Cornwall (2018, 12) argues that discourses of women's empowerment in international development contribute towards sustaining a traditional family model 'in which women are those who do the caring. . . . For all the encouragement to enter the labour market, empowered women may find no relief in expectations that they will provide unpaid care work at home'. What used to be spoken about as a double burden is now called 'empowerment'. Hence, applied linguists play an important role in interrogating the linguistic wrapping of gender, employment and development initiatives, both in Malaysia and beyond, and exposing the patriarchal model of family care that lies beneath their shiny veneer.

By speaking the language of empowerment and inclusion, TalentCorp's career comeback stories perform the invisibilisation of not only gender inequalities but also existing hierarchies of class, citizenship and non-citizenship, and production and reproduction. As Elias (2020a, 9) has pointed out, it is *middle-class* women's workforce participation that is regarded as a catalyst for Malaysia's global competitiveness and growth. Gender equality policy interventions have been centred on a 'middle-class, educated, urban female subject . . . whereas specific groups of racialised citizens and non-citizen women, working at home, or for households as domestic workers, are continually undervalued and/or unrecognised'. Resonating with these observations, the career comeback stories exclusively address relatively affluent women who are able to prioritise cultivating positive affect, personal growth and a well-rounded life and who have access to FWAs. Missing from the conversation are less privileged women who need to work for basic financial reasons but cannot afford child or elder care, and who are not likely to be in jobs that offer family-friendly benefits. However, drawing on a language that evokes diversity and women's empowerment can create a warmly persuasive though false impression that the state initiatives serve all women equally, thereby further instilling middle-class needs as the yardstick to measure gender equality. This necessitates applied linguistics research that can expose

the ways in which mainstreamed buzzwords insulate and entrench the privileged status that the middle-classes enjoy in narratives of development not only in Malaysia but also within the Global South more generally (see Ballard 2012). Such studies can also clear the ground for more discussion about how linguistic practices in gender and development contexts reinforce stratifications between well-educated women citizens and their economically precarious migrant counterparts in the 'global household'. In the career comeback stories, the former are constituted through a 'luminous' interpellation as upwardly mobile, empowered subjects while the latter invisibly provide the 'low wage socially reproductive work so central to the Malaysian state's pursuit of economic competitiveness and the growth of a prosperous middle-class society' (Elias 2010b, 841). This sustains the migrant women's 'structural inequality within the global political economy, the local economy and the households within which they work', which contributes to their vulnerability (848). As applied linguists, we can bring transnational household workers' textual absences into presence to shine light on their important labouring roles within global circuits of capital accumulation. Ladegaard's (2012, 2017, 2019) research, for example, has been crucial for challenging dominant representations and perceptions of the workers through their narratives which function as a means for amplifying their suppressed voices and empowering them to re-author their life-stories.

In Malaysia, MDWs' status as underclass subjects is reinforced by intersecting hierarchies of class, race and nationality and, crucially, their association with domestic work which is seen as having no value (Elias and Louth 2016). Activists have sought to make their labour visible and formally recognised as work. However, the subordination of reproduction to production within institutional and public discourse, as reflected in this study's data, presents a challenge for this. In the stories, pursuing a career is valorised as the path to well-being and personal empowerment. Social reproduction, in contrast, is treated as unremarkable. Taking an applied linguistics perspective to national competitiveness initiatives would offer a timely intervention to challenge the exploitation and undervaluation of reproductive labour within the global economic order which are normalised through linguistic practices. Drawing attention to the essential work that has been backgrounded can serve as means of resisting the prominence of self-care, growth and competitiveness and making care visible and valued. This contributes towards opening up possibilities for care that have been evacuated by neoliberalism such as community and universal care.

Finally, there are opportunities for state and development actors that can pave way for interventions that would better support women in all regions. While the gender issues at the interface of family, work, development and migration discussed in this study have emerged from Malaysia's particular geopolitical circumstances, variations of these problems

occur in many other national contexts. At the same time, the international language of women's empowerment has become prominent in policy-making, as noted earlier. As such, governments and development agencies across geographical settings need to re-evaluate the ways in which the lexicon of equality and empowerment have come to be used in their gender and work discourse. This includes reflecting on how their deployment of words such as 'balance', 'diversity' and 'inclusion' silences structural inequalities and detracts attention from self-scrutiny regarding their country's gender issues and, accordingly, from the possibility of real and lasting change. Standing (2004, cited in Cornwall 2007, 480) argues that 'it is naive to expect bureaucrats to be either willing or able to carry out the transformative work that those who advocate the adoption of radical concepts expect of them'. Nonetheless, it is important for applied linguists to continue to promote the possibility for conversations about how the language of empowerment can be reclaimed to serve the cause of social justice and structural change around the world.

Notes

1 This chapter adopts a broad definition of 'East Asia' that refers to both the eastern and south-east regions of Asia.
2 This estimate is based on the assumption that each household has one domestic worker. There were around 300,000 documented domestic workers in Malaysia in 2016 (ILO 2016b). The total number of households in Malaysia in the same year stood at 7.5 million (KRI 2018a).
3 In May 2020, there were 40 articles in the 'Women' section. Eleven were removed from the dataset as they were either unrelated to the topic of returning to the workforce after a career break or also published in *Flexworklife.my*.
4 In March 2022, the Employment Act was amended to replace the terms 'domestic servant' and 'foreign domestic servant' with 'domestic employee' and 'foreign domestic employee' respectively. However, it is unclear what rights, if any, are conferred to MDWs by this amendment.

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6 A reversed gender bias? Exploring intersectional identity work by Belgian women with a Turkish or Moroccan migration background

Catho Jacobs, Dorien Van De Mieroop and Colette Van Laar

1. Introduction

A recent study by the European Commission (2019) revealed that European women still have lower labour market participation than men, that they are paid less per hour and that they are underrepresented in decision-making positions. This is also the case in Belgium (OECD 2020a, 2020b, 2020c). When zooming in on a subgroup of this category, namely Belgian women with a second-generation[1] migration background, it becomes apparent that this subgroup suffers from even more severe inequalities. Statistics show not only that in Belgium individuals of all migration backgrounds – especially of Turkish and Moroccan origins[2] – have a lower employment rate than people of Belgian origin (Unia, and Federal Public Service Employment, Labour and Social Dialogue 2019; Heath, Rothon, and Kilpi 2008), but also that this is especially the case for women. While women with a Turkish or Moroccan migration background have a markedly lower employment rate than men with the same migration background, they are also more underrepresented in higher positions. In particular, only 3.9 and 2.6 percent of women with, respectively, Turkish and Moroccan origins are senior managers or professionals, in comparison to 5,7 and 6,3 percent of men with those origins (Vandezande et al. 2007, 40).[3]

Furthermore, the picture behind all these numbers is also rather bleak, as discourse analytical studies have shown. In particular, these women with a Turkish or Moroccan migration background often also face discrimination and prejudice in their workplaces. This can have repercussions for the construction of their professional identities in two ways. First, women may struggle to construct appropriate identities in the workplace due to their minority gender identity, since gender is argued to be something that is always covertly present as a "background framing construct" (Holmes 2005, 57). This is due to the "gender order" that characterises contemporary workplaces (Connell 1987), in which stereotypically masculine behavioural and interactional norms prescribe

professional behaviour, especially at the highest echelons of power (Mullany 2007) and in leadership positions (Schnurr 2009). This gender bias in favour of stereotypically masculine (linguistic) behaviour leads to difficulties for women in constructing appropriate professional identities.

Second, women with a migration background often additionally struggle to balance their professional and ethnic identities. In this respect, Holmes (2018, 34) introduced the concept of the 'culture order', defined as 'a hegemonic ideology influencing the ways in which individuals orient to the construction of their ethnic or cultural identity'. So, similar to masculine norms that influence social interaction, ethnic majority group norms pervade society in general, and workplaces in particular, and implicitly prescribe how to behave and interact in an appropriate manner. It is self-evident that it is more challenging for individuals from minority ethnic groups to avoid violating these norms, which can lead to difficulties in constructing appropriate professional identities (Holmes 2018; Holmes, Marra, and Vine 2011). In sum, women with a migration background are arguably disadvantaged in two ways, since they may struggle to balance their gender as well as their ethnic identities with professional identities.

In social psychological research, this struggle has been described as the 'double jeopardy' hypothesis (Beale 1979). In particular, this theory hypothesises that the discrimination and stereotypes that women from an ethnic minority group face consists of the sum of the prejudices that are associated with both their gender and ethnic minority identity (Purdie-Vaughns and Eibach 2008). Moreover, scholars have argued that this additive perspective is not comprehensive enough, since the 'intersectional experience is greater than the sum of racism and sexism' (Crenshaw 1989, 140). In light of this, the scrutiny of compound stereotypes has gained more prominence in social psychological research, resulting in studies that focus on stereotypes that are exclusively associated with intersectional (or compound) categories, such as 'black women' or 'Asian students' (Schneider 2005; see, e.g. Ghavami and Peplau 2012). This thus implies that women with a migration background could face challenges in the workplace (see, e.g. Van Laar et al. 2019) not only in relation to gender and ethnic stereotypes but also due to prejudices and stereotypes that are exclusively associated with the compound group of women with a migration background.

This intersection of gender and ethnicity and its relation to the construction of professional identity has only been investigated to a limited extent in sociolinguistic studies thus far. For example, Holmes and Marra (2011) and Mullany and Yoong (2016) have shown, respectively in institutional discourse and online political discourse, that masculine as well as ethnic majority group norms influence the construction and perception of appropriate professional identities. In this chapter, we aim to add to this research by scrutinising interviews about professional experiences from highly skilled women with a migration background who work in

white-collar jobs. By focusing on the professional identity construction of Belgian women with Turkish and Moroccan migration roots, this chapter offers a micro-analytical perspective on the effects of globalisation in the workplace. In particular, we aim to not only show how these women make sense of issues of discrimination, gendered stereotyping and representations of workplace culture that are associated with the geographical location of Belgium but also explore the more general implications of our findings. We first provide information regarding our data and methods and then we move to the analytical part of this chapter which finally leads to the discussion and conclusions.

2. Method

2.1 Background

As sketched earlier, we investigate interviews with women with a Turkish and Moroccan migration background because of the variety of challenges – in relation to their gender, their ethnicity as well as the combination of these two – they may face in the workplace. Additionally, this group is highly underrepresented in higher positions (see introduction), which is why we expect struggles in relation to these various identities to come to the fore even more when they work in white-collar jobs, as the women in our dataset do. In this respect, it is important to note that we view the concept of identity from a social constructionist perspective. In line with this, identity is not seen as something individuals *have*, but as something that individuals *create* in interaction through language. Because of this, identity is described as a multi-faceted, as well as an interactionally constructed and negotiated process (Van De Mieroop 2017). More specifically, in our analyses we scrutinise the construction of compound categories, which can be defined as intersectional categories that combine more than one social identity such as gender, ethnicity and religion (e.g. Muslim women with a Turkish migration background), and associated compound stereotypes, which are stereotypes that are exclusively associated with that intersectional category.

Moreover, we decided to focus specifically on interviews as data for this research question because, as Linde (1993) maintains, in order to obtain data containing talk about highly specific topics – such as this one – it is better to 'ask about them directly' rather than simply tape interactions in which it is unlikely that these topics will occur spontaneously, 'unless one is willing to wait with tape recorder poised for an impractically long time' (Linde 1993, 58). Additionally, other studies have shown that interviews constitute a fruitful way to investigate identity negotiations in general (see, e.g. Zayts and Lazzaro-Salazar 2020 on the usefulness of sociolinguistic interviews), as well as the interface of professional, ethnic and gender identities in particular (see, e.g. Van De Mieroop 2012).

2.2 Data and methods

The data of this study consists of a larger corpus of interactions in and in relation to the white-collar workplaces of 13 Belgian women with a Turkish or Moroccan migration background, of which a first section (see Jacobs, Van De Mieroop, and Van Laar 2022) consists of naturally occurring workplace interactions. In these interactions, certain tendencies arose, for instance the construction of professional identities in relation to gender and ethnic identities or experiences of workplace discrimination. These were further probed for in in-depth semi-structured interviews, which constitute the second section of our corpus. This subcorpus contains approximately 13 hours of interview data, which were transcribed applying simplified conventions used in Conversation Analysis (Jefferson 2004). All the participants signed an informed consent form following a procedure that was approved by the Social and Societal Ethics Committee of KU Leuven; all names are replaced by pseudonyms and all other identifying information is removed.

In terms of method, we operationalise the social constructionist approach as sketched above by means of a holistic discourse analytical method in which we scrutinise the data with a micro-lens, integrating discursive as well as sequential features of the interaction into the analysis. Given our analytical focus, we pay specific attention to the way categories are invoked in our data and for this, we on the one hand draw on Membership Categorization Analysis (MCA). This analytical framework finds its roots in the early, ethnomethodological work of Harvey Sacks (e.g. Sacks 1986), and looks at 'how social knowledge is organized and used during the course of everyday situations and events' (Fitzgerald and Housley 2015, 5). Importantly, Housley and Fitzgerald (2015) argue that MCA should not be regarded as a fully worked out methodology, but as a continuum, with at one end studies that focus on how category and sequence are interrelated (e.g. Hester and Eglin 1997), and at the other end studies in which an MCA approach is used to investigate how individuals construct and negotiate categories in interaction (e.g. Stokoe 2012; Clifton, Schnurr, and Van De Mieroop 2020). In line with the latter end of this continuum, we use the analytical tools provided by MCA to look at how categories, and category-bound features and activities, are explicitly made relevant in the interaction and 'how this category work invokes a particular moral order' (Clifton, Schnurr, and Van De Mieroop 2020, 94). This is done in a way that is compatible with the social constructionist approach, since we refrain from adopting prediscursive assumptions about the individuals' category memberships as well as the associated activities and features, and solely focus on memberships (and associated aspects of those memberships) that the participants make relevant themselves. On the other hand, it is important to note that compound categories can also be invoked in a more implicit manner,

which can be analysed by drawing on the principle of indexicality (cf., e.g. Bucholtz and Hall 2005). This principle states that linguistic forms can *index* social meanings and as such are able to invoke membership to certain groups. For instance, the use of an accent or professional jargon can signal an individual's membership to an ethnic or professional group. Importantly, this is also in line with the social constructionist approach, since social meaning is always analysed as 'embedded in the specific local interactional context in which a particular linguistic form occurs at a particular point in time' (Van De Mieroop 2017, 190).

3.   Analysis

In order to scrutinise the interviewees' intersectional identity work systematically, we specifically focus on those excerpts in which comparisons between women and men with a migration background are made explicitly relevant by the interviewer. This results in a small dataset of excerpts that are highly comparable due to their similar topical orientation. Interestingly, we found that, in all cases in which this was discussed, the interviewees problematise the intersectional categories of gender and ethnicity and provide more nuance to the compounds. In particular, they add additional 'layers' to the originally two-layered category (viz., on the basis of the layers of gender and ethnicity), thus increasing the dimensions of intersectionality. In the first section, we show how the interviewees divide the category of women with a migration background into further subcategories, while this additional layering of the compound category is talked into being for the category of men in the second analytical section.

3.1 *Constructing multi-layered compound categories for women with a migration background*

We analyse two extracts from interviews with women with a Turkish migration background in this section. In Extract 1, we focus on Ayşe, who is currently working as an operational expert for a library. The extract starts with a turn by the interviewer that introduces two compound categories through the use of the category labels 'women/men with a migration background' (lines 2–3).

Extract 1: Ayşe[4]

1	**IR**	en denkt ge dat er een groot verschil is voor
		and do you think that there is a big difference for
2		vrouwen met een migratieachtergrond en
		women with a migration background and
3		mannen met een migratie↑achtergrond
		men with a migration ↑background

4   (1.0)
5   **IR**   qua mogelijkheden en kansen op het   ↑w[erk
             in terms of possibilities and chances at ↑w[ork
6   **IE**   [ja
                                                              [yes
7   ik denk da mannen (het moet van)
             i think that men (it has to be of)
8   het moeilijker krijgen nog denk ik waarschijnlijk
             have it even more difficult i think probably
9   (1.1)
10   **IE**   tis verschillend ik denk da euhm vrouwen misschien
             it's different i think that erm women maybe
11   (1.1)
12   **IE**   als ze een mosli- als ze hun hoofddoek dragen
             if they are a musli- if they wear their headscarf
((5 lines omitted with a sidestep to other groups))
18   **IE**   zij misschien door hun hoofddoek
             they maybe because of their headscarf
19   meer verbaal geweld of zo
             more verbal violence or something
20   (0.7)
21   **IE**   maar wa zoeken naar een job betreft denk ik
             but regarding looking for a job i think
22   da mannen nog nog moeilijker hebben
             that men have even even more difficult
23   (0.6)
24   mannen van migratieachtergrond omda zij moeten
             men of migration background because they have to
25   opboksen tegen. h het stereotype van de £criminele£
             fight against. h the stereotype of the £criminal£
26   (0.7)
27   **IE**   buitenlander
             foreigner

In the initial lines of Extract 1 (lines 1–5), the interviewer makes both ethnic and gender identity salient but situates the defining distinction between the two compound categories as gendered (viz., women versus men), while keeping ethnic identity constant. In this way, the interviewer encourages the interviewee to discuss the professional 'possibilities and chances' (line 5) of these two compound categories, but with a comparative focus on gender.

The interviewee answers affirmatively in line 6 to the question of whether there is a 'big difference' (line 1) for the two groups, which is a claim she further substantiates in the following lines. In her answer, the interviewee picks up on the gender dichotomy that was made relevant

by the interviewer through the use of the category label 'men' (line 7), which implicitly refers to the group of men with migration roots due to the preceding question. This group is implicitly constructed as having more difficulties, seen through the use of the comparative adverb 'more difficult' (*moeilijker*, line 8), in comparison with female counterparts, although the latter group is not explicitly made relevant. Interestingly, by modifying 'more difficult' with the adverb 'even' (*nog*, line 8), she makes salient that *women* with a migration background also experience professional difficulties, but that this is even more so the case for *men* with a migration background.

After a pause, the interviewee then moves away from 'ranking' the degree of difficulty for the two groups and nuances this statement by specifying that they have 'different' experiences (line 10). In lines 10–19, the interviewee focuses on the perspective of women with a migration background, which she announces through the use of the gender category label 'women' (line 10), which, again, implicitly refers to the intersectional gender-ethnic identity. Interestingly, she then continues by making further distinctions within that group relevant, namely regarding religious identity, and having a visible marker of religion. This is accomplished through the use of the category label 'musli-' (*mosli-*, line 12) and the category-bound feature that they 'wear their headscarf' (line 12). As such, she constructs a detailed compound category, with components of ethnic, gender and religious identity, which is immediately related to a visible marker of religion.

After a brief sidestep, the interviewee continues with a mitigated claim (cf. 'maybe', *misschien*, line 18; 'or something', *of zo*, line 19) that visibly religious Muslim women experience 'more verbal violence' (line 19), again leaving the comparative group implicit. The interviewee explicitly attributes these experiences to the noun phrase 'their headscarf' (cf. the causative adverb 'because of', *door*, line 18), thus adding a further layer and nuance to the intersectional identity of 'woman of an ethnic minority group'.

In lines 21–30, the interviewee then shifts the perspective to men with a migration background who find themselves in job search situations (line 21). While the interviewee first only refers to the group's gender identity through the use of the category label 'men' (line 22), she self-repairs to establish the intersectional gender-ethnic identity (line 24) and repeats her initial evaluation that it is 'even more difficult' (line 22, cf. line 8) for them. Importantly, in comparison to lines 7–8, the interviewee not only paints a more concrete picture here, through referring to the specific context of looking for a job, but she also formulates an account for why this happens. Crucially, in this account, the entire compound group is linked to the 'stereotype' of 'the criminal foreigner' (*de criminele buitenlander*, lines 25 and 27). This stereotype is framed as monolithic through the use of the singular form of the noun phrase as well as the definite article, which both contribute to the construction of one particular representation. This representation stands in contrast to the plurality of the group members

through the use of 'men', and 'they', in lines 22 and 24. This stereotype is highly negative, as the group of men with a migration background are perceived not only as 'criminal' but also as outsiders vis-à-vis Belgian society (cf. the label 'foreigner', line 27). Finally, the members of this masculine compound category are linked to the category bound activity of having to 'fight against' (line 25) this stereotype, which actually constructs them as more agentive than their visibly religious female counterparts, who are presented as victims of 'verbal violence'[5] (line 19).

Overall, in Extract 1 we have observed that the interviewee on the one hand provided further nuance for the female compound category by constructing additional intersectional dimensions which could be either positive or negative for women particularly in relation to wearing a headscarf. On the other hand, she emphasised the monolithic nature of the perceptions relating to the male compound category, which is thus, as a whole, judged in a negative way. We can observe similar tendencies in Extract 2, in an interview with Elif, the owner of a real estate office. Right before this stretch of discourse takes place, the interviewer asked Elif whether she thinks men experience prejudices. The interviewee answers affirmatively to this question and after a few more explanations, a further probe by the interviewer (see line 1) invokes the following explanation:

Extract 2: Elif

1	IR	en hoe bedoel↑de
		and what do you ↑mean
2	IE	a- stel stel dat ge naar een sollicitatiegesprek moet gaan
		a- imagine imagine that you have to go to a job interview
3	(1.0)	
4	IE	.h voor een bepaalde functie. h ge hebt daar iemand
		.h for a certain position. h you have there someone
5		met een migratieachtergrond zonder hoofddoek en ge hebt een
		with a migration background without headscarf and you have a
6	(1.2)	
7	IE	man met een migratieachtergrond. h die ali noemt
		man with a migration background. h who is called ali
8	IR	ja
		yes
9	IE	ze zullen eerder da meisje nemen
		they will rather take that girl
10		o[mdat die denken van <u>ah</u> das een geë- ëmancipeerde vrouw
		be[cause they think like <u>ah</u> that's an eman- emancipated woman

((six lines omitted with some unclear formulations))

17		oké dies modern
		okay she's modern
18		dus dies geëmancip[eerd ma van die man
		so she's emancip[ated but about that man
19	**IR**	[ja
		[yes
20	**IE**	ja we we gaan ni weten of of
		yes we we are not going to know if if
21		dat da zo nen achterlijken £is£
		that that is some kind of a £retard£

As an answer to the clarification question of the interviewer, the interviewee constructs a hypothetical job interview. In this hypothetical situation, Elif makes relevant two hypothetical candidates, which she constructs as part of two different compound groups. First, in line 5, a subgroup of the compound category is invoked, namely the group of women with migration roots without a headscarf. Although that only explicitly makes relevant the absence of a visible marker of religion, implicitly it also disambiguates the vague reference 'someone' (line 4) in terms of gender. Second, the group of men with a migration background is made relevant through the use of gender as well as ethnic category labels through the use of the noun 'man', followed by the prepositional phrase 'with a migration background' (line 7), but no additional subgroups are constructed here. As such, on top of the basic ethnic and gender layers of the compound category, the interviewee constructs a difference between the two candidates on the basis of having the potential to have an explicit marker of a religious minority identity through the presence or absence of a headscarf for women versus no visual marker for men.

In lines 9–18 of Extract 2, the interviewee then argues that the hypothetical interviewers of the potential job interview, who are instantiated through the third person pronominal form 'they' (*ze*, line 9), will have a preference for the female candidate, for whom gender identity is explicitly made relevant through the use of 'girl' (*meisje*, line 9). The interviewee constructs this preference as being due to the fact that the job interviewers associate this three-layered compound group (i.e., women with a migration background and without a visual marker of religion) with positive category-bound features, such as being 'emancipated' (lines 10 and 18) and 'modern' (line 17). The attribution of these features to this group is formulated by means of hypothetical reported thoughts of these interviewers, and this is done in an entirely parallel way for their male counterparts. In line 18, the gender category label 'man' is invoked and subsequently linked to prejudices about this category through the hypothetical interviewers' direct reported thought in lines 20–21 ('we are

not going to know if that is some kind of a retard'). While it is unclear what she exactly means by this potential – and self-evidently highly negative – evaluation of the male group members as potential 'retards', it becomes more meaningful through the contrastive discussion in which it functions. In particular, the interviewee sets up a gendered contrast in relation to an additional layer of the compound category, namely the potential of having a visual marker of religious minority identity. On the one hand, the subcategory of women with a migration background without a headscarf is associated with the category-bound features 'modern' and 'emancipated'. On the other hand, because the interviewee claims that there is a lack of such a subcategorisation device for men with a migration background, these category-bound features cannot be associated with such a subcategory, and thus all the men are qualified as potential 'retards', thus meaning that they are negatively evaluated as 'not emancipated' or 'not modern'.[6]

Hence, it is because of this absence of a visible marker of religion through a headscarf that women of this subcategory are regarded as 'modern' and avoid being linked to conservative religious practices. Importantly, by framing it like this, the interviewee implicitly makes relevant that women who do wear a headscarf are linked to this conservative view on religion, which could of course have negative effects on their professional careers. With regard to men with a migration background, the interviewee presents the lack of such a visible religious feature which can subdivide the group further, as a cause for stereotyping the male category as a whole. Thus, as in the first extract, more nuance is only provided for the female group of the compound categories at the intersection of gender and ethnicity and this is presented as an advantage for women – or at least for those not wearing the hijab – in comparison to men of the same ethnic minority group.

3.2 Constructing multi-layered compound categories for men with a migration background

Whereas in the previous section, the focus was on data in which the interviewees only divide the category of *women* with a migration background into further subcategories, this section investigates data where a multi-layered compound category is constructed for *men* with a migration background. In particular, we analyse fragments from two interviews with women with a Moroccan migration background.

Extract 3 is taken from the interview with Ikrame, who works as a communication manager. This fragment starts with a turn by the interviewer in which the two compound categories are introduced by means of the category labels 'men and women with a migration background' (line 6).

Extract 3: Ikrame

1	**IR**	en denkt ge dat er
		and do you think that there
2	(1.3)	
3	**IR**	ja
		yes
4	(0.6)	
5	**IR**	voor mannen en v- dat er een verschil is
		for men and w- that there is a difference
6		tussen mannen en ↑vrouwen met een migratieachtergrond
		between men and ↑women with a migration background
7		qua: ervaringen da ze ↑hebben
		in terms o:f experiences that they ↑have
8	**IE**	euh ja ja als ik zo zie naar mijn broers
		erm yes yes if i like look at my brothers
9	(0.5)	
10	**IE**	allez als ik zo ergens zou solliciteren
		i mean if i like would apply somewhere
11		'k denk da ze mij al snel zouden a-
		i think that they would already quickly a-
12	(1.4)	
13	**IE**	allez ja vragen voor een tweede gesprek
		well yes ask me for a second interview
14		al is 't maar gewoon om hun cijfers te halen terwijl
		even if it's just to reach their numbers while
15		bij mijn broers zou da bijvoorbeeld totaal ni zo zijn
		for my brothers that would for instance totally not be the case
16		ik weet da zij ook
		i know that they also
17	(0.6)	
18	**IE**	heel veel moeite hadden gewoon om een stageplaats te krijgen
		had a lot of difficulties to just get an internship

((6 lines omitted in which IE repeats that she only focuses on her brothers))

25	**IE**	die zijn super mondig
		they are super vocal
26	(0.6)	
27	**IR**	ja
		yes
28	**IE**	maar da spreekt soms ook gewoon in <u>hun</u> nadeel
		but that also just speaks to <u>their</u> disadvantage sometimes

29		omdat da zo'n wa
		because that some kind of
30		(0.7)
31	**IE**	rebelse allochtoon euh @
		rebellious foreigner erm @

In the initial part of Extract 3 (lines 1–7), the interviewer makes both ethnic and gender identity salient, but, as in the previous data examples, gender is once more foregrounded as a comparative focus by the interviewer. In Ikrame's affirmative answer in line 8 to the question of whether there is a 'difference' (line 5), it becomes clear that, although the interviewee picks up on these overarching categories, she immediately switches to a comparison on an individual instead of a more general level. In other words, Ikrame does not compare the experiences of *all* the members of the two compound groups but provides a more personalised comparison between the experiences of her 'brothers' (line 8, making male gender identity relevant) with her own experiences, which implicitly makes her female gender and ethnic minority identity salient. To compare their experiences, the interviewee constructs a hypothetical narrative that revolves around a job application. In this hypothetical experience, Ikrame creates a somewhat positive experience for herself, since she argues that the job interviewers, identified through the third person plural pronoun 'they' (*ze*, line 11) would ask her for a follow-up interview ('second interview', line 13), although she adds the cynical evaluation that the reason for this could be to 'just reach their numbers', meaning their diversity targets (line 14) thus implying that the call back for a 'second interview' is not for genuine reasons.

In line 15, this somewhat positive hypothetical experience is then compared to the hypothetical experience of her brothers. In contrast, she argues that they would not be asked for a follow-up interview, emphasised through the extreme case formulation 'totally not' (*totaal ni*, line 15) (Pomerantz 1986). She then provides evidence for this hypothetical scenario through the use of the pragmatic particle 'I know' in line 16, which boosts the force and the factual nature of her claim, and then introduces a brief vicarious narrative about her brothers' experiences of having difficulties in finding an internship. In these lines, Ikrame frames securing an internship as less difficult than securing a real job through the use of 'just' (*gewoon*, line 18), as such emphasising that even in these cases, her brothers experienced difficulties.

In lines 25–31, Ikrame partially ('sometimes', line 28) accounts for these difficulties by characterising her brothers as 'vocal' (*mondig*, line 25), which is emphasised by the semantically extreme adjective 'super' (Edwards 2000), which arguably adds a third layer to the intersectional identity of 'man of an ethnic minority group'. The interviewee constructs

this third layer as being a 'disadvantage' for them (line 28), namely invoking the category-bound feature of being perceived as 'rebellious' and as outsiders of Belgian society, as becomes clear through the label 'foreigner' (*allochtoon*, line 31).

Overall, in this fragment we observed that the interviewee provided further nuance for the male compound category, which was constructed as being linked to negative category-bound features. It is important to note that positive implications of these nuances in the male compound category are not mentioned at all. We can observe similar tendencies in Extract 4, in which Hafsa, the head of the office of student facilities of an institute for higher education, is being interviewed:

Extract 4: Hafsa

1	**IR**	en denkt ge dat er een verschil is voor euhm
		and do you think that there is a difference for erm
2	(0.7)	
3	**IR**	tussen mannen en vrouwen ↑met een migratieachtergrond
		between men and women ↑with a migration background
4		qua dingen da ze meemaken
		in terms of things that they experience
5		qua ↑discriminatie of ↑stereotypes of ja
		in terms of ↑discrimination or ↑stereotypes or yes
6	(2.2)	
7	**IE**	ja ik denk dat het voor mannen soms moeilijker is euhm
		yes i think that it is sometimes more difficult for men erm

((5 lines omitted with pauses and reformulations))

13		laaggeschoolde mannen die hebben het vaak wel moeilijker
		low-skilled men they often do have it more difficult
14	(0.5)	
15	**IE**	euhm om de weg te vinden naar de arbeidsmarkt
		erm to find the way to the job market
16	(1.0)	
17	**IE**	en da heeft te maken met
		and that has to do with
18		ja heel wa zaken die die leven natuurlijk v[an
		yes a lot of things that that live of course l[ike
19	**IR**	[ja
		[yes
20	**IE**	.h euhm
		.h erm
21	(1.5)	
22	**IE**	ten opzichte van ja
		towards yes
23		ten opzichte van mannen me een migratieachtergrond rond
		towards men with a migration background about

24		.h allez die zijn agressief die komen altijd te laat euhm
		.h like they are aggressive they are always late erm
25	**IR**	ja
		yes
26	**IE**	die hebben geen sociale vaardigheden
		they don't have social skills
27		(0.7)
28	**IE**	euhm die snappen niks
		erm they don't understand anything

Similar to the previous data extracts, the interviewer's question topicalises gender as the comparative focus of the discussion of these compound categories, but next to focusing on the general 'difference' (line 1) between these categories, she also relates this to potential experiences of 'discrimination' and 'stereotypes' at work (line 5). In Hafsa's affirmative answer to this question, the interviewee picks up on the gendered dichotomy that was made relevant by the interviewer through the use of the category label 'men' (line 7). As we have seen in the preceding data extracts, she argues that this compound group experiences more difficulties, expressed through the comparative adverb 'more difficult' (*moeilijker*, line 8) in some cases ('sometimes', line 7) in comparison to those of their female counterparts, although the latter group is not explicitly made relevant.

The compound category of men with migration roots is then further subdivided by making a third layer relevant, namely that of educational attainment, referred to by the label 'low-skilled' (*laaggeschoold*, which, if literally translated, would be 'low-schooled', line 13). The interviewee then states that this three-layered compound group 'often' (line 13) experiences 'more' difficulties 'to find the way to the job market' (line 15), which she attributes to ideas that circulate in society about this group (cf. *zaken die leven*, literally translated as 'things that live', line 18). It is important to note that these lines – as well as the omitted part prior to these lines – are characterised by many pauses (lines 14, 16 and 21) and hesitation markers (lines 15 and 20), which clearly mark that this part of her answer is rather problematic for the interviewee to articulate.

After yet another reformulation, the interviewee picks up the topic in line 23 by focusing on the initial, overarching compound category again through the category label 'men with a migration background' (line 23), invoking only gender and ethnic identity. She then shifts to direct reported speech – unattributed to anyone in particular – in which she lists a number of category-bound features and activities that are stereotypically linked to men, namely being 'aggressive', being 'late', having no 'social skills', and not understanding anything (lines 24–28).

All in all, in this fragment the interviewee thus made a further distinction within the male compound category, making relevant a three-layered compound group for men with a migration background with a low educational attainment level, which is presented as a group that experiences

the most difficulties. Hafsa then continues to argue that, in comparison to the female group, the overarching group of men is associated with a long list of stereotypical category-bound features and activities that have a negative impact on the perception of their professional identities. Thus, as in Extract 3, only negative implications of these nuances in the male compound category are foregrounded here.

4. Discussion

In our analyses it becomes clear that the interviewees highlight negative professional consequences for *men* with a migration background – both when they construct multi-layered compounds for women (Extracts 1 and 2) and men (Extracts 3 and 4). In the first two extracts, the complexity of the multi-layered female compound group is presented as giving the interviewed women the opportunity to be perceived positively. This is an option that they construct as unavailable to men with a migration background. Due to this, the perception of the male compound category is presented as monolithic and associated with negative stereotypes, such as criminal foreigners in Extract 1 or potential retards in Extract 2. They thus do not make any further distinctions within this category, which, as a whole, consequently suffers from stereotyping. The reported advantage for some women then potentially lies in the interviewees' argument that they are not regarded as one monolithic group and that some women are judged in a positive way because of this, namely as 'modern' and 'emancipated' (Extract 2). So basically, the potential addition of an extra layer to the two-layered compound category is presented as an opportunity for women with migration roots to distinguish themselves from other category members, namely from those who wear a headscarf. Because of this, stereotypes are applied to increasingly smaller subgroups of the initially two-layered compound category. Implicitly, the interviewees thus make evident that these stereotypes and the associated negative consequences do apply for women who wear the headscarf, and that the advantage in relation to men presumably only exists for unveiled women. As such, this layering is not presented as changing the nature of these stereotypes nor denying their existence, but as merely reducing their impact in practice.

In the last two extracts the group of men with a migration background is constructed as a multi-layered compound group, consisting of three layers – albeit sometimes temporarily as in Extract 4. In comparison to, for example, Extract 2, where the *absence* of multi-layeredness for the compound group of men with migration roots was constructed as a disadvantage for that group, in Extracts 3 and 4 it is through the *presence* of multi-layeredness that the disadvantages for these men are brought to the fore. In Extract 3 the disadvantageous nature of the multi-layeredness is seen in the addition of the third layer of being vocal – invoking the damaging stereotype of being a 'rebellious foreigner' – which, it is

argued, has a negative impact when applying for jobs. In Extract 4 the negative stereotypes that are associated with the overarching compound group are implicitly constructed as being more pronounced for the multi-layered group of low-skilled men with a migration background than for the simple two-layered group. Importantly, in both cases, these negative effects for professional identity are argued to be especially the case for *men* with a migration background, in comparison to *women* with a migration background. In this way, these two interviewees construct the presence of multi-layered compounds for men with a migration background as being disadvantageous for them in comparison to their female counterparts.

In sum, our analyses of all extracts show that our interviewees foreground and emphasise the negative implications for men with a migration background. As such, they all construct a larger negative gender bias towards *men* than towards *women*. Importantly, this does not mean that the interviewees argue that women with a migration background do not experience negative biases, since negative reactions towards women with a migration background, and especially towards women who wear the headscarf, are clearly referred to (cf. Extract 1). However, they are not foregrounded as the main point of these female interviewees' answers to the interviewers' questions.

5. Conclusion

By using a discourse analytical approach focusing on Membership Categorization Analysis and indexical markers of identity, we were able to scrutinise how women with a migration background negotiate compound categories in relation to professional identities in interaction. When looking into how women with a migration background dealt with the intersectional compound groups that were initiated by the interviewer, we found that these interviewees treat these two-layered intersectional groups as not sufficient to grasp the complexity and nuances of categories in real-life professional settings. The interviewees divided the overarching two-layered groups into further subcategories, and as such provided even more multi-layered compound groups. Importantly, the interviewees thus constructed categories that are far more nuanced than those that are caught in terms of 'just' a few intersecting layers, let alone only pertaining to 'grand' categories such as gender and ethnicity. Also, more locally negotiated category memberships were constructed, for instance the presence of visible markers of religion, or being 'vocal'. Moreover, these analyses also highlighted the fluidity of these categorisation processes when they are carefully scrutinised from a discursive perspective. These compound categories are often under constant renegotiation and revision, as previous research has shown (Van De Mieroop 2012), since the exact scope of these new subcategories, as well as the way these subcategories

are related to other (sub)categories – or to specific category-bound features and activities – is left rather vague, or, alternatively, is revised from one turn to the next. In this respect, our analysis shows that investigating intersectional identities as they are interactionally constructed and negotiated in interviews is a worthwhile endeavour, as it uncovers not only how intersectional identities are linguistically invoked by means of membership categories, but also that even compound groups – with their inherent multi-layered complexity – are interactionally treated as not nuanced enough. This thus calls for analyses of compound categories with even more attention to the additional complexities of these categories in different, real-life contexts.

Furthermore, our analyses have shown that highly specific topics that are 'not readily observable in the day-to-day discursive practices of individuals' (Clifton and Van De Mieroop 2017, 237), can come to the fore by using interviews where the interviewer explicitly probes for compound group membership categories. In this way, the interviewer plays an important role in projecting intersectional identities upon the interviewees, showing that 'both the interviewer's and the interviewee's interactional behaviour contributes to the flow of an interaction and shapes the interviewee's responses' (Zayts and Lazzaro-Salazar 2020, 308). As such, this provides further evidence (cf. Van De Mieroop 2012) that semi-structured interviews can be very useful in their own right to study not only identity construction in general but also specifically the interface of professional, ethnic and gender identities, at least when treated as interactional events in which both interlocutors contribute to the collaborative process of meaning-making.

Moreover, when considering how these multi-layered compound groups were integrated into the arguments of the interviewees, we found that they were associated with *perceived* category-bound features and activities, or, in other words, stereotypes. Importantly, although these compound-related stereotypes are negotiated in different ways, the female interviewees in our dataset all frame the intersection of both gender and ethnic identities as advantageous for them in comparison to their male counterparts in relation to the construction of professional identity. The foregrounding of advantages for women with a migration background is contrary to what one might expect, since, although these two compound groups both face stereotyping and discrimination with regard to their ethnic minority identity, the group of women with a migration background is expected to have an additional struggle due to a negative gender bias directed towards women in the workplace. As such, and as is argued by the 'double jeopardy' hypothesis (Beale 1979; Purdie-Vaughns and Eibach 2008), women with a migration background are expected to experience a cumulative disadvantage since they might be subjected to the stereotypes and prejudices that are associated with both their ethnic and gender minority identity. Our analyses however show that the

interviewees in our dataset construct a reversed gender bias in relation to ethnic identities in institutional contexts, thus supporting other studies that have already pointed at such a potential advantage for women of ethnic minority groups (e.g. Reid 2010). So even though the employment rate of this group is still far behind that of their male counterparts (see introduction), some of the women who do make it to the workplace – and who meet certain expectations, such as not wearing the headscarf – may perhaps perceive slightly less challenges than men with a migration background, or at least may present their experiences in this way, as we observed in this chapter. This of course raises the question of whether men with a migration background would construct a similar gender bias, which would be an interesting avenue for further research.

Finally, it is self-evident that these findings need to be interpreted in relation to the local Belgian context that forms the backdrop of these interviews. It is important to underline that our interviewees paint a more favourable picture only in comparison to their male counterparts and that they also hint at the possibility that this advantage only holds for women who do not wear a headscarf, implying that veiled women have different (and possibly worse) experiences. Of course, one needs to keep in mind that this advantage for women is constructed in the geopolitical context of Belgium by women with a Turkish or Moroccan migration background, with its highly specific labour market participation features (cf. introduction), and that women with different migration roots or against the backdrop of other countries will probably position themselves quite differently. Yet, on a more abstract and a more general, global level, our analyses indicate that stereotypes in the workplace might differ in relation to men and women from ethnic minorities. More precisely, this shows that the concepts of the gender order (Connell 1987) and the culture order (Holmes 2018) simultaneously influence behaviour at the workplace. In other words, there seems to be a highly complex and dynamic *compound* order, where these two intersecting orders together function as baseline lenses through which experiences at the workplace need to be interpreted. Additionally, our analyses showed that on top of this, also other aspects of identity – such as religion or educational attainment – may interfere and increase the intersectional complexity of the compound order. It is important to stress however that these additional aspects are even more dynamic than the 'baseline' layers of gender and culture and that they may be even more strongly related to their geographical, cultural, temporal, as well as local contexts. Because of this, it is crucial to adopt a holistic approach that on top of the gender and culture order, not only takes into account the intersection of these two orders but also integrates other aspects of identity as they emerge in the specific context of analysis. In spite of this local variability, we nevertheless believe that in our increasingly multicultural societies, such complex – at least two-layered – 'compound orders' may become more and more

relevant to understand which norms and expectations operate as new 'background framing construct[s]' (cf. Holmes 2005, 57 regarding gender) in the workplace, and in our globalised world in general.

Notes

1 Individuals with a second-generation migration background are defined in this chapter as individuals who are born in Belgium, but (one of) their parents were born abroad.
2 Individuals with a Turkish or Moroccan migration background have some of the lowest employment rates in Belgium. Corluy et al. (2015) showed that between 2008 and 2012 the average employment rate of Belgians with a migration background from the second generation was the lowest for individuals with origins from North-Africa (including Morocco, 56,98%), followed by origins from Turkey (62,22%), non-EU27 countries (except Turkey and North-Africa, 75,68%), EU27 countries (76,52%), and that it was the highest for individuals without a migration background (86,34%).
3 As this highly specific subgroup is not very often studied, these are the most recent statistics available.
4 All unidiomatic formulations in the English translations of the data extracts reflect unidiomatic formulations or mistakes in the Dutch original.
5 What 'verbal violence' in this context exactly entails is not commented on, and because of that it could range from implicit negative comments to explicit racist slurs.
6 The interviewee actually explicitly uses this feature 'not modern' for men with a migration background later in the interview, which is not shown here for reasons of space.

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7 The battle heads underground

Unrecognised bias in everyday workplace talk

Janet Holmes and Meredith Marra

1. Introduction

Those working in the area of language and gender have long recognised the hegemonic relationships or 'orders' that impact on society, whether encapsulated by the 'gender order' (Connell 1987) and its inherent hierarchies relating to the roles of men and women in society, or the 'culture order', a more recently proposed concept (Holmes 2018) with which the gender order intersects. Writing in the shadow of the global Black Lives Matter movement and with the not-too-distant echoes of #MeToo still reverberating, our focus on these interconnected orders is clearly topical. In this chapter, we use these concepts to expose implicit biases apparent in mundane interactions in New Zealand workplaces. We unpack corresponding assumptions about relative power, supporting our analysis with reflective data from the Language in the Workplace Project (LWP) corpus.

We begin with a discussion of the concepts of the gender order, the culture order and unconscious or implicit bias, and then provide an account of the methods we have adopted to explore evidence for the relevance of these concepts in our workplace data. We draw on recordings and information collected in corporate workplaces where normatively masculine and culturally mainstream behaviours are still evident (especially in leadership practices) as well as data from the stereotypically feminine industry of aged care. We analyse a range of excerpts from these sources as well as detail from interviews conducted with participants, together with our own analytical reflections as discourse analysts involved in investigating issues of power in workplace talk over more than 25 years. We conclude with a discussion of the practical implications of our analyses for challenging gender and cultural bias in the workplace.

Analysing workplace talk recorded specifically in New Zealand social settings, we also raise issues around the global hegemonies and local norms which are reflected in the instantiations of bias we identify. As a Commonwealth nation with a history of colonisation, many of our interpretations of the New Zealand data highlight the Anglo and 'Western'

societal norms that match the findings of others in this volume. However, the country's commitment to biculturalism and recognition of the place of Te Tiriti o Waitangi[1] within society support challenges to some of the taken-for-granted assumptions surrounding hierarchies. To add further complexity, newcomers to New Zealand increasingly contribute to our societal values. All of these factors are present in the data. Our goal is thus to emphasise the importance of the situated and contextualised nature of all interaction, actively throwing into relief societal differences that afford contestation of accepted positionings based on gendered and cultural Discourses.

2. Intersecting orders and unrecognised bias

2.1 The gender order

Sociocultural values influence the ways in which individuals discursively construct their social identities in particular contexts in different societies. Connell (1987) introduced the term the gender order to describe widespread societal patterns of power relations between masculinities and femininities which influence the construction of gender identity. Emphasising the importance of paying attention to large-scale macro-level structures, Connell points to the hegemony of masculinities in most western societies and the influence of hegemonic power relations which form notions of masculinity and femininity, a position we endorse through our social realist approach to analysis (Holmes, Marra, and Vine 2011, 19ff). The gender order is thus a strong ideological constraint that influences what is regarded as appropriate behaviour for women and men in different contexts (cf. Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 2013), whether people conform to it or contest it. It constitutes 'social institutions and arrangements in which sex/gender categorization is a fundamental organizing principle' (McConnell-Ginet 2020, 254).

The concept of the gender order directs attention to taken-for-granted presuppositions about gender-appropriate behaviour that impact interaction, often in quite subtle ways. The manifestation of the order should not be understood as static, however; instead we need to recognise that ideologies shape and are shaped by the specific context. Our focus in this discussion is the context in which we have been working, namely New Zealand workplaces. Although New Zealand experiences comparative geographical isolation, the effects of globalisation are nevertheless apparent. And while we are typically considered to be part of the Global North, a greater focus on the decolonisation of knowledge provides points of connection with the Global South (see King 2017 for an argument on the affordances of this positioning for understanding gender and sexuality). While the feminist research of the last 40 years has had a significant impact on New Zealand society, and there has been a large increase in

public awareness of the need to avoid overt gender discrimination, there is also evidence that the gendered ideologies, expectations and norms identified by Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (2013), continue to influence social behaviour, including language use (see Holmes 2020); this is demonstrated in the 'embedding' of the prioritisation of masculine norms in leadership or the feminisation and pay gaps experienced in aged care as we see in our data below. This chapter thus further develops challenges to the gendered hegemonies within society, examining evidence of potential gender bias and gendered presuppositions in corporate and caring workplace contexts.

2.2 The culture order[2]

Holmes (2018) proposes the culture order as a parallel to the gender order focusing on the hegemonic ideology that influences the ways in which individuals orient to the construction of their ethnic or cultural identity. While the gender order directs attention to gendered assumptions which unavoidably influence the behaviour of individuals, the culture order encourages analysis of taken-for-granted presuppositions about appropriate cultural behaviours which impact interaction, especially in intercultural contexts. Thus the concept of the culture order draws attention to pervasive, hegemonic assumptions constraining social interaction – assumptions of which most individuals are largely unaware until some violation occurs that draws attention to generally undisputed, 'naturalised' sociocultural norms. One important aspect that distinguishes the culture order from the gender order is that, while many members of society are increasingly aware of the ways in which gendered ideologies, expectations and norms influence social behaviour (including language), it is minority-cultural group members who are typically most aware of the impact of the culture order (see Holmes, Vine, and Marra 2020). Majority group members simply assume that their ways of behaving are normal (Holmes 2018, 34). In what follows, we examine evidence of unrecognised bias as a result of these orders in recorded data from corporate employees and carers, complexifying the contextual setting through a focus on (cultural) majority group members in minority workplace contexts and minority group members in majority workplace contexts.

2.3 Unconscious, implicit or hidden bias[3]

As this sub-heading indicates, a number of terms have been used to describe the phenomenon we explore in this chapter. Each inevitably carries some baggage and so we have selected the term 'unrecognised bias' as a very general term for the purposes of our analysis. As psychologists have demonstrated, we all hold biases. Without even realising it, we make stereotypic associations between groups of people and their

individual actions, capacities and inclinations (Eberhardt 2019). Labels conceal and reinforce these assumptions; as soon as an ethnic or gender label is assigned to an individual a number of 'problematic and self-limiting assumptions' go with the labels (McConnell-Ginet 2020, 254).

Reflexivity is, therefore, an essential component in the identification of bias, and it is a key component of our methodology. As educated Pākehā women (that is, New Zealanders who identify as majority group members), we unavoidably bring our particular lenses to discourse analysis; constant awareness that this comprises both a strength and a weakness is therefore important. We are all bound up in social processes, and unconscious bias is not something that occurs in a vacuum. As Butler points out (2005, 83), 'we cannot be tied to the conceit of a fully transparent self – our own or others'. Another important component of implicit or hidden bias is captured by the concept of 'microaggression', discussed in relation to race by Sue et al. (2007, 273):

> Racial microaggressions are brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, and environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults to the target person or community.

While microaggressions can lie anywhere between conscious/deliberate and unconscious/unintentional, there is much evidence that unconscious and unintentional aggressions have greater detrimental impact on minority groups (see Sue 2010). Examples include being misgendered (e.g. assigning 'she/her' pronouns when the relevant pronouns are 'they/them'), being complimented for speaking 'good English' as a non-white New Zealander (even when the person was born in the country), or a lack of representation in a workplace environment (e.g. no pictures of people of colour on the walls). In our discussion later we extend the term to encompass microaggressions based on gender. Within the Pākehā culture norms that arguably dominate mainstream New Zealand society, it is most often women who are the target of these gendered microaggressions, although our analysis also shows that interplay with the culture order can upset the hegemonies.

Finally, it is salient in this context to state that our analytical approach has its roots in Interactional Sociolinguistics (Gumperz 1999), examining discourse in its wider socio-cultural context and drawing on the analysts' knowledge of the community and its norms to interpret what is going on. Our familiarity with majority group norms and the insights developed into minority group norms as a result of our ongoing research are clearly crucial to the analysis of potential gender and cultural bias in workplace interaction. Hence, the high importance of reflexivity. We use this approach within a social realist framework to analyse evidence both of recognised and unrecognised bias in workplace discourse.

3. Methodology

The data excerpts used in this chapter are selected from the Wellington Language in the Workplace Project (LWP) (www.wgtn.ac.nz/lwp) to illustrate how the hegemony of the gender order and the culture order play out in workplace interaction and to support our argument that unrecognised bias inevitably impacts workplace interaction in subtle and typically undetected ways. The LWP Corpus currently comprises more than two million transcribed words from 2000 interactions, involving 700 participants from 30 different New Zealand workplaces which include commercial organisations, government departments, small businesses, factories, building sites and eldercare facilities. As noted at the outset, while the data sits within the geographic location of New Zealand, cultural assumptions and the culture order impact on organisations in dynamic and subtle ways. Consequently, we place particular emphasis on contextualised interpretations in order to build the complexity needed for discussions that contribute to our understandings of the influence of globalised norms.

In our data collection, we prioritise naturally occurring interaction, collecting audio and video recordings of everyday workplace talk. In order to access and interpret this data, we adopt an ethnographic approach and a philosophy of working with participants as research collaborators. As far as possible, and as culturally relevant, our policy is to minimise our intrusion as researchers into the work environment.[4] Alongside the recordings, we have periods of participant/non-participant observation, debriefs and more formal interviews with collaborators. Each aspect of data collection supports deeper understanding of the interactions. In exploring the issue of gender and culture hegemony, as well as unrecognised bias, we draw in particular on our analyses of the contrasting norms of workplace interaction of majority ethnic group Pākehā and minority ethnic group Māori participants (see, e.g. Holmes, Marra, and Vine 2011), on interviews undertaken with workplace managers, and on our own reflections as analysts who are constantly re-assessing and problematising our understanding of the data.

First, then, fortuitously, our workplace recordings sometimes captured moments when conflicting norms came into explicit focus, as illustrated in the analyses later. Second, during their post-recording interviews, the managers who volunteered to participate in our research sometimes explicitly identified the benefits of their encounters with those from different cultures and with minority group members. And third, our own ongoing reflections on our analyses of material that had seemed difficult to explain at first hearing often provide further valuable and relevant insights. As McConnell-Ginet (2020, 254) states, it is important to stimulate 'reflection on how labeling practices help "generate, validate and perpetuate" meanings with built-in assumptions that prop up the

structural *in*justices on which the . . . system rests'.[5] In the analyses below, we make use of all three sources of insight which we prioritise for their potential to offer application beyond the local context within which they were collected and analysed.

4. Analysis

4.1 The corporate data

In this section, we discuss examples from our recordings of everyday workplace interaction in corporate environments highlighting evidence of the cultural dominance of Pākehā ways of doing things in New Zealand society across many contexts.

Holmes (2020) provides evidence of both overt and covert sexist behaviour discriminating against women in the workplace, the most egregious of which is the demand from a client that he deal with a man, not Anna, the firm's representative on the relevant issue: 'until I got a man in he wouldn't listen'.

In workplaces where, atypically, minority group norms are respected, at least in some areas of interaction, we find examples where majority group members have an opportunity to become aware of potential bias. We have documented in some detail evidence of how traditional Māori meeting norms influence the conduct of meetings in Māori workplaces. Any Pākehā joining such a workplace soon becomes aware of their taken-for-granted assumptions in this respect (Holmes, Marra, and Vine 2011; Holmes 2018). Openings and closings, turn-taking rules, expectations about when and how to contribute one's expertise, and the importance of food as a component in events involving clients (Marra, King, and Holmes 2014) are all areas where Pākehā majority group norms differ from those of Māori, and thus through our research with Māori participants, we were privileged to gain insight into the unconscious biases that most Pākehā cannot avoid in such areas.

One representative instance that we have discussed in detail elsewhere (Holmes, Marra, and Vine 2011, 78–80) involves Frank, a Pākehā manager in a Māori workplace, reprimanding a new Pākehā staff member for his ignorance of the acceptance in Māori contexts of audible audience feedback during a presentation. The new staff member is inappropriately asserting majority group norms, demonstrating the widespread assumption that these are unquestioned, taken-for-granted ways of doing things. Having worked in Māori organisations for many years, Frank has become familiar with the minority group cultural norms appropriate in this workplace and is confident in challenging the newcomer's assumptions.

Frank's reflections in the interview highlight his respect for what he has learned by working in Māori workplaces. He comments on a number of

aspects including the importance of avoiding boasting and self-aggrandisement. Humility is valued, he asserts, as is respectful behaviour towards others. Respect is a very important Māori cultural value which takes precedence over collegiality or solidarity, especially in formal contexts (Holmes 2018).

Excerpt 1

Frank in interview with leadership specialist and LWP collaborator, Prof Brad Jackson.

1. **Frank**: I think my exposure to māoridom has [. . .] confirmed
2. that I should pretend to be nothing other than what I am
3. so forget about sort of blowing yourself up and that sort of
4. thing [. . .] approach people with sincerity and um respect
5. um listen and then try and be constructive

In another Māori workplace, a female Pākehā manager, Gretel, similarly demonstrates her awareness of the unspoken assumptions in the wider society that majority group norms prevail. For Gretel there is the challenge of balancing both an appropriate professional identity as a minority group member in her workplace environment, and the enactment of a gender identity that meets the expectations of the gender order in intersection with the Māori norms which predominate in her context (cf. Yvonne in Holmes and Marra 2011). In interaction with Pākehā clients, she is aware that she needs to portray herself as competent, efficient and authoritative but in ways that are balanced with an appropriate gender enactment. She is also sensitive, however, to the Māori norms that expect a leader to show humility and avoid self-promotion. Hence in interactions with outsiders while accompanied by Māori colleagues, she is consistently faced with a double bind. We have discussed relevant examples in some detail (see Holmes 2018, for example) but this brief excerpt sums up her dilemma neatly.

Excerpt 2

Gretel is reporting on her team's work to the regular weekly meeting of the whole company. She describes how she responds to a client's question 'are you any good?'

1. **Gretel**: and Hemi was sitting there and I'm thinking
2. now if I say I'm any good I'll look like a tosser
3. and if I hesitate I'll look like an even bigger tosser
4. and Hemi said [name] since the white lady got here
5. things have been a lot better

Here Gretel neatly navigates conflicting cultural norms, demonstrating her awareness of the Pākehā expectation that she should assert her competence, alongside her sensitivity to the inappropriateness of self-promotion in a Māori workplace. She is rescued by Hemi who not only testifies to her skills but also lightens the discussion with a well-established humorous label for Gretel *the white lady* (line 4), a label happily embraced by Gretel herself in many of our recorded episodes with her team.

Like Frank, Gretel reflects in interview on her awareness of the minority group workplace norms in her company and demonstrates her sensitivity to the distinctive behaviour appropriate in interaction with Māori clients. In a majority group context, Gretel as a manager would be entitled to assert herself; in interaction with a Māori client, she accepts a support role, despite her seniority. This is not the place to discuss the complexities of gendered patterns in Māori interaction (see Metge 1995), but it is clear that in such interactions, the gender order and the culture order intersect. While women defer to male authority in many contexts, the resolution of the intersection is negotiated by the participants in the light of their awareness of the relevant contextual constraints.

Excerpt 3

Gretel, in interview with Janet Holmes, reflecting on what she has learned about her role as a Pākehā woman representing a Māori company in interaction with a Māori client.

1. **Gretel:** I have to say that some clients feel less comfortable
2. working with a Pākehā person . . .
3. they're happy for me to be in the background
4. but they really don't want me having too much hands on
5. stuff so in in those cases the work I do is more behind
6. the scenes working with the senior who's actually dealing
7. with the client. . . I never really had a problem with that
8. because sometimes that Māori perspective is pretty
9. essential to the work and that's something I don't have

Labelling Gretel through the noun phrase *the white lady* signals her 'other' or 'outsider' status, even though it is a light-hearted tease, and Gretel accepts it as such, as indicated by her interview reflections. Similarly, during an exchange in which Frank's status as an outsider in his Māori workplace is made very explicit, first by Frank himself and then by another participant, a different team member suggests he can claim to be *whangai*, an adoptee, a term which gives him some status in the 'family' that is the organisation (Vine 2020).[6] These 'outsider' identifications for well-respected Pākehā in Māori organisations provide an interesting mirror image of the usual situation where Māori are treated in subtle

ways as 'not quite one of us' in some Pākehā institutions, an issue worth pursuing further.[7]

Excerpt 4 illustrates how majority group norms are simply asserted without any need for justification in Pākehā-dominated corporate environments.

Excerpt 4[8]

Regular weekly meeting of project team in large commercial organization; 'Sandy' (Jock Sanderson) is in the chair, while Clara is the section manager. They are discussing how those working in the organisation's call centre should answer the phone to clients.

1. **Sandy:**   we were going to have a vote on
2.   it's um welcome or is it [in Māori]: kia ora:
3. **Clara:**   oh it's welcome
4. **Vita:**   yeah
5. **Sandy:**   you sure?
6. **Clara:**   yes
7. **Peggy:**   your whānau ('family') can say whatever (you)
8.   //want to outside business hours\ =
9. **Vita:**   /[laughs]\\
10. **Peggy:** = but in business hours it's welcome
11. **Vita:**   [laughs]: where did that come from anyway: [laughs]
12. **Sandy:** just made that up
13. **Clara:** so after that bit of diversity and inclusion

In this example, Sandy reminds the team that they are to vote on whether the standard greeting for the call centre operators should be *welcome* or *kia ora*. Clara, the manager, bluntly asserts *oh it's welcome* (line 3) and Peggy then uses humour (lines 7–8, 10) to defuse the resulting tension. We first used this example many years ago to demonstrate how members of this particular workplace team use humour to manage potential conflict (Holmes and Marra 2004). However, more recent reflection on this interaction in the light of increased advocacy of the use of te reo Māori (the Māori language)[9] in a wide range of New Zealand contexts brought two specific issues to our attention, both pertinent to our interest in identifying unrecognised bias. First, this brief interaction illustrates perfectly the way this workplace team operates: Sandy, second-in-command to Clara, consistently manages relationship issues with a light hand and defuses potential conflict. This pattern of a second-in-command who orients to relationship management while the overseeing manager focuses on decision-making is one we have noted in a number of corporate organisations (Vine et al. 2008). Interestingly here, however, the standard gender order is challenged in that the stereotypical pattern involves a male leader

with a female second-in-command. Sandy's role could then be regarded as normatively 'feminine' in this organisation, a nice challenge to the taken-for-granted assumptions that dominate so many large organisations.

Second, Sandy identifies as both Māori and Pākehā (as do many New Zealanders), and the team's awareness of this is indicated by Peggy's reference to his *whānau*, a familiar Māori term (line 7). Sandy's advocacy of a Māori greeting *kia ora* (which has since become standard in many organisations) can thus be regarded as a small step to countering the cultural domination of English in workplace interaction. However, after a single attempt at a challenge *you sure?* (line 5), he cedes to Clara's dogmatic declaration that the operators should use *welcome* (line 3). Not only does he give way without further argument but when Vita laughingly asks where the idea of *kia ora* came from (line 11), he says *just made that up* (line 12), playing down its cultural significance and putting himself down in a very culturally predictable way by suggesting he had not given the issue much thought. It is interesting that at about this same point in time, the debate around greetings became a hot topic on *Shortland Street*, a weekday staple of the New Zealand television schedule. In this hospital drama, the receptionist was required by policy to use *kia ora* but the character aligned with an older, conservative Pākehā female stereotype and actively resisted the notion that a Māori greeting was appropriate. Her attempts were unsuccessful but reflected the conflict in society over changes to the invisible cultural order. We see this same awareness of the effects of the dominating influence of Pākehā norms in Clara's humorous attempt to mitigate the side-lining of difference with her ironic reference to *diversity and inclusion* (line 13), aspirations that were gaining lip service if not practical uptake in the corporate world at the time.

Societal assumptions about what is 'normal' contributed to us entering the world of aged care as a distinct workplace setting, one in which the cultural norms and expectations had the potential to contrast with majority culture. The aged care setting was one where we anticipated a diverse, international workforce and a setting where gender would be highlighted; aged care is arguably a feminised industry in the Global North with strong expectations that caring is a role taken by women (see McDowell, Lazzaro Salazar, and Marra 2020). The stereotypes in this case came from the government, and the realities of aged care meant our own hegemonic influences were drawn into question. Eldercare provides a setting where contrasting gender associations for society are writ large.

4.2 Aged care settings

The gender order in Pākehā-dominated New Zealand means the aged care sector is understood in lay terms as 'pink collar' work, that is service and caring work typically thought of as 'women's work' and linked to the negative consequences of low pay and lack of status. As experienced

researchers in effective workplace communication, the *Settlement Unit of the New Zealand Ministry for Business, Innovation and Employment* (MBIE) approached us to advise on best practice in this industry, at the same time requesting similar advice for the building sector. The reasoning was an assumption that semi-skilled newcomers to the country would be seeking employment in these industries where there were labour shortages: men would find work in building and construction, women in aged care. In order to provide this advice, we undertook ethnographic research as per our standard procedures (for detail, see Holmes and Woodham 2013; Marsden and Holmes 2014). Collaborating with workplaces quickly challenged the stereotypes. The assumptions were met with laughter in residential homes, noting in particular the physical requirements that necessitated the employment of male staff.[10] This confronting realisation of our own misconceptions meant we included a subproject focused specifically on carers who identified as male. Our first example is taken from this subproject. In Excerpt 5, Alec, a Pākehā male carer, is interacting with a resident in his eldercare facility.

Excerpt 5

Alec is talking to resident Nancy in her room. Nancy is upset that her preferred seat in the common area was not available to her at lunch.

1.	**Nancy:**	someone's taken my place at the at that table
2.		with Vera and that where I've
3.		//been sitting\ yeah I've been sitting there
4.	**Alec:**	/have they?\\
5.	**Nancy:**	I went down at lunchtime and . . .
6.		so I picked the tray and I went in the lounge
7.		and there was another woman in my seat
8.		an old lady I didn't see her properly
9.		I just looked away and came out
10.		cos I felt embarrassed
11.		so I had it down here #
12.		gonna have all my meals in here in future I've
13.		decided //if they're gonna put someone in my seat\
14.	**Alec:**	/[voc] + s- I'm\\ I'm sure it's just the new lady
15.		she's just trying to find a spot . . .
16.		we can find another spot for you
17.		we can find another spot for her
18.	**Nancy:**	what?
19.	**Alec:**	if you want that spot we can give it to you . . .
20.	**Nancy:**	I'll come down and see about the sitting
21.	**Alec:**	alright that's good I'll find you a spot
22.	**Nancy:**	yeah but I don't want to l- sit anywhere else

In this example, Alec listens to Nancy's story about finding an *old lady* in her seat and Nancy's decision to avoid the lounge in future in favour of eating in her room (line 12), citing her embarrassment at feeling usurped (line 10). His immediate reaction is to offer an alternative explanation and reassurance that she is not being overlooked (lines 14–15), a strategy that might be considered indexical of a discourse of caring (McDowell, Lazzaro Salazar, and Marra 2020). Both speakers seem to recognise that staying away from communal space is a dispreferred outcome of Nancy's recent experience. At this point, Alec shifts to more normatively masculine strategies, proposing a solution *we can find another spot for you/for her* (lines 16–17) and then switching pronouns from *we* to *I* to 'solve' her problem (line 21).[11] Alec is increasingly direct, authoritative and 'in charge' of the situation. Nancy goes along with the solution he has proposed (albeit with the repeat that she gets *my seat*).

It is interesting to note that Alec left the residential facility during our recording process. It is well documented that men working in a gender-segregated sector such as caring experience a 'stereotype threat' (Kalokerinos et al. 2017) to their masculinity. Having chosen this career we might arguably expect that he had already overcome the related societal pressure. Our ethnographic work gave us the insight that his participation in the employment community was not without problems, and he experienced negative attention regarding the suitability of a man working in the industry from at least one female carer within the workplace. Wider societal ideologies about gender impact not only our own practices but also the practices of others. In the case of Alec, Nancy's cooperation could have arguably been a result of the gender order in which a male had authority, but for his colleague his presence as a male *carer* was apparently not welcome.

In the next excerpt, we see dimensions of the intersection with the culture order. In this case it is the resident, rather than a colleague, who constructs the male carer as inappropriately 'masculine'.

Excerpt 6

Afato, a Samoan carer, is interacting with resident Ida. Ida refers to a lamp that Afato had accidently knocked over on the previous day. George is another carer in the facility interacting with Ida. Like Afato, George identifies as Samoan, although he is 20 years his senior.

1. **Afato:** so are we going back into the wheelchair or
2.   the lazy boy love
3. **Ida:** (over there)
4. **Afato:** alright . . .
5.   they want an incident form for that thing +
6.   the the lights //going off\

7.   **Ida:** /okay\\ of course
8.   **Afato:** yes
9.   **Ida:** I didn't even see what you do did
10.   but you were doing it rather vigorously //obvious\ly
11. **Afato:** /[laughs]\\
12. **Ida:** did you see what he's done George
13. **George:** yeah [laughs]
14. **Ida:** George
15. **Afato:** not me?
16. **Ida:** crashed the light off one of them
17. **Afato:** (and this)
18. **Ida:** you just can't let him loose
19. **Afato:** eh?
20. **Ida:** can't let some people loose can you
21. **Afato:** yeah
22. **Ida:** they run amok
23. **Afato:** it is
24. **Ida:** they run amok I love those expressions +
25.   you know what amok means
26.   [Ida explains *amok* to Afato who doesn't know the expression]
27. **Ida:** amok //Afato\ ran amok
28. **George:** /(no)\\
29. **Afato:** what's that
30. **Ida:** he's got out of control and started smashing lights
31. **Afato:** it's not like I did it deliberately
32. **Ida:** [laughs]
33. **Afato:** it is
34. **Ida:** but it happened
35. **Afato:** yeah ++ okay anything else Ida you need anything else
36. **Ida:** no thank you Afato

This exchange is dominated by Ida's description of Afato as having behaved aggressively, summarised as being *out of control* and *smashing lights* (line 30). Although always expressed in a teasing tone, Ida's claims carry extra weight when they are addressed not only to Afato but also to his colleague George who happens to be nearby. As we see in the early section, Afato and Ida typically share a friendly relationship and he initially responds with laughter when his actions are first labelled as being rather *vigorous* (line 10). As the accusations become more elaborate, especially when addressed to his (older) colleague, Afato seems to become rather confused by the construction that he has *run amok* (line 22) and *crash[ed]the light off* (line 16). The overall impression Ida arguably creates is that Afato is not suited to the work and that it is his masculine-stereotype actions that are to blame.

Afato's othering is similarly highlighted by the English language lesson given by Ida for the idiomatic expression to *run amok*. For Ida, aligning with a Pākehā gender and culture order, Afato's minority status rests in both his gender and his cultural identification. For Afato (and possibly for George), a Samoan cultural orientation likely contributes to some of the confusion that Afato seems to be experiencing in understanding why his behaviour is being cast both as aggressive and somehow intentional and 'wrong'; looking after elderly members of the community reflects respect for hierarchy and is the responsibility of all in Samoan communities (Metge and Kinloch 1978; Salanoa 2020), and the implicit challenge to his professionalism, directed at his 'inferior' language skills, seems to bemuse him. There are many Pasifika members of staff at the residential homes with whom we worked, including both men and women, while residents are more likely to identify as Pākehā. This conflict in the applicability of the competing orders seems to come to the surface in Afato's insistence that *it's not like I did it deliberately* (line 31), before he somewhat quickly ends his interaction with Ida and moves away.

The incident gives the impression of low status for Afato in this context. This unfortunately aligns with the Pākehā culture order in New Zealand where Pākehā norms dominate and alternative cultural expectations are backgrounded. By contrast, Harold seems to be more empowered in his practices, perhaps signalling alignment with bicultural aspirations within New Zealand society. Harold regularly foregrounds his Māori identity in our data, and arguably uses his cultural positioning as a resource in challenging hierarchies, as we argue below.

Excerpt 7

Harold is talking to resident Florence in her room as part of his morning checks.

1.   **Harold:** oh it was horrible this morning [talks about
2.   the weather] (7) and did you sleep well [. . .]
3.   **Florence:** very well went to sleep about nine and woke at ++
4.   two + then again this morning
5.   **Harold:** [laughs] if you only wake once during the night
6.   then it's a good sleep
7.   **Florence:** yes I was that's what I normally do [. . .] I have
8.   one pill at night and a half a pill when I wake ++
9.   **Harold:** I can speak to the nurse about that if you want
10.   them to wake you and give you the other half? + will that
           be easier
11.   [Harold explains options]
12. **Florence:** it's their job to wake you up (in order to get
13.   you to sleep) . . .
14. **Harold:** you can always trial it and and see how it goes

15. **Florence:** I don't know that I'd like being waken from
16.   the night sleep
17. **Harold:** [laughs]

In Excerpt 7, Harold's authority as an experienced and knowledgeable carer is demonstrated through his suggestions for medical intervention (albeit to advise the nurse who can administer the pills, a task for which he is not qualified) as well as the way he takes control of the interaction; following an established routine for 'morning cares', he asks questions for Florence to respond to (see Freed and Ehrlich 2010 on the power of questions). While this is a reasonably straightforward example of Harold aligning with the hegemony of the wider (Pākehā/Global North) gender order, it is also an example which, when paired with Excerpt 8, demonstrates the flexibility of approach required from carers. In Excerpt 7 there is evidence of relational talk at the outset in the form of small talk about weather (line 1), but the transactional functions of the interaction dominate. In Excerpt 8, relational strategies are brought to the foreground.

Excerpt 8

Harold is called away from Florence to check on Polly in the next door room. Polly has been unwell.

1. **Harold:** it's alright Polly (12)
2.   here we go we'll put this one on you (7)
3.   you poor thing (51) almost done Polly hang on (40)
4.   okay can you walk forward for me Polly ++ Polly up ++
5.   can you walk forward for me sweetie (18)
6.   [quietly]: okay: +++ here we go Polly
7.   come on we'll get you into bed eh
8. **Polly:** [breathing audibly, shallowly] (20)
9. **Harold:** it's alright (4) [quietly]: okay: + pass me
10.   your hands okay ready follow me ++ alright and we'll grab
11.   under here okay ++ there we go Polly (4)
12.   okay are you ready I'm gonna swing you round and
13.   [helps Polly onto the bed]

This extract highlights the empathetic, other-oriented, caring and patient practices we see throughout the carer discourse we have investigated (see Marsden and Holmes 2014), heightened because of the specific context in which Harold and Polly find themselves. Harold uses terms of endearment (*you poor thing* line 3, *sweetie* line 5), there are long pauses (lines 1, 2, 3, 5, 8 and 11) to give Polly time to manage the tricky movements they are engaged in, reassurance (*eh* line 7, *it's alright* lines 1 and 9, *are you ready* line 12), and narration of actions to make sure Polly understands

what is happening (e.g. *I'm going to swing you round* line 12). That many of these strategies are normatively feminine does not detract from Harold's overall construction of masculinity, but rather demonstrates effective communicative skills and competence in his role. Much of his identity work in other interactions focuses on his sporting endeavours, including reference to regular gym attendance and encouragement of residents to increase their physical strength. Equally, there is reference to this fitness contributing to his participation in activities such as a culturally important journey sailing a traditional boat to the Cook Islands, which highlights his Māori identity.

Harold's Māori identity is salient to his caring role. Like the Samoan cultural attitude to elders, respect for and care of older family and community members is a core value irrespective of gender in a Māori worldview; while Harold's masculinity might create conflict with his career choice under a Pākehā dominated culture order, it is well aligned with his Māori identity. These excerpts thus provide a range of examples of how the intersection of the gender order and the culture order plays out in a specific workplace where subtle biases contribute to gendered and culture-bound assumptions about appropriate behaviour. In all cases, our analyses demonstrate the subtlety and nuance required for unpicking the influence of cultural hierarchies, as well as the impact they have on the enactment of identity. This forces us to avoid blanket statements about globalisation and search instead for the ways in which complex influences contribute to bias and discrimination.

5. Discussion: the underground battle

The title of this chapter reflects our awareness that while some forms of discrimination are increasingly and widely recognised, others remain 'underground', especially when coupled with the complexity of intersecting and competing orders. The ongoing and tireless efforts of the feminist movement over many years have lifted discriminatory events above the level of consciousness, even if the hegemonies of the gender order mean they still occur. But as the discussion of microaggressions notes, bias based on race or culture is not always as accessible to us; when we contemplate intersecting hegemonies, the bias often remains hidden. Foregrounding one order or the other does not address the subtleties of their enactment in everyday discourse, nor the ability and resources required to challenge them. Instead, it is important that in all our work towards exposing discrimination, in whichever cultural context we are operating, we recognise the interplay of hegemonies.

To address the influence of intersecting orders we turned to examples of majority group members in minority contexts, settings in which the culture order related to a non-dominant community enjoys temporary

salience. Excerpts 1, 2 and 3 illustrate how sensitivity to minority group values can be developed when a majority group member is, unusually, a member of an organisation dedicated to furthering minority group concerns. While self-promotion and 'hero stories' are well-documented occurrences in Pākehā contexts (Jackson and Parry 2001; Holmes, Marra, and Vine 2011), working within their respective Māori organisations, Frank and Gretel demonstrate awareness of the importance of humility and avoidance of boasting in contexts where Māori values prevail.

However, as noted, Gretel and Frank can also be regarded as the butt of instances that could be interpreted as microaggressions; teasing often has a sting in its tail (cf. the concepts of 'biting' and 'nipping' in Boxer and Cortés-Conde 1997). Identifying Gretel as *the white lady* and Frank as *whangai* (an adoptee) makes clear they are not quite 'one of us'. However, their relative power in the wider context can be regarded as mitigating this othering effect.

The examples from the aged care setting demonstrate the impact of the intersectional identities of interactants and the contribution these make to the enactment of bias. For Alec, the gender order embedded within the dominant Pākehā culture order arguably contributed to his exclusion by other staff. For Afato, his Samoan worldview was harmonious with his carer identity and his industry-appropriate behaviour. The resident for whom he was caring was operating under different assumptions, making explicit his masculinity and, in the guise of a humorous tease, highlighting the apparent mismatch between Afato's role and his gender identity. In excerpts 7 and 8, Harold's flexibility in communicative style is indicative of the effective professionals seen throughout our dataset (Holmes and Stubbe 2015). His masculinity is foregrounded in the first of his examples, his empathy and expertise as a carer in the second. The alignment with a Māori culture order that prioritises the collective and respect for elders underpins both.

The complexity found in the examples serves to demonstrate that, while we might argue that the gender order impacts on all behaviour, it is important to recognise that hegemonies intersect with competing hegemonies, including in our case the intersection of the gender order with the culture order. While in New Zealand the overarching culture order is largely dominated by Pākehā values (Holmes, Marra, and Vine 2020), this is an oversimplification of the realities of context-specific interactions which may call into question competing cultural values and attitudes depending on the individuals, the team, the industry or any other relevant structures.

At the beginning of this chapter, we addressed the impact of a globalised gender order on New Zealand society. We raised the proposition that New Zealand may be subject to pressures from both the Global North and, to a lesser extent, the Global South. Our intention was not

to explicitly take a position in the debate on the appropriateness of these concepts to accurately reflect globalised understandings, but rather to recognise the need for an approach to gender ideologies that creates space for dynamism and the influence of contrasting worldviews. For more than ten years we have emphasised that identity construction involves the balancing of a range of different social factors (see, e.g. Holmes and Marra 2011). Here we raise the analytic focus to the level of orders to demonstrate the complex layers of influence on this balancing process.

6. Conclusion: bringing the battle to the surface

Troubling the hegemonies is an important activity for discourse analysts. Left unchallenged, the orders construct unjust boundaries separating who belongs and who is excluded. These are difficult to breach, especially for those with minority status. The dominance of Pākehā norms in New Zealand, and arguably their relationship to the Global North, has been demonstrated in the underlying values we have identified in the analyses earlier. The gender order is one component of those norms, and women in the workplace are always aware of pressure to conform to societal strictures concerning appropriately feminine behaviour. It is particularly interesting to note that, in industries where the gender order subjects workers to societal marginalisation, such as the feminised and associated disadvantaged status of aged care workers, diverse culture orders offer avenues for overcoming stigma: Harold claims status through his alignment with Māori norms, and Afato expects the same in line with his Samoan worldview. To majority group members, these alternative hierarchies are not always available because of their own relationships with the hegemonies they experience.

  To identify and explain unrecognised bias and expose taken-for-granted assumptions with any confidence requires a range of diverse methods. Our own participation in society as Pākehā women meant that experience of microaggressions based on gender were familiar and easily identified. The reflections offered by Gretel and Frank in interview, as well as our own experiences gaining vital familiarity with underlying assumptions in the Māori world as part of our research practices, were central in our abilities to recognise the unquestioned status of Pākehā norms in most aspects of New Zealand society. In the aged care setting where we had least experience, our ethnographic observations in the workplaces and attention to the explicit ethnic identification of the carers (especially Harold, who regularly foregrounded his Māori identity) all contributed to our interpretations of the recordings.[12] Without access to the range of data we had available, the unrecognised bias would likely have remained entirely unrecognised, while representing significant consequences from an emic perspective.

By way of conclusion, we highlight the potential we have as sociolinguists and gender scholars globally to address the unrecognised bias that negatively impacts on the workplace experience of minority group members. As we have aimed to demonstrate, we have analytic skills to offer in the cause of calling out bias and microaggressions; by identifying how concrete practices instantiate abstract concepts we can draw attention to actions that might otherwise remain unchallenged. In our own work, this has included actively challenging and reordering lists in research grant criteria to position the Māori worldview and the humanities (as an arguably feminised disciplinary area) as primary considerations rather than as a metaphorical 'add ons' placed at the end of lists, or challenging the government to recognise that their stereotypes of the workforce in gendered industries are contributing to the feminisation of the sector, including the pay gaps this may produce which compound to keep minority group members in the industry in lower-paid occupations.

In order to enact this from our position as inherently privileged community members, we must support the identification of bias by those from minority groups (even when those instances are presented or understood as simply hunches that bias or a microaggression has occurred, since this is likely a by-product of the pressures of marginalisation). Social justice is a strong motivation, but our efforts also serve the quest for effective communication. Research can inform social action to challenge unfair bias, as well as indicating more diverse and fruitful ways of conducting workplace interaction. This chapter has provided an opportunity to illustrate the role of sociolinguists and discourse analysts in identifying and troubling prejudicial components of the underground battle.

Acknowledgement

Transcription conventions

[laughs]: :Paralinguistic features and editorial information in square brackets; colons indicate beginning and end
[voc]   unspecified vocalisation

+   Pause of up to one second
(2)   Timed pause
. . . //. . . ... \ Simultaneous speech
/. . . . . . . \\ . . .
=   Turn continuation
()   Unclear utterance, transcriber's best guess
('family')   Standard English gloss
End of sense unit
?   Questioning intonation
s-   Cut-off utterance
[. . .] Section of transcript omitted
Names of workplace participants and workplaces are pseudonyms

Notes

 1 While sometimes still contested within parts of society, Te Tiriti o Waitangi (the Treaty of Waitangi) is a treaty of partnership, participation and protection that fundamentally underpins New Zealand society. Te Tiriti was signed by Māori chiefs and the Crown in 1840.
 2 This section draws on Holmes (2018) to summarise the key points regarding the concept of the culture order.
 3 This section draws on a literature survey undertaken by Shelley Dawson.
 4 See Holmes and Stubbe (2015) for more details. See also Holmes, Marra, and Vine (2011), Marra (2008) where culturally sensitive modifications for researching with Māori participants and in Māori organisations are discussed, as well as Vine and Marra (2017) where we outline the importance of a flexible approach.
 5 McConnell-Ginet (2020) quoting from an interview with a woman working for justice for prison inmates.
 6 See Vine (2020, 212–13) for further discussion.
 7 We note that the privileged status of Pākehā in wider society means that these terms which might on the surface seem othering, are not treated as such by the participants or their colleagues, but instead are interpreted as terms of inclusion.
 8 This example was first discussed in Holmes and Marra (2004).
 9 Te reo Māori became an official language following the passing of the Māori Language Act in 1987 reflecting the central role of te Tiriti o Waitangi in New Zealand society, and the language as a taonga (treasure).
10 The irony of this alternative stereotype is not lost on us.
11 Interestingly this strategy matches a stereotype in Tannen (1990), a volume aimed at a mass audience and reflecting the dominant 'equal-but-different' cultures' approach to gender that she espoused. Of relevance here is the characterisation of men as solution-oriented, and women speakers as relationally oriented, that is, using that frame, Nancy might have simply been seeking reassurance that her feelings were valid.
12 While there is no space for it here, we are increasingly aware of the emergence of metapragmatics as a useful additional tool (see Marra and Dawson 2021).

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8 'It doesn't matter if you're female or male it's the same thing.' Re-gendering the notion of work in agile workplaces in Switzerland, the UK and the USA

Joelle Loew

1. Introduction

It has been widely acknowledged in academic and practitioner literature that increasing the participation of women in the field of Information Technology (IT) is an ongoing priority and a political issue in most of the Western world. Yet, studies have found recurrent themes of gender discrimination such as issues of recruiting and hiring, retaining women in the workforce, and discrimination in terms of pay in different countries including the USA, the UK and Switzerland (Deloitte 2016; Resch et al. 2017). These barriers persist, and the percentages of women in the field are not increasing, despite a growing number of policies and public campaigns trying to raise the profile of women in IT and aiming to retain women in the workforce in these geopolitical contexts. While these issues of gender politics are subject to local socio-cultural variation (Frieze and Quesenberry 2019), the global reach of the IT industry and its associated gender bias make them relevant more globally (e.g. Applin 2019), specifically with regard to the intricate processes by which the field of IT is gendered. This chapter investigates the linguistics of globalisation, geopolitics and gender in the workplace by way of a case study of agile IT, drawing on semi-structured interviews with women who have successfully broken into this male-dominated profession in Switzerland, the USA and the UK. Applying frameworks from interactional sociolinguistics and social constructionism, I identify recurring themes around gender-based stereotyping, discrimination and bias across different geopolitical contexts in the globalised IT industry, specifically focusing on the discursive strategies through which these women (re-)gender the very notion of work, as they reify and defy the gender order in their sense-making practices. I discuss these findings against the backdrop of largely positive Discourses of globalisation, digitalisation and feminisation of the IT industry, to end with some implications for practice and future research.

2. Background

While there have been significant advances in gender equality in Euro- and Anglo-Western labour markets, the field of IT remains gendered both with regard to numerical prevalence of men in the workforce and with regard to normative expectations of who is best suited to undertake this kind of work (Holmes 2014; Resch et al. 2017). In the geopolitical contexts of this study, the participation of women is significantly lower than their overall participation in the workforce: in the UK, the percentage of women with tech roles in STEM occupations (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) has remained stagnant at around 16–17% since 2009 (WISE Campaign 2019), in Switzerland the participation of women is currently even lower at 14.5% (ICTswitzerland 2020), in the USA it is at 25% but on the decline (McKinsey 2018).

In a recent review of gender segregation in the IT sector in over 50 countries, Chow and Charles have shown that the participation of women has not improved according to 'economic modernization or with the large-scale incorporation of women in higher education, labor markets, and other public-sphere institutions' (2019, 36), especially in Euro- and Anglo-Western countries which otherwise rank comparably high in global gender equality comparisons (Schwab et al. 2020). Such countries, instead, often show a larger gap in the participation of women in the technology sector than those with lower overall gender equality ratings (see, e.g. Varma 2019 on the case of India). Chow and Charles (2019) argue that this may be related to the fact that women of higher socio-economic status in these geopolitical contexts are encouraged to pursue a career of their choosing that suits their interests, which is in line with neoliberal and postfeminist ideals of individual choice (Lewis, Benschop, and Simpson 2017). Yet, such choices are of course not free from societal expectations of what women or men are – allegedly – more 'naturally' suited for (e.g. Cameron 2015; see also McDowell this volume) and in fact, gender-based stereotyping is especially prevalent in workplaces where men or women are over- or under-represented, respectively (McDowell 2021).

In line with this, homogenised (and sometimes stereotypical) notions of men and women and what keeps them in or attracts them to a workplace, and emphasis on the specific contributions women can make to the IT profession, often feature in the literature (Resch et al. 2017) and in public discourse (e.g. PwC 2017). This issue is especially prevalent with regard to so-called 'agile ways of working'. Agile ways of working and associated practices and processes for software development and project management are becoming the norm in the field of IT more globally (Meyer 2014). While 'agile' can refer to flexible ways of working with regard to location and time in a variety of workplace contexts, this study zooms in on agile ways of working linked to the so-called 'agile

manifesto', implemented in the field of IT using specific methods such as Scrum.[1] The 'agile manifesto' was drawn up by practitioners in the early 2000s and includes specific values, principles and practices that foreground user-centred and iterative ways of working, and put a strong emphasis on collaborative teamwork and identification with the team (Beck et al. 2001). This includes valuing individuals and interactions over processes and tools, with face-to-face interaction seen as the most desirable way of communicating (Meyer 2014). Agile ways of working hence emphasise frequent and open communication among teams and with customers, and foreground interpersonal and relational aspects of professional communication.

It has been argued that due to an explicit focus on communicative competence, collaboration and interpersonal aspects of professional communication – which are stereotypically indexed for femininity (Holmes and Marra 2004) – methods such as Scrum are especially suitable for women (Hazzan and Dubinsky 2006; Russo 2015). This includes the view that the focus of the manifesto on reducing hierarchies and empowering people may have the potential to challenge previous (masculine) power structures (Barke et al. 2015) and to make IT a more inclusive profession for women (Kohl Silveira and Prikladnicki 2019). Yet, while there may be such potential (Barke and Zehlike 2016), more research is needed to understand the more implicit processes that produce hierarchical gender relations in agile IT contexts. This includes, for example, the issue of the decontextualised conclusion that a renewed focus on practices stereotypically indexing femininity opens up new avenues for women in the technology sector, without consideration of the discursive co-construction of what notions of femininity or masculinity are in any given geopolitical context. It is crucial to consider how such processes are shaped by overarching gendered Discourses that create acceptable subject positions for men and women (Mills and Mullany 2011; Sunderland 2004). That is, any investigation into the complexities of gender issues in the IT profession linking localised communicative practice to global issues of gender politics must include consideration of how such work is gendered in itself, including the crucial role language plays in such gendering processes (e.g. Schnurr et al. 2020), which is the aim of this study.

The gendering of work is hereby understood as a theoretical lens to capture the fact that the very notion of work is not neutral, but that organisations are gendered in complex ways, including the fact that the ideal worker in supposedly neutral neoliberal, capitalist and Western societies is white, and is male (Acker 1990; Bridges and Messerschmidt 2019). The gendering of work is linked to a complex mixture of both individual and historical socialisation processes, as well as global political and systemic inequalities in the form of the gender order, that is, a 'historically constructed pattern of power relations between men and women' (Connell 1987, 168) to which members of society orient, 'whether they

conform to or contest it' (Holmes 2018, 34). This includes powerful associated cultural myths and definitions of masculinity and femininity which, in the form of gendered and gendering Discourses, set boundaries for the manner in which women are represented or expected to behave in particular ways, including the kind of work that women are considered suitable for (Ekberg and Ekberg 2017; Mullany and Yoong 2017). This contributes to the exclusion of women from male-dominated environments, and research has shown that the gender order leads to the fact that a male norm is still privileged in the majority of workplaces[2] (e.g. Mastracci and Arreola 2016) which results in disadvantages for women (Holmes 2020). Conceptualising the gendering of work as a discursive process taking place in and through language allows focusing not only on the awareness of, but also on the process by which my participants, in orienting to the gender order, co-construct it, and talk a gendered workspace into being, and how in this way global issues of gender politics surface in professional communication. The research question this chapter aims to answer is thus: How do women who have successfully entered male-dominated IT workplaces orient to and construct gender issues in their respective geopolitical contexts? In the next section, I describe the dataset I draw on.

3. Data and methodology

This chapter is guided by principles from interactional sociolinguistics in combination with social constructionist and discursive approaches to gendering processes (e.g. Vine, Marra, and Holmes 2021, see also contributions to this volume by Lazzaro-Salazar and McDowell). Such approaches focus on the study of the co-construction and negotiation of social meaning in interaction at the level of linguistic practice, embedded in the broader context within which it occurs (Gumperz 1982; Rampton 2010; Sarangi and Roberts 1999). This allows putting an analytical focus on how macro-level gendered Discourses in the form of the gender order both shape and are shaped by localised micro-level linguistic practice (e.g. Hall, Levon, and Milani 2019), which, in turn, is especially relevant for research on gendering processes from a critical feminist and political perspective (see Angouri, Marra, and Dawson 2021).

In this chapter, I draw on semi-structured interviews I conducted with seven female IT professionals on their experience and knowledge of agile ways of working.[3] Of these, two were conducted in Swiss German and five were conducted in English. The interviews lasted just over an hour on average. I consider interviews both as 'account' and 'interaction' (Sarangi 2018, 107) since interviewee and interviewer 'co-construct lived experience' and engage in a joint, interactional sense-making process (Creswell 2014, 6). Ethical guidelines by the British Association for Applied Linguistics were followed, Informed Consent was collected from the

participants and data was anonymised upon transcription (BAAL 2016, see also Locher and Bolander 2019). The interviews were transcribed verbatim and coded for patterns regarding the discursive processes by which gender issues are (co-)constructed, to identify recurring themes around gendered stereotyping, discrimination and bias across the different cultural, linguistic and geopolitical contexts. Samples for analysis were transcribed in more detail according to conventions included in the appendix (Holmes and Stubbe 2015). The experiences of these women were remarkably similar even though the interviewees have a range of nationalities (Swiss, American, English and Dutch), have different job roles (Senior Software Designer, Business Analyst, Scrum Master, Project Manager, Agile Coach), and work in international companies in different geopolitical contexts (Switzerland, the USA, the UK). While I discuss further relevant examples in my thesis (Loew forthcoming), for this chapter I have selected three anecdotes to illustrate the key themes I identified in these interviews. I will elaborate on these in the next section.

4. Findings

My data shows that agile ways of working are adding a new gendered dimension to the IT profession across different geopolitical contexts. In the following, I outline how the women in my study discuss sexism, discrimination and gender-based stereotyping, and consider how these accounts of language in the workplace are inextricably linked to broader issues of gender politics. I highlight the key role language plays in reifying harmful stereotypes and myths about what it means to be effective, credible professionals, and identify the discursive processes through which male normativities are co-constructed and hence work is gendered.

4.1 *Naturalising gender differences: it's a personality thing*

An overarching Discourse of gender difference is often endorsed by my participants through naturalising gender difference. That is, they endorse gender-based stereotypes such as the association of communicative competence with women and the association of technological competence with men (see Cameron 2014; Meyerhoff and Ehrlich 2019) through making reference to homogenised categories of 'men' and 'women' and associated qualities and issues. Stereotypes mentioned specific to the IT industry include a friction between (mostly female) designers and (mostly male) programmers, describing male IT professionals as 'nerdy developers' or mentioning the so-called 'brogrammer' culture (see Salter 2017), for example, a hyper-masculine workplace culture which is alienating to women (see Plester 2015). Alongside using the term 'gender' or related compounds such as 'gender thing', categorising men and women into homogenous groups helps participants to discuss their experiences as

women in male-dominated workplaces. This includes mentioning specific strategies that are necessary in order to navigate being the only woman in a team and related to this, doing things 'like a man' or 'like a woman', respectively. At the same time, however, participants also reject this Discourse of gender difference, and specifically negotiate whether or not something is 'a gender thing' or 'because of gender' when they reflect on alleged or seeming differences between men and women, and how or why they themselves, or their co-workers, do (or do not) fit these stereotypes.

My participants often navigate the issue of homogenised groups of men and women, and associated stereotypes that they do not fit, by making reference to their personalities. The powerful Discourse of intrinsic gender differences is seemingly rejected in this way, when my participants position themselves as 'different' from other, often 'stereotypical' women, such as Tina, a UX Designer from the UK, who stated 'I am not a girly girl', or Ava, an Agile Coach from Switzerland, who said that she had always 'preferred to work with men'. Explicitly refuting female stereotypes, the women nevertheless implicitly engage in endorsing and co-constructing the male workplace norm since their frequent use of self-referential pronouns (such as 'not to *me* personally') implies that for other women, this may well be an issue. This is further complicated through the way in which gender issues such as sexism and discrimination are reported, which I discuss in the next section.

4.2 Trivialising sexism and discrimination

My interviewees report sexism and discrimination as part of their everyday working lives. Anecdotes include, alongside stories of discriminatory and sexist behaviour such as sexual humour, less clear instances of discrimination such as mentioning 'old fashioned sexism', for example, expecting women to be making cups of tea for meetings, or more generally an 'old fashioned way of seeing women' as 'too emotional' or 'not assertive enough'. Locating these practices in the past or as 'old' hereby frames sexism and discrimination as no longer prevalent, or something that will disappear in the future, and in fact, the ways in which stories of sexism and discrimination are told often mitigate their effect and seriousness in complex ways. The excerpt that follows below is from an interview with Franzi, and a good example to illustrate this.

Excerpt 1: Franzi

Context: Franzi is a Business Analyst from Switzerland working for a Swiss IT Consulting Company. I know her well, which explains my informal reaction to her anecdote in line 5. The interview was conducted in Swiss German and translated by the author. Ralph is a Product Owner[4] and John a Project Manager at Franzi's Consulting

Company. Ralph had given Franzi the task to recover information from Company C, which proved to be more difficult than expected.

1. Und denn het dr Ralph anschienend in däm Call gseit
   And then Ralph apparently said in this call
2. Hey ich ha dFranzi uf dCompany C agsetzt abr sisch leidr wirklich nit so eifach wie ich dänggt ha
   Hey I put Franzi onto Company C but unfortunately it's really not as easy as I thought
3. und denn het dr John anschinend gseit jo gäll jung und blond löst au nit alli Problem
   and then apparently John said well young and blonde doesn't solve all problems does it
4. [interviewer and interviewee laugh, and the interviewer curses in disbelief]
5. Aber dr John är isch wigch är isch sehr respäktvoll und är isch nit frauefeindlich aso sisch wigch
   but John he is really he is very respectful and he is not misogynistic so it was really
6. sone Witz wosi untr Männer gmacht hän und zerscht wo ichs ghört ha ha ich au so dänkt wuou . . .
   a joke they did amongst men and first when I heard it I also thought wooooo . . .
7. abr glichzitig ischs halt so wie es isch halt positiv und au negativ
   but at the same time it's just the way it is it's positive and also negative
8. abr will dr John dä respektiert mi für was ich mach für mini Arbet und nit- är isch nit
   but because John respects me for what I do for my work and not he's not
9. är judged mi nit vo mim Üssere aber das isch au das wo ebe au e vorteil cha si
   he doesn't judge me by my looks but this is what can also be an advantage
10. ehm wenn du halt jung bisch und guet usgsehsch und nätt bisch dass dir dLüt denn eher e gfalle mache
    uhm when you are young and you look good and you are nice that people are more likely to do you a favor
11. abr das isch denn dFroog dänkich das numme will ich e Frau bi? Odr wie funktioniert das?
    but that is the question do I only think that because I am a woman? Or how does this work?

In this excerpt, Franzi shares an anecdote told by another female colleague about a call in which Ralph told John that it proved to be more

difficult than expected for Franzi to obtain information from Company C, prompting John to say 'young and blonde doesn't solve all problems does it' (line 3). While it is important to acknowledge that my reaction, as interviewer, encourages her to evaluate this incident as problematic (line 4), it is all the more relevant that she does not agree with me: rather, she instantly mitigates the statement through laughing (line 4) and justifies John's behaviour here since, as she states, he is normally 'very respectful' (line 5), 'not misogynistic' (line 5) and 'respects me for what I do', meaning 'her work' (line 8). So, while 'first' she 'also' (like I did) exclaimed in disbelief (line 6), she goes on to trivialise his statement, framing it as gendered humour (e.g. 'a joke they did amongst men', line 6) and emphasises this legitimisation through multiple uses of the intensifier 'really' in 5. In line 9 she both states that she is not judged by her looks (by John) but at the same time states that it could be an advantage to 'look good' since 'people are more likely to do you a favor' (line 10). She appropriates the stereotype of a 'young and blonde' woman to her advantage in an agentive act but asks if 'I only think that because I am a woman? Or how does this work?' (line 11) which to some extent mitigates this claim, framing it as an interrogative rather than a declarative statement. So, while she questions the assumption, at the same time Franzi generalises across a homogenised category of women, partially accepting and trivialising gender-based stereotyping, thereby not only endorsing an overall Discourse of gender difference, but also feeding into the powerful cultural myth of 'boys will be boys' (e.g. Gill, Kelan, and Scharff 2017). More precisely, such strategies not only reduce accountability for discriminatory gendered behaviour (e.g. Jones and Clifton 2018) but contribute to the normalisation of the gendered IT industry as seemingly neutral, and in this way actively gendering the notion of work through co-constructing the gender order as a status quo (e.g. Schnurr et al. 2020).

4.3 (Not) adapting to male norms

As the previous example shows, implicit processes of gendering are inextricably linked to explicit gender-based stereotyping and discrimination. In this section, I discuss a longer excerpt that shows how closely these competing gendered Discourses are intertwined, and how they endorse notions of what it means to be an effective, productive and credible professional in the IT industry more generally, and in the agile IT world specifically.

Excerpt 2: Ava

Context: Ava is an Agile Coach and works for a Swiss IT Consulting Company. The interview was conducted in English. The following excerpt is part of a longer reflection on her experience as a woman

in a male-dominated field. Just prior to this excerpt she mentioned a sexist comment that a co-worker had made regarding the way women should or should not dress. I is myself, the interviewer, and A is Ava.

1.   **A:** I must say I try not to dress too provocative I don't like to be
2.   watched + + . . . in that kind of way so I always dress I don't dress
3.   like a man but uh in a professional way I wouldn't wear a short skirt +
4.   never [laughs] . . . yeah I don't want to be watched in a way that
5.   doesn't I like + . . . I want to be seen for my skills and not for my
6.   body [laughs] . . . so I think it's a natural social skill to do that have
7.   to adapt if you want to be taken seriously and I work with high-level
8.   management usually C-levels so I don't want to be treated as a oh the
9.   nice girl's here I get some remarks sometimes like ah it's nice to have
10. some feminine touch in the meeting or it's nice to have some
11. feminine ++ I don't know some people think that women bring some
12. sensitivity in meetings and lower the voices and maybe it's true + I
13. don't know
14. **I.** Do you think that's true?
15. **A.** I don't know ++ not sure ++
16. **I.** How does it make you feel when people say that?
17. **A.** to me it's not useful + to talk about it to me it's just same brains
18. just speak just do your work it doesn't matter if you're female or male
19. it's the same thing and I know males that are much more sensitive
20. than other women I mean it doesn't really for me it's completely the
21. same
22. **I.** Yes absolutely I think the problem is more + that not every body
23. works on that premise //you know that I know that\
24. **A.** /yeah yeah yeah and and\\ I must admit there is still dynamic
25. that is different when you have several men in groups and you have
26. several women in groups you can feel the difference so we cannot
27. say it's exactly the same that's true I prefer to work with men than
28. women for a reason too I prefer men's more straight more
29. straightforward you have a problem with me just tell me

This example introduces another prevalent issue with regard to the embodiment of gender issues already alluded to by Franzi in Example 1, namely questions of sexuality and the body. Ava here explicitly mentions that she does not dress 'like a man' but 'in a professional way' (line 3) in order to be 'seen for her skills and not for her body' (line 5). In order to be 'taken seriously' (line 7), so she continues, 'you' – referring here to 'women' – have to 'adapt', which she considers 'a natural social skill' (line 6). Framing it not only as women's responsibility but as a 'natural skill' to 'adapt' to – seemingly neutral – workplaces in order to 'earn respect' (as Franzi put it elsewhere), is in fact evidence that these workplaces are not 'neutral' or 'natural', they are gendered, perpetuating masculine normativities in relation to which women are required

to position themselves. Ava's account then shifts from the generic 'you' to discussing her own experience with predominantly male high-level management, saying that she adapts because she does not want to be treated as 'oh the nice girl's here' (line 9), bringing in a 'feminine touch' (line 10) or 'sensitivity' (line 12), rejecting these stereotypical notions of femininity through distancing herself from them, similar to Tina mentioned earlier.

Ava reiterates this through saying that 'some people' think that women 'bring sensitivity in meetings' which may 'lower the voices' (line 11), but when I probe further about what she herself thinks about this she hesitates (line 14), rejecting this Discourse of gender difference. In stating that she does not think it is useful 'to talk about it' (line 17) especially when it comes to work, she explicitly erases the space for verbalising gendered experiences, since, as she states, for her ('to me', line 17, 'for me', line 20), it is 'completely the same' (line 20), once again making reference to her own experience of men who are 'much more sensitive than other women' (line 19). Like my other participants, Ava backgrounds the relevance of gender here, and explicitly constructs the notion of work as (seemingly) neutral, yet implying that while it makes no difference to *her* it may well do so for others. As the interviewer, I support her rejection of the gender order (line 18) but in lines 25–28 she continues to endorse homogenised categories of men and women arguing that if you have 'men' or 'women' 'in groups', 'you can feel the difference' (line 26) and that hence it 'cannot' be said that 'it's exactly the same' (line 27), supporting this statement by referring to her own experience and personality which, as she mentioned earlier in the interview, includes that she prefers to work with men (lines 27–28).

The contradictory statements through which Ava constructs gender issues over this relatively short sequence of turns are reflective of the complex discursive processes through which gendered work is talked into being when my participants position themselves and others in relation to competing gendered Discourses and the already highly gendered notion of work in the IT industry. That is, like my other participants, Ava both endorses gender-based stereotypes (lines 25–26), but at the same time rejects them (lines 17–19), and while, arguably, she thereby aims to de-gender the notion of work through defying the gender order, she implicitly reifies the gender order at the same time, hence re-gendering the very notion of work: what is seemingly neutral, is gendered further when women have to adapt and position themselves in relation to masculine normativities which are discursively constructed as seemingly neutral professionalism. Such contradictory processes are further complicated in discussions of agile ways of working by my participants, which is illustrated in the next excerpt. It is taken from an interview with Taylor, who here discusses different kinds of roles that women tend to take on in the

IT industry. Many of my interviewees confirmed that these often include project management roles rather than technical ones.

Excerpt 3: Women in Agile

Context: Taylor is a Business Analyst from the US. The interview was conducted in English. At this point in the interview, I asked her about her view on the links between agile ways of working and gender issues, to which she responded by mentioning her previous workplace and discussing the kinds of roles women tend to take on in the IT industry.

1.   Without an exception the project managers were all women?
2.   uhm and I find that across most industries
3.   most project managers tend to be women so uhm so that kind
4.   of brings the question you know if there's
5.   a problem if there's something going on or if there is pressure
6.   being put on the project by stakeholders
7.   or I mean women are essentially managing all of that and
8.   there's not that dispersion of responsibility
9.   and there's not that flat hierarchy and there's not that rigid
10. communication that's being laid out
11. [several turns on planning her wedding and managing her household omitted]
12. I feel that the role that women play outside the home? is kind
13. of aggressively mirrored inside the
14. workplace whenever they take on project management roles
15. uhm so if you're not using agile + you're
16. gonna be + responsible + you're gonna be that point of contact
17. you're gonna take on the emotional
18. labor of being in charge and coordinating everything with little
19. or no communication and input from
20. the rest of the team

In this excerpt, Taylor discusses that project managers in the IT industry (and in her experience, even beyond this) tend to be women, who, because of this, often have to manage the work of others and are responsible for mitigating 'problems' or 'pressure' from stakeholders on a project (lines 5–6). She makes reference here to her own personal life (which many of my participants have done to varying degrees in the interviews) and mentions that managing her own household and planning her wedding is easy, because she herself has project management experience. She links this to 'the role that women play outside the home' which is 'aggressively mirrored inside the workplace' (lines 12–14) when women take

on project management roles and associated 'emotional labor'.[5] Taylor uses this as an umbrella term to refer to aspects of work that are not covered by conventional understandings of paid work, including relational aspects of professional communication such as for example not only being responsible for presenting a piece of software to a stakeholder but also managing most of the relational aspects that go into this process, both within the team and with stakeholders. Taylor states here that in the workplace, such issues are prevalent where there 'is not that flat hierarchy' and 'not that rigid communication' (lines 9–10) prescribed by agile frameworks (line 15), and that the 'pressure' (line 5) of 'being in charge' and 'coordinating everything' with 'little or no communication and input from the rest of the team' (lines 18–20) could be mitigated through agile ways of working.

  Regardless of whether or not my participants were discussing gender issues, all of them commented on the potential of agile ways of working to reduce hierarchies, and to ensure transparent and frequent communication and collaboration in the workplace through the specific practices prescribed by the framework and built into daily work processes. As Ava stated in her interview, these make people feel more 'responsible' because they are 'implicated' in decisions and are therefore 'more motivated', that is, she proposes that a reduction in hierarchy and increase in transparency may make team members more accountable for articulating and making visible their own contributions to the work process and that this includes – but is not limited to – relational aspects of professional communication. While these opportunities are reported on by the women (and men) in my study, and may well exist, the excerpts I have analysed indicate that agile ways of working must be considered against the backdrop of the already highly gendered environment of the IT industry. This includes, for example, structural issues of why project managers tend to be women in the first place (rather than having technical roles), why hierarchical workplaces disproportionately disadvantage women (rather than men), and why, consequently, relational aspects of workplace interactions are often the responsibility of women. In the next section, I discuss these issues against the backdrop of largely positive Discourses of globalisation, digitalisation and feminisation that prevail in research on agile ways of working in the IT industry.

5. Discussion

Agile ways of working are argued to be inclusive, collaborative, globally relevant and are hailed as a positive development in the field (e.g. Boes et al. 2018), which is confirmed by my interviewees, who emphasise the potential of agile ways of working to foster accountability and equality in the workplace in an industry marred by (gendered) hierarchical

structures (Example 3). Yet, these largely positive Discourses of a globalised, unified and empowered IT workforce do not align with the very gendered experience that these women face on a daily basis (Examples 1 and 2), indicating that agile ways of working must be contextualised within global issues of gender politics. My findings add to the literature on the discursive strategies through which women who work in the field of IT navigate their gendered experiences, including positioning oneself as 'different' from other women, locating sexism and discrimination in the past, discursively legitimising a masculinist culture as the seemingly neutral status quo (e.g. Gill, Kelan, and Scharff 2017; Jones and Clifton 2018) as well as using gender-based stereotyping to their advantage (e.g. Kenny and Donnelly 2019). A geopolitical lens linking the workplace as a political space to issues of gender politics more globally has shown that in doing so, these women 'actively, although not necessarily consciously' engage in gendering practices (Schnurr et al. 2020, 415, brackets removed). That is, through the ways in which these women orient to the gender order, they actively co-construct it as part of a workplace norm they have to 'adapt' to (as women) to be perceived as 'professional' (in a male-dominated workplace), both naturalising and rejecting gender-based stereotypes, reporting and trivialising sexism and discrimination at the same time.

In line with neoliberal, postfeminist arguments on individual choice, these discursive strategies not only locate gendered experiences at an individual rather than structural level (Litosseliti, Gill, and Garcia Favaro 2019) and hence reduce the space for discussing and addressing systemic injustice and its relationship to discrimination and sexism in IT, but they also co-construct the gender order and perpetuate the seeming neutrality of the field, disappearing rather than making visible the fact that the field of IT itself is gendered, and women are excluded in complex ways. The contradictory accounts of these issues detailed in my findings may be explained by the fact that these women are not only aware of the gender order, but actively contest it too, and while not wanting to engage in the reification of stereotypes and hierarchical gender relations, they are confronted with these processes on a regular basis. This, in turn, then forms an integral part of their own individual sense-making practice, and in this way may be '*producing* dichotomies and differences by the appearance of individual agency' (Sørensen 2017, 310). This includes, for example, the decontextualised conclusion that a feminisation of the IT industry is underway through agile ways of working, and that associated practices and processes – indexed for femininity, accompanied by egalitarian Discourses – could make IT more inclusive to, and more attractive for, women. The associated diversification of skills considered relevant to the notion of work, including communicative competence, may seemingly contribute to a changing Discourse of what it means to be a competent professional (Cameron 2014; Hultgren 2017). However, the underlying

gendering processes identified above in fact contribute to powerful con-
structs associating notions of what it means to be an efficient, compe-
tent and reputable professional in the global North with masculinity,
and they foster, especially in the field of IT, the 'ideological marriage of
masculinity and technical competency' (Carrigan 2018, 345; see also Gil-
Juárez, Feliu, and Vitores 2018). It is therefore imperative that agile ways
of working, increasingly implemented globally and largely accompanied
by positive Discourses of globalisation and digitalisation across different
geopolitical contexts, are contextualised within the gendered IT industry
and continue to be analysed through a critical gender lens.

6. Conclusion and implications for practice

In line with the aims of this book to investigate the linguistics of glo-
balisation, geopolitics and gender in workplace cultures in a range of
different contemporary international settings, the present study has con-
tributed a perspective on the geopolitics of the gendering of work by way
of a case study of agile IT workplaces. The gendering processes detailed
above were remarkably similar across the different geopolitical contexts,
which points to the fact that IT workplaces are not only a geopolitical
space marred by gender inequalities on a local level, but that this is an
issue of global and political relevance. I have focused on investigating
how gendering processes in talk about work are linked to broader issues
of gender politics, and I have shown how my interviewees draw on com-
peting gendered Discourses in their sense-making practice, as they defy
and reify the gender order simultaneously, implicitly and explicitly (re-)
gendering the very notion of work in the field of agile IT. In line with
other feminist linguistic research, this study therefore aims to 'reinvigor-
ate the political basis of earlier work' (Ehrlich and Meyerhoff 2014, 14;
McElhinny 2014) and shows the importance of paying close attention to
the communicative practices in agile IT that contribute to the normalisa-
tion of gendered workplaces as seemingly neutral.

   This is also relevant with regard to the practical implications of this
study. Increasing awareness of the structural as well as discursive pro-
cesses by which the notion of work in the IT industry is gendered, and
hence making visible how the gender order is (co-)constructed, defied
and reified in and through language is a crucial step towards increasing
equality in the field, which could be incorporated into policy, strategy
and training. Furthermore, agile ways of working are denoted as innova-
tive, collaborative and an asset to the diversity agenda, and while they
may have such a potential – specifically in the diversification of skills and
the breaking of hierarchies – they must be contextualised within the more
globally relevant gendering processes in the field of IT both in research
and in practice. Further research is needed to investigate the relation-
ship between the geopolitics of gender and agile, such as analysing

interactional data to investigate how these processes are realised in practice, thereby focusing not only on women. Lastly, despite the relevance of communication to agile IT workplaces, research from the field of Applied Linguistics on this topic remains scarce. Research on professional communication could benefit from engaging more explicitly with agile ways of working and associated terminology and practice already well established in other fields, in order to foster relevance of linguistic research for practitioners, researchers, educators and research participants.

Transcription conventions

(based on Holmes and Stubbe 2015)

[comment] Comments and summarised sections in square brackets

Italics   Translations from Swiss German to English by the author

[laughs]   Paralinguistic features in square brackets

+   Pause of up to one second

++   Pause of + amount seconds

. . . //. . .\ . . . Simultaneous speech (overlaps)

. . . /. . .\\ . . .

(hello)   Transcriber's best guess at an unclear utterance

?   Rising or question intonation

–   Incomplete or cut-off utterance

. . .   Section of transcript omitted

All names are pseudonyms. Minimal feedback was omitted for readability.

Acknowledgements

Notes

1 Scrum is an 'organizational technique' (Meyer 2014, 139) that includes a specific work cycle (called a Sprint) and associated practices and roles (Schwaber and Sutherland 2020).

2 Female-dominated workplaces such as early childhood education or eldercare, in turn, are less accessible to men (e.g., McDowell 2015; see also McDowell in this volume), and explicit dominant norms therein may differ. In such contexts, the gender order surfaces through other means such as quicker career progression for men, perceptions as well as actual status of such professions

regarding societal standing, and more practical issues such as pay (Mullany 2011).
3 These interviews were collected as part of my doctoral research and are a sub-set of the corpus I compiled for my study in 2018–2020. This corpus includes interviews with 22 IT professionals working in the USA, the UK and Switzer-land and over 52 hours of recordings of workplace interactions from an agile IT company in the UK, as well as fieldnotes from one 2h team meeting at a Swiss company and one 2h workshop on decision-making by a Swiss Asso-ciation. The subset for this chapter comprises all interviews conducted with women.
4 Product Owner is a role in the agile framework of Scrum, responsible for liais-ing between customers and developers about a product.
5 In the literature, emotional labour is more narrowly defined and refers to regu-lating emotions which have some sort of negative effect on individuals, a term developed by Hochschild (1983) in her work on flight attendants. Taylor's concept also refers to relational practice more broadly (e.g. Fletcher 1999; Holmes and Marra 2004).

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9 Performing discipline in UK primary school classrooms. Challenging essentialist beliefs about teacher gender

Joanne McDowell

1. Introduction

Gender essentialism is the idea that men and women are essentially different because of the disparities between the two sexes (Humbert, van den Brink, and Kelan 2018); that biological sex naturally determines the intrinsic and unchangeable traits possessed by women and men (Rippon 2019). This principle is inaccurate and outdated and has led to discriminatory attitudes, which is when essentialism becomes potentially damaging. The view that women and men behave 'differently' – due to their biology – reflects a naturalist view, and a dangerous one. This is a salient, political issue with global applicability across different geopolitical landscapes. The perception of 'suitable' behaviours for both sexes is often subject to socio-cultural variation; this is dependent on geographical location (Humbert, van den Brink, and Kelan 2018). What is globally consistent is that gender politics is closely linked to cultural ideologies (Moosa and Bhana 2017a). The different skills and characteristics attributed to men and women sustain the patriarchal status quo: that gender inequality is 'natural', that men are natural leaders, and that women are born followers (Rippon 2019). Such worldwide beliefs perpetuate occupational segregation by sex, and gender inequalities within the workplace. Because of gender stereotyping, men often report feeling deterred from entering what society deems as 'women's work' (discussed in Section 2). This trend is evident worldwide (McDowell, Lazzaro-Salazar, and Marra 2020; McDowell 2018; Haines, Deaux, and Lofaro 2016; Moosa and Bhana 2017b; Buschor et al. 2014; Cruickshank et al. 2018). Too few men enter non-traditional areas of work due to essentialist gendered beliefs, having internalised that such work is only suitable for those with female characteristics. Attempts to address this reinforce stereotypes; a gendered response to a shortage of men that seeks to carve a masculine niche into such roles to make them more suitable. By promoting 'masculine' characteristics, damaging stereotypes are advocated, and perpetuated (see sections 2.1 and 2.2).

Such beliefs instead must be challenged if men and women are to be successfully recruited into non-traditional work roles in greater numbers. This chapter aims to tackle stereotypes of essential gendered behaviour that have led to certain discriminatory beliefs about one gendered occupation in particular: primary school teaching. It will outline key, empirical findings from applied, discursive analysis of male teachers' classroom discourse. This will shift how we think about the performance of this profession as gendered; instead, to as it should be seen, as gender neutral. Such research can help challenge persistent, gender essentialist beliefs that lead to bias about certain jobs, and the type of people we believe suitable to perform them (Cruickshank et al. 2018; Carli et al. 2016; Didham 2015). We must address the damaging role that gender beliefs can have in preventing equal representation for men in what is understood to be 'women's' work (Williams 1995), to tackle the gender imbalance in primary schools that exists not only in the UK (outlined in Section 2), but elsewhere (e.g. in Australia, see McGrath and Van Bergen 2017; in South Africa, see Bhana and Moosa 2016, Moosa and Bhana 2017a; in Germany, see McDowell, Klattenberg, and Lenz 2020; and in Vietnam see Nguyen 2020).

2. Essentialist perceptions about 'gender-suitable' occupations

The belief that gender derives from one's biological sex, shaping a fixed and inherent identity that controls how we speak and act, has led to occupational segregation (amongst many other issues). In this, women and men are deemed to be suitable for different types of work, based inherently on their gender. Such assumptions – that men and women have different skills, abilities, and preferences for work – exist on a global scale (Humbert, van den Brink, and Kelan 2018; Huppatz and Goodwin 2013). These views are centred on cultural beliefs that women are carers, and therefore put family life over work, or want to work within a role that requires such traits. Men, in line with hegemonic masculine ideals, are 'breadwinners', with a need to gain status and financial security. The concept of gendered occupations emerges from what are deemed as 'feminine' or 'masculine' traits. So-called feminine workplaces are characterised by stereotypical features of femininity (being caring, facilitative, supportive). Supposed masculine workplaces are characterised by hegemonic masculinity (aggressiveness, competitiveness, power, leadership (Burke and Collins 2001; Litosseliti and Leadbeater 2020; Mistry and Sood 2016).

Stereotypical ideals about who can perform certain work roles endure because such views are so deeply entrenched around the world (Haines, Deaux, and Lofaro 2016). Attempts have been made to increase the representation of women in leadership roles by introducing targets and

quotas. These repeatedly fail, however, as the traits ascribed to women are not seen to be in line with what is considered to be a 'leadership' standard (see Humbert, van den Brink, and Kelan 2018). Similar issues are evident regarding men's entry into occupations traditionally associated with women; quotas are not being met. The interpretation of a 'global' workplace in this current chapter is one that is found across the world: the primary school classroom is such a place. There exists an issue, here, that has global applicability: the shortage of men in this teaching role. This is an issue made even more prominent by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Numerical variation exists across geographical location, certainly, but most countries share the commonality of a lack of male primary school teachers (Nguyen 2020; McDowell, Klattenberg, and Lenz 2020; McGrath and van Bergen 2017). Primary school teaching is strongly associated with a nurturing role, and with providing pastoral and physical care to young children (Bullough 2015). Rarely are these seen as masculine traits. Such generalised assumptions, based on cultural constructions of gender, have damaging, global consequences of gender bias (Basow and Rubenfeld 2003; Mistry and Sood 2016). Even with frequent government initiatives to recruit men, their numbers in primary schools are not increasing. Male teachers are still viewed as 'freaks' (Warwick, Warwick, and Hopper 2012). In certain countries, such as Australia and South Africa, the number of men taking up teaching roles is declining (see McGrath and Van Bergen 2017).

One potential reason for (and problem with) this current situation is that people bond with those that are most like them: we are naturally drawn to those who are the same (Rippon 2019). Therefore, men in powerful roles often recruit other men, as they are seen to share the same traits, and so be seen as more suitable for the role (this occurs at the expense of women, who are viewed as different to men, and more family-orientated [Humbert, van den Brink, and Kelan 2018]). Something similar happens when young boys see only women in teaching roles. Boys learn through this experience that teaching is a role that is not suitable for men. Conversely, young girls learn it is a job type most appropriate for them (one revolving around caring and communication). It is, therefore, imperative that the gender balance of teachers reflect society to teach young children that men have the traits to perform these roles (see Moosa and Bhana 2017b for a discussion of reducing gender-based violence against women in South Africa).

2.1 Teacher gender in the UK primary school: why so few men?

In the UK, 85 percent of registered primary school teachers are women (Department of Education 2020). This makes the very small proportion of primary schools in which male teachers are present important foci

for study. The UK government, primary schools, and Initial Teacher Education hubs have attempted to recruit more men into the occupation through various initiatives (Cruickshank et al. 2018). However, men are still not entering these professions in sufficient numbers since these initiatives began (Thornton and Bricheno 2006). This, coupled with a high male teacher-trainee attrition rate, means that there remains a 'huge gender imbalance' across teaching staff (Mistry and Sood 2016, 283). One possible barrier is that such initiatives are attempting to attract men by promoting apparently 'hegemonic masculine' aspects of the role. For example, they refer to the commonly held beliefs that men are needed to prescribe 'hard' discipline (e.g. giving direct and aggressive orders, [see Read 2008]); to be an authoritative male role model; and to forge positive relationships with boys to get them better engaged in their schooling (Spilt, Koomen, and Jak 2012).

Amongst teachers, classroom management issues are generally regarded as problematic since pupils who are disruptive in class can damage the learning environment for their peers. This has led to classroom management being perceived as one of the greatest challenges for teachers from many countries; said challenges presenting some of the main causes of job dissatisfaction (Klattenberg 2020). How teachers are thought to react to, and discipline violations of permitted classroom behaviour (e.g. a student calling out without raising their hand) has often been incorrectly indexed by teacher gender due to the essentialist beliefs previously discussed. Higher numbers of female teachers are said to have led to a softer, 'liberal' style of classroom discipline (e.g. the use of mitigated directives and criticism, [see Read 2008]). This has, apparently, led to the underachievement of boys in the classroom. As a result, more men are thought to be needed to provide 'hard' discipline to perform classroom management, to improve boys' academic engagement (see McDowell, Klattenberg, and Lenz 2020). In carving out a masculine niche for men in this field in an attempt to make the job 'more suitable', schools, initiatives and policy makers have increasingly pushed the discourse that men are needed because boys need a 'male' role model (Skelton 2003). This follows the (arguably) global rhetoric of 'think manager, think male' (Schein et al. 1996, 33). This is based on dangerous, gendered beliefs, and not fact (see Ankers de Salis et al.'s 2019 discussion on whether men make better teachers of boys than women).

This persistent idea that women are not capable of 'hard' classroom management only perpetuates harmful, gendered stereotypes, that women do not possess the speaking rights and control needed to hold power in their classroom, and that they cannot adequately control male pupils (Read 2008). It also perpetuates stereotypical ways of thinking about classroom management and discipline; that it must be direct and aggressive (i.e., indexed as masculine), to be successful. In fact, such discipline strategies have been shown to damage positive

teacher–learner relationships (see Carrington, Tymms, and Merrell 2008 for an example).

As Humbert, Van Brink, and Kelan (2018) argue, it is when essentialist gender beliefs lead to discriminatory attitudes that they become a problem. Male teachers often self-report that their school's expectations of them to fulfil hegemonic, masculine roles made them extremely unhappy and uncomfortable (see Sargent 2000; Skelton 2003). In various geopolitical contexts, this accounts for the high attrition rate of male teacher trainees and teachers. For example, Jones' (2004) research reports on male teachers who are not allowed to hug their pupils, and Cushman (2010) that male teachers are required to fulfil stereotypical, male roles to the extent that in primary schools this is detrimental to teaching pupils about gender equality. Instead, Cushman (2010) argues this behaviour reinforces gendered beliefs of role performance in young people. The implication sustains that men bring something to the profession that women simply cannot offer (supporting essentialist gendered beliefs that men and women will bring different skills to the job); but also, that they are not capable of giving care, and nurture, as these are not hegemonic, masculine characteristics (MacDougall 1997). Such assumptions reinforce damaging stereotypes.

2.2 What is 'being a teacher' in the classroom?

To perform a teaching role, teachers must combine transactional goals (e.g. teaching instruction and classroom management) and relational goals (e.g. creating a harmonious, friendly, and supportive class environment; fostering good teacher–pupil relations). Teachers must make decisions and perform classroom management, managing conflict and bad behaviour. They must often react to bad behaviour by disciplining students (Klattenberg 2020). In this current chapter, discipline is defined following Margutti and Piirainen-Marsh (2011, 305), as 'activities through which teachers and students address some forms of conduct as unacceptable, criticisable or reproachable'.

The interrelationship between sex and gender means that men are often thought to speak in masculine ways and women feminine (Basow and Rubenfeld 2003). Indeed, men are expected to use language to exert their social dominance in interaction. Yet to what extent can classroom management through discipline strategies really be classed as feminine or masculine? Generalising about all men and women has reinforced gender dichotomies and strengthened sex-role stereotypes. This has allowed for the simplification and reduction of a group of people's behaviours and created an 'imagined community' (Talbot 2003, 70). This is where essentialist gender stereotypes are prevalent; the belief that men are needed to perform 'hard' discipline and women can only display 'soft' discipline (see Read 2008 for an in-depth discussion of discipline). One way to

change societies' perceptions of primary teaching is through an exploration of how the job is discursively performed rather than simply assuming that teachers will perform it differently because of their gender.

3. Methods

Applying a qualitative, discourse-analytical approach to examine real-life classroom discourse, this chapter examines how male primary school teachers respond to important issues of discipline, decision-making and leadership. This research adopts Interactional Sociolinguistic theory (IS), which entails a detailed analysis of the language strategies employed in the context and situation in which they take place. It is important to study the practices used in the classroom to reposition generalisations regarding language and gender 'away from properties that women and men might have, toward their social practices and social relations' (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 1999, 198). Freed (2003) stressed the need to examine how people communicate using the linguistic resources available to them in each specific context. This is because language is embedded in social practice, which affects the choices we make (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 2003). Numerous studies have disagreed on the extent to which an examination of linguistic features and language styles should be gender-based and separate from 'their full conversational and communicative contexts' (Freed and Greenwood 1996, 2). Where the essentialist approach has categorised speakers according to biological sex and assigned certain discourse markers accordingly, social constructionists acknowledge the effect of the specific contexts, and the various factors that may contribute to the performance of one's identity (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 1999, 2003; West and Fenstermaker 1995).

3.1 Data

Fieldwork was conducted in 3 co-educational primary schools in Hertfordshire, UK, which were primarily selected because they had male teachers, resulting in a case study of 12 teacher participants, 6 men and 6 women. All teachers were white, and British. This is not a representative sample of gender, social class or race, and cannot provide insights into intersectionality, but is sufficient for a qualitative, exploratory case study, and provides a substantial database of classroom interaction. Data was collected by the author and consists of two, full schooldays of both video and audio recordings per teacher, resulting in approximately 120 hours of classroom discourse which was then transcribed and coded using NVivo as a data management tool. Video recordings were employed to aid the transcription as these allowed the identification of the pupils when they interacted with the teacher. These also provided evidence of important, non-linguistic behaviour such as body language, aiding data analysis.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with each teacher to gather background knowledge.

There are a small number of studies that have demonstrated that female teachers do in fact employ a 'hard' discipline style in their classroom (see McDowell and Klattenberg 2018; Read 2008 for examples) there has been far less exploration of male teachers' linguistic behaviour. While data from female teachers was also collected, this chapter only focuses on that gathered from male teachers.

3.2 Data analysis

For an initial identification of instances of classroom discipline, Lewis' disciplining taxonomy was deployed.

Table 9.1 Types of Primary School Discipline Strategies (adapted from Lewis 2001; Lewis et al. 2005)

Discipline Strategy	Description
Student Involvement in discipline decisions	Encourage the class determine what is good behaviour and involve them in creating and determining the discipline process, so the students understand that their behaviour is not what the other students expect.
Talking with students	Discuss and explain the students' bad behaviour and the impact that it has on others, so they are encouraged to change.
Recognition and Rewards	Recognise and reward the students who behave appropriately. Praise students. Reward class when everyone is behaving.
Hinting	Non-directional description of bad behaviour so that students self-regulate (ask questions, describe bad behaviour, remind students about classroom rules).
Punishment	Applying consequences to misbehaving students and increasing the level of punishment if students continue to misbehave (move seats, give detention).
Aggression	Legal aggressive techniques including shouting or yelling angrily, keeping the entire class in over break/lunch time because of disruptive students, using sarcasm, deliberate embarrassment of pupil in front of the class.

The data was initially analysed and coded into the various discipline strategies noted in Table 9.1. Then, classification from Read's (2008) discussion of 'disciplinarian' (hard) discipline (which is unmitigated orders and criticism) and 'liberal' (soft) discipline (which is mitigated, softened commands and criticisms) was adopted to further classify discipline

types. To do this, the linguistic strategies used to carry out the type of discipline were examined in more detail by using frameworks frequently adopted within Interactional Sociolinguistics. These were Coates' (1996) taxonomy on collaboration and mitigation, Holmes' (1982, 1990, 1995) frameworks on tag questions, hedging and politeness, and Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness model. These frameworks were chosen as they are well established and frequently used to categorise linguistic features and their functions including unmitigated declaratives, orders, and criticism, which are frequently culturally associated with masculinity (Mills and Mullany 2011). Whereas mitigation through hedging, minimisers, use of the inclusive pronoun 'we' to include oneself in the instruction or order, speaker collaboration, minimal responses, inclusive address terms, and the use of facilitating tag questions tend to be associated with femininity (Cameron 2007). As recommended by Holmes (Holmes 2014, 182) to check the data analysis and interpretation, data was presented at both linguistic and education conferences and discussed with other prominent researchers. Moreover, four workshops were held with education practitioners, and over 50 data extracts were discussed to check interpretation, the analysis of which was very well-received and agreed upon.

Sociolinguists have progressed from the examination and explanation of so-called gender differences to take account of the context when examining men and women's speech in scholarly discourse. However, terms such as 'feminine' or 'masculine' speech are still used, despite acceptance that gender can be placed on a spectrum. This is problematic, as there remains an ideology of split-discourse styles explicitly seen through the terminology of discussing such language. As no other terminology yet exists, however, the author has to this point used the terms 'masculine' or 'feminine' in this chapter. In the remainder of this chapter, however, more descriptive labels for teachers' style and strategies, which do not draw on limiting gender norms and stereotypes, will be used. Finally, to re-frame gender norms, an alternative form of expression is offered in this chapter's conclusion: the suggestion that we remove such terminology altogether and instead discuss the language used as indexical of the profession. This chapter adheres to the premise that teachers will use all types of linguistic strategies regardless of their gender and provides further support for this.

4. Analysis and discussion

The extracts in this section present insights from the data to demonstrate how men perform classroom management.

4.1 Male teachers utilising 'soft' discipline styles

This section presents evidence of male teachers using what has been termed 'soft' (liberal, mitigated) discipline (Read 2008). They made use of positive sanctions to motivate and encourage students to work when

they were misbehaving, such as giving out rewards and giving positive encouragement and praise (Lewis 2001; Lewis et al. 2005). Linguistic strategies employed to mitigate this type of discipline included hedging, minimisers, the inclusive pronoun 'we' to include oneself in the instruction or order, collaboration, minimal responses, inclusive address terms and facilitating tag questions (Holmes 2006).

Extract 1 demonstrates a teacher (who works with the youngest group of pupils) encouraging a male pupil to engage in his work:

Extract 1 (Children are in Year 1)

1. {Adam is lying flat on the floor}
2. Stephen: Adam (.) Adam can you come over here please/
3. Stephen: Adam (.) Adam I think I'm not going to be asking anymore
4.   because we've got work to do alright/
5. Stephen: okay you can join in with this work or you can sit there and
6.   lose your reward

Here, Stephen begins by directly calling the student by name to get his attention and then mitigates his instruction with the modal verb 'can' in line 2. So rather than directly order Adam over, he phrases this as an interrogative. When Adam ignores him, Stephen attempts again with a more direct statement, but we still see mitigation with the hedge 'I think': 'I think I'm not going to be asking anymore', which he then immediately softens with a reason for his request 'because we've got work to do 'alright' in lines 3–4. Giving a reason for his request is an attempt at hinting (Lewis 2001), reminding Adam of the classroom rules and expected behaviour. He uses the inclusive pronoun 'we' to include himself in his instruction to minimise its threat, 'we've got work to do', showing downward mitigation (Holmes 2006). In fact, whilst teaching, Stephen often used 'we' to refer to himself as part of the pupil group, especially when pupils approached him when he was working with others (i.e., 'we are busy working'). He ends his request with the tag question 'alright' which acts as a preventative measure by making it clear what he expects from Adam and checking his understanding. In line 5, Stephen begins with the frame 'okay' to reinstate the rule, before giving a caution followed by the threat of privilege removal. This may seem tough, but the entire threat is mitigated to allow the student to choose the positive option (joining the teacher) seen through the verb phrase 'you can'. Such skills allow the teacher to motivate and encourage the pupils. Throughout this extract we see the teacher employ several strategies using a mix of reorientation and reactive discipline alongside hinting and minor threat of punishment (lines 5–6).

Along with mitigation, teachers made use of positive reinforcement during periods of discipline (e.g. gaining reward points; getting rewards). Extract 2 demonstrates the teacher, Stephen, using such strategies to perform both transactional and relational work with his pupils.

Extract 2 (Children are in Year 1)

1.   Stephen: You've lost your sticker and in fact you can earn that sticker
2.   back if you do good work (.) look at how many words Michael has
3.   written already AND Adam (.) in fact all of purple group well done
4.   Jack: <?>
5.   Stephen: no don't take a board use a piece of paper everybody else is
6.   doing their work that's brilliant keep going okay/ I'm going to get
7.   you all money in the reward bank if you keep going

Stephen utilises the rewards and recognition strategy several times here (Lewis 2001). He begins by reminding Jack that he can 'earn' his sticker back (which was lost early in the day due to bad behaviour) if he performs well. This mitigates the earlier punishment as well as providing an incentive for Jack to work harder (Lewis et al. 2005). Stephen praises the other pupils who are performing well (lines 2–3) to encourage Jack to stop misbehaving and carry on with his writing. We see further evidence of this in lines 6–7, where he praises Jack for starting his work, which is then mitigated with the invariant tag question 'okay' to attenuate the force of the order (Holmes 1982). He then offers the positive sanction of 'all the money in the reward bank' in lines 6–7 if Jack keeps going with his work (the 'reward bank' is a jar of sweets). His praise in line 3 also acts to provide motivation and encouragement to the other pupils who are doing their work. In doing so, he creates a friendly and supportive classroom to improve motivation and learning, commitment, and participation when the children are performing transactional tasks.

Teachers often used linguistic strategies to attenuate the force of their utterance to show concern for their pupils' faces when performing discipline. In extract 3, the teacher Keith makes a joke, which itself is a positive politeness strategy as using humour is an effective bonding tool (Brown and Levinson 1987) often used to perform relational practice (Fletcher 2018). However, this then causes the other pupils to get overexcited and despite trying to carry on with his transactional instructions, Keith must stop teaching to gain back control of his class:

Extract 3 (Children are in Year 6)

1.   Keith: tis the lesson to be happy
2.   {Children laugh persistently}
3.   Keith: no you've got to say what you've learned ERR wow hang on
4.   hang on I'm losing your attention and that's not the point of this (1.)
5.   the point is (1.) the vehicle is a text message and that's meant to make it fun but
6.   you still need to share your learning alright/
7.   Mohammed: oh
8.   Keith: okay/ {child nods yes} Good, super stuff.

Keith reminds his pupils about the point of the lesson, that yes learning should be fun (line 5), but they still must be engaging in the work, learning and sharing their learning with their peers. He uses slang to reduce the force of his utterance in lines 3–4 'hang on hang on' rather than directly ordering them to be quiet or to stop what they are doing. He then explains why he has stopped them in line 4, before re-explaining the transactional work they need to do in lines 5–6. The invariant tag 'alright' at the end of line 6 (Holmes 1982) turns his statement into a request by asking the students if they understand his instructions and acknowledge what they must do besides have fun with the task. This is further reinforced in line 8 with the question 'okay'. On getting agreement from one pupil that was extremely over-excited, Keith delivers praise in line 8 to give positive reinforcement and encouragement (Lewis 2001).

Ben, in extracts 4 and 5, consistently uses strategies to perform 'soft' discipline work. In extract 4, Ben is teaching French, but cannot get one pupil to engage. He stops teaching the class and directly addresses the student by name (line 1), but he does not do this in a threatening manner. Nor is this an attempt to deliberately embarrass the student evident by the mitigation employed:

Extract 4 (Children are in Year 6)

1. Ben: /j'ai dix ans/ Christopher I need you to do the actions as well stop
2. fiddling with your shoes just poppet there we go
3. Ben: quel âge as-tu/
4. Boy and Girl in unison: j'ai onze ans
5. Ben: I know people find this hard but you know there's no slumping
6.   on the desk picking chatting and being silly is sort of no excuse
7. really is it/

Ben explains his expectations to the student to get them to perform the task and directs him to 'stop fiddling with his shoes'. He attenuates this directive with the minimiser 'just' before referring to the pupil fondly as 'poppet' (line 2). This is a term of endearment in the UK and an inclusive address term that softens the force of the directive (Brown and Levinson 1987) that, in this case, is used to show politeness to the pupil. Using such inclusive address terms allows Ben to keep a cohesive link with his pupils, reducing the teacher–pupil hierarchy by demonstrating solidarity. He attempts to carry on teaching, but some children are being disruptive, so once more he stops his transactional talk teaching French. So, again, Ben must ask the children to be quiet and to pay attention. However, he does not do this directly, nor aggressively. Ben mitigates his hinting strategy in lines 5 and 6. This hinting aims to remind students of the classroom rules; sit up straight and pay attention. He also provides a

reasoning of sorts for their misbehaviour here: 'I know people find this hard'. Once again, he gently reminds his pupils that this conduct is not acceptable (Lewis 2001) and hints to them the classroom rules in lines 5–6 hedging using discourse markers 'sort of' and 'you know' to minimise the force of his utterance (Holmes 1990).

We see Ben using inclusive address terms (Brown and Levinson 1987) in lines 1 and 3 of extract 5, referring to his students as 'guys'. He softens with the modal verb 'can' which means he uses an interrogative rather than an imperative and repeats 'please' twice in this instruction:

Extract 5 (Children are in Year 6)

1. Ben: okay guys can I ask you to please go to your erm literacy places
2.   please {children move noisily}
3. Ben: shh shh shh (.) guys (.) we are going to have to be really quiet
4.   today because we we've got erm (1.) we've got SAT's happening
5.   throughout the school {children quiet down a little but are still a bit noisy}
6. Ben: so we are going to do so what we are going to first of all
7.   what we are going to have a look at today is shh shh we've got to
8.   be really quiet today because we don't want to get in trouble for
9.   making noise now over the course of the next two weeks sure
10. we don't\

A strategy frequently deployed throughout this sequence is the use of the inclusive pronoun 'we' (Holmes 2006), where Ben is including himself in every instruction that he gives to his pupils from lines 3–9, a total of 10 times. He explains to the pupils why they must be quiet to provide a justification for his request (Holmes and Stubbe 2015). Instead of directly telling the pupils to stop talking, he uses the more informal and friendly 'shh shh' in lines 3 and 7. Ben's filled pauses 'erm' (lines 1 and 4), restarts and repetition (lines 6–7) and recycled turn 'sure we don't' are all strategies that act to attenuate the force of requests to create a feeling of group cohesion and collaboration (Schnurr 2013).

Extract 6 demonstrates the teacher Matt using positive reinforcement for students who had written their homework well, and mitigated criticism for those who had not:

Extract 6 (Children are in Year 7)

1.   Matt: you haven't got a partner that doesn't matter you just need to
2.   sit on the floor on your bottom please (1.) that is all I ask of you {pupils settle}

3.   Matt: alright I have got a few people that I need to see later about
4.   their stories I am not massively impressed by some people (.) some
5.   people already know who they are okay (.) but there's some really
6.   REALLY scruffy work (.) some people have taken a great amount
7.   of pride in their work (1.) and those people know who they are (.)
8.   whereas OTHER people are do you know what some of it there
9.   was almost GRAFFITI in some of the books (.) and that's really
10.   upsetting and we are going to have words about that because I'm
11.   a little bit annoyed (3.) these books are a record of all the fantastic
12.   work you have done and then to RUIN it really let's be honest with
13.   graffiti (.) I'm NOT massively impressed (.) AT ALL (1.) so some
14.   there are house points(.) in fact house points galore and for others
15.   (1.) it's going to be a bit of a telling off (2.) alright/ {Pupils nod}
16.   Matt: cool (.) right let's get that sorted (5.)
17.   Matt: alright okay guys erm (1.) alright what we are going to do in
18.   a bit is we are going to get into our places and we are going to go
19.   back through our stories (1.) some of us are going to spend a bit
20.   of time writing them yeah/ SOME OF US are going to improve our
21.   handwriting (.) because it's a bit scruffy hmm yeah/

In this extract, Matt is explaining to the pupils that their stories were written in poor handwriting. Before expressing his disappointment in more detail, Matt positively acknowledges those students who had done well giving them praise and recognition in lines 6–7 (Lewis 2001). When expressing his emotion, he minimises his criticism and threat of the forthcoming sanctions with hedges in line 11 'a little bit'; and line 15 'a bit of a' (Holmes 1995; Coates 1996). He then goes back to rewarding and recognising the students who had done well with the promise of 'house points galore' as a means of encouragement and motivation, but also as a recognition of academic achievement. He completes this element of discipline with the invariant tag 'alright' which acts as a check that the students understand what he has just outlined. But it also acts as a means of hedging the force of his previous utterance (Holmes 1982). This deployment of mitigation is a face-saving strategy (Brown and Levinson 1987) that allows the teacher to reduce the level of criticism and therefore the embarrassment of having done poor work which is important for student motivation and participation (Cullen 2002). Being critiqued openly in class may be extremely damaging to a student's motivation and engagement. So, Matt critiques the group rather than single out individuals. This discipline style carries on into his next initiation sequence. His use of the slang term 'cool' and collaborative 'let's' in line 16, followed by his use of inclusive address markers 'guys' in line 17 and repeated use of the 'we', 'us' and 'our' to include himself in his own transactional instructions (lines 17–20) all function to downplay his status and power (Holmes and Stubbe 2015) to maintain a sense of group cohesion and solidarity between himself and his pupils.

5. Conclusion

Essentialist gendered viewpoints often lead to discriminatory gender politics and this occurs across different geopolitical landscapes (Humbert, van den Brink, and Kelan 2018). Gender is therefore a major cause of segregation, excluding the 'other' from work roles seen not to be suitable. Damaging beliefs that men cannot deliver pastoral care to their pupils or demonstrate any caring traits at all (MacDougall 1997) means they are often in demand to become teachers only due to the 'masculine' traits they can supposedly bring to the job (which also perpetuates that women do not possess such traits), as evident in the worldwide initiatives that attempt to attract men to the role (Buschor et al. 2014; Cruickshank et al. 2018; Skelton 2009).

To tackle this, we therefore must make visible these gendered beliefs and how they manifest themselves in social practices around the world. The notion that women and men are simply 'naturally' different, is key to men's lack of visibility in this occupation. Changing this mindset within societies is crucial; and providing evidence as to how the job is actually performed, rather than focusing on essentialist gender beliefs of what is thought about teacher performance, is paramount. This chapter questioned whether gendered stereotypes are truly applicable to how classroom management/discipline is linguistically performed in the primary school classroom. The focus here was on participants as teachers and their use of styles and strategies that are appropriate for their context and for their pupils as individual learners. Women and men have a wide range of communicative skills in their linguistic arsenal. So, as competent teachers, they need to use whichever style is required to perform the role (for similar research see Nguyen 2020; McDowell, Klattenberg, and Lenz 2020; McDowell 2019). Numerous factors can influence a teacher's style including the age of the pupil, the training the teacher has had, and the relationship they have with each pupil. Therefore, each teacher's linguistic performance is determined by their workplace culture, with the linguistic repertoire of their setting having influence on their linguistic choices.

We must increase public awareness that the speech style of performing this role is not linked to gender, but to the environment (Marra, Schnurr, and Holmes 2006; Powell, Bagilhole, and Dainty 2009). Teachers orient the community in which they belong (Wenger 1998); that of being a primary school teacher. The discursive behaviour of these teachers should therefore be thought of in the general public as the discourse of 'doing "being" a teacher' to move away from persistent gender norms to de-gender this job to recruit more men. Re-interpreting language use as reflecting professional identity has important implications for other geopolitical contexts, too. For example, Bhana and Moosa's (2016) work in South Africa discusses that, in their culture, women often face

gender-based violence, so showing young boys that men too can make caring and compassionate teachers, would be an invaluable aid to changing the cultural mindset of how men can behave. To explore this and other political issues across the globe, further research in this area would involve additional data collection from a wider range of geopolitical contexts to investigate if these current findings are replicated and to allow for the consideration of intersectionality.

Transcription conventions

\	Falling intonation
/	Rising intonation
<?>	Indecipherable speech
WORD	Loud/raised voice/Stressed word
(.)	Very brief pause
(1.)	Longer pause with length in seconds
{}	Paralanguage or transcriptionist comment

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10 Gender, politics and national identity stereotypes

Constructing legitimate professional identities in the UK House of Lords

Victoria Howard

1. Introduction

The domain of politics has become a well-established area of enquiry for researching language, gender and professional communication in global political settings in recent years (e.g. Wilson and Boxer 2015; Mullany and Yoong 2016). This chapter will focus on the party political setting of the United Kingdom's (UK's) House of Lords – the upper chamber of the UK Parliament based in Westminster, London. Its gendered name, the 'Lords', epitomises the notion that the role of a political leader is gendered 'male' (see Mullany and Schnurr this volume). Women have been permitted to participate in the Lords, to some extent, since 1958, but their participation still remains significantly lower than that of men, at just 28% (up from 24% in 2015). This is typical of women's participation across the globe – the latest Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) statistics show that only 25% of national parliamentarians are women (IPU 2020).

This chapter adopts a case study approach (e.g. Cameron and Shaw 2016; Mullany and Yoong 2016) to explore professional communication in a political setting in which being male is institutionally positioned as the norm. It examines how politicians construct intersecting gender and national identities of Scottishness, Welshness and Englishness through the professional communication strategies they use, in their parliamentary discourse; this includes deliberately drawing attention to identity differences that draw on national categories and stereotypes and how these intersect with gender and social class identities. Such constructions take place against a backdrop of geopolitical change in the UK. Although the UK itself still exists as the 'United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland', with Great Britain comprising England, Scotland and Wales, since 1998, some powers that used to be held solely in Westminster have been 'devolved' to political institutions in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, which now have their own parliamentary institutions (as well as representation at Westminster). Nationalist political parties, which seek greater autonomy to break away from the UK and form separate

countries in their own right, have performed well in elections, particularly the Scottish Nationalist Party (SNP) and, to a lesser extent, Plaid Cymru in Wales. Growing movements towards complete independence from the UK led to a Scottish Independence Referendum in 2014, where Scottish voters ultimately voted to remain in the UK. However, the vote was close, and pressure for independence continues, particularly since the European Union (EU) referendum in the UK in 2016, in which Scotland and Northern Ireland voted to remain in the EU but were outvoted by areas of England and Wales. Political parties including the SNP and Plaid Cymru continue to grow and push for independence referenda, and it is likely that such geopolitical movements will continue to influence UK parliamentary discourse in the years to come.

It is within this context that the multiple ways in which gender, Scottish and Welsh national identities and nationality-based stereotypes invoked by 'peers', the official name used for members of the Lords, are analysed. The dataset spreads across five years of specific debates known as the 'Queen's Speech Debates' (QSDs). These debates take place following a speech by the UK's Queen in which she sets out the government's policy for a new Parliamentary Session. Professional communication from politicians in this context includes political comment but also has ceremonial and relational functions as speakers participate in the constitutional pageantry of the State Opening of Parliament.

I take an integrated linguistic approach to studying Lords' discourse, combining interactional sociolinguistics and linguistic pragmatics, to investigate how politicians enact their intersectional identities. This includes how workplace inequalities can manifest through institutional norms and discourse practices, as speakers strive to construct themselves as competent, legitimate politicians. In particular, I explore how intersecting identities are constructed by focusing upon the linguistics of humour, and how humour is used to reproduce stereotypically masculine communicative norms, which have acquired the status of 'professional norms' (Walsh 2001, 1). Stereotype-based humour emerges as a practice of the institution and a key component of the established discourse practices imbued with the most power that typifies linguistic participation – this includes gender-based stereotypes, integrated with other potentially damaging stereotypes drawing on national identity. Previous research has found that humour in the House of Commons, the lower chamber of the UK Parliament, is at times sexist and sexualised (Shaw 2020) and typically involves 'exchanges of parliamentary joking and sarcastic statements, often based on recycled stereotypes' which aim to 'reinforce in-group solidarity and inter-group dissent' (Ilie 2017, 316). In this chapter, I uncover similar patterns in the Lords, which reinforce the notion of politics as a space that is coded 'male'.

The chapter begins with a brief overview of the Lords as an institution, explaining why it deserves sociolinguistic scrutiny. Then it provides

an overview of the theoretical approach taken in this study and the research field examining gender in political spaces and humour as a linguistic resource in professional settings. After outlining the methodology, the dataset is analysed to illustrate how speakers invoke humorous and stereotyped forms of gender and national identity, targeted at both themselves and others, to attempt to construct legitimate professional identities. Finally, it considers how such humour on the one hand builds solidarity with colleagues, but on the other hand perpetuates a narrow form of acceptable professional identity, a 'prototype', which perpetuates exclusivity and inequality in political spheres.

2. Background

2.1 *Political settings, gender and identity*

Sociolinguistic research of professional communication in political parliaments often investigates inequalities in the participation of men and women including through analysis of rule behaviour and floor space occupation (e.g. Shaw 2006, 2020; Cameron and Shaw 2016; Howard 2020). Studies undertaken in the UK Lords are few and have had specific foci (see Baker 2004 on same-sex marriage discourses; Robles 2011). While these are important areas of study, this chapter instead focuses on how speakers perform intersecting gender and national identities to enact professional identities that they consider appropriate and legitimate to the context. Butler's (1990, 33) social constructionist performativity framework is extended beyond just gender to consider other aspects of identity, following Mills' (2003, 5) argument that performances of identity take place 'within constraints established by communities of practice and our perceptions of what is appropriate within those communities of practice'.

   In terms of theorising identity, Bucholtz and Hall (2005, 586) define it as 'the social positioning of self and other'. Their approach helps to explain how identity is constructed in social interaction, both on a momentary basis, and across multiple interactions, drawing on macro and micro-level inter-subjective stance-taking and positionality, as well as indexicality (Ochs 1992). This chapter takes an intersectional approach (Crenshaw 1989) to explore how different aspects of subjective experience combine to marginalise people in specific ways (see e.g. Jones 2016; Mullany and Yoong 2016). Yuval-Davis (2011) argues that intersectional studies should be extended beyond marginalised people to all people to best understand inequalities in society. Indeed, examining how intersectionality can produce advantageous as well as disadvantageous subject positions is especially important to comprehending interactions, especially in political settings such as the Lords.

   This chapter explores strategic orientation to gendered discursive norms through the construction of intersectional social identities.

Johnson (1997) advocates for an exploration of how gender difference is constructed in discourse to maintain dominance and how stereotypes and ideologies heavily index hegemonic masculinity. Taken from Connell's (1995) work, hegemonic masculinity reflects normalised masculine gender practices, such as toughness, assertiveness and self-sufficiency, which confer the greatest power in a patriarchal system that positions men in dominant positions above women. Holmes and Stubbe (2003) emphasise the value of identifying stereotypical features of feminine interactional styles (including indirectness and collaboration) and masculine styles (including directness and competitiveness) as a useful benchmark for exploring stereotypically gendered speech styles. Much research now focuses on how stereotypes are invoked, claimed or contested in linguistic constructions of gender, particularly through Ochs' (1992) notion of indexicality, which has been drawn upon heavily by Bucholtz and Hall (2005). Intersectionality recognises that gender is not always the most or only salient aspect of identity.

I will argue that speakers' constructions of legitimate professional identities often centre around constructions of stereotyped gendered and national identities that they consider to be intelligible within specific communities of practice (henceforth CofP), which will now be defined.

2.2 Political communities of practice

Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (1992a, 464) adapted Lave and Wenger's (1991) social learning theory to better fit linguistic analysis, defining a CofP as follows: '[a]n aggregate of people who come together around mutual engagement in an endeavour. Ways of doing things, ways of talking, beliefs, values, power relations – in short – practices – emerge in the course of this mutual endeavour'. The CofP framework has been convincingly adopted as a means of examining language and gender in various professional communication contexts (e.g. Holmes and Schnurr 2005; Mullany 2007) including political spheres (e.g. Shaw 2020). This approach facilitates research that departs from essentialist, binary categorisation of language as either 'male' or 'female' and instead focuses on 'people's active engagement in the reproduction of or resistance to gender arrangements in their communities' (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 1992b, 472). Whilst CofP studies at times over-emphasise the homogeneity of communities (Mills 2003; Contu and Willmott 2003), this chapter aims to draw out heterogeneous, non-dominant practices as well as behavioural patterns.

Conforming to norms and practices, including adopting an intelligible linguistic repertoire, is critical to establishing status in a CofP (Holmes and Meyerhoff 1999, 176). Shaw (2011) has demonstrated the consequences of failing to do so for Cheryl Gillan, Secretary of State for Wales in the National Assembly of Wales. Shaw's analysis reveals that, although

Gillan was a 'discourse competent' speaker (Mills 1992, 4), using co-operative and competitive strategies, her failure to adopt CofP practices and the shared repertoire undermined perceptions of her competence and suggested 'outsider' status (Shaw 2011, 286). This led to negative, frequently gendered evaluations of her speech. A similar argument is also made by Bengoechea (2011) when analysing negative evaluations of Carme Chacón, the first woman appointed as Minister of Defence in the Spanish Parliament.

This 'double bind' (Baxter 2003) between displaying appropriate femininity and authority prompts Romaniuk and Ehrlich (2018, 525), in their study of Hillary Rodham Clinton's speeches, to argue that masculine hegemony is so deeply embedded in the political 'cultural script' that for women no enactment of gender is free of social sanctions. Irwin (2015) recognises that Margaret Thatcher, the UK's first woman Prime Minister, was negatively evaluated for both speaking like a man and a woman when she acquired a CofP repertoire that was dominated by masculine interactional characteristics. This reinforces Walsh's (2001, 1) observation that, through repetition, masculine norms can become 'gender-neutral professional norms', yet it also suggests that men and women may not have equal access to such resources. Interestingly, Crewe (2005, 163) argues that the Lords is a far more egalitarian space than the Commons, as 'women thrive in debates where courtly manners reign and aggression is deemed unsuitable behaviour for a peer'. However, Howard (2020, 78) counters that norms and practices of the Lords are still dominated by masculine interactional styles, which some women find difficult to negotiate alongside constructing intelligible gender identities. Researchers have also recognised that other aspects of identity interact with gender to influence politicians' interactional styles. Childs (2004) found age and political affiliation were relevant to MPs' interactional styles in the UK House of Commons. Young men MPs, considered 'new men', were evaluated by women MPs as having less confrontational styles; similarly left-wing politicians were considered more collaborative, regardless of gender. Irwin (2015) drew a similar conclusion, concluding that 'being a woman member of [the Conservative party] CofP differs considerably from being a woman member of other political parties' (Irwin 2015, 38).

The next section provides an overview of humour and how it can be used as a gendered linguistic resource in workplaces.

2.3 *Humour in professional communication*

Considerable research has been undertaken analysing the use of humour as resource for drawing, maintaining and contesting social boundaries in professional communication (e.g. Shaw 2020; Holmes and Schnurr 2005). This chapter adopts Mullany's (2007) definition of humour as follows:

Instances where participant(s) signal amusement to one another, based on the analyst's assessment of interlocutors' paralinguistic, prosodic and discoursal clues. Humour can be a result of either intentional or unintentional humorous action, and can be classified as either successful or unsuccessful.

<div align="right">(Mullany 2007, 88, drawing on Holmes 2000).</div>

This definition encompasses failed and inadvertent humour, as well as the 'dark side' (Schnurr 2009) of humour, which is not necessarily amusing to all participants and/or could be intended to deride one party. One key function of humour is for interlocutors to appear affiliative in conversational settings (Attardo 2015; Mullany 2007), where humour helps with 'smoothing the course of interaction' (Norrick 1993, 129). However, humour can also perform disaffiliative functions (Boxer and Cortés-Conde 1997, 275).

This chapter also adopts Mullany's (2007, 90) categorisation of the functions of humour:

(1) 'to create/maintain solidarity and collegiality', capturing a gamut of affiliative functions, for example, self-deprecation, 'othering' and drawing in-group and out-group identities;
(2) 'repressive humour', where speakers in positions of superiority enact institutional power through humour (Holmes 2000);
(3) subversive humour, where subordinates use humour as a cloak to contest the power and status of superiors and their 'values, attitudes and goals' (Holmes and Marra 2002, 73);
(4) rivalrous humour, where speakers make tactical use of humour to issue face threatening acts against equals, including making 'protests/ criticisms/challenges' (Mullany 2007, 89).

Researchers have found humour employed strategically in a range of professional settings, including to perform leadership (see, e.g. Mullany 2007; Schnurr 2008). Such resources may be gendered in some CofPs where not all participants have equal access. Shaw's (2002) initial analysis of humour in the UK House of Commons identified that men were responsible for most humour produced in debates and that humour was a gendered linguistic practice. She also noted that types of humour, such as sexual and sexist humour were exclusively produced by men, building solidarity with fellow men to the exclusion of women. Crewe (2005, 17), who has undertaken extensive ethnographic research in the Lords, remarks that '[i]t can still take years to feel at home in the Lords and know the procedures inside out, but it is easier for some than others'. She identifies public school and military backgrounds as conferring particular advantages, highlighting class-based barriers to equal participation. While archaic traditions can be difficult for members of the Lords

to navigate, pervasive elitism intensifies the distance and disconnection between the public and the Lords. This is precisely why sociolinguistic scrutiny of inequality within parliaments is essential globally; researchers need to critically appraise mechanisms that bring privilege to certain groups based on aspects of their identities, whilst seeking out those for whom intersecting aspects of identity bring disadvantage.

Shaw (2020, 252) observed that women in the Commons still did not participate in humorous challenges to authority figures, surmising that 'these displays appear to have functions relating to homosocial bonding and the strengthening of fraternal networks', that even the most powerful women are unable to access (see also Walsh 2001). However, Shaw (2020) did not find humour to be a gendered practice across the devolved parliaments in the UK. In the Scottish Parliament, she found that women have access to a similar linguistic repertoire to men, making more use of humour, although still not as often as men. She also found that, although women participated in sexualised humour, they were still negatively evaluated for engaging in behaviour such as sexist barracking, which was considered contrary to stereotypes of appropriate feminine behaviour. Researchers in other professional contexts have found gendered humour resources to be used strategically. Mullany (2004) notes that, while women meeting Chairs favoured repressive humour, men also used repressive power and Holmes and Schnurr (2005, 137) similarly found that 'women and men . . . made use of humor as a discursive resource in a range of interesting ways in responding to the kinds of gendered expectations which characterized their workplaces'. This chapter initially explores whether humour is a gendered resource in relation to the peer professional identities and then considers how humour functions as a tool to construct legitimacy and to navigate the geopolitical context of country boundaries within the UK in relation to devolution and rising nationalism.

3. Methodology

The UK Lords is a highly anachronistic institution where history and tradition lead to the privileging of men and the upper classes (Howard 2020). It is amongst only 27% of countries globally (most of which are non-democratic or Commonwealth countries that imported the Westminster model) where members of the upper chamber of Parliament are appointed, not elected, whether directly or indirectly (IPU 2021). Yet it has a significant role in law-making, scrutinising the government and participating in national and international political decision-making. As the second-largest legislature in the world, behind only China's National People's Congress, its size far exceeds any chamber in a democratic nation. Institutional sexism and discrimination against women are overt, evidenced by constitutional rules which grant seats to 92 hereditary

peers, who inherit titles primarily from their fathers through male preference primogeniture. Peers are also predominantly older, with 97% of members over 50 (Brown 2015), and white, with only 6% of members estimated to be from ethnic minority backgrounds (Operation Black Vote n.d.). There are 26 seats for Bishops of the Church of England with no seats reserved for members of other faiths. Structural inequality is reflected in practices such as collectively addressing the Chamber using the directly indexicalised male gendered term 'Lords', as well as spatially. For example, there is a seating area called the 'unmarried daughters' box' (now used for other occupants) and a 'modesty' curtain around the public gallery to avoid peers catching sight of women's ankles. These spatial features establish men as the norm and mark the presence of women members as 'other'.

The full dataset for this study includes five years of data (2013–2017) from the Queen's Speech Debate. As noted above, this takes place at the beginning of each new parliamentary session and follows the same structure each time. The first day of debate is typified by speeches that were commonly evaluated as 'witty' and 'entertaining' by subsequent speakers. They are given by a mover, who opens the debate, and a seconder, who supports them, plus the leaders of the opposition parties. It presents an opportunity to observe how speakers orientate towards debate norms and practices. The Lords' chamber is usually very full for the QSD, allowing for the linguistic observation of 'the sense and culture of the House as a whole' (Committee of Privileges 2008–09).

The full dataset comprises of all those who spoke as movers, seconders and leader of the opposition parties in all five years: 17 speakers in total made 23 speeches, 12 of which were by men and 11 were by women. To avoid limitations identified by other researchers (Slembrouck 1992; Shaw 2018) in relation to using Hansard Official Record transcripts, the debates were fully transcribed from video footage using techniques drawn from conversation analysis (including intonation, pauses, gesture and gaze where possible). The interactional sociolinguistic approach (e.g. Cameron and Shaw 2016; Mullany 2007), draws on techniques from critical discourse analysis, to pursue a political agenda of exploring discourses (Foucault 1969) and power, as well as the contexts in which they are produced. Feminist post-structural discourse analysis is included to consider multiple perspectives and read the data against the grain (Baxter 2008, 2017). The data analysed below were identified following the codification of features, including direct and indirect indexing of aspects of identity, for example social class, national identity, gender.

In this chapter I focus on speeches given by the only 4 speakers who are not from England in the dataset; these were also the only speakers who were found to have explicitly marked their national identity of Scottishness and Welshness in their speeches. The extracts comprise examples where thematic coding for both gender and national identity overlapped.

This presents an important opportunity to study the interplay between intersecting identities in the professional communication that takes place within the debate. The speakers include 3 Conservative party members who are Scottish: Lord Lang of Monkton (LAN), Baroness Goldie (GOL) and Lord Forsyth of Drumlean (FOR) and one Liberal Democrat who is Welsh: Lord German (GER): three of the speakers are men and 1 is a woman. It also addresses Shaw's (2020, 16) observation that 'research into gender and linguistic style of *male* politicians is sparse' (italics in original). This is contextualised with some quantitative data of the whole dataset. Section 4 analyses how these speakers use humour to invoke gender and other aspects of their identities as they construct professional identities and take stances in relation to the geopolitical context, particularly devolution and nationalism in Wales and Scotland.

4. Data analysis: national identity, humour and gender

Space precludes a full quantitative exploration of the dataset (see Howard 2020), but to contextualise the qualitative analysis below, of the 17 speakers, 9 were men and 8 were women, who give 23 speeches in total, including 'mover' and 'seconder' roles (see Section 3). Across all of these QSD speeches, men made 114 humorous utterances in 12 speeches, and women made 100 humorous utterances in 11 speeches. These frequency counts are similar; however, when unpacking the functions of humour of the 10 speakers (6 men and 4 women) who performed comparable mover and seconder roles, there were distinctions. Sixty percent of all humorous utterances by men (29 instances by 6 speakers) functioned rivalrously, principally criticising or ridiculing other politicians, compared to only 14% of humorous utterances by women (just 4 instances, all by one speaker, discussed below). In contrast, 25% of men's humorous utterances (9 instances by 5 speakers) functioned subversively, principally challenging superiors, compared to 66% (13 instances by all 4 speakers) of subversive humorous utterances by women, which principally challenge the institutional status quo. Thus, men's humour in this dataset tended to be characterised by rivalry, whereas women's tended to be characterised by subversiveness. Subversive humour was used by men, but to a lesser extent than women, who tended to use it to subtly question institutional and political practices associated with tradition and the status quo. The small size of the dataset means that generalisation must be avoided until further investigation through a wider study has taken place, but fine-grained analysis can nonetheless shed more light on gendered humour practices.

In Extract 1, Goldie invokes her gendered and Scottish national identities as she constructs herself as a legitimate peer using linguistic resources of rhetoric and register. The audience response is indicated in this extract, and the following extracts, through 'UNKM' which refers to unknown

multiple speakers, and 'UNKS', which refers to a single unidentified speaker.

Extract 1

   1. **GOL:** my Lords <u>this</u> is a place of mysteries
   2. (.) idiosyncrasies and enigmas so I am
   3. less than clear about why I have been
   4. selected to make (.) this speech (.) I do
   5. recall when attending one of the (.)
   6. delightful soirees so charmingly hosted by
   7. the Leader of the House my noble friend (.)
   8. Baroness Stowell (.) making
   9. myself useful by trotting round with the
  10. plates of canapes (.) ((turns to side)) I
  11. thought I carried that off with some ↑style
  12. (.) so perhaps this commended me
  13. to the powers that [be (.)]
  14. **UNKM:** [%((laughs))%]
  15. **GOL:** But if so I have an uneasy sense of
  16. deception (.) I would like to say that I was
  17. on that occasion motivated to assist (.) by
  18. social mores and a good Scottish
  19. upbringing (.) but that would be
  20. disingenuous (.) quite simply I had worked
  21. out that it was the only way I could maintain
  22. regular and discreet access to the food (.)
  23. **UNKM:** ((laughs))
  24. **GOL:** This stratagem was entirely
  25. pragmatic (.) having been exposed to
  26. Edinburgh during seventeen years in the
  27. Scottish Parliament I had no desire to find
  28. that the Edinburgh custom (.) ((emphatic
  29. Scottish accent)) "you'll have had your
  30. ↑tea"
  31. **UNKM:** ((LAUGHS))
  32. **GOL:** had been exported to Baroness
  33. Stowell's ↑soirees (.) my fears were
  34. groundless (.) although without wishing to
  35. appear churlish I did think the canapes were
  36. a tad on the small side

Goldie begins by declaring that the House is, 'a place of mysteries (.) idiosyncrasies and enigmas' and claiming she does not understand why she was selected to speak (lines 2–4). Arguably, she is strategically

downplaying her own status in a self-deprecating manner, drawing on stereotypes of upper-class femininity, where good manners and courtesy are prized (Mills 2004, 176), as she reflects on how her helpfulness at a party may have 'commended me to the powers that be' (lines 12–13). Elaborate adjectives and intensifiers are stereotypically associated with women's speech (Lakoff 1975), as well as powerless speech (O'Barr and Atkins 1980). Stereotypes contribute to an intelligible feminine gendered identity, allowing Goldie to position herself as modest, dutiful and morally 'good', which also aligns with the elite communicative register. This is invoked through the subject matter and her use of positively polite compliments, evaluating the 'soiree' (an upper-class evening social event) hosted by Stowell, who is English, with the pre-modifying adjective 'delightful', and her hosting skills using the intensifier 'so' and adverb 'charmingly', which indirectly index upper-class femininity in a UK context. Similarly, she self-deprecatingly describes her waitressing skills, 'making myself useful by trotting round with the plates of canapes' (lines 8–10), where the verb choice 'trot', usually used to refer to movement by a horse, indicates obedience, subservience and eagerness to please by serving food to others, a job role dominated by women. She invokes self-deprecating humour, positing that this may have ingratiated her to her superiors, rather than her extensive political career as former Leader of the Scottish Conservatives. Finally, Goldie's body language as she turns to the side and self-evaluates that 'I thought I carried that off with some ↑style', and the prosody of rising intonation and pause (lines 10–11) indicate that she intended this to be a solidarity-enhancing humorous aside, almost mocking her own performance. However, the uptake is minimal with just a quiet ripple of laughter (line 14), indicating that the humour was not wholly successful.

   Goldie subsequently undermines the 'dutiful woman' construction through humour in which she confesses that such an interpretation leaves her with 'an uneasy sense of deception' (lines 15–16). She similarly rejects 'social mores and a good Scottish upbringing', directly indexicalising her 'Scottish' national identity and heritage through use of the adjective whilst purporting to reject it as an explanation for her behaviour, as the motivation for her behaviour, as 'disingenuous' (line 20). Rather than these politeness-based factors, she states that she was motivated by a desire to get access to food subverting the stereotypically hegemonic feminine behaviour she has described. Bourdieu (1984/1991) argues that eating is a gendered practice: 'It behooves a man to drink and eat more, and to eat and drink stronger things . . . and they leave the tit-bits . . . to the children and the women, who have a small measure' (Bourdieu 1984/1991, 192). Goldie purports to align herself with the feminine-gendered practice of eating smaller portions, whilst hiding her authentic, unfeminine appetite. Her anecdote is humorous because her confession of deviousness functions to enhance solidarity, as well as to display her

oratory skills, commensurate with an authentic 'peer' identity. From the audience's laughter (line 23), the humour seems to have been successful.

Having marked her Scottish identity (line 18), Goldie later aligns her eagerness to gain access to food with her opposition to stereotypes of Edinburgh frugality (see also Extract 2). The leading question, 'you'll have had your ↑tea', performed with an exaggerated Scottish accent (lines 29–30), implies the preferred response: the addressee does not expect more food. Like Lang, Goldie attributes this lack of generosity to a particular city in Scotland, not the nationality more broadly. In constructing Edinburgh practices as 'other', she humorously establishes opposing in-group solidarity between herself, as someone from the west of Scotland, and her audience. The humour also serves a 'darker' function, allowing Goldie to express regional rivalry within the geopolitical borders of one country (Scotland) with the broader audience comprised of all of the countries of the UK, in a socially acceptable way (Holmes and Marra 2002; Schnurr 2009) thus laying claim to a less frugal, more positive and legitimate Scottish identity. Similarly, it cloaks a potentially impolite criticism of Stowell's English hospitality, a feminine gendered duty (lines 34–36). Stowell, although holding a more senior political role, is English, younger, from a less traditional political background and has far less political experience than Goldie, so this may be a subversive display of power.

Extract 2, which similarly navigates rivalry amongst Scottish identities, is taken from a speech given by Lang. It contains two fairly prototypical jokes involving 'witticisms' (Norrick 1993) which rely heavily on negative national stereotypes:

Extract 2

1. **LAN:** Scotland is a great nation (.) but that
2. greatness has been achieved within the
3. United Kingdom (.) Scottish Enlightenment
4. came after seventeen hundred and seven (.)
5. so did the great industrial growth (.)
6. and the global breakout (.) when Scots
7. travelled the world (.) keeping the Sabbath
8. (.) and anything else we could lay our hands
9. on
10. **UNKM:** ((laughs))
11. **LAN:** [discusses at length famous Scottish
12. inventions]
13. Not many people know my Lords that
14. copper wire was invented (.) by
15. two Aberdonians quarrelling over a penny
16. (.)

17. **UNKM**: ((laughs))
18. **LAN**: If the forthcoming referendum were
19. to take Scotland out of the United Kingdom
20. (.) we would all suffer (.)

The two witticisms are marked by the recurrent theme of stereotypical Scottish frugality (lines 6–8, and 13–15). It is interesting that such stereotype-based humour is considered 'tellable' and appropriate in a political institution. There can be little doubt that perpetuating negative Scottish stereotypes could be considered offensive; in this sense it is arguably something many people are 'socially conditioned' to consider impolite (Bousfield 2010). Perhaps Lang, who is 72 years old and had been a member of the Lords for over 15 years, considers that his core status in the CofP as a prototypical, long-standing, older male peer permits him to transgress social rules, or perhaps he, as an insider in the Scottish identity group, does not consider this to be offensive. However, such humour appears to be a powerful linguistic resource to signal status in the institution and to construct the legitimate professional identity of 'peer' through orientation to the witty register, and ultimately, to make his political point that, although he is Scottish, Scotland should not be fighting for nationalist separation from the UK.

Lang uses the abbreviated, more informal identity category 'Scots' to comment that they kept 'the Sabbath (.) and anything else we could lay our hands on' (lines 8–9), relying on plural meanings of 'to keep' as both 'to observe' and 'to retain'. He uses explicit linguistic markers to assert his inclusion within this identity category. Through first-person plural pronouns: 'anything else *we* could lay *our* hands on' (emphasis added, line 8), Lang positions himself as one of the stereotypical 'Scots' who is the subject matter of his jokes. As an insider, he draws on negative discourses of Scottishness in a rather self-deprecating manner, which seems solidarity-enhancing in function. Interestingly, he takes this stereotype further in his joke focalising around the proper noun 'Aberdonians' (people from the Scottish city of Aberdeen) inventing copper wire by stretching a penny in a quarrel (lines 13–15), adapting a traditional joke about Scottishness and Scots being argumentative that has various place and religious identity versions. Here, stereotypes of miserliness and disagreeableness are narrowed down to people from the geographical location of the city of Aberdeen. Lang was born in Glasgow and his title refers to Monkton in Ayrshire (Southwest Scotland) and thus would not consider himself an Aberdonian. He attributes more extreme stereotypes of miserliness to a city, rather than the whole of Scotland. Through this stereotypically masculine rivalrous humour, which arguably operates as 'entertaining impoliteness', he lays claim to a superior and more legitimate form of 'Scottishness'; by 'othering' a region, he constructs in-group solidarity with his audience, in contrast to the Aberdonian 'victims'

(Culpeper 2011). Laughter is audible after both humorous utterances (lines 10 and 17) indicating that successful humour has taken place. This suggests that stereotype-based humour was positively evaluated and not considered inappropriate by the audience.

The functions of this stereotype-based humour are multiple. Humour mitigates the strength of his assertions of 'greatness' (line 2) and his declaration that a change in geopolitical power brought about by Scottish independence (as threatened by the Independence Referendum which had been announced two months earlier) would mean 'we would all suffer' (line 20). Amongst the humorous utterances in this speech there is a serious political point delivered through a stereotypically masculine direct and authoritative statement about Scottish independence. Juxtaposing such declarative statements with stereotype-based humour works to mitigate what would otherwise be controversial views which are not the discourse norm of the QSDs, especially when considering that the audience of the debates undoubtedly included people in favour of Scottish independence. As Holmes and Schnurr (2005, 130) note, humour has a 'softening effect on even the most corrosive comment'. Furthermore, Lang's extensive use of stereotype-based humour seems to promote social cohesion (Holmes 2000; Culpeper 2011) between peers who share the same view of the forthcoming Scottish Independence Referendum. As Culpeper (2011, 234–35) suggests, 'entertaining impoliteness' is enticing because speaker and audience enjoy the creativity of the impoliteness and a sense of superiority over others. Consequently, the stereotype-based humour allows Lang to perform political power and showcase his oratory skills and orientation to the witty communicative norms of the debate.

In Extract 3, Lang uses humour based on stereotypes of Welsh national identity in a joke about 'other measures' announced in the Queen's Speech:

Extract 3

1. **LAN:** On one occasion (.) a Welsh farmer
2. (.) watching the State Opening on
3. television and hearing those words (.) turned
4. to his wife and said (.)
5. ((emphatic Welsh accent)) ↑<u>udder</u> measures
6. Megan (.) udder measures (.) the English
7. must be having trouble with their <u>cows</u>
8. again (.)
9. **UNKM:** ((laughs))

Lang draws on stereotypes of Welsh people and their limited linguistic capabilities here in terms of accent misinterpretation, positioning them

as unintelligent farmers, mishearing and misunderstanding 'other' as 'udder' (line 5), delivered in a mock Welsh accent. This humour is not self-deprecating as Lang does not share the necessary Welsh identity; he is an outsider but uses the humour to develop his insider status within the broader CofP. He showcases the wit and oratory skills important to the authentic 'peer' identity, and the nationality-based rivalry indexes stereotypically masculine competitiveness between Scotland and Wales. The laughter response (line 9) is much shorter and more muted. There are limitations of microphone coverage that could silence some voices, but every indication is that this humour was not well-received. Extract 3 is particularly interesting because Lang's speech was seconded by Lord German, a member of the Welsh Liberal Democrats, during a Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition Government. Speakers are identified in advance by the Leader of the House, so Lang would have been aware of this when he scripted his speech thus this may well have been a display of power and national or political rivalry. Whilst German does not directly reference this part of Lang's speech, he undertakes considerable work to demonstrate pride in his Welsh identity.

In Extract 4, German begins by evaluating Lang's speech with a compliment in the form of a set of three consecutive adjectives, 'witty, clever and thoughtful', before mentioning some of Lang's ministerial posts. He then moves on to state the following:

Extract 4

1. **GER**: I know from what he has just said
2. that it may not have escaped your
3. Lordships' house (.) this is a wholly non
4. ↑English team (.) commencing the
5. debate on the humble Address≈
6. **UNKM**: ≈ hear hear
7. **GER**: Your Lordships may be pleased
8. however that I will not dwell on the fact
9. that ten per cent of the FA Premier League
10. (.) is now represented by Wales
11. **UNKM**: ((laughs))
12. **GER**: nor will I dwell upon the recent Six
13. Nations triumph
14. **UNKM**: ((laughs))
15. **GER**: nor will I dwell upon the captaincy
16. of the British Lions
17. **UNKM**: ((laughs))
18. **GER**: and all this with just five percent of
19. the ↑population
20. **UNKM**: ((laughs))

Whereas in Extracts 2 and 3 Lang used stereotype-based humour about Scottish and Welsh people to distinguish between and within UK national identity categories, German presents unity with Lang through the noun phrase 'wholly non ↑English team' (lines 3–4), 'othering' the English majority in the Lords. At the time of this speech, over 82% of members resided mainly in England (Purvis 2012). German marks out 'non-English' national identity as distinct from the norm to unite and build collegiality between the minority of members from non-English nations. German's identity work seems to counter Lang's negative construction of Welshness and may be a pragmatic means of disagreeing, within the structural confines of this CofP, where speeches are expected to humorous, and with a speaker who as a member of the same coalition is expected to present a degree of unity.

German's focus on nationality is honed more closely to humorous Welsh national pride as he continues (lines 7–20). Using a modality to soften the strength of his proposition, he suggests a collective view that the House '*may* be pleased however that I will not dwell on' various facts which illustrate Welsh sporting achievements which show Welsh superiority when compared to England's football and rugby teams or England's players. Here, he uses the rhetorical device of a tricolon of three instances of paraleipsis, a form of irony, as he emphasises certain sporting achievements whilst professing to ignore them. The Welsh successes which he claims to 'not dwell on' are drawn from men's sport, illustrating an interplay between gender, national identity and competition, and begin with Welsh players making up 10% of the English Premier Football League (lines 7–10). He repeats the phrase 'nor will I dwell upon' twice more as he introduces Welsh rugby successes (lines 12 and 15). Paraleipsis is a humorous way of mitigating the strength of German's pro-Welsh statements. It offers a humorous 'shield' (Mullany 2007) against potential criticism for overtly displaying Welsh nationalism in the UK Parliament. Finally, in line 18, German abandons the pretence of refraining from such aggrandisement, as he evaluates the significance of such successes as, 'all this with just five percent of the population', using rising intonation which underscores his appraisal that this is an impressive feat.

Notably, German foregrounds Wales's sporting success in men's sporting events as a key source of Welsh national pride. Coates (2003, 44) observes that the topic of sport is commonly discussed by men, functioning as a means 'to keep talk away from the personal'. Here, sporting rivalry appears to be received as humour, evidenced by laughter from the audience. Sport is not regularly invoked in this dataset, as would be expected of discourse in a formal parliamentary setting; however, when it does occur, as in Extract 4, it is clearly used by German as a discourse device to emphasise his Welshness through male sporting achievement as something which, in his view, makes being Welsh superior to the English majority audience.

German's humour is multi-faceted, functioning (i) subversively, to subtly challenge Lang, a more senior peer; (ii) rivalrously, to express competition between nationalities; and (iii) collegiately, to soften any potential divisiveness or confrontation and to maintain in-group harmony. Further, it allows German to showcase his rhetorical skills, which are critical to an authentic 'peer' professional identity. He appears to be drawing on a range of masculine and feminine gendered discourse practices to balance conveying his message and maintaining harmony (see Marra, Schnurr, and Holmes 2006).

This balance of functions is less evident in Extract 5, in which Scottish Conservative and pro-UK peer Forsyth engages in extensive rivalrous humour, indexing competitive and confrontational dominant hegemonic masculinity, to ridicule the leader of the SNP, Alex Salmond, following defeat in the latest General Election:

Extract 5

1.   **FOR:** there were (.) some (.) unexpected
2.   high[lights however (.)]
3.   **UNKM:**
4.   ⌊ ((laughs)) ⌋
5.   **FOR:** <u>Alex Salmond</u> ((tongue in cheek))
6.   [((smiles)) (-)]
7.   **UNKM:** ⌊ wa:y ⌋
8.   **UNKM:** ⌊ <u>((laughs))</u> ⌋
9.   **UNKS:** ⌊ very quick ⌋
10. **FOR:** I knew I ((palms upturned)) could
11. [unite this House]
12. **UNKM:** ⌊ ((<u>LAUGHS</u>)) ⌋
13. **FOR:** <u>Alex Salmond</u> in the words (.) of his
14. (.) beloved Flower of Scotland (.) was
15. sent (.) haemward to think again
16. **UNKM:** ((laughs))
17. **FOR:** he left quoting Walter Scott's poem
18. about my noble friend (.) the Earl of
19. Dundee's famous Jacobite relative (.)
20. ((lyrical Scots accent)) you've not seen the
21. last of my bonnet and me
22. **UNKM:** ((%laughs%))
23. **FOR:** the Jacobite cry (.) down with the
24. elector (.) might have been more
25. [appropriate]
26. **UNKM:** ⌊ ((laughs)) ⌋
27. **FOR:** as the SNP lost twenty-one of their
28. seats (.) forty percent of their seats (.)

The phrase 'unexpected highlights' (lines 1–2) cues his anecdote and garners laughter, as he builds anticipation. When he proceeds, he utters loudly 'Alex Salmond' (line 5) before making a protracted pause during which he smiles and literally places his tongue in his cheek, marking the humour and cuing a positive response from the audience. As well as exaggerated, booming laughter, which sounds overwhelmingly masculine, and shouts of prolonged 'wa:y' (line 7), a man's voice is audible, positively evaluating Forsyth's linguistic performance as 'very quick' (line 9) reflecting the audience's engagement in the rivalry and schadenfreude at Salmond, leader of the SNP, losing his seat during the recent general election. Describing Salmond's defeat as a 'highlight' is a source of humour that builds solidarity between members and expresses political rivalry with Salmond. Crucially, the SNP does not participate in the Lords as they disagree with its undemocratic nature. Forsyth's assertive declaration that 'I knew I ((palms outstretched)) could unite this House' (lines 10–11), where his gesture reinforces collegiality against a common political rival.

After further, loud audience laughter (line 12), Forsyth continues to ridicule Salmond by constructing their gender identities through military analogies and exploiting the latter's Scottish identity through a range of intertextual resources. He turns the words of the Scottish national anthem, *Flower of Scotland*, against Salmond, commenting that he was 'sent (.) haemward to think again' (line 15). Emphasis on the Scots word 'haemward', which uses spelling deviation to emphasise the phonetic delivery in a Scottish accent, ('homeward' in Standard English), draws an analogy between Salmond and the subject of the anthem, the defeated English King Edward. Forsyth adds a second analogy to describe Salmond's defeat, the Earl of Dundee's relative who led a Jacobite uprising against William of Orange but was ultimately defeated (lines 17–21). Forsyth uses a line from the poem, *Bonny Dundee*, 'you've not seen the last of my bonnet and me' (lines 20–21) to ridicule and emasculate Salmond further, invoking a visual and humorous image of Salmond's indignance. He concludes with a declarative statement (lines 27–28), which explicitly conveys the message of SNP defeat he had couched in humour. Throughout, Forsyth draws heavily on historical battle analogies, invoking gendered discourses of men as powerful fighters, which construct Salmond as a comical, weak, retreating character (see, e.g. Lawson 2014; Williams 2014 for a discussion of classed masculine toughness). Forsyth uses stereotypically masculine, direct, competitive and assertive speech, characterised by declarative statements without hedging or mitigation, thus positioning himself as an authority. Intertextual resources of poetry and history may reduce his personal responsibility for the comments (Goffman 1959), but more importantly, arguably they index a witty and higher social class identity, in which education and historical, military knowledge are privileged, constructing Forsyth's authentic peer identity,

as well as his masculine gender identity and Scottish national identity. This shows how Forsyth builds an authentic 'peer' professional identity through powerfully intersecting gender, social class and national identity constructions.

5. Discussion

This case study demonstrates how speakers' professional communication orientates not only to gendered communicative norms but also to the geopolitical context of the UK, including devolution and calls for independence discussed in Section 1. While gendered national identity humour is often overtly used to emphasise difference between English, Scottish or Welsh peers, it also functions to construct solidarity in the CofP in opposition to 'others', whether they are from other regions or political parties.

The politicians in this dataset tend to draw upon linguistic resources that index highly stereotyped social identity categories in the construction of their own legitimate 'peer' identities. The analysis highlights that professional communication in this political setting is typified by a range of masculinist interactional norms including speakers using militarised language and 'entertaining impoliteness', rivalrous humour, sporting talk and a competitive, direct and assertive speech style. It is not only men who use these resources (as Extract 1 shows), although they tend to do so more often, indicating that 'masculinist discursive norms' may have, over time, crystallised into professional discursive norms (Walsh 2001). Acquiring this masculine CofP repertoire, which may not be available to all participants as a legitimate discourse style, may help peers to demonstrate authentic professional identities and is thus a potential source of workplace inequality.

Furthermore, the gender identities that these peers constructed tended to accord with more traditional stereotypes, which have been found to contribute to workplace inequality and women's subordination across the globe (UN Women 2011). It is therefore highly problematic that stereotypes are so central to the intelligible gender identities invoked to establish legitimacy commensurate with the identity of 'peer'. Indeed, humorous social identity constructions were key to all the speakers' professional identity constructions as a linguistic resource they used to demonstrate rhetorical skill. Not only are such norms gendered, but they are also classed, as indicated by a reliance on high-culture inter-textual resources, witty humour and a distinctive and exclusive rhetorical register.

Some speakers draw on these normative elite and masculine linguistic resources to perform other functions and achieve other interactional goals in a manner congruent with the norms and practices of the CofP. In German's case, he uses humour and rhetoric based on Welshmen's sporting success, to counteract Lang's 'udder measures' joke. As a Liberal

Democrat (the third-largest party in Westminster), he may not share the same CofP goals as Lang, a governing Conservative party member, but rules of this particular debate forbid controversial statements. Using established CofP practices, he is able to perform disagreement without attracting negative evaluation, demonstrating skilful blending of linguistic resources (Marra, Schnurr, and Holmes 2006).

The other speakers in this dataset tended to use national identity constructions to distinguish themselves from the norm of 'English' to some extent, but also as a means of constructing solidarity against 'others' and increasing the palatability of their stances in relation to key issues. Lang used national identity constructions and stereotypical humour to mitigate his political views on the Scottish referendum, and Forsyth to discredit a political pro-independence rival through 'entertaining impoliteness' (Culpeper 2011) where the goal of uniting his audience was explicit. Goldie, on the other hand, invoked her national identity to exert power in a challenge to the authority of Stowell and to undermine the highly feminine gender identity she had invoked. Although Scottish national identity was invoked by the Scottish speakers in the dataset, they did not construct homogeneity, showing a plurality of 'Scottishness' and thus claiming greater legitimacy, or a more authentic form of Scottishness.

6. Conclusion

By focusing principally on men's speech, this chapter has begun to address Shaw's (2020, 16) observation that to understand gender in political discourse, we cannot interrogate only women's speech. It has explored how highly stereotyped constructions of gender and national identity are drawn upon in professional communication, in part, to orientate towards the geopolitical context. UN Women note the following around the globe:

> Negative stereotypes hinder peoples' ability to fulfil their potential by limiting choices and opportunities. They are at the root of overt and covert, direct and indirect, and recurrent gender discrimination, which adversely affects the de jure and de facto substantive equality that should be guaranteed to women.
>
> (UN Women 2011, 1)

This chapter has investigated such stereotypes as a potential source of inequality in this setting, as well as exposing how discursive norms in the space are coded to index the prototypical elite, masculinist peer identity. It suggests that constructing an intelligible gender identity is an important aspect of demonstrating core status in the CofP, presenting oneself as an 'insider' and establishing a legitimate 'peer' professional identity. However, this promotes a narrow range of acceptable social and

geographically based identities which may exclude some participants and increase distance from the heterogeneous UK public. This chapter has also introduced a new dimension to sociolinguistic study of the Lords by investigating geopolitical boundaries, focusing on Scottish, Welsh and English national identities, observing that Englishness seemed to be unmarked, but Scottish speakers and the Welsh speaker heavily indexed their own national identities. However, consideration of ethnicity more widely is lacking in this study simply because other ethnicities were not indexed as identity features by any speakers in the dataset, all of whom were white. This is obviously problematic as being white and British appears to be assumed as normative.

Lawson and Sayers (2016, 9) call for researchers to consider how their research can be leveraged to bring about change (see also Chapter 1 this volume; Mullany 2020). At the heart of this chapter is the desire to inform a more global debate about future directions of parliamentary institutions, not just in the UK, but internationally. In investigating how politicians construct identities they consider to be appropriate to their institution, I have identified gendered norms and practices, and a reliance on elite rhetoric and outdated stereotypes of national identity which indicate persistent inequality in the Lords and the need for reform. Given the woeful under-representation of women in political institutions around the world (IPU 2020), these patterns are likely to be borne out internationally in similarly archaic and male-dominated political institutions. Further research is essential to expose and challenge such barriers to egalitarian political participation across the globe.

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Transcription Conventions (adapted from Jefferson 2004)

↑	Rise in intonation
((smiles))	Paralinguistic information
(.)	Pause under 2 seconds
(-)	Pause over 2 seconds
% %	Uttered quietly
CAPS	Shouted
[ ]	Overlapping speech – first speaker(s)
⌊ ⌋	Overlapping speech – second speaker(s)
≈	No break or gap, through-produced talk
::	Elongated preceding sound
<u>underlined</u>	Heavy contrastive emphasis
" "	Direct speech, marked by speaker's intonation

11 Epilogue

Geopolitical lenses (and mirrors) in workplace language and gender research

Brian W. King

1. Introduction

This chapter provides a critical reflection, with a particular focus on the geopolitical lens in the book's title. Two notions of 'geopolitical context' are identified in the chapters. One approach views it as a single political entity of some description (e.g. Australia, Indonesia). The other approach views it as a relational process, a type of politics that crosses borders and reflects global power relations (e.g. Australian-ness and Indonesian-ness merging and/or colliding). The research presented in the individual chapters focuses on specific contexts, giving rise to a set of critical questions: What is a geopolitical lens, and can geopolitical practices be distinguished from ethnic or cultural practices? Do we need geopolitics? Or do we really just mean sociocultural and national contexts? Might we fruitfully theorise a 'geopolitical order' alongside the gender and culture orders explored in the chapters? Finally, the contributions demonstrate the need for a feminist approach to geopolitics, and I would add that this needs to be an approach that is radical enough to join hands with subaltern geopolitics and decolonising interventions. We must look away from our 'lens' into the geopolitical mirror, taking seriously the notion that our academic fields are geopolitical apparatuses themselves. We must create permanent ruptures in academic geopolitical injustice, while also destabilising the gender order in the workplace so that our research becomes a truly feminist geopolitical intervention.

When the editors approached me to ask if I would be interested in writing an epilogue, I agreed without hesitation. The topic of the convergence of globalisation, geopolitics and gender in qualitative research about language use is very current and potentially unsettling, and it is one with which applied linguistics, sociolinguistics and cognate disciplines are only just beginning to come to terms. In the Epilogue, I focus in particular on geopolitics running through the contributions, because it offers a fresh angle on the topic of language, gender and globalisation in the workplace. The implications of the notions of framing geopolitical contexts that emerge in the volume will be explored, both for the types

of questions that the frames permit researchers to ask and for what I see as the respective potential benefits and/or pitfalls as we move ahead to a post-COVID world. I will finish with a discussion of future directions, proposing that there is a 'geopolitical order' at work, and that it operates in the contexts of the research sites and data we examine. Also, just as significantly, I argue that it operates in the contexts of the academic fields in which we work. Geopolitics has its place, but it is a transnational version of feminist geopolitics that requires discourse analysts to devote one eye to their own geopolitical lens and the other to their geopolitical mirror.

2. Reflections on the 'geopolitical'

It is probably quite obvious by now that I think the editors have taken on a challenging blend of issues in this collection. Their endeavour to explore globalised gender discrimination and persistent inequalities across numerous geopolitical contexts and diverse professions (Chapter 1) is complicated by complexities surrounding the different ways in which a geopolitical lens can be interpreted and what is encompassed by its field of view.

It has been observed in the field of language, gender and sexuality that a geopolitical turn, oriented to hearing across borders and learning from the margins 'by the margins' (Ostermann 2021, 621), is underway, and it is fundamentally a feminist enterprise in its attention to the walls of inequality that stop knowledges from cross-fertilising (Hall, Borba, and Hiramoto 2021; Ostermann 2021). Certainly, the feminist geopolitics literature has long argued a similar point, framing a feminist approach to geopolitics as a question of 'how geopolitical processes are experienced unevenly across different situated populations' (Massaro and Williams 2013, 570) and most importantly offering prospects for transformation and resistance. It has been asked how researchers might pay more attention to people's embodied and enacted 'alter-geopolitics' (Koopman 2011); in other words, how people bring their own knowledges to bear and manage to break through walls that are a local manifestation of global power relationships and differences. Transnational cultural flows work to 'scatter' hegemonies (Grewal and Kaplan 1994), and so discussions of globalisation need to take into consideration that gender is related to a variety of hegemonic forces that are organised across groups and institutions, both within and between nations – hegemonies that reveal themselves in gender relations (McElhinny 2011). It can be seen in the chapters that there is a repetition, across national and regional contexts, of gender issues that disadvantage women in the workplace, and some women far more than others, depending on how gender intersects with other identity categories, lending further credence to the notion of scattered hegemonies.

One might ask, then, how language in the workplace scholarship can be informed by an approach to geopolitics in which we see clearly that gendered workplaces are key components in the operation of global power. As becomes clear in the contributions to this book, professional communication often entails ideological struggles over what (or who) is global or local, struggles which are not equal playing fields. Ideologies of globalisation and localisation circulate via transnational flows of people and information, and workplaces themselves can be apparatuses that reify such ideologies. These circulating ideologies can 'shape the politics of inclusion or exclusion' that emerge in analyses of gender and language (McElhinny 2011, 9) and in a wide variety of professional settings. Feminist geopolitics has been theorised as a response to critical geopolitics, and it 'draws attention to the way in which the seemingly "apolitical" or "a-geopolitical" realms of the body, the home, and intimate relationships are key sites at which discursive and material relations of geopolitical power are continually reproduced and challenged' (Massaro and Williams 2013, 574). Certainly, this focus on more intimate settings, to bring a more comprehensive picture of different contextual factors and identity categories, is part of the remit of the current volume, with its focus on personal experiences and practices that affect professional communication, including the fusion of the professional and domestic (Chapters 2, 3 and 5), as well as casting a broad enough net to include domestic workspaces as sites for data analysis in their own right (Chapter 5). While individual chapters take different approaches to what counts as geopolitical power, taken together, they form a series of feminist-oriented analyses that provide a window into knowledges from a broad sample of the world map in order to rethink the global via the local. In the next section, I will explore what this means in terms of ideologically driven inclusions and exclusions that shape professional institutions – a geopolitical order of globalisation and localisation that favours some regions of the globe, and their citizens, over others.

3. Geopolitics in contexts – geopolitical contexts

All of the chapters are packed with insight about gender and culture in the workplace, and they are all well-positioned to make valuable contributions to the topic of globalisation and gender in professional communication. A prevailing focus on the qualitative analysis of narrative and conversation places the collection within a feminist project, and this standpoint often entails attention to language's entanglement with feelings, lives and livelihoods – an emphasis that has been identified as a step in moving towards a decolonisation of linguistic analysis (Deumert and Storch 2020). It is encouraging to see these developments as part of the investigation of gender and globalisation in the workplace.

When it comes to the geopolitical element, my focus here, I have found the book to be separable into two halves, approaching the question 'what is a geopolitical context?' quite differently. One approach appears to understand geopolitical context as a single political entity of some description (e.g. a nation-state). The other approach treats it as a relational process, a type of politics that crosses borders and reflects global power relations (e.g. the merging and/or colliding of national affiliations or ascriptions). The main difference between these approaches is that the former seeks to track gender trends as potentially homogenising forces that cross international political boundaries, and the latter is more centrally about geopolitics as a hegemonic relational process, bound up with gender and driving implicit bias in workplaces (and beyond). To start differentiating the two, it is essential to address what each approach brings to the table. My argument for future research moving forward is that, by examining 'geopolitics in contexts' rather than 'geopolitical contexts', we can better pursue a type of praxis that challenges geopolitical injustices.

Starting with the framing of *geopolitical contexts* (countable) as discrete countries or other bounded political entities, I would argue that it serves mainly as a way to tally contexts, perhaps demonstrating that a phenomenon is more globally widespread than previously thought. The data analysis itself, on the other hand, will more likely be interpreted in relation to the identified *sociocultural* contexts of its participants. This type of politically geographic tally provides an important insight about global trends, but places in the background any notions of spatial politics that are epistemologically 'baked into' geopolitics as a field (Dowler and Sharp 2001; Massaro and Williams 2013). In these accounts, issues of global power politics, and their manifestation at various scales including the intimate or institutional, are not the main aspects driving the questions asked or the analysis. Rather, as the various chapters have shown, such an approach reveals a sense that a problem with gender equality in workplaces operates at a scale larger than individual contexts, whilst still seeing the importance of localised socio-cultural settings as critical to influencing local manifestations of language, gender and power. Insights gained from such an approach can then hopefully be used in future to push into conducting geopolitically transformative research by attending more closely to issues of geopolitical power.

In their introduction, the editors discuss the COVID-19 pandemic, a global crisis that started before this collection began, and, at the time of writing this Epilogue, continues to unfold. The pandemic can teach us a great deal about how globalisation and geopolitics work in the world, in one sense demonstrating that a global event like a pandemic can cross borders in unpredictable ways, creating to some extent a commonality of experience. Then again, it has put a spotlight on geopolitical power stripped of its globalisation cloaks, appearing in its most stark and unjust manifestations, with disparities in access to vaccinations between

the Global South and North, and inertia, ranging to colonialist apathy, about what might have been done about it (Blume 2022). We see by this disparity the limits of the abstract notion of globalisation when the focus is on practice, and we are reminded that the noun geopolitics has 'politics' as its root. What we are dealing with is a kind of *politics* that is inflected with spatiality and borders, and it is a politics that is deeply rooted in modernity, which is in turn steeped in colonialism (Shepherd 2020). With the decolonising project gaining momentum in language study, a geopolitical turn that neglects colonialism is an incomplete one.

4. Gender and geopolitics in context

Following on from the previous thoughts, my reading of the chapters took place with a series of questions in mind: How are these contributions providing a view into gendered geopolitical processes and interventions? That is, are we shown how these workplaces reproduce geopolitics and gender in terms of power and how gender and geopolitics are imbricated or entangled? Answering such questions entails determining how a workplace participant's placement in hierarchies is dependent on intersections of gender and geopolitics. To what extent is one's placement in geopolitically driven hierarchies, such as foreign/local or parochial/cosmopolitan, dependent on one's gender? Conversely, is gendering influenced by geopolitical standing? Who benefits, and who pays the highest price?

We must be cautious not to imply that the fight for gender equality trumps the fight for geopolitical equality, for it is often impossible to separate the two. If it is necessary for women in a setting to overcome gender hegemony only by laying a childcare burden on the backs of migrant women who are their domestic workers, then what emerges is gendered geopolitics *par excellence*, as Yoong demonstrates in Chapter 5. In my opinion, Yoong (this volume) captures the essence of geopolitics in workplaces in two important ways. On the one hand, it reveals that efforts of nations to compete globally can lead governments to engage in biopolitical interventions at home, with state power acting directly on women's bodies in the workplace to make them more productive – what Foucault called *anatomo-politics* (Foucault 1980). On the other hand, Yoong demonstrates that it is via the exploitation of people from the Global South (geopolitics at the scale of institutions) that this attempt at keeping up with international geopolitics can occur. These overlapping processes are both relational; that is, they occur between countries or global regions. They do not represent 'a' political context but rather *geopolitics in context*. Yoong explores these ideas by looking at how gendered geopolitical processes unfold in specific work contexts, (re)enacting global power relations. She asks how the gendering of women at work, within the category 'woman', is influenced by their geopolitical standing, with placements in hierarchies dependent upon it. Migrant women end up on

the bottom as 'disposable means' for middle-class women to 'achieve their ends' as they themselves respond to state power's push for them to have greater productive capacity in the economy and thereby to be good biopolitical citizens, even though the burden of childcare (or its deferral) still falls to them. In the process, the migrant women are painted as either commodities or villains.

In Chapter 6, we see geopolitics at work in Belgium, in tandem with the gender order, culture order and social class because 'foreignness' also matters. In the narratives analysed, gender is seen to be influencing geopolitical standing – what it means to be a 'foreign' man, or an outsider. The women narrators suggest that men are lumped together in the category foreign as a monolithic group, because potential employers have no overt way to tell whether they have been 'emancipated' from what mainstream Belgians see as problematic Muslim attitudes. In contrast, women can orient to the absence or presence of the hijab as a visible marker of religion, and a visible marker of assimilation. We see here the entanglement of gender with one's geopolitical standing – that is, how 'foreign' someone is perceived to be versus how localised or assimilated. So, in this sense, insights about gendered geopolitics in context are revealed. Furthermore, this chapter's analysis allows us a window into the knowledges of the interviewees, mediating the knowledges of the analysts when it comes to the entanglement of gender and geopolitics. Such an analysis moves a step closer to a decolonisation of the geopolitics of academia, a topic I will return to below.

5. Future directions

5.1 Feminist, subaltern, decolonial geopolitics

Do we *need* a geopolitical lens? Or, when we deploy it during analysis, are we really referring to a sociocultural lens at the end of the day? I would argue that one concept could 'stand in' for the other unless we continue to see geopolitics as inherently relational and often bound up with colonial histories. Geopolitical contexts, in this way of thinking, are therefore always relational contexts, never losing sight of how one region or nation is positioned in relation to others in terms of power, and how this global power game manifests in workplaces, which can function as geopolitical apparatuses themselves. In the words of Dowler and Sharp (2001, 171), pioneers in theorising feminist geopolitics, thinking geopolitically requires focusing our analytical attention on 'the ways in which the nation and the international are reproduced in the mundane practices we take for granted'. To say that one is taking a geopolitical perspective, then, requires reflection well beyond asking whether we have included perspectives from the global South (although this is very important). We must ask ourselves what we mean by a geopolitical lens,

realising that geopolitics is inherently relational. If a set of data emerged from a workplace in 'a geopolitical context' then we must be referring to the broader context of a country and how it is implicated in geopolitical power relations. Otherwise, we are probably dealing with national context or sociocultural context. How do we distinguish geopolitical practices from ethnic or cultural practices? If we orient to it as analysts, we need to know how it is distinguishable from these other processes even if mostly entangled with them. This Epilogue, then, poses a challenge to future research to push even further post-COVID-19 in terms of intersectionality and decolonising. Perhaps we should push further to 'subaltern geopolitics', asking how we can heed colonial and imperial histories and not just geographical locations (Sharp 2011). How can we challenge norms and normativity in ways that are decisive and ruptural? What does it mean to heed colonial histories in a feminist geopolitical turn?

We get a taste of this process in the chapter by Janet Holmes and Meredith Marra (Chapter 7). Effort is made to acknowledge their own speaking positions from within New Zealand's dominant sociocultural group, and they emphasise that they speak from within 'a commonwealth nation with a history of colonization'. Their approach here is geopolitical in two ways. First of all, the colonial history of New Zealand is included as part of its geopolitics in context. On the other hand, their statements, in which they also acknowledge New Zealand's fluid 'North/South' status (King 2017), position them as bringing specific memories, feelings and experiences to the table and not as insiders to universal abstract knowledge, a positioning that points to efforts at decolonisation of knowledge (Shepherd 2020). By looking in the mirror in this way, they make a crucial first step towards a more radical geopolitics of knowledge.

5.2 Looking in the mirror

To look in the geopolitical mirror is of course only a starting place, and I do not claim to have mastered this orientation myself. However, the research presented in the previous chapters provides a useful starting point for such an endeavour, as it clearly demonstrates the need to more systematically orient to and address a series of (geopolitical) problems in our future research. For example, after having identified commonalities in terms of gendered practices and experiences across local and global contexts, future research should use these findings as a starting point to further advance our gender critique, thereby directly addressing geopolitical disparities. Furthermore, we need to hold up a mirror to see the geopolitics in our own academic fields and keep an eye to the ways in which academia tends to act as a geopolitical apparatus itself, often riddled with geopolitical inequality.

To be appropriately reflexive in this way requires resisting the urge to treat data from numerous countries (especially the Global South) merely

as more grist for the Northern theory-making mill (Milani and Lazar 2017). It is important instead to engage in a Southern praxis of intervention whereby we challenge hegemony to create new ways of thinking (Lazar 2020), letting previously marginalised knowledges mediate our own (Rowlett and King 2022). It is much more likely that we can enable this type of mediation if we position academic geopolitics as a relational process, examining the quantity of knowledges that are part of the conversation. If we hope to succeed, we need to be clear about our own 'locus of enunciation' – a specific geographical, historical, bodily and ideological context from which one is speaking (Menezes de Sousa 2007) (see Chapter 7). Following through, one must then attend in the research context to the gaze that it makes relevant, ideally providing a detailed analysis of the relationality of researcher and researched, in order to explore 'how local knowledges are seen to mediate the knowledges of the researchers (and vice versa), impacting and reshaping the locus of enunciation as such' (Rowlett and King 2022). It is a type of mediated learning that aligns with feminist ethnography's commitment to seeing researchers and participants as partners in discovery (Hall and Davis 2021; King 2022). Via this framing it 'turn[s] the reflexivity that is ethnography's strength onto geopolitical exclusions' and by bringing participants' knowledge explicitly into the analysis, research can hope to shed its colonialist roots (Hall and Davis 2021, 101).

I will argue that one can align with this ethos without taking an ethnographic standpoint on research *per se*. As the editors suggest in Chapter 1, the lived experiences explored in the chapters, both in the words of the participants and in the words of the chapter authors, all have something to offer one another in terms of localised knowledge despite a range of research methods. These dialogues, I would argue, are another important starting point for future research, which could, for example, unpack further how these knowledges are mediating each other. It is in this exposé of partnered discovery that we can eschew appropriation of knowledge and embrace the synergy of knowledges in dialogue. This is a transnational feminist approach to knowledge creation, which leads me to the finish.

5.3 Creating ruptures

Reflecting on feminism's entrée into cultural studies in the 1970s, Stuart Hall (1992, 282) described the arrival of feminism as 'the thief in the night, it broke in; interrupted, made an unseemly noise, seized the time, crapped on the table of cultural studies', an intervention he further characterised as 'specific', 'decisive' and 'ruptural'. His provocative words ring of affect and seem to be full of scar tissue, but there is also a prosody of progress within his statement whereby ruptures have led to new epistemological trajectories. In the field of feminist geopolitics, early

contributor Jennifer Hyndman used the metaphor of Humpty Dumpty to draw attention to the limits of a critical approach that does not also engage the realm of intervention. 'Critical geopolitics . . . exposes the investments that our dominant geopolitical narratives embody, but it does not put Humpty Dumpty back together again, so to speak. Nor does it question why Humpty is always falling off the wall' (Hyndman 2000). In other words, we risk ending up with a clear view of hegemonic masculinity raising its head again and again but no sense of what to do about it in practice. So, the final question I want to ask in this chapter is how we might, as researchers (and as advocates or activists), avoid donning a geopolitical hat later to be removed, but instead follow through. We need not 'crap on the table' but how might we 'break in' and 'make unseemly noises' that create permanent ruptures in the geopolitics of northern hegemony while also doing the important work of rupturing the gender order in the professional workplace through a linguistic lens?

5.4 Putting Humpty Dumpty together again

Reflecting on this feminist drive to intervene led me to ask whether and how the contributions to this volume make ruptural interventions, either explicitly or implicitly. Do they queer workplace geopolitics? That is, do they confuse and confound norms and normativity? Do they heed colonial and imperial histories as part of a geopolitics that questions modernity, the clarion call of transnational feminism (Grewal 2005)? Do they engage in decolonial critique of knowledge? Stephanie Schnurr (Chapter 2) identifies moments in her study's participant narratives when the storytelling is critical and challenges gender ideologies and other moments when the telling is instead not critical and so reanimates those ideologies, perhaps unintentionally bolstering them. By looking at what stories do, Schnurr suggests that retellings about confronting gender ideologies can more powerfully serve as counter-discourses; they are much more transformative than retelling how to navigate through hegemony in a kind of 'work-around' that does not confound any norms. This type of norm-busting, which I would call 'queering', is also evident in Chapter 4, where we see Turkish women reversing masculinist discourses in order to position their own contributions as more desirable. The challenge facing us moving forward is to think about how to be more explicit about highlighting such strategic responses in all the contexts we work in.

6. The geopolitical order

To finish, my reflections to this point have inspired me to put forward the idea that there is often a geopolitical order operating in workplace environments, whether domestic or institutional, and it is entangled with the gender order (Connell 1987) and the culture order (Holmes 2018).

I would like to frame it, using similar language, as a strong ideological constraint by which taken-for-granted presuppositions about international or even inter-regional relations impact on interaction, influencing whose bodies end up bearing the most weight. It is an order that, in many places around the world, cannot be separated from imperial and colonial histories, which cannot easily be separated from gender injustices (Singh 2021). This geopolitical ideological constraint applies to what we see, as academics, both in our lenses and in our mirrors; it has impact on interactions in our data and in the academic conversations we initiate, join, and sustain. By looking at how geopolitical power is re-enacted, what I have referred to here as geopolitics in contexts, hopefully we, as researchers, can face the challenges ahead – to create permanent ruptures in academic geopolitical injustice while also destabilising the gender order in the workplace. It can be a truly feminist geopolitical intervention.

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