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The Social Epidemic of Inequality in Canada: Gender Inequality

Through the years, social stratification of Canada has progressed and altered by cultural changes and social changes in society (Cummings et al. 2017). Gender inequality is a prevalent form of social stratification of Canada that engages oppression and marginalization (Cummings et al. 2017; Rushowy 2018). In the early 1900s, the acknowledgment of women as persons was established by the women's suffrage movement (Strong-Boag 2016). This movement cultivated a pathway of equity for women since society was patriarchal at the time, but today gender inequality still impacts the lives of women including those of various ethnic backgrounds (Strong Boag 2016; *Canadian Press* 2018; Cummings et al. 2017). Even more, the recognition of people of different gender identities has resulted in the mass awareness of gender diversity with the rise of LGBTQ activism (Nazish 2018). Today, contemporary culture is heavily influenced by agents of socialization such as family, religion, education and the government that impose gender stereotypes and social constructs (Cummings et al. 2017). Despite the fact, that Marxist criticism elaborates on the conflict of classes as the source of social stratification and can explain the gender gap in wages: this stratification of gender inequality can be explained by the prevalence and differentiation of culture (Rushwoy 2018; Cummings et al 2017). An anthropological analysis of domains of experience, social constructions, and agents of socialization displays the social stratification of gender inequality in Canada originates from these social aspects of culture that people uphold in this contemporary era (Nazish 2018; Cummings et al. 2017).

Domains of Experience in Canada and Gender Inequality

Particularly, the transfer of domains of experience is evident in Canadian influence of

discourses and surveillance associated with gender inequality (Cummings et al. 2017). In fact, the transfer of domains of experience is described as the application of knowledge from one area of experience, such as family, to another (Cummings et al. 2017, 96). Especially, the patriarchic history of Canada has some reminiscence in contemporary culture (Cummings et al. 2016; Rushowy 2018). As James Frideres and Rene Gadacz suggested, they deemed that racism is institutionalized in social structures in Canada like in education and in the government which they called “structural racism” (Cummings et al. 2017, 194). Further, this can be applied to the institutionalized inequality toward women in society that is prevalent in the workplace and on the daily basis (Cummings et al. 2017, 194; Rushowy 2018). The androcentric view, that men are more intelligent than women has increased in prevalence in history to modern day (Hanson 1996). This exemplification of women is expressed in today in academia, where there is an absence of women in science and the glass ceiling of prejudice toward women (Hanson 1996). In addition, the influence of media including books, media and contemporary culture cause individuals to reproduce implications in society (Cummings et al. 2017). Also, personal experiences of citizens in Canada can influence one’s perception of other individuals, including immigrants and Indigenous people; as a result, implicate exception fallacies and ecological fallacies (Ravelli and Webber 2016). That is to say, exception fallacies are assumptions made from one individual and applied to people in the same categorized group, whereas ecological fallacies are biases developed based on a group of people and all individuals within the same categorized group (Ravelli and Webber 2016). An example of ecological fallacy is the view of better drivers, in which women or particular women of ethnicities are viewed worst drivers in comparison to men (Ravelli and Webber 2016; Ien 2018). In an article of *The Globe and Mail*, this exception fallacy is displayed by the discrimination toward Black women due to the

prejudice of their competence of driving (Ien 2018).

Social Construction of Gender Inequality

The emergence of social stratification in Canada can be explained by the social construction of identities that produce discrimination and inequality due to socialization and inclusivity (Cummings et al. 2017). More predominantly, the social construction of gender binaries of men and women resonates sexism (Cummings et al. 2017). This gender binary is evident in Popenoe's ethnography, in which women uphold the image of Azawagh female beauty while men portray the foundational role of society, as they are responsible for political discussion for their tribes and family decisions (Popenoe 2004). In other words, due to the more dominant roles of men in the Azawagh culture, this can cause gender conflict in which inequality is inculcated, especially in terms of divorces that end with only the male's final decision (Popenoe 2004). For instance, the custom of the "kidnapped bride" displays the gender conflict between men and women (Popenoe 2004). The custom of the "kidnapped bride" is taken place the morning after the wedding when the bride lives in one of her female friends' houses and the bride must be recaptured by the male friends of the groom which displays gender conflict (Popenoe 2004). Also, these social constructs of men and women demonstrate social constraints that can impede on one's individuality and cause stigmatization from gender inequality (Cummings et al. 2017; Nazish 2018). Furthermore, these social constructs act as social constraints for oppressed groups, including women and people of other gender identities (Nazish 2018). Even more, people who identify as transgender, bisexuals and other gender identities would be socially excluded from these social constructs (Nazish 2018). Through the idea of intersectionality, ideologies of discrimination and inequality are more systemically detrimental to people of minority groups (Crenshaw 1989; Cummings et al. 2017). That is to say,

intersectionality is the combination of the aspects of one's social location like racial identity and gender (Crenshaw 1989). The idea of intersectionality is exemplified in the current and ongoing case of missing Indigenous women that is greatly overlooked by society (*Canadian Press* 2018). Moreover, Indigenous women are not just marginalized because of their ethnic background as Indigenous people, but also as women (*Canadian Press* 2018; Crenshaw 1989). Furthermore, intersectionality instills gender inequality for people of many racial backgrounds or social backgrounds and involves different experiences of gender discrimination on the basis of gender, racial or ethnic background (*Canadian Press* 2018; Crenshaw 1989).

Agents of Socialization of Gender Inequality

Additionally, the agents of socialization can impose gender inequality in Canadian society (Cummings et al. 2017). In particular, this is can be explained by the contemporary culture in Canada that inflicts social inequality due to the differentiation of beliefs (Cummings et al. 2017). For instance, there is more of the prominence of men in history and literature that lack feminist views and women empowerment (Hughes-Edwards 2007). This has resulted in the establishments of feminist publishing companies and bookstores, for the purpose of social equality and feminism in literature (Kirch 2018). Especially, social structures including family, friends and school can impose gender stereotypes and social constructs. For example, roles of men and women in the household demonstrate the assignment of roles based on gender; such as cooking and cleaning for women and household repairs done by men (Ravelli and Webber 2016). Also, it has been documented of the chilly climate established in post-secondary school; in which sexism is depicted in blatant actions toward women in universities (Ravelli and Webber 2016). Today, mass media have greatly influenced people, as it is the predominant form of mass communication in society that has significantly shaped people's lives in cybernetic revolution

(Ravelli and Webber 2016; Cummings et al. 2017). In regard to beauty ideals depicted in the media, this has caused young females to internally pressure themselves to the beauty ideals and personal comparisons with others; leading to the social hierarchy of popularity and bullying due to these images of beauty (Cummings et al. 2017).

Social Epidemic of Gender Inequality

Overall, gender inequality resonates from the diversity of beliefs, social constructs and experiences in the cultural mosaic society of Canada (Cummings et al. 2017). In particular, the application of knowledge from one's experience of their social location to another aspect of one's social location (Cummings et al. 2017). For instance, patriarchy has existed for a long time and still exists today, especially on the daily basis, in science and the workplace (Hanson 1996; Rushowy 2018). Additionally, social constructs of men and women have formed inequality, in which these social constructs embody social constraints for women and people of different gender identities (Cummings et al 2017). Especially, these social constructs impose pressure and marginalization of women and people of different gender identities (Cummings et el. 2017; Nazish 2018). Gender discrimination can vary by experience, which is explained by an intersectional analysis on the discrimination toward Indigenous women who experience discrimination due to their gender and racial background (Crenshaw 1989; *Canadian Press* 2018). Significantly, agents of socialization have greatly shaped society through the widespread transmission of ideas through media, religion, education and the family (Cummings et al 2017; Ravelli and Webber 2016). For instance, the beauty ideals conveyed in the media are reflected in schools that socially construct the hierarchy of popularity based on beauty ideals from the media (Cummings et al. 2017). Indeed, the contrast of cultural beliefs in Canada enforces gender inequality and inflicts many social consequences such as gender wage gaps and mistreatment; in

which can cause the social epidemic of inequality, but can be resisted by the social cohesion between people of any gender identity through advocacy (Cummings et al. 2017).

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