

Reproduction of power: A Critical Discourse Analysis on
Female Circumcision

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ABSTRACT

There is an adverse reaction to the practice of female circumcision in the West. This study investigates the adverse reaction to reveal the public discourse on female circumcision as one that is gendered. Using a critical discourse analysis, the study examines the body of Western discourses to explore the reproduction of system of gender hierarchy in the discourse. Guided by a theoretical analysis of the 'private'/'public' divide through which feminine and masculine power is enforced, the study exposes ways in which similar power relation is sustained in the body of Western discourses on female circumcision. The study applies a textual analysis inquiring the language use of the Fran Hosken report and policy statements originating from the United States, United Kingdom, and international organizations. Using various themes that emerged during the textual analysis, the study deconstructs the body of Western discourses on female circumcision and presents the construction of femininity and masculinity. The findings suggest the discursive application of control and power grounded in rationality, science, knowledge and ways of being.

DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to the memory of my sister Keneni Mogga

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Female circumcision is generally described as the tradition of removing or altering the external genitals of girls (Abusharaf 2006; Boyle 2002; El Dareer, 1982; Oduyoye, 2007). It is mainly confined to parts of Africa, Asia and the Middle East (Boyle, 2002). Nonetheless, the practice is not exclusive to these areas. There are reports that female circumcision has been practiced by the Romans and in the U.S and England in the 19th century until it was stopped in 1973 (Lightfoot-Klien, 1989; Strong-Leek, 2009). The practice is reported to have occurred recently in North America and Europe among immigrants from countries where the practice is common (Boyle, 2002).

There are varied accounts to the origin of female circumcision. However, the most dominating narrative reports its origin to the second century B.C in the Pharaonic beliefs on the bisexuality of gods (Boyle, 2002; Gruenbaum, 2001). According to this belief, every individual possesses both a female and male soul where circumcision is required to create identifiable male and female traits. Circumcision is thus deemed necessary to make ‘boys’ by removing the feminine soul located on the penis and to make ‘girls’ by removing the male soul located in the clitoris and labia (Boyle, 2002; Gruenbaum, 2001). Circumcision also symbolized both physical and spiritual purity which was an obsession of ancient Egyptians (Gollaher, 2000). The practice is believed to have spread by slave traders to Egypt and its occupied territories, such as the Sudan, in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries (Boyle, 2002). It was used in order to restrict female slaves from conceiving (Boyle, 2002). The Romans used it for social ranking with female circumcision to indicate a higher status (Lightfoot-

Klien, 1989). In the U.S. and England, it was used as a cure for masturbation, a treatment for lesbian inclination (Strong-Leek, 2009).

The literature acknowledges four types of commonly practiced female circumcisions (Abusharaf, 2006; Boyle, 2002; El Dareer 1982). One form is *infibulation*, sometimes known as Pharaonic, where the clitoris and the labia are removed and the two sides of the vulva are sewn together except for a small opening. This is the most radical and severe form of female circumcision. *Excision*, commonly known as clitoridectomy, consists of the removal of all or part of the clitoris, and in some cases other external genitalia, but without stitching. Most female circumcision in Africa involves this form (Boyle 2002; Boddy 2007). *Sunna*, the mildest type, involves removing only the tip of the prepuce of the clitoris. The fourth type includes general alterations involving pricking, piercing, incising of the genital area (Boyle, 2002: 26; El Dareer 1982; Shell-Duncan & Hernlund 2002; Gruenbaum 2001; WHO 2010).

Justifications to Female Circumcision

The occurrence and procedure of the above described types of female circumcision depend on ethnicity, geography and status (Abusharaf, 2006). The variations can be explained within a cultural context of their applications. In general, female circumcision is carried out to shape an identity meant to define social relations, norms, values, and principles relative to the ethnicity that practice it. For instance, in Northern Sudan where infibulation is most common, circumcision is deemed necessary for the development of the femininity of a woman's body by removing the 'male part' which helps eliminate gender ambiguity (Gruenbaum, 2001). For others, it is vital in maintaining the purity and cleanliness of the

female body which is an essential pre-marriage quality for a woman (Abusharaf, 2001; Boyle, 2002). The significance of purity and cleanliness must be understood in context of societies where virginity is an absolute prerequisite for marriage, and where an extra-marital relationship provokes the most severe penalties (Gruenbaum, 2001).

Nonetheless, purity related to virginity is not a uniform explanation to the practice as there are exceptions where female circumcision is carried out while sexuality before marriage is permitted. A case in point would be the Rendille of Northern Kenya where girls are circumcised as brides before which time they are allowed to have sexual partners (Shell-Duncan, Obiero & Muruli, 2000). The Rendille circumcise girls before marriage to specify the bride as a woman who is now “sexually exclusive and is allowed to bear” her husband’s children only (Shell-Duncan et al. 2000, p.118).

The variation to the justification of female circumcision also includes its value as a rite of passage. For groups such as the Massai, female circumcision symbolizes the transition from “girlhood to marriageable age” which is considered an achievement of well-being (Gruenbaum, 2001, p.69). Other values of the practice go hand in hand with the system of age, kinship and class (Droz, 2000). In this regard, the practice marks the transformation of childhood traits of “oversexed, unclean, rude, bossy and disrespectful” to an adulthood which include being obedient wives, respectful to parents and their elders and showing maturity (Abusharaf, 2006, p.81). This symbolic transition also helps women to sustain a distinct status in their respective society. For instance, amongst the Kikuyu¹ of Kenya circumcision is a step in becoming a “human being;” a person subject to law, sexuality, social practices including participating in political, economic, and religious activities (Droz,

¹ Alternatively spelled as Gikuyu.

2000: p.222-223). One of the reasons for female circumcision amongst the Rendille of Northern Kenya is that it distinguishes them from animals (Shell-Duncan, Obiero & Muruli 2000).

Female circumcision can also be a marker of ethnic boundary as groups use it to identify themselves different from other ethnic groups around them (Abusharaf, 2000; Droz, 2000). Circumcision as an ethnic marker also signifies a demarcation of status and identity. For instance, those considered higher status ethnic groups are noted to perform the most severe type of circumcision that demonstrates the status privilege related to one's ability to afford a midwife (Gruenbaum, 2001). This is the case with the Rashaida and the Messeriya nomadic groups of Sudan who chose the Sunna type from infibulation which requires midwife assistance during child birth (Gruenbaum, 2001). For others, the social class and status is a marker of "superior morality" against those that do not participate in the practice (Gruenbaum, 2000).

The practice of female circumcision is often interpreted in religious terms. Islam is especially linked to female circumcision. However, there is no evidence to suggest the link between the practice of female circumcision and Islam, except that the emphasis on purity by Islam coincides with one of the justifications of the practice (Boyle, 2001). In fact, there is no relationship between religion and the practice of female circumcision. Evidence of the distribution of the practice in Africa supports this. For instance, in Eastern and Horn of Africa, the highest percentage of circumcised women is Christian (Boyle, 2002). Record also shows that those with traditional religious beliefs such as the Massai also participate in the practice (Gruenbaum, 2001). In addition, the practice is absent in 80% of the Islamic world (Lightfoot-Klein, 1989). Nonetheless, there are some Muslims who encourage the

practice on the basis of fulfilling religious obligations (Abusharaf, 2000; Abu-Sahlieh, 2006). According to Lightfoot-Klein (1989), in some cases Islam is used to frame the practice as a religious obligation. The situation of the Mandinga of Guinea-Bissau is a case in point where the practice is embraced on religious terms. The Mandinga believe that the practice allows “the rite of purification” for women in establishing their identity as Muslims “ready to pray in the proper way” (Abusharaf, 2000, p. 62). It is important to note that female circumcision as a religious requirement is not unique to Islam. The practice was retained by converted Christians in Kenya who assumed it as a requirement for achieving an eternal life (Lightfoot-Klein, 1989).

Thus, the practice varies in form with each ethnic group. With most ethnic groups the practice is intertwined with elements that define social relations, norms, values, and social organization. The rationale of the practice also reflects social and cultural principles that correspond to each ethnic group. One common element in female circumcision which is applied in all ethnic groups is the role women play in guarding the practice. In almost all ethnic groups women take the responsibility of guaranteeing procedures of the practice are followed through. For instance, women will be in charge of the circumcision process which includes ensuring the strict absence of men (Boyle 2002; Shell-Duncan et al., 2000). In some groups this restriction extends to uncircumcised people in general. For instance, with the Rendille, uncircumcised males and girls are forbidden from entering the circumcision hut (Shell-Duncan et al. 2000). This aspect of the practice which sets women to be in charge adds a certain hierarchical dynamic amongst girls and women. In her study on the Meru of Kenya, Lynn Thomas (2000) observes that the women involved in the initiation process of “teachings, ceremonies and celebrations” possess a “figure of authority” over others (131-

139). Mothers and grandmothers of daughters who are going through the initiation process also “enhance their social standings” (Thomas, 2000, p.147). It is also noted that women tend to defend the practice more than men (Thomas: 2000).

Social risk of the uncircumcised

In societies accustomed to the practice, the social response to the uncircumcised is mostly negative. The uncircumcised person is stigmatized and labeled as unclean, impure and unfit to marry or bear children (Gollaher, 2000). In some societies, uncut women are called girls, no matter what their age is and are forbidden to speak at community gatherings (Gollaher, 2000). In some ethnic groups, uncircumcised girls are forbidden to attend important social events and community activities and even excluded from a group (Abusharaf, 1998). Most of the time girls willingly participate to conform to behaviors characterizing womanhood in their community. The social pressures and confrontations are so intense that uncircumcised wives often become circumcised as adults (Abusharaf, 1998). The role of men in this process is an additional reason for the need to circumcise. A study done in Egypt indicates that husbands chose circumcised women to uncircumcised for marriage (Boyle, 2002). The link between female circumcision and marriage is especially strong for societies where marriage is considered an important element in achieving a status and security (Gruenbaum, 2001).

International Interest

One of the earlier interference to female circumcision dates back to the 16th century Roman missionaries’ effort to discourage converts in Ethiopia (Lighfoot-Klien, 1989). The practice captured a fresh attention in the early 20th century colonial period. During the

colonial period, the practice not only “did offend European sensibilities” it was also believed to have interfered with colonization strategies (Boddy, 2007, p.152). The British contact with Sudan is a case in point. In this case, population growth in Sudan was a concern to the colonial government which intended to stimulate the agricultural economy of Sudan independent of Egypt (Boddy, 2007). The practice of female circumcision was understood to compromise women’s reproductive abilities which could thereby lead to the reduction in the number of cotton farm workers of Sudan (Boddy, 2007). As colonial occupation continued with further plans to make areas more productive, family traditions and “hereditary principles” were recognized as impediments to progress (Boddy, 2007). Thus, civilizing goals that would bring in the “value of hard work, economic individualism and importance of money” were instigated to encourage the abandonment of the practice (Boddy, 2007, p.173-176).

Other concerns ranged from forbidding it on religious grounds by missionaries to dispelling it as a myth or denouncing it on medical grounds (Boyle, 2002; Momoh, 2005). For instance, female circumcision was condemned by Catholic missionaries in Egypt who assumed the practice as Jewish (Boyle, 2002). Further reactions grew against female circumcision when information on the practice surfaced from ethnographers, states, and international communities in the late 1930’s (Boyle, 2002). The practice later received even more attention when Western feminists began to present it as “sadistic and part of a global patriarchal conspiracy,” requiring an urgent international response (Boyle, 2002). It stimulated further interest with the first groundbreaking document published by a feminist activist Fran Hosken (1979) who traveled throughout Sub-Saharan Africa to learn about the practice. This document, which is known as “The Hosken Report,” was the first to compile

country specific case studies and provide detailed information on the practice (Hosken, 1979). This report was also the first to describe the practice as a “genital and sexual mutilation” and to insist on the adoption of a new term “Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)” (Boyle, 2002, p. 48- 50; Hosken, 1979). During the 1990’s, international mobilization against the practice grew, supported by claims of human rights violations and health concerns, leading to the exclusive use of the term ‘female genital mutilation’ by most Western states (Boyle, 2002).

As discussed, reactions to the practice of female circumcision took different forms. Despite these differences, the message most often transmitted by Western states and international organizations suggests that female circumcision is almost universally understood as an unnecessary and harmful practice (Rahman & Toubia, 2000; Obermeyer 1999). For instance, United States policy places it in the same category as other violent “harmful traditional practices” such as honor killing, infanticide, and child marriage (U.S. Department of States 2008). Similarly, the practice is classified as a “harmful or discriminatory traditional practice” by the United Nations (UN) (Rahman & Toubia, 2000:19-30). The World Health organization (WHO), the first international organization to adopt the term “Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)”, also shares this view and recognizes it as a traditional or customary practice with no health value (Oboler, 2000; WHO Publication, 2008). The WHO also recognizes the practice as a gender-based human rights violation (WHO Fact sheet 241: 2000; Obermeyer, 1999: 90). To stress the severity of the practice, the “medically correct” term ‘female genital mutilation’ continues to be used by Western states and international organizations such as the WHO and the U. N. Development Program (UNDP) (Boyle, 2002, p.50).

In keeping with this international outcry, governments of countries such as the United States, Canada, Australia, Great Britain, and France have adopted policies banning the practice of female circumcision nationally (Boyle, 2002). These countries have also expanded their commitment to abolishing FGM by joining international efforts to eradicate the practice (Boyle, 2002). For instance, the United States supports preventative measures and goals that would eradicate the practice from countries in Africa (U.S. Department of States 2008).

Research Objective

This research examines the public discourse on the practice of female circumcision. It aims to address the body of Western discourses and explore how they reproduce gendered patterns of social reality. Acknowledging the plurality of discourses on the practice in the West, the study uses the most appropriate term 'body of Western discourses ' when addressing the discourse. This study also borrows from Samuel Huntington (1997) in identifying the West with reference to states in Europe, North America, and countries such as Australia and New Zealand) (Appendix A). Accordingly, the term Western refers to the social, political and economic values of these States (Appendix A).

An assessment of the literature reveals that body of Western discourses on female circumcision reflects a uniform orientation to the practice. It is striking to note the degree to which the practice of female circumcision is presented negatively in the West and that such a negative reaction is accepted as the only legitimate response. One of the objectives of this research is to identify the social and political processes that give rise to these adverse reactions, and thus define the content of the discourses on female circumcision advanced by

Western states. This research will also examine international organizations in order to identify the extent to which they promote a similar discourse.

Research Question

In order to achieve the above mentioned research objectives, the following questions are posed:

1. Why is a consistently negative discourse presented internationally on female circumcision?
2. Why are Western states and international organizations sharing the same view about female circumcision?
3. Why is the practice constructed universally as Female Genital Mutilation?
4. What causes the silencing of the voices of practicing cultures, and how and why does this occur?

Research Rationale

Problems on the definition, description, and understanding of female circumcision have been evaluated by several scholars. Most are critical of general assumptions as they are contextualized by outsiders particularly by the West (Abusharaf 2000; Ahmadu 2000; Gruenbaum 2000; Korieh 2005; Shell-Duncan et al 2000; Nnaemeka, 2005). Western interpretations are criticized for relying heavily on “Western cultural assumptions” of sexuality, human body and social relations (Ahmadu 2000, p.284). Limitations of the discourse of elimination efforts are distinguished for overlooking varying contexts of the practice and therefore are uniformed and problematic (Shell-Duncan & Hernlund, 2000: 9). In addition, Western approach to the practice has been criticized as one that is “summarized

without exploration” (Boddy, 2007, p.52). For instance, the application of terms such as “mutilation” in international campaigns is critically reviewed for conveying messages of condemnation and judgment of practicing cultures (Shell-Duncan and Hernlund 2000, p. 6). Shell-Duncan et al. (2000) contend that the general assumption continues to present the outcome of a specific type of female circumcision as the outcome of all types of the practice.

Information provided on female circumcision is also criticized for being biased. Through her analysis of The Hosken Report, Abusharaf (2000) identifies Western feminist discourses on female circumcision in particular problematic as they “oversimplify” the values and “overemphasize” the effects of the practice on sexual pleasure (p.160-161). Similarly, Ellen Gruenbaum (2001) questions the “simplistic condemnation of the practice” and suggests a sound contextual analysis to the practice that assesses it from various angles with special emphasis on what women of practicing cultures has to articulate about the practice (p.25- 26). This research reminds that a simplified interpretation would be an evaluation that ignores the variation of the practice, the cultural and symbolic values assigned to each practice, and the significance of the practice by practicing cultures.

There are criticisms against the feminist-focus representation of female circumcision. Fuambai Ahmadu (2000) is one who evaluates the representation as such. She (2000) argues against Western representation of the practice which she claims delivers a “male-centered explanations and assumptions” (p.285). The emphasis on “masculinity and its symbolism” neglects the significance of the practice for “sex and gender construction and kinship relations” in practicing cultures (p.285-286). Gruenbaum (2000) dismisses the feminist-focus interpretation for delineating the practice as a “conspiracy of men to oppress women” (p.50). Abusharaf (2000) shares a similar view and argues that the demonstration of the

practice as “deliberate acts of violence, dominance, and transgression against women” is “an ethnocentric commentary on cultural difference” (Abusharaf, 2000, p.162). Chima Korieh (2005) also contends the feminist oriented discourse which she claims continues to privilege “Western cultural ideas and practices” (p.111).

The contextualization of female circumcision has been criticized on other areas as well. For instance, Shell-Duncan et al (2000) specify that the link of female circumcision to female sexual desire or pleasure is based on an assumption that specifies sexuality as a “priori around which all women organize” (p.16). Korieh’s (2005) analysis emphasizes that the socially constructed Western “clitoris knowledge” has no power to societies where sexuality is demonstrated by removing the clitoris (p.112-114). In fact, “Western interventionists” are criticized for taking a unidirectional approach that dehumanizes African women (Nnaemeka, 2005, p.29-30). Graphic illustrations used to expose the practice are taken as a case in point where women are overtly “objectified” (Nnaemeka, 2005, p.30). The focus of presenting the practice as one that inflicts pain has also been a focus of criticism. The argument is that, while the reality of pain has been documented by various activists and researchers (see for example Boyle 2006; Gruenbaum: Walker 1999; Hosken, 1979), the value attached to pain is discounted. Hernlund et al. (2005) claim that pain-focused interpretation ignores the symbolic value pain has for some societies. In many practicing societies going through the pain is part of the process where women demonstrate an ability to bear pain as a preparation to childbirth and it is also a metaphor of adult status (Shell-Duncan & Hernlund 2005).

The current debate on circumcision is recognized to reflect a continuation of the “imperial arrogance” of the colonial period (Nnaemeka, 2005: p.7). According to Korieh

(2005), the relationship that is constructed between Western societies, feminists in particular, and practicing cultures is a continuation of the “stereotypical images of cultural “others” ”of the colonized women (p.114). Korieh’s (2005) presents the discourse as one that is framed in colonial and imperialist terms which include racialized power and subordination.

Most of these researchers criticize the interpretation of the practice for reflecting Western social thought and for imposing a “western cultural norm” (Korieh 2005, Hernlund and Shell-Duncan 2007, p.116). These researches also demand a contextual analysis to the practice that will include a careful examination of the practice and its transformation to endorse change. However, these researchers fail to adequately explore the discourse as one shaped by elements of Western social and political processes. This research will fill this apparent gap and identify the discourse as gendered considering that the discourse valorizes the views of “certain social actors, practices, processes that are associated with men and masculinity” (Marchand and Runyan, 2002, p.12). Accordingly, this study will deconstruct body of Western discourses on female circumcision using a critical analysis which is sensitive to gender. Deconstruction of the discourse involves the examination of aspects of gender hierarchical relations that influence the actions of Western states such as the United States (US) and United Kingdom (UK) and international organizations that widely address the issue of female circumcision.

This research will begin by revealing the ways in which gender has created a certain social dynamic in the West. For instance, research shows that gender inequality persists over a wide range of Western social and political spheres, influencing the structure of Western society (Enloe 1989; Mies 1986; Peterson 1992, 2002; Raven-Roberts 2005; Whitworth 2000; Youngs 2006). Moreover, the source of gender inequality in the West is located in the

divide between what is recognized as the ‘private’ and the ‘public’. This divide is created by social and political processes that are maintained in domestic and international spaces (Enloe 1989; Mies 1986; Peterson 1992, 2002; Raven-Roberts 2005; Whitworth 2000; Youngs 2006).

Accordingly, the study will present a theoretical analysis of the ‘private’/‘public’ gender divide to reveal how it has created a social and political reality in the West (Macdonald 2002; Peterson 1992, 2002; Robinson 2006, Youngs 2006). In this regard, it will examine how this divide is maintained by the discourse on female circumcision. This process will include exploring areas where the private/public divide is constructed, especially when the practice is described as ‘barbaric’ or ‘primitive, signifying an unequal relationship between the West and societies where the practice is prevalent. Considering the silencing of the voices of practicing cultures, the study builds upon the ‘private’ and ‘public’ distinction to explore why a Western interpretation is favored. This process allows the study to explore the link between the private/public distinction and the content of the discourse on female circumcision in terms of what is adopted and developed and what is rejected and discouraged within the body of Western discourses.

Thus, the purpose of this research is to explore how the body of Western discourses on female circumcision draws on the system of gender hierarchy that divides the social and political space into both a private and a public sphere, and then transforms it into an expression of power. This research is rooted in the assumption that the body of Western discourses on female circumcision reproduces the power relations embedded in the socially constructed gender hierarchy. These gendered power relations are found in both the actions and the statements coming from states and international organizations. For instance, the

conventional use of the term ‘mutilation’ by both states and international organizations can be recognized as one that situates practicing cultures as inferior to those who oppose it. As such, the study applies the methodology of critical discourse analysis of the texts of states and international organizations examining statements that enact, confirm, legitimate, and reproduce power in the body of Western discourses on female circumcision. In this research, critical discourse analysis is a form of textual analysis that observes dominant themes surrounding the representation of gendered power relations in the body of Western discourses on female circumcision. Critical discourse analysis is the avenue by which the statements of Western states and international organizations will be methodologically examined and coded. This research design will be explored further in Chapter 3.

Delimitations

This study is bounded on the following points:

1. This study is limited to the discourse in the West and does not include the discourse by practicing cultures.
2. The variation of the discourse which include the human rights and health discourses are not covered in this study.
3. The study does not provide a historical location of the discourse in relation to any particular country or countries of practicing cultures.

Organization of the Thesis

The following chapters will allow the reader to have an overview of body of Western discourses on female circumcision sensitive to gender. Chapter One provided a background on the practice of female circumcision by referring to academic literature and documents written on the practice. A review on the origin of the practice, its cultural and traditional implications and social constraints of the uncircumcised were established. The cultural implications explaining the variation of the practice and meanings and values attached to female circumcision by practicing societies were also presented. Furthermore, an overview of the international reaction to the practice with a focus on Western states and international organizations was presented.

Also included in this chapter are research objective, research question, research rationale and the delimitation of the study. Chapter Two is a review of the literature that provides a theoretical framework on the construction of gender in the social, political, state and international spaces. There are seven sections in this chapter. The first section presents an analysis on the construction of gender at the social level by examining the ‘private’ and ‘public’ space. The second section will identify the quality of rationality as one that is masculinized. The third section expounds Western state’s masculinity in their relationship with other states. The fourth section establishes international organizations as significant actors in sustaining the nature of the discourse as one that is masculinized. The fifth section demonstrates the construction of ‘other’ subjects as feminine. The sixth section describes the masculine nature of International Relations Theory. The seventh section presents a framework that establishes the global space as masculinized. Chapter Three presents the methodology applied to conduct this research. Chapter Four deconstructs the body of

Western discourses on female circumcision based on data collected from published reports and documents. Chapter Five presents discussion of findings, strength and limitations and directions for future research.

CHAPTER II

THE REPRODUCTION OF POWER

Introduction

The general nature of body of Western discourses suggests a negative response to the practice of female circumcision. Opponents of the practice in the West emphasize the need to eradicate the practice with strong mobilizing efforts emerging from states, and international organizations. The study recognizes the nature of the discourse as one that depicts an unequal relationship between the West and female circumcision practicing cultures. The study argues that body of Western discourses on female circumcision relies on the socially constructed gender hierarchy which is also reflected in the actions and statements undertaken and issued by states and international organizations.

Based on this premise, Chapter Two provides a basic theoretical framework informing the study. It will engage the available literature that examines the construction of gender and its reproduction in the social and political spaces assuming power. Thus, system of gender hierarchy that regulate the social and political space and processes that encourage their appearance internationally are explored in this chapter.

The analysis is divided in seven parts that present key issues of relevance to the study. The first part discusses the construction of systems of gender hierarchy within the confines of social dynamics. It highlights those basic social relations around which the structure of the 'private' and 'public' are encouraged to stratify gender relations shaping the capitalist patriarchy . The second part expands on the private/public divide and draws attention to the perception on reason and rationality reflective of gender hierarchy. This part

orients the argument towards Western compositions that organize masculinized processes and representations. Thus, the third part analyzes the protector position of Western states in their interaction with other states specifying the manifestation of patterns of gender hierarchy in this relationship. The fourth part will be an overview of International Relations (IR) theory to examine the construction of masculinized political realities. The fifth part will examine the relationship between Western states and the concept 'other' to illuminate the reconstruction of a stratified relationship. An analysis of International Organizations (IO) will be included in the sixth part to highlight the recurrence of political practices encouraged through forms of gender stratification at an institutional level. The seventh part of the theoretical analysis will identify processes and activities that consent to the reproduction of system of gender hierarchy in the global space.

Gendering Social Relations

The widely-held assumption that sex determines gender roles has been instrumental in defining what it means to be a man and a woman. Social scientists, particularly feminist scholars, find the extensive applications of gender roles in social relations problematic. This is because more often than not gender is mystified, and is appropriated to fit the socially constructed understanding of 'femaleness' and 'maleness' leading to social stratification (Mies, 1986). For instance, women's responsibilities as caregivers to children and their spouse confined them to household activities that imply 'femaleness' (Grant, 1992, p.86-87). They were attributed the roles of 'motherhood' and 'housewife' on the assumption that they possess the inborn qualities and abilities to perform the "activity of nature" (Mies, 1986, p.45). Therefore, women were caretakers of the family, and of what takes place in the

domestic. Men, on the other hand, would be defined as ‘breadwinners’ with roles that included “action on external nature” (Mies, 1986, p.53 & 56).

The segregation of gender roles created what is considered feminine and masculine activities not only based on biology but also as they become the means by which division of labor were recognized (Peterson, 1992, p.42). Furthermore, these separate activities identified as ‘of nature’ and ‘on nature’ would structure two categories; dividing ‘the private’ (of nature) from ‘the public’ (on nature). Women were to be primarily located in the ‘private,’ which was unique and distinct from the ‘public,’ where men take charge and control (Mies, 1986; Peterson, 1992). Thus, the divide became instrumental for defining, locating and representing the two spheres exclusive of each other (Mies, 1986; Peterson, 1992). Most importantly, this divide concealed the “hidden reality” of the relations of power and exploitation present in this stratified gender hierarchy (Mies, 1986, p.25).

As exposed by women’s movements, the expression of the woman-man power relation in the domestic household is systematically applied in the general social and political spaces reinforcing this hierarchy (Mies, 1986). Feminist scholars maintain that the “capitalist patriarchy” bridges such “systemic connection between what is left as the private” and the “whole system of male” (Mies, 1986, p.26-27). Capitalist patriarchy is referred to as a system of male dominance which includes “the rule of husbands, of male bosses, of ruling men in most societal institutions, in politics and economics” (Mies, 1986, p. 37). It systematically perpetuates oppression and exploitation by means of “individual patriarchy” with men claiming that those matters which belong to the private should remain in the private (Mies, 1986, p.26). A case in point, while the modern state strongly opposed the raping or molestation of women it has not, until recently (and even today, reluctantly)

interfere if a man abuses his wife in the private (Mies, 1986). Earlier efforts of the modern state to distance itself from the private revealed its enhancement of “indirect violence” which feminist scholars also located in other social and political affairs of the patriarchal system (Peterson, 1992, p.45; Mies, 1986, p.28).

One of the general natures of early radical feminist criticism against the capitalist patriarchy is that it permitted the systemic control of women by men in both the private and the public spheres (Peterson, 1992). The most significant argument is that the state’s centralized authority permitted masculinity and masculine ideas to be the sole “agent of social and political organization” legitimizing a hierarchy that existed in the social order (Peterson, 1992, p.45). A critical observation of the modern state detect that the state organizes a “gendered power” and justifies relations of dominance by institutionalizing and reproducing what is already available in the social order (Peterson, 1992, p.39). For instance, laws that regulate women’s sexuality such as abortion laws reflected male principles especially as they reward men more than they do women (Peterson, 1992:39). In other words, the organization of a social order based on masculine values is applied in shaping the state. Hence, the simple “division of labor by sex” is transformed and is now “upheld by means of institutions like the patriarchal family and the state” (Mies, 1986, p. 67).

While social relations in the West were understood to reflect apparent and hidden gender power relations, revealing their presence in other societies proved some importance to feminist movements who sought the collective transformation of women. For instance, radical feminists locate the systemic male dominance in societies outside of the modern state.

Fran Hosken (1979) located its presence in populations around the world where men hold power and women are subject to subordination, including in the traditional African family.

Given the feminist identification of the structural division of private/public in the West and other societies, this section recognizes two developments at work. The first is that gender social relations organized masculinity to gain a relative advantage over femininity be it in the private (domestic) and public (social and political) space. The second development is that the construction of gender advanced further in shaping contemporary social and political systems to support genderized processes (Fleming, 1997). Furthermore, the basic arrangement of women and men within the private/public divide has preserved a direct (monitored by laws) and indirect (those that make “masculine identity the agent of social political organization”) gendered power relation (Peterson, 1992, p.37). The subsequent sections focus on indirect gendered power relations and processes believed to nourish the reproduction of power. The purpose is to identify the less apparent or what Fairclough (1989) recognizes as “hidden social structures” and give account to how they are reproduced in the body of Western discourses on female circumcision (p.40). In this context, reproduction implies the “process of being produced anew (re-produced)” which requires constant production of internalized social structures which people draw upon (Fairclough, 1989, p.39).

Masculinizing Rationality

A form of gendered power relation is observed while assessing the value given to rationality and ways of reason. For instance, femininity is observed to be associated with a lack of decision making ability while masculinity is associated with rationality (Peterson, 1992, p.8). The portrayal of gender as such sets women as “knowable” subjects and men as

“knowers” (Peterson, 1992, p.8). The ‘knowable’ were confined to the private space given that they are irrational, subordinate by nature, emotional, weak and subjective (Peterson, 1992). On the other hand, ‘knowers’ occupied the public sphere as they possess “natural” power and the capacity to rationalize, reason, hold autonomy, objectivity and political identity (Peterson, 1992: p.8-12). The distinction between the ‘knowable’ and ‘knowers’ constructed a knowledge hierarchy that recognized male rationality as the predominant “ways of knowing” (Peterson, 1992, p.39). It also allowed the development of the patriarchal state as a symbol of scientific reasoning especially as the state recognized masculine “ways of being” as essential qualities and “male-identified capacities for reasoning, abstracting, and formalizing” its social realities (Peterson, 1992, p.37-39).

It can be argued that Western intellectual tradition and reason has generally reflected the story of male subject reason; the subject being the “white, propertied, Christian, male head of household” (Benhabib, 1995, p.19). Western intellectual tradition as a subject of reason implies that, science as a “way of knowing” is constructed to denote masculinity and also as a rational superior to and exclusive of that which was marked as “female/nature/feminine” (Peterson, 1992, p.40). This conclusion is not surprising considering that the development of science and technology were taken as “production forces” that liberated men from nature including women (Mies, 1986, p.75).

The construction of science as masculine does not necessarily exclude women from the rational world. However, it conveys that ‘feminine’ forms of knowing are rejected and dismissed. Women would be allowed in the public sphere as long as they “become like men” or “surrender their femininity” (Peterson, 1992: 45; Shepherd, 2006:24). Enloe (1989) argues that the “political arena is a sphere for men only, or for those rare women who can

successfully play at being men, or at least not shake masculine presumptions” (p.13).

Accordingly, masculinity is shaped to symbolize rationality and is reconstructed as scientific, marginalizing everything that is considered feminine, and thereby creating a hierarchy between masculinity and femininity. This analysis proposes that the masculinization of rationality is one explanation as to how the voices of those that are deemed to be unscientific or culturally-bound are absent or are silenced in the discourse on female circumcision.

Masculinizing Western States

An analysis of Western states relationship with other states also reveals the reproduction of gender oriented unequal relationships. This is because, in general Western states tend to adopt the role of the ‘protector’ outlining a division between those that are ‘protected’ and the ‘protector’. When closely scrutinized this relationship reveals the recurrence of patterns of gender hierarchy. The protected-protector relationship finds its root in what Peterson (1992) referred to as “protection rackets” which include selection of marriage for protection, and state offered economic and privacy securities (p.50-53).

The protection rackets have in them powerfully gendered and effectively mystified hierarchies of protector-protected dichotomy. For instance, the protector role is reflected as a “masculine autonomy” and the protected as a “feminine dependency” (Enloe, 1989, p.12; Peterson, 1992, p.54). Western states demonstrated the protector role in its unique form in their international relationships. Just as a “real man” assumes the role to defend the weak woman against the “dangerous world” (Enloe, 1989, p.12), the modern patriarchal state will ‘speak and act for’ states of inferior social and political status (Youngs, 2006, p.5). As such, the protector role is mostly associated with symbols of “freedom and control” while the

protected symbolizes “passivity and vulnerability” (Peterson, 1992, p.54). Such is the case with female circumcision where countries such as the United States “develop prevention and response strategies” so that “vulnerable populations” can be protected and guided (U.S. Department of States, 2008, p.14). It is more or less a relationship of “man-the-sovereign” providing for “woman-the-liege” (De Beauvoir, 1953: xxi). Nayak (2006) refers to this relationship as “*infantilization*”; a discursive process whereby certain groups are represented as “vulnerable, helpless and backward children” (p.48).

Another important point is that, the frequent acclamation of political strength and power by the U.S. created a self-characterization which represents the nation as masculine (Shepherd, 2006). Through the conceptualization of values such as freedom as due values of the “civilized world” exceeding values of the uncivilized, it formulated its own importance (Shepherd, 2006, p.31). In general “protection systems” position the protected as dependents that cannot choose to defend themselves especially as they justify power, maintain boundaries and hierarchies, and “reproduce non- participatory dynamics” (Peterson, 1992, p.52). If sameness is claimed between the protected and protector (which sometimes is the case), it is through “perpetuating the illusion of equality (Peterson, 1992, p.51). In view of that, series of categories such as the “civilized/uncivilized, rational/irrational, developed/undeveloped” will be established, once again reflecting the private/public divide and a discourse that declares Western superiority (Youngs, 2006, p.9).

Masculinizing International Relations Theory

An examination of Western states interpretation of the world also reveals the framing of a gendered world reality. This study identifies that, by excluding women’s perception of

the world and their social and political experiences, the patriarchal state carried the gender hierarchy dialogue internationally (Grant and Newland, 1991). Central to this claim is International Relations (IR) theory which puts forward assumptions of how the world should be organized.

Work in IR has disclosed the way in which political realities are constructed emphasizing the “male as its political actors,” thus relying on old traditions that predestined women to the private (Grant and Newland, 1991, p.9). Critics of mainstream approaches in international relations recognize the limitations of the theoretical work by pointing out that much of IR theory has been constructed solely by men as men perceive the world (Grant and Newland, 1991). This observation is crucial considering that IR presents the state as one of the significant actors in the international system (Sassen, 2007:7). Thus, the state develops into an important actor by producing “powerful and influential statements” settled within the “masculine context” constrained from feminine realities (Youngs, 2006, p.7).

This critical research establishes that when international relations theory interprets the world, it does so by manifesting the “characteristics of men,” considering that it draws knowledge from the experience of men (Grant and Newland, 1991, p.9; Whitworth, 2000). Feminist analysis insists on the absence, marginalization and exclusion of women’s interest and voices from the rational and practice of IR theory (Youngs, 2006). Exclusion of women from rational thinking is systematic in that instead of completely removing women it restricts their full appearance by encouraging their existence within “masculinist settings” (Youngs, 2006, p.8). At times, this exclusion is intentional since there is a preconception that women “confront the context of patriarchal realities” (Youngs 2006, p.6).

If, in fact, “experience is the source of our knowledge” then it can be argued that

knowledge in international relations theory is largely based on the experiences of only one gender (Grant and Newland, 1991, p.2; Peterson, 1992). The experience of only one gender effectively means that there is an application of partial knowledge, based on the masculine experience, in interpreting and understanding the social and political realities of the world. The application of partial knowledge is evident when one observes the “language of international politics” which indicates “a strong conventional masculine content” (Halliday, 1991, p.158).

Consequently, the “objective” associated with masculinity is further emphasized, highlighting the relevance of scientific reasoning, and establishing a hierarchy in the “ways of knowing” considered important for the state and its interpretation of the world (Peterson 1992, p.39). A similar privileging of *scientific* and *objective* reasoning is found in the discourse surrounding female circumcision, where certain interpretations of the practice are favored over others in international discourse.

Feminizing the Other

An analysis on the construction of new subjects is the focus of this section. Processes that construct new subjects include activities that exclude and sort based on external differences and those that constitute power (Butler, 1995). This study establishes a link between the unique masculine representations that emerge as women of the modern world meet Other women. This link is an important reminder that women of the “modern capitalist patriarchy” remain at the center of the dynamics in enforcing expressions of gender divide and raising it to a new level (Mies, 1986). A return to the colonial period reveals part of this reality.

With the colonial contact, two types of women emerged; those with “domesticated nature” associated with the capitalist patriarch, whose status changed to that of “ladies”, and colonized women with a “savage nature” (Mies, 1986, p.95 & 69). In other words, the location of women in the modern state allowed them to assume a better position to that of women of the colonies (Mies, 1986, p.95). In essence, an inequality between women of the colonizer and women of the colonized, reflected the appropriation of separate identity of ‘us’ verses the “backward foreigner” (Mies, 1986, p.74). In this way, women in the West established ‘the civilized’ as themselves and ‘the savage’ as the ‘Other.’ In the sense that it is explained by Simone de Beauvoir (1953) ‘Otherness’ is a category formed of human thought that sets up the Self as essential as opposed to the inessential other (p.xvii). It is imperative to be familiar with the dissected identities as they continue to convey the construction of relationships imbedded with power.

hooks (1984) argues that even though women in the West struggled against the social structure that subjugated them, they believed in the value system of their own society. Central to this value system is science. With the development of the patriarchal society, women in the West recognized science as rational and “inseparable from and mutually supportive of the social transformations in modern state formation” (Peterson, 1992, p.39). It appeared that they succumbed to “male values and identities” which they themselves identified as the creation of patriarchal power (Youngs, 2006, p.8). Western women’s belief in the value system of science is a demonstration that they continue to operate in a world that belongs to men (De Beauvoir, 1953, p.xxi). What was projected was that, women in the West will construct ‘the civilized’ as themselves and ‘the savage’ as the Other unreflectively

in their discourses. According to Fairclough (1989), the discourse on the Other mounts to a legitimization of a “power relations without being conscious of doing so” (p.41).

The acceptance of science as the rational to modern society was particularly evident in feminist movements that encouraged the reform of women’s position in society.

However, as women relied on their own society’s value system, they also developed a bias against other value systems and representations. This bias can be traced back to the history of women’s movement that shaped the discourse of inequality around the issue of body politics. As it stands, the discourse of body politics with the slogan “the personal is political”, brought to women’s attention by women’s movements, encouraged women to openly speak about their intimate relationships and also acknowledge the “lack of knowledge about their bodies (Mies, 1986, p.25). Although the movements marked unity by exposing the common experience of women in the West, the effort to apply a similar objective proved weak. The universal identification of solidarity of women (Buttler, 1995) or what Enloe (1989) mocks as the “personal relationships have been internationalized” can be recognized as one that enforced exclusion (p. 196). For instance, while implying a “common oppression” and “shared victimization” with the Other, feminist activists distinguished a relationship between the cultured woman and the scientific woman (hooks, 1984, p.5-8). In most cases, feminist thought dominated women related discourse by practically blocking new and different explanations (hooks, 1984, p.9). Even the notion of “sisterhood” was informed with a sense of resistance towards those ideas considered “outside the chosen sphere” (hooks, 1984, p.46). When a somehow successful inclusion of the Other occurs, the representation was controlled and manipulated (hooks, 1984).

As a direct reference to this study, the feminist activist and writer Fran Hosken seems to contribute in the construction of the Other by denouncing cultural practices and depicting other women as “people who do not know any better” (Hosken, 1979, p.1). In her analysis of feminist writing, Chandra T. Mohanty (1984) notes this limitation as a politicized relation of power (p.334). She argues that when western women self-identify as “educated, modern, having control over their own bodies and sexualities, and the freedom to make their own decision” they are indeed exercising power through a discourse (Mohanty, 1984, p. 336-337).

It is important to note that, the unique status Western women achieved as they came into contact with other women are a partial account of the construction of the Other. Therefore, it is important to reflect on the other actor; the capitalist patriarchy. The contribution of the capitalist patriarchy in this process is two-fold. The first is that, in its contact with other cultures, the capitalist patriarchy celebrated its achievement for creating the most civilized citizens over and above all other ‘savage’ and ‘barbaric’ systems (Peterson, 1992). The self-assertion furnished the construction of “certain parts of the world as “nature, savage, uncontrolled and...open for exploitation and civilizing efforts” (Mies 1986, p.68). It determined the cultural and political inferiority of the colonized and therefore urged the need to enforce its language, perspective and way of life on the savage (Anzaldúa, 1990, p.143). In general, the capitalist patriarchy dealings with the colonies reflected elements of control and domination and also the neutralization of civilization of the colonies (Anzaldúa, 1990).

The second process is that in “knowing the Other” the capitalist patriarchy continued to protect what it established to be true regarding the Self ensuring the portrayal of its own

values as a benefit to “traditionalist people” (Nayak, 2006, p. 46; Shepherd, 2006, p.33). They included values such as “civilization’, ‘progresses, ‘security’ ” embodied in masculine behavior (Enloe, 1989, p.200). Thus, the encounter with the Other endorsed the gendering process through the distinction of the Other and as one that also represents Western states as masculine and non-western states as feminine.

Masculinizing International Organizations

To recall, section one specified that masculine and feminine activities paved the way for the significant distinction of social relations; those that exist inside and those “outside of the family” (Peterson, 1992, p.42). However, it is not as such the separation of inside and outside activities but what has become of them that has been the focus of critique on gender relation. For instance, the source of gender inequality in the West is recognized as a divide between the ‘private’ and the ‘public’. Feminists argue that this divide is created by social and political processes that are maintained in the national.

This study builds upon the previous observations to include the role international organizations play. The study recognizes international organizations to be carriers of the private/public divide as they are “also involved in promoting and sustaining assumptions around gender relations” (Whitworth, 2000, p.97). Normal Fairclough’s theory (1989) on institutional power suggests that “institutional practices which people draw upon without thinking often embody assumptions which directly or indirectly legitimize existing power relations” (p. 33). States are significant actors worth considering when studying the outcome of state behavior (Raven-Roberts, 2005). In terms of international organizations, they assist in outlining an environment where generally acceptable behaviors are carried out globally.

For instance, similar to national governments, they decide what is important (Raven-Roberts, 2005). They socialize states to values suitable to international community by defining states “appropriate action” (Boyle, 2002, p.13). They also propose internationally shared social and political concerns and encourage a collective solution (Boyle, 2002, p.13).

The observation of international organizations suggests a complex interplay between “local” and “international” considerations (Boyle, 2002, p.14). By implication, they play roles in “promoting and sustaining assumptions around gender relations” (Raven-Roberts, 2005, p.93-94). Considering the masculine nature of Western states, this analysis suggests the recurrence of ‘masculine’ favoritism in structuring and in channeling political realities in international organizations.

Masculinizing the Global Space

An examination of the global outlook is necessary considering the emphasis given to the practice of female circumcision as one that needs a special reflection in complimenting processes of global transformation. At the center of the global outlook is the global space, more or less institutionalized, stimulating the global discourse as gendered. This section reflects on the observation that gender intimately shapes political spaces and also constructs identities (Shepherd, 2006).

To begin with, the use of the term ‘global’ at any level requires an evaluation. In most accounts it has forced an illusion of uniform representations when partial interpretations are ensured through gender mediated processes (Marchand and Runyan, 2000). Application of terminologies such as “global efforts,” “global awareness,” “global community,” and “global goal” presents the interpretation as one that is concerted when only

masculine representations are allowed (Department for International Development 2007, UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre 2006, U.S. Department of States 2008, World Health Organization, 2008). The global space also is inherently gendered holding qualities that “fostered, reified and perpetuated” inequalities reflective of the historical construction of gender (Marchand, 2000: p. 219). However, to embark upon the global space as one that reflects a gendered nature requires an investigation on processes that transpire in the global space.

One process that this study identifies is globalization. Globalization is referred to in a number of different ways. This study defines it as a set of global processes influenced by complex and dynamic elements of social structures, practices and institutions involving the interaction of multiple national and global actors (Sassen, 2007). In her analysis on globalization, Peterson (2002) observes it to reflect mainstream accounts indicating its gendered nature (2). Processes of globalization convey values of “certain social institutions, actors, practices and processes” considered masculine marginalizing the feminine (Marchand, 2000, p.12). Its features reflect the continued process of “capitalist racialized patriarchy” in such a way that it “denigrates identities and activities deemed ‘feminine’ ” (Peterson, 2002, p.4).

Additionally, accessibility of the global space depends on whether one holds an “image of power” or is limited by the lack of it (Marchand, 2000, p.218). In this sense, power depicts the masculine and feminine representations. Reflecting on Bob Connell, Marchand (2000) argues that in most situations “hegemonic (Western) masculinity” is accepted as more powerful in global interactions (p.221). The concept of hegemony is crucial as it explains a form of unnoticed power asserted by a powerful group over a group

that does not have power in a subtle way that the non-dominant group unknowingly consents to being dominated (Gramsci 1949/1992). Within the feminist framework, hegemonic masculinity is a “socially constructed cultural idea that, while it does not correspond to the actual personality of the majority of men, sustains patriarchal authority and legitimizes a patriarchal political and social order” (Tickner, 1992, p 6). Hence, hegemonic masculinity permits a “cultural dynamic by which a group claims and sustains a leading position” that recognizes “some correspondence between cultural ideal and institutional power” and “the successful claim to authority” (Marchand, 2000, p.221). Through processes of globalization, the global space is recognized to favor masculine values “as opposed to other ‘feminized domains’ ” (Marchand, 2000, p.219).

Accordingly, this research identifies two important progresses in the construction of gender and with it the expression of power inside the global space. The first is recognized when ‘masculinized’ processes are favored over feminized ones through values given to technology, science, rationality or expertise (Marchand, 2000). The second progress is identified as certain masculine and feminine representations are favored over other types of representations. We note these progresses when one group/state “cultural, racial, ethnic, national, familial identities, roles and relations” are defined as unique from others (Marchand & Runyan, 2000:1). Both progresses are important in analyzing how ‘older forms’ of gender relations are shouldered and reconstructed once again within the global discourse while creating ‘new’ ones (Marchand & Runyan, 2000).

Also important is the recognition of new “subjectivities, identities and relations” and the “reconstitution of gender and racial ideologies which serve to justify as well as naturalize the ‘new’ and the ‘old’ inequalities” (Marchand & Runyan, 2000). Therefore, the global

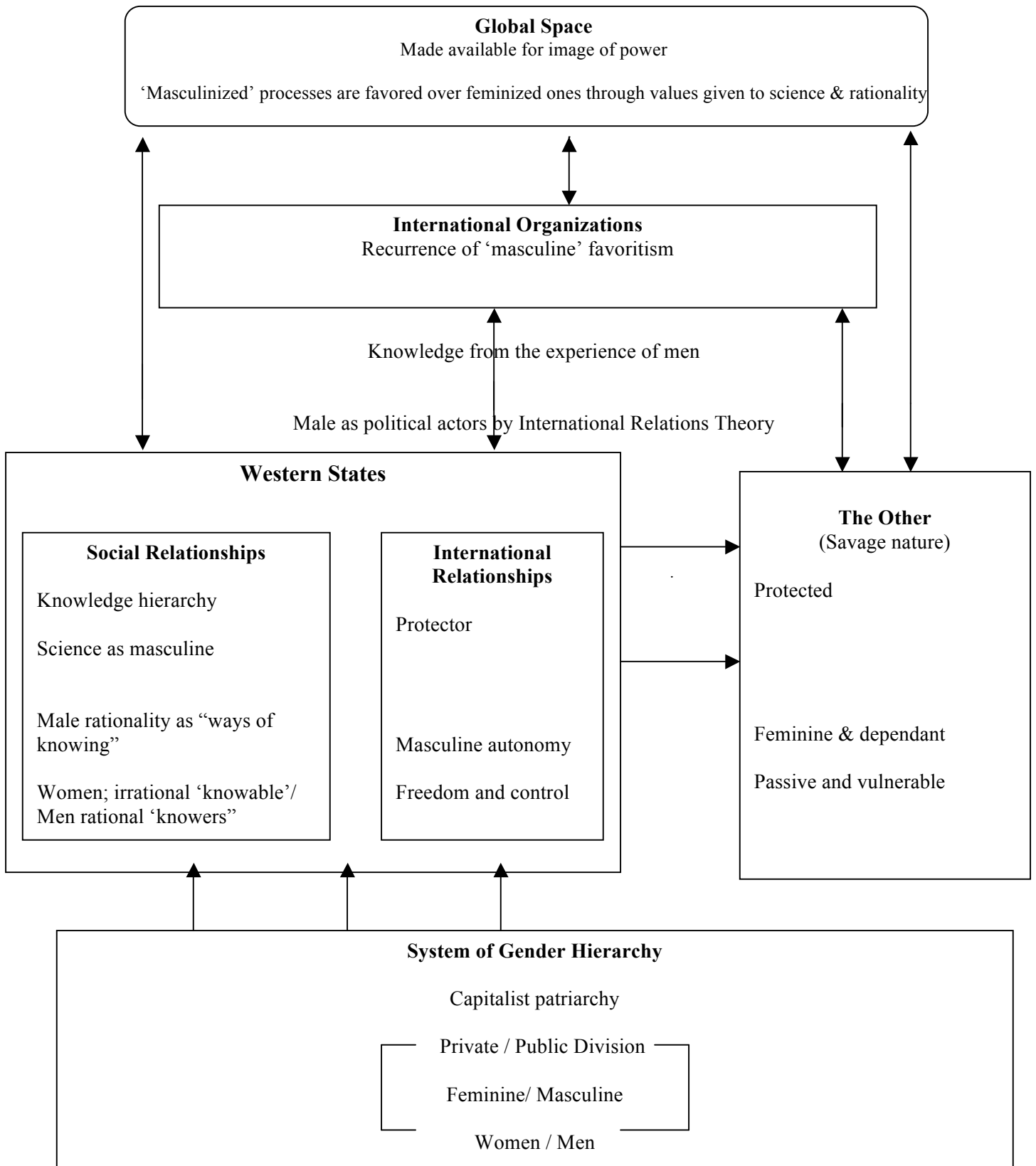
space permits the discourses to reflect “relations of domination” in the form of “gendered symbolism and metaphors” which this research aims to identify as the reproduction of gender power hierarchy at the global level (Marchand, 2000, p.12). For instance, the value given to international orientation (usually supported by scientific rationale) rather than the local/ domestic (at times dependent on culture oriented explanations) is one that reproduces a power relation (Marchand, 2000).

Conclusion

Chapter Two laid-out elements of gender hierarchy in the social and political spaces. By highlighting seven inter-related parts it exposed conditions and processes that influence the reproduction of power relations. The first part examined the system of gender hierarchy which holds elements of the private- public divide and representations of feminine and masculine activities. The second part recognized the influence of this divide as it facilitated the construction of knowledge hierarchy by accepting science and rationality as masculine. The third part established the masculinization of Western states as they maintained the position of the protector in their interaction with other states especially those assumed to hold savage nature. The fourth part concluded that the favor to knowledge originating from the experience of men by the theory of International Relations revealed the exercise of a masculine power. The fifth part conveyed the contribution of women of the modern world and the capitalist patriarchy in the construction of women of the colonized and then the cultured as the feminized Other. The activities of International Organizations are examined in the sixth part. Similar to observation on previous sections, this section showed the

recurrence of masculine favoritism. The final part demonstrated the reproduction of power in the masculinized global space with processes such as globalization playing a role.

Figure 1. Outline of the Theoretical Framework



CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The goal of this research is to investigate how body of Western discourses on female circumcision draws on the system of gender hierarchy that divides the social and political space into a private and a public sphere, which are transformed into expressions of power through discourse. Chapter One was the first step in achieving this goal. The chapter introduced female circumcision and provided a general account of Western reactions to the practice. Chapter Two provided a literature review of theoretical assumptions that address the construction of gender hierarchy in social and political spaces and its reproduction influencing the body of Western discourses. The current chapter explains the methodological approach adopted to carry out the study. It also introduces selected documents and demonstrates how data is analyzed.

Methodology

This research applies a gender based critical discourse analysis. Critical discourse analysis (CDA) will be understood as the deconstruction of the meaning of texts within the context of the social processes with which they appear (Georgakopoulou & Goutsos, 2004: Locke, 2004). CDA as a tool is chosen to evaluate and adequately produce insights into the way social practices, structures and relationships are constructed into reality through discourse (Georgakopoulou & Goutsos, 2004: Locke, 2004, Merrigan & Huston 2009). The main justification for selecting CDA as a methodology is because the approach indicates an important relationship between language and society (Wodak & Meyer 2009). Language is

an integral attribute of society and is a produce of social processes and practices in the form of discourse (Fairclough, 1989; 23). In addition to its occurrence in “social conditions of production” such as written and spoken texts, discourse amounts to “conditions of interpretation” constrained by socially determined structures (Fairclough, 1989; 25-26). Social determination implies what Foucault (1972), explains as the controlled production, selection, organization and redistribution of what can be said based on procedures of *exclusion* and *prohibition* revealing the exercise of power in discourse (216).

CDA is unique in its reflection on the “mediation between language and social structures” through the application of theories especially those that deal with systemic power relations (Merrigan & Huston 2009; Wodak & Meyer 2009). This study focuses on one particular social structure; gender hierarchy. To recall, this thesis argues that the body of Western discourses on female circumcision draws on the system of gender hierarchy that divides the social and political space into both a private and a public sphere, and then transforms it into an expression of power. This research assumes that Western body of discourses on female circumcision reproduces the power relations embedded in the socially constructed gender hierarchy. The assumption specifies an intimate link between the structure of gender hierarchy and the discourse on female circumcision. It also indicates that power relations are maintained as power is reconstructed influencing the nature of the discourse. An argument was already established in Chapter Two through the application of feminist international relations theories which recognized gender as a key variable that controls the discourse. Western states and international organizations will be considered as units that frame the discourse, reproducing and sustaining the gendered discourse on female circumcision.

The study seeks to deconstruct body of Western discourses on female circumcision. The most useful activity in deconstructing a discourse is to conduct a textual analysis (Merrigan & Huston 2009). Textual analysis is an opportunity to reveal the discourse mediated relationship between social structures and text (Fairclough, 1989, 140). The most important element of textual analysis requires the recognition of texts as reflections of social assumptions that can easily be interpreted and incorporated within particular power relations (Fairclough, 1989; 141). Accordingly, evidence is sought through textual analysis to accomplish the deconstruction of the discourse on female circumcision. The study will carefully analyze written texts, including policies and reports, published by states and international organizations in order to assess the claim that international discourse is gendered. This review of documents will allow examining the kind of language deployed, the context of the texts, and the ways in which the texts are framed in policies and reports that address female circumcision.

Data Analysis

The data analysis incorporates source documents such as, policies, reports, and official statements released by states and international organizations. The study examines the most consulted documents readily available. The documents are selected because they are considered official statements influencing and guiding the international discourse on female circumcision. The following ten documents are considered for analysis; The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Policy on FGM published in 2000, the 2004 Global Health Strategy for Female Genital Cutting report and the CRS Report for Congress on International Violence Against Women: US Response and Policy Issues

published in 2008. The UK Department for International Development (DFID) issues paper of 1998 and the progress report of 2007 will also be analyzed to highlight the pattern of current discourse in the UK. The documents from the US and UK will be used to demonstrate if states rely on information that reflects larger patterns of ‘social realities’ such as scientific knowledge. The analysis of these documents will help highlight how gendered power relation is maintained as Western states assume the role of ‘the protector’ over ‘vulnerable’ practicing cultures.

With regards to international organizations, the study examines the 1997 and 2008 joint statements released by the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP). The 2000 and 2008 WHO Fact Sheets will also be analyzed. These documents are used as evidence to explore the recurrence of gendered representations as these international organizations also prioritize the interpretation of the practice on a discourse that privilege Western knowledge.

In addition, the study analyzes the 1979 Fran Hosken Report. This report is selected as an important example for the way earlier discourse drew from the system of gender hierarchy especially that practicing women are constructed as victims of the patriarchal system. The Fran Hosken Report is a key document that influenced the nature of the discourse creating social and political reactions in the United States and internationally. Finally, secondary sources in the form of academic literature that give account to information on the practice of female circumcision will be reviewed to support arguments. Other academic documents that will identify the historical location of the discourse such as the discourse of the first international reaction to the practice are also examined.

Background on Data Source

USAID, the independent federal government agency which advances U.S. foreign policy, published the 2000 USAID policy. The 2004 Global Health Strategy for Female Genital Cutting is a report published by the Bureau for Global Health (GH); an operating unit of USAID which provides technical support and strategic planning. The Congressional Research Service (CRS) which provides policy and legal analysis exclusively for the US congress published the 2008 US Response and Policy on International Violence Against Women. However, the following names from Foreign Affairs, Defense and Trade Division are associated with this particular report; Luisa Blanchfield, Coordinator, Rhoda Margesson, Clare Ribando Seelke, Tiaji Salaam-Blyther, and Nina M. Serafino. Information on the background of the individuals could not be acquired.

DFID is a British government department responsible for promoting development and the reduction of poverty. It works closely with multilateral agencies, the World Bank, the European Union, and the United Nations. With regards to DFID' Issues paper of 1998 and the Progress Report of 2007, information on persons associated with the production of these reports and information on the process of the production of the report could not be found.

The 1997 and 2008 joint statements are publications of the WHO. While the 1997 document presented joint statements of UNICEF, UNFPA and UNDP the 2008 expanded by documenting wider United Nations support and adding new information on the practice of female circumcision. Although there are no individuals directly related with the publication of these documents, the 2008 document statement refers to the work of some researchers

such as Gruenbaum E, Hernlund Y, Obermeyer, and Shell-Duncan which this study also reviewed.

The Fran Hosken Report is written by feminist activist Fran Hosken who was also a journalist. The report presents case studies that are written based on the field work on female circumcision practicing countries in Africa and the Middle East. Hosken was also a temporary advisor on the practice to the WHO.

Data Analysis Procedures

As described in Chapter One and Chapter Two, the theoretical framework for this research is the critical exposure of the reproduction of gendered power relations. The seven important elements informing the study explained through the theoretical framework in Chapter Two, guided the data analysis of the ten selected documents. The data documents were analyzed focusing on sentences where an implicit or explicit appearance of these elements was observed. *Labeling* was the first phase in this process where several handwritten notes were made. The labels were used as markers in the data documents to indicate where an observation was made on concepts of gender, power, rationality, science, knowledge and ways of being. Once this process was completed, sentences were extracted and put for a further analysis. A total of 94 sentences were extracted initially which were later sorted out based on key arguments made under each element. For instance, the argument “Accordingly, masculinity is shaped to symbolize rationality and is reconstructed as scientific, marginalizing everything that is considered feminine, thereby creating a hierarchy between masculinity and femininity” from the section on *masculinizing rationality* was used when examining the value given to rationality and ways of reason in statements.

Examining arguments established under the seven elements helped identify sentences in the data documents that address the arguments. During this process an observation was made that while some sentences were explicit others had less observable concepts that pertain to the research question. This observation helped to the second phase of the data analysis that applied the use of a manual color coding and grouping which resulted in theme naming. At the initial stage of naming of themes, key concepts were used directly from the theoretical framework. For instance, masculinizing rationality was used which was then renamed as *controlled interpretation*. A constant renaming was applied with the need to accurately reflect all instances under each element. Naming of themes was taken from actual words in statements or informed by my knowledge of literature in feminism, international development, sociology and anthropology. For instance, the theme *control through knowledge* was used because of the overwhelmingly recurring referent made to knowledge. In contrast, certain themes such as *hegemonic masculinity* were named when statements have an affinity to the theoretical framework for the study.

Perhaps it is important to describe the process used to distinguish statements that pertain to social and political processes of the global space. This arrangement was made considering the analysis made on the broad concept of the *global space* which highlighted two progresses discussed in Chapter Two. The key action at this phase was coding two categories; ‘*processes*’ and ‘*activities*’. Once the categories were coded, statements of *global* content were investigated guided by the theoretical framework. During this process ten subcategories emerged which were then reduced to six based on relevancy and for avoidance of redundancy. A similar process of manual color coding and grouping was applied in locating the categories which resulted with the need to add clarity to the categories. Hence,

the categories were refined to themes. This process helped identify statements relevant to the research and most importantly examine the statements for a more detailed interpretation. The result of the data analysis was the emergence of 12 themes presented and discussed under Section One and Section Two in Chapter Four.

Conclusion

Chapter Three introduced the processes involved in conducting the study. It identified CDA as the methodology in performing this study. It explained why this methodology is selected highlighting the strength of CDA to effectively demonstrate the relationship between construction of social structure and their transformation into reality through the use of language. This chapter also identified textual analysis as its key procedure in providing evidence on the reproduction of gender hierarchy in the discourse of female circumcision by specifying documents from the US and UK. It also provided background information on the data sources and the procedures of the data analysis.

CHAPTER IV
DECONSTRUCTING THE BODY OF WESTERN DISCOURSES ON FEMALE
CIRCUMCISION

Introduction

This chapter presents the deconstruction of the body of Western discourses on female circumcision and reveals the discourse as a manifestation of gender power relations. To recall, the theoretical framework in Chapter Two discussed the construction of gender and its application in the reproduction of power using an early feminist scholar analysis of gender relations. It clearly outlined systems of gender hierarchy and processes that influence the reproduction of power relations at various levels. Expanding on this analysis, this chapter will examine the reproduction of power not only through actions but as they are discursively constructed by Western states and International Organizations (IO). Accordingly, an analysis based on documents and policies of the US, UK, IO and the Hosken Report will be presented. Throughout this chapter the term “the practice” will be used to refer to female circumcision.

This chapter has two sections. The first section is organized by themes that emerged when reviewing statements of the data documents. The themes support the theoretical models discussed in Chapter Two to distinguish the ways gender hierarchy is maintained and how power is deployed in a discourse. The themes evoke the relationship between discourse and power expressed in the form of rational and scientific knowledge. Hence, the expressions of value of rationality, science, and knowledge are scrutinized within the themes. First, the theme on controlled interpretations is examined followed by control through

knowledge, imposed values, imposed assumptions and controlled strategies. Powered expertise and powered leadership themes will be explained consecutively.

Also divided in themes, the second section focuses on the body of Western discourses recognizing mainstream accounts, values, images and ways of being that reproduce masculinized processes and activities using the global space. Similar to the first section, the themes in this section also reflect the theoretical models discussed in Chapter Two. Accordingly, themes on repressed views, language in structuring knowledge based process, projection of ways of knowing and ways of being, strategic framing of common language through education and the amalgamation of scientific discourse will be presented.

Section One

Controlled Interpretations

A consistent rejection to the practice's cultural justification is observed especially against its acceptance as a cultural norm. The most common tenor of the body of Western discourses depicts culture as an inadequate reason to carry out the practice. It appears that there is an urge to find a good reason, which could not be satisfied by a simple cultural explanation, as to why this practice exists. For instance, the US Bureau for Global Health (2004) strategy emphasizes that "FGC is done for many complex and poorly understood reasons; it is a deeply rooted cultural practice (p.7). IO perception is "...Where female genital mutilation is widely practiced, it is supported by both men and women, usually without question (World Health Organization, 2008, p.5). The body of Western discourses on female circumcision slights the practice's culturally-oriented explanations on the basis that they do not pertain to scientific rationale. Arguably, there is an implication that culture based logic diminishes the needed critical thinking in adequately explaining the practice.

This view on cultural explanations is revealed as one that successfully reproduces power, especially in that it is fully consumed by scientific explanation. This is particularly evident in statements that interpret the practice;

Excerpt 1

Female Genital Cutting (FGC) is the name given to traditional practices that involve the partial or total cutting away of the female external genitalia and/or other injury to the female genitals, whether for cultural or non-therapeutic reasons (Bureau for Global Health; United States Agency for International Development Strategy for Female Genital Cutting (FG), 2004, p.1).

Excerpt 2

The term “female genital mutilation”refers to all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons (Eliminating Female genital mutilation: An interagency statement OHCHR, UNAIDS, UNDP, UNECA, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNIFEM,WHO, 2008, p.1).

Excerpt 3

Female genital mutilation (FGM), often referred to as “female circumcision”, comprises all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs whether for cultural, religious or other non-therapeutic reasons (WHO Fact Sheet N241, June 2000).

Excerpt 4

Female genital mutilation comprises all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs whether for cultural or other non-therapeutic reasons (Female genital mutilation: A Joint WHO/UNICEF/UNFPA statement, 1997: p.3).

Excerpt 5

Female genital mutilation has no known health benefits. On the contrary, it is known to be harmful to girls and women in many ways. First and foremost, it is painful and traumatic. The removal of or damage to healthy, normal genital tissue interferes with the natural functioning of the body and causes several immediate and long-term health consequences (Eliminating Female genital mutilation: An interagency statement OHCHR, UNAIDS, UNDP, UNECA, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNIFEM, WHO, 2008, p.1).

The excerpts above show the application of terms that normalize science as a rational. It is important to note that the interpretations equate the process of removing the female genitalia with “*injury*” and refer to it as “*non-medical or non-therapeutic*,” thus, portraying the practice as one that lacks scientific rationale. Excerpt 5 demonstrates that a negative scientific evaluation of “*no known health benefits*” is established considering it affects the “*normal*” body. Western states and IO interpret the practice based on their own reality, which extends to the control of how the practice is described. As Western states and IO describe the practice using their own reality, they legitimize the exercise of a discursive power through a controlled interpretation.

Given that the interpretations are redundant with regards to the statements coming from the US and IO, they also reinforce the credibility of scientific interpretations of the practice. Most importantly, as scientific interpretations are applied continuously, an implicit dismissal of cultural elucidations takes place. In fact, the recognition to science as rationality is discursively constructed creating a hierarchy of knowledge essentially retaining science as the dominant way of knowing.

In a similar vein, a scientific rationale is also applied in describing the people who perform the circumcision. For instance, Hosken (1979) portrays them as “illiterate old women with no knowledge of anatomy” (Medical Facts and Summary, p. 1). The US and IO also describe these individuals as “medically untrained person – often an older woman” who uses “a variety of instruments, ranging from a scalpel to a piece of glass” or as “female traditional practitioner with crude instruments” (2004 US strategy, p.6; WHO Fact Sheet N241, 2000). In essence, these peoples’ cognition is recognized as less competent especially that they use primitive instruments to carry out the practice.

In view of the analysis made on the interpretation of the practice and the description of the people, the reproduction of power is evident particularly as science is used to mediate the practice. The value of science is embodied and naturalized continuously in the body of Western discourses to the point where it has become the dominant interpretation of the practice. In effect, the conceptualization of the practice in scientific rationale validates the automatic dismissal of cultural explanations in its entirety. By the dismissal of cultural explanations, an authoritative power is exercised as Western states and IO give mere consideration to what fits within their view of the world.

Control Through Knowledge

The belief and recognition of science as a knowledge that adheres to logic is further revealed when some Western feminist discourse on female circumcision is examined. The following excerpt from the report by the late feminist activist Fran Hosken (1979) illustrates that notion;

Excerpt 6:

The operations are practiced by people who do not know any better, and are wholly ignorant of the biological facts (Personal View, p. 1)

Excerpt 7:

In the traditional environment, people are convinced of the necessity of the operations;...What is related here below may seem full of fanciful imagination. It is essential to keep in mind that this is the reality for the people involved, who have no access to what we know to be the biological facts of life (The reason given, p.1)

The conception of science central to knowledge is evident in the use of the phrase “*the biological facts*” in the two extracts. Based on the term “*wholly ignorant*” remark, the distinct construction of identities of *us* and the *backward other* (Mies, 1986, p.74) is

maintained. Pertinent to the construction of identities is the phrase “*who have no access to what we know*” which emphasizes the identification of the self as a source of authentic knowledge. The two extracts demonstrate a stereotypical construction of the practice as an external logic to knowledge. There also is an allusion that “*traditional environment*” is a barrier to rational and logical thinking. In fact, an unfavourable description is given to the African traditional system as a whole;

Excerpt 8:

In the African village system, the Chiefs and Elders who make the decisions, including when circumcision is to take place, are of course, always men. Women do not take part in the decisions, but they are compelled to follow the man-made rules (Hosken, Introduction/Case Histories, 1979, p.6).

Excerpt 9:

Tradition in rural Africa means the subordination of the individual to the family group, which is ruled by a man who makes all the decisions and it demands the subordination of the families to the collective village life, where all decisions are made by the elders and chiefs, who with a few exceptions are always men. (Introduction/Case Histories, 1979, p.7).

It is evident that tradition is framed as a system of domination used especially to subordinate women. With tradition at play, women of practicing culture are constructed as powerless subjects who are forced to adhere to the rules of the practice dictated by men. The interpretation of tradition as a subordinating mechanism determines the practice as a display of inequality of women and men as explained by radical feminists. The negative assumption surrounding village system is one that allowed radical feminists such as Hosken (1979) to identify herself as a liberated woman. This self-identification leads to their assertion in transforming the livelihood of women of practicing culture;

Excerpt 10:

We are able to teach those who cling to distorted beliefs and damaging practices some better ways to cope with themselves, their lives, reproduction and sexuality. We know that everyone on this earth has the capacity to learn (Hosken, 1997, Forward p. 2).

Excerpt 11:

I believe that there is a fundamental obligation on the part of all of us who have access to information, who are aware of the biological and sexual facts, to share what we know, and make this knowledge available to all who need it so desperately (Hosken, 1997: OUTLOOK Women and Health, p. 11).

The propositions made to “*teach*” and “*share what we know*” with an emphasis to having the “*ability*” and “*obligation*” reveals the ambition to liberate. The sentences indicate the integration of power in a discourse around knowledge with a claim to the authenticity of Western knowledge. The contrasting image of “*we are able to*” with “*distorted beliefs and damaging practices*,” is made indicating an ownership to power which originates from having “*better ways*” through knowledge of “*biological and sexual facts*.”

Therefore, beyond the liberating effort lies a strenuous attempt to civilize by making the “*knowledge available*” to continue decision-making through a rationalized and calculated manner. Furthermore, civilizing efforts are directed with a presupposition that practicing cultures lag-behind the scientifically developed West;

Excerpt 12:

There is simply no excuse, given the present state of communication technology, to tolerate the confusion, the terrible harm, the disruption and destruction created by ignorance about sex (Hosken 1997, Forward p.2).

A reference is made to science as a ‘*state of communication technology* and tradition as *disruption and destruction ...by ignorance.*’ It is certain that this statement enforces the

knowable/knower division constructing the ‘we’ as an advanced society and practicing cultures as “*savage and barbaric*” (Peterson, 1992, p.27). The presupposition that female circumcision practicing cultures lack knowledge essentially indicates the higher status early radical feminist assume to that of practicing cultures.

Imposed Values

While maintaining the distinct *us* and the *Other*, a bond with women of practicing cultures is established through an assumed common experience of patriarchy. The following extract illustrates a sense of sameness portrayed by Hosken (1997);

Excerpt 13:

We also share the same oppression, we suffer from the same violence of men, and we are charged with child raising—that is, the future of each country and continent (Hosken, 1997, Personal View p.13).

Excerpt 14:

The control of women’s bodies by men is literally universal. Only the forms differ from one society to another (Hosken, 1997, Politics p.2).

The following two claims are observed from the excerpts above. The first is the presupposition that in every society men oppress women. The phrases “*share the same oppression*” and “*suffer from the same violence of men*” indicate this claim. The second is the implicit reference made to patriarchy as the cause for the universal experience of women. These mutual experiences are further validated as the practice is constructed as a shared attack;

Excerpt 15:

Women can and must define their own goals because we share the same needs worldwide: our needs in every culture and every country are the same where

health and the control over our bodies and sexuality are concerned because we are the colonized people in every society, and all over the world (Hosken, 1997, Somalia p.14).

Excerpt 16:

I feel that my own personal sense of dignity and worth as a woman and human being is under attack by these mutilations, inflicted on helpless children for no other reason than that they are female (Hosken, 1997, Personal View p.1).

Excerpt 17:

Put in another way, I feel that these deliberate interventions in the female personality are an attack on human freedom, on the freedom of women everywhere (Hosken, 1997 Personal View p.1).

As the excerpts show, sameness is established with the assumption that women of practicing culture share “*the same needs*” with women in the West. The needs are sorted out in terms of the value given to the “*control over our bodies and sexualities.*” The link to value of body control makes a reference to the discourse of “body politics” (Mies, 1986, p. 25) which was the focus of early feminist movement in the fight against the patriarchy system. The practice is also measured against a broader value of “*sense of dignity*” and “*human freedom.*” Therefore, the presupposition of the practice as an attack on the female body and also against basic human values is established successfully within the discourse.

Furthermore, Western radical feminists’ claims to a shared oppression expound the universalization of patriarchy as a system whereby some of the practice’s values are analyzed;

Excerpt 18:

This conspiracy of silence in the rest of the world is a testimony that the patriarchal system of female oppression is international and reaches all over the world (Hosken, 1997, The Reason Given p.15).

Excerpt 19:

There is no valid reason today for concealing from women knowledge and health facts about sexuality and reproduction that they most urgently need to take control over their own lives (Hosken, 1997, History p.3).

The two excerpts indicate a discourse that appeals to what Western feminists recognize as the systemic control of women by men. For instance, the ‘*conspiracy of silence*’ and ‘*concealing from women*’ are used to determine the experience of women of practicing cultures in the manner whereby the experience of women in the capitalist patriarchal system was conceptualized. Generally, the practice is presented as a systemic male dominance. Accordingly, similar to what is achieved by women in the West, the operation of the practice had to be exposed;

Excerpt 20:

The contempt for the female of the species, which is the basic cause of all forms of female mutilations, must be challenged and dealt with everywhere, and at its source. We shall never succeed to change behavior unless we confront its cause (Hosken, 1979, Forward 1).

Excerpt 21:

But any form of mutilation of the female body, performed with the intention of diminishing her femaleness and sexuality, must be categorically rejected (Hosken, 1979: Forward p. 2).

The reference to the practice as an act of “*contempt for the female*” and “*intention of diminishing her femaleness and sexuality*” is a conclusion that the patriarchal system is in effect in practicing cultures. Simplified suggestions such as “*must be challenged and dealt with*” and “*must be categorically rejected*” also reflect radical feminists’ ways of dealing with patriarchal challenges. A further examination of the feminist discourse brings the focus to how women of practicing cultures are constructed as silent victims;

Excerpt 22:

The politics of genital mutilation are the politics of obfuscation, of ignorance, hypocrisy, fear and deceit. The victims are children and young mothers, or those least able to defend themselves or speak for themselves (Hosken, 1979 Politics 21).

Excerpt 23:

The African girls and young women who are mutilated will never speak for themselves, and even if some do, who would listen? (Hosken, 1979, Politics p.12).

The above excerpts indicate a discourse marked by a political profile that portrays the practice as a purposed act of power creating “*fear*.” The implication is that women are deprived of their ability to stand up for themselves as their genitals are “*mutilated*.” As such, a direct link is made between removing part of the female body and decision making ability. Simply put, the practice is constructed as the means by which male-power is retained by removing the genitals of women of practicing cultures.

In fact, this conclusion by radical feminists is also shared by Western states and IO. For instance, the US establishes it with reference to the “historically unequal power relationship between men and women,” an activity believed to “perpetuate a cycle of violence” (U.S. Department of States, 2008, CRS-3). The UK insists on the end to the widespread of gender discrimination and focuses on gender equality approaches (DFID 1998 & 2007). With respect to IO, the practice is defined as a form of violence which “deprives girls and women from making an independent decision about an intervention that has a lasting effect on their bodies and infringes on their autonomy and control over their lives” (Eliminating Female genital mutilation: An interagency statement OHCHR, UNAIDS, UNDP, UNECA, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNIFEM, WHO, 2008, p.10).

The rationalization of the practice primarily in gender terms, first by some radical feminists and then by Western states and IO, is a restriction to alternative explanations that could deeply examine the value given to female circumcision by those who are practicing it.

Imposed Assumptions

This section provides further evidence to the ways in which IO frame the discourse of the practice in gender terms. The following excerpts are used to reveal IO as promoters of gender based assumptions;

Excerpt 24:

There is increasing recognition that the cultural purpose of female genital mutilation varies as widely as the type of procedure performed and that a full understanding of women's position and of gender relations within the particular sociocultural and economic context is required in order to eliminate the practice (A joint WHO/UNICEF/UNFPA statement 1997, p.13).

Excerpt 25:

Female genital mutilation has been recognized as discrimination based on sex because it is rooted in gender inequalities and power imbalances between men and women and inhibits women's full and equal enjoyment of their human rights. (Eliminating Female genital mutilation: An interagency statement OHCHR, UNAIDS, UNDP, UNECA, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNIFEM, WHO, 2008, p.10).

Gender based assumptions of the practice can be observed from the excerpts above. In Excerpt 24 while the variation on cultural justification is identified, an emphasis on understanding the practice based on "*women's position and of gender relations*" is made. In Excerpt 25 there is an assertion that the practice is '*rooted in gender inequalities and power imbalances between men and women*'. The promotion of assumptions around gender is a legitimization of power relations between practicing cultures and international organizations.

This claim is especially evident as gender-based understanding of the practice is applied to monitor not only the practice but also the society in general;

Excerpt 26:

The elimination of female genital mutilation is also a step towards the achievement of gender equity, equality and women's empowerment (Female genital mutilation: A Joint WHO/UNICEF/UNFPA statement, 1997: p.15).

Excerpt 27:

As female genital mutilation is a manifestation of gender inequality, the empowerment of women is of key importance to the elimination of the practice. Addressing this through education and debate brings to the fore the human rights of girls and women and the differential treatment of boys and girls with regard to their roles in society in general, and specifically with respect to female genital mutilation. This can serve to influence gender relations and thus accelerate progress in abandonment of the practice (Eliminating Female genital mutilation: An interagency statement OHCHR, UNAIDS, UNDP, UNECA, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNIFEM, WHO, 2008, p.15).

As the excerpts above indicate, there is a basic view that the practice is founded on an existing gender inequality within the society. Hence, eliminating the practice is outlined as a “*step towards the achievement*” of gender equalities in other areas of social relations. More often than not, the need to end the practice is directed towards the need to change social relations of the society in general. Accordingly, IO understanding of the practice in gender-relation terms sets a tone where such view is promoted largely which leads to sustaining it as an internationally shared concern.

Controlled Strategies

Western states have established various strategies to achieve eradication goals. The strategies apply persuasive language of knowledge and enforce scientific processes. The

following excerpts are identified as strategies that integrate dominant scientific methodologies.

Excerpt 28:

USAID will undertake the following actions to ensure that the issue of FGM/C is effectively integrated into and deliberately considered within Agency policy, programs, and strategies:

Establish a regular liaison with other donors/activist groups to gather information and develop a framework for research and advocacy that will enhance collaboration and coordination of elimination efforts, share lessons learned, and stimulate public understanding of FGM/C (USAID Policy on Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting 2000).

Excerpt 29:

The Bureau for Global Health is the repository for state-of-the-art thinking on FGC abandonment....Therefore, it is recommended that GH do the following in the areas of research, innovation, and dissemination:

- Continue research on effective FGC abandonment programs fostering behavior change, building on lessons learned;
- Initiate research on integrating FGC abandonment activities....
- Identify further research gaps; and
- Incorporate results of research and lessons learned into FGC policies, materials, guidelines and programming (US Bureau for Global Health United States Agency for International Development Strategy for Female Genital Cutting (FG) Female Genital Cutting, 2004, p.12).

Excerpt 30:

The DFID supported Research Programme Consortia on 'Realising Rights: Improving Sexual and Reproductive Health for Poor and Vulnerable Populations' is providing evidence on the economic costs of unsafe abortion related mortality and morbidity (DFID's Maternal Health Strategy Reducing maternal deaths: evidence and action 2nd Progress Report, 2007, p.23).

We can observe from the excerpts that an emphasis is made on scientific techniques.

Terms such as '*effectively integrated*,' '*gather information*,' '*develop a framework for research*,' '*state-of-the-art thinking*,' and '*research*' indicate the application of research and organized information. The terms emphasize the value to know-how in knowledge creation

and organization. Furthermore, as Western states ‘ensure,’ ‘initiate’ and ‘provide evidence,’ they are implicitly directing practicing cultures towards the understanding of how to target information to others.

As such, the individual in the Western culture is represented as a person capable of thinking, planning, creating, and communicating effectively; unlike the individual in the practicing culture. This understanding marks the construction of the practice as a setback and practicing cultures as groups that need to be guided and awakened to information management. In fact, this is also the conception of Hosken (1979) who insisted that “African women are not conscious of their own oppression” (Personal View p.11).

In general, the emphasis on scientific techniques is a discursive dictation of the way social reality should be interpreted, and how information should be organized, and disseminated. Similarly, IO also reinforces such stance:

Excerpt 31:

WHO efforts to eliminate female genital mutilation focus on...: research: generating knowledge about the causes and consequences of the practice, how to eliminate it, and how to care for those who have experienced FGM (WHO Fact Sheet N241, 2008).

Excerpt 32:

Consistency in the use of indicators enables comparative analysis at national and international levels across different surveys. Evaluation, including base- and end-line studies as well as process evaluation, is essential for measuring feasibility and effectiveness

Research continues to be needed on aspects that will contribute to the elimination and prevention of female genital mutilation and better care for girls and women who have been subjected to the practice (Eliminating Female genital mutilation: An interagency statement OHCHR, UNAIDS, UNDP, UNECA, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNIFEM,WHO, 2008, p.20).

Comparable to States, IO install scientific techniques. It is evident that the framework of research is applied to structure knowledge-based processes through scientifically appropriated strategies. The extensive application of research is also transferred as a responsibility to “*care for*” people, who went through the practice. In general, the strategies exert a discourse of power as they control the context in which eliminating efforts are established.

Powered Expertise

As discussed earlier, culture as a rational is rejected and practicing cultures are constructed to lack the ability to critically examine their own practice. This has established the necessity for expert insight that censured the practice thoroughly;

Excerpt 33:

Traditional practices are part of local cultures and are generally considered socially acceptable; in some cases, they are encouraged by family members and the community. Many experts maintain that some of these practices are damaging to women (International Violence Against Women: U.S. Response and Policy Issues, 2008, CRS-7).

Excerpt 34:

As some researchers had pointed out limitations in the 1995 classification, WHO convened a number of consultations with technical experts and others working to end female genital mutilation to review the typology and evaluate possible alternatives. It was concluded that the available evidence is insufficient to warrant a new classification; however, the wording of the current typology was slightly modified, and sub-divisions created, to capture more closely the variety of procedures (Eliminating Female genital mutilation: An interagency statement OHCHR, UNAIDS, UNDP, UNECA, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNIFEM, WHO, 2008, p. 23).

Excerpt 35:

DFID organized an expert group meetings on maternal mortality measurement. (Department for International Development, 2007, p.23).

As the excerpts indicate, the account of people believed to possess the tools for producing knowledge and information is preferred. Excerpt 33 indicates the value given to “*many experts.*” Excerpt 34 demonstrates the reliance on “*technological experts*” who help identify the practices variation. Excerpt 35 illustrates the dependency on consultation of “*expert group meetings.*” The three excerpts show the commitment to expert knowledge and a dependency to expert advice. As such, power is exercised through experts who shape the reality of the practice and establish values aiming to influence practicing cultures. Another form of power is also observed with experts controlling information and deciding the manner in which information is disseminated. In other terms, experts determine the problem, and also present how problem solving processes should be organized. How the processing of information about the practice itself appeals to standards of scientific conventions is shown below;

Excerpt 36:

USAID/GH undertook the following process to develop the FGC Strategy:

- Collection of information through interviews, document reviews and attendance at FGC intra-agency and partners working group meetings;
- Identification of the most important lessons learned from previous work; and Synthesis of this information into a draft strategy, followed by several internal meetings of USAID staff to revise the strategy and discuss funding mechanisms (Bureau for Global Health; United States Agency for International Development Strategy for Female Genital Cutting (FG), 2004, p.8).

Excerpt 37:

As effective programme design and implementation must be based on sound data, continuous monitoring is required to document trends in prevalence and changes in the type and justifications for the practice (Eliminating Female genital mutilation: An interagency statement OHCHR, UNAIDS, UNDP, UNECA, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNIFEM, WHO, 2008, p.20).

Words such as “*collection of,*” “*identification of,*” “*synthesis of,*” “*effective programme design,*” “*implementation*” and “*sound data*” are presented as valuable processes. The preference to using experts who utilize scientific strategies and methodologies expose the discursive construction of identities of science and of culture. As a result, Western states and IO are constructed as experts with the ability to appropriate reality and present information. Yet, on the other hand, practicing cultures are depicted as those who lack such qualities and are regarded as the least qualified and experienced in revealing reality.

Powered Leadership

The sense of power is indirectly exercised as Western states and IO communicate their position of leadership in their statements. More often than not, the claim to leadership reproduces a hierarchy of identities;

Excerpt 38:

The strategy described in this document capitalizes on the Agency’s strategic advantages of global leadership, international collaboration and technical assistance in the field (Bureau for Global Health; United States Agency for International Development Strategy for Female Genital Cutting (FG), 2004, p.4).

Excerpt 39:

The United Nations plays a crucial role in providing international standards and promoting and undertaking research, in collaboration with academic and development partners, to ensure that standards are grounded in sound evidence. United Nations agencies are particularly well placed to promote cooperation and coordination among all actors. Several United Nations bodies are tasked with monitoring the implementation of international legal commitments to protect and promote human rights for all without discrimination on any basis (Eliminating Female genital mutilation: An interagency statement OHCHR, UNAIDS, UNDP, UNECA, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNIFEM, WHO, 2008, p.20).

Excerpt 38 explicitly underscores the discursive construction of position of leadership through roles assigned to provide “*technical assistance.*” Less evident in excerpt 39, the perception of proper leadership is developed by “undertaking *research*” and “*ensure that standards are grounded in sound evidence.*” Leadership is grounded in roles related to expertise in setting scientific standards and quality of know-how. The self-identification of leadership already signifies a dominant stand against practicing cultures. It also shows the power to determine the condition of a leader. But most importantly, the type of leadership portrayed in the excerpts shows exert of power to determine and control information marginalizing other forms. In view of this, an implicit message of lack of attentiveness to differing ideas is portrayed by the body of Western discourses.

Section Two

This section will deconstruct international interactions that use global space using five themes that emerged in analyzing *global* statements by States and IO. To begin with, the following table is presented to identify categories and sub-categories that help distinguish the themes. A category of *process* is identified in statements outlining strategies that encourage or suggest the global integration of ideas and projects. The category of *Activities* is identified in statements that designate practices suitable to the institutional structure of Western states. The categories are not always distinct as they overlap constantly within statements and between documents. This observation reveals the favour to mainstream activity and the consent to homogenous outcomes. The themes derived from the subcategories are summarized in the following table followed by a detailed description of each theme.

Table : 1 Themes from Analysis of Global Statements

Categories	Subcategories	Themes
Processes	Positively valued statements portraying processes as real and actual	Repressed views
	Language used in structuring knowledge based process	Systemic structuring of Language
	Projection of ways of knowing and ways of being	Hegemonic masculinity
Practices	Strategic framing of common language through education	Regulating scientific thought
	The integration of scientific discourse	Marginalizing the local

Repressed Views

Repressed view as a theme emerged when analyzing positively valued statements in statements extracted from states and IO that portray processes as real and actual. The excerpts below indicate statements reflecting mainstream accounts that encourage or prevent activities. Statements are exposed to validate the values of Western states and IO that authenticate processes and representations.

Excerpt 40:

USAID will strengthen national leadership and policies of foreign governments at community, regional and national levels. A global dialogue between donor groups will be fostered and maintained in support of positive government policy and legislation changes. USAID will disseminate best practices of cooperating agencies aiming at the abandonment of FGC on a local, national and international level (Bureau for Global Health; United States Agency for International Development Strategy for Female Genital Cutting (FG), 2004, p.11).

Excerpt 41:

Members of the international community — including governments, international organizations, NGOs, and others — work on collaborative and separate initiatives to develop prevention and response strategies to protect vulnerable populations, particularly women and girls (International Violence Against Women: U.S. Response and Policy Issues, 2008, DRS-14).

Excerpt 42:

DFID supported advocacy events in Geneva and 28 African countries to mark the UN International Zero Tolerance of FGM Day, to raise global awareness of female genital mutilation (FGM) (Department for International Development 2007, p.6).

Excerpt 43:

Since then [1997], great efforts have been made to counteract FGM, through research, work within communities, and changes in public policy. Progress at both international and local levels includes:

- wider international involvement to stop FGM;
- the development of international monitoring bodies and resolutions that condemn the practice;
- revised legal frameworks and growing political support to end FGM; and in some countries, decreasing practice of FGM, and an increasing number of women and men in practising communities who declare their support to end it (Eliminating Female genital mutilation: An interagency statement OHCHR, UNAIDS, UNDP, UNECA, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNIFEM, WHO, 2008, p.3)

Words such as “*dialogue, cooperating, and collaborative*” simulate a relationship based on shared knowledge and mutual interests of the “*international community*” with no explicit reference to who the community refers to within the international framework. Within the context the excerpts are presented, there is no indication that this “*international community*” includes practicing cultures. In fact, practicing cultures are purposely omitted from the discussion under the identification of “*vulnerable populations*” justifying the silencing and repression of their views.

With the promotion of “*positive government policy*,” as well as “*best practices, prevention, response strategies*” and “*advocacy events*,” an institutional power is reinforced globally. Additionally, progress is reported through a claim to “*international and local*” engagement. The excerpts reveal not only statements representing processes as if they are real and actual but also expose an assumed consent established with practicing cultures.

Systemic Structuring of Language

This theme emerges when examining language used in the US and the UN joint statements that promote the abandonment of the practice of female circumcision. The selected excerpts effectively show the link between knowledge and language and the construction of scientific knowledge as a common ground at the global level.

Excerpt 44:

GH has supported pioneering work in results monitoring and has facilitated global collaboration in the development of tools for program evaluation and trend analysis in the global health sector (Bureau for Global Health; United States Agency for International Development Strategy for Female Genital Cutting (FG), 2004, p.11)

Excerpt 45:

Leadership in identifying further research, compilation of research and field implementation findings regarding the impact of FGC reduction programs and providing this information to donors to mobilize global resources to enable the scale up of FGC programs (Bureau for Global Health; United States Agency for International Development Strategy for Female Genital Cutting (FG), 2004, p.14).

Excerpt 46:

The plan emphasizes the need for a multi-disciplinary approach, and the importance of teamwork at a national, regional and global level, bringing together governments, political and religious institutions, IO and funding agencies (United States Agency for International Development, 2004, p.21).

Processes such as “*program evaluation,*” “*trend analysis,*” “*compilation of research,*” “*field implementation findings,*” “*multi-disciplinary approach*” and “*effective programme design and implementation*” indicate the exclusive promotion of processes of scientific content. The promotion of processes of scientific content points to directing language structures. The consistent demand by IO reflects the commitment to sustaining science-based language used in structuring knowledge based processes. Hence, science influences the language of communication, whereby the global space is exposed to systematically structured and scientifically justified processes and approaches.

Hegemonic Masculinity

The observation on the projection of ways of knowing and ways of being contributed to the emergence of this theme. In the global space, ways of knowing and being are predominantly projected in claims that seek change through collective communication. The extracts below illustrate this;

Excerpt 47:

To reach the collective, coordinated choice necessary for sustained abandonment of female genital mutilation, communities must have the opportunity to discuss and reflect on new knowledge in public. Such public dialogue provides opportunities to increase awareness and understanding by the community as a whole on women’s human rights and on national and international legal instruments on female genital mutilation. This dialogue and debate among women, men and community leaders often focuses on women’s rights, health, and female genital mutilation, and brings about recognition of the value of women in the community, thus fostering their active contribution to decision-making and enhancing their ability to discontinue the practice (Eliminating Female genital mutilation: An interagency statement OHCHR, UNAIDS, UNDP, UNECA, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNIFEM, WHO, 2008, p.15).

Excerpt 48:

Empowerment of women: As female genital mutilation is a manifestation of gender inequality, the empowerment of women is of key importance to the elimination of the practice. Addressing this through education and debate brings to the fore the human rights of girls and women and the differential treatment of boys and girls with regard to their roles in society in general, and specifically with respect to female genital mutilation. This can serve to influence gender relations and thus accelerate progress in abandonment of the practice (Eliminating Female genital mutilation: An interagency statement OHCHR, UNAIDS, UNDP, UNECA, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNIFEM, WHO, 2008, p.15).

Excerpt 49:

Intergenerational dialogue is another example in which communication between groups that rarely discuss such issues on an egalitarian basis is encouraged (GTZ, 2005). Most importantly, such public discussions can stimulate discussions in the private, family setting where decisions about genital mutilation of girl children are made by parents and other family members (Eliminating Female genital mutilation: An interagency statement OHCHR, UNAIDS, UNDP, UNECA, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNIFEM, WHO, 2008, p.15).

The above excerpts identify ways of knowing and being projected in three different forms. In excerpt 47, ways of knowing is maintained through stated goals that stimulate communication in the form of “*discussion*,” “*public dialogue*” and “*debate*”. In excerpt 48, they are dictated by identifying women’s position of subordination and calling for “*empowerment*” against the “*differential treatment of boys and girls*” by way of “*debate*.” In excerpt 49, an ‘*intergenerational dialogue*’ is acknowledged as necessary to promote “*communication*” of ‘*egalitarian bases*.’

As such, the suggestions to various forms of communication are projections, given that they demean structures that help define certain social positions of people of practicing cultures. As discussed in Chapter One, in some practicing cultures participating in public activities is not permitted unless the person is a “human being;” a status achieved after circumcision (Droz, 2000, p. 222-223).

Regulating Scientific Thought

This theme reflects the strategic framing of common language through education using the influence of the global space. The following excerpts highlight how education and training become instrumental in regulating scientific thought;

Excerpt 50:

Empowering education helps people to examine their own beliefs and values related to the practice in a dynamic and open way that is not experienced or seen as threatening. Educational sessions will be empowering if they serve not only to impart new knowledge but also to provide a forum for participants to exchange experiences, and help them reveal and share complex inner feelings and examine conflicting attitudes towards female genital mutilation in the community. Empowering education can be undertaken through various forms of training, including literacy training, analytical skills and problem-solving as well as more modern methods, such as computer-based applications and mobile phone messages (Eliminating Female genital mutilation: An interagency statement OHCHR, UNAIDS, UNDP, UNECA, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNIFEM, WHO, 2008: 14).

Excerpt 51:

Most of UNICEF's efforts for the elimination of female genital mutilation take place through its field offices and country programmes. These efforts involve a range of approaches, particularly the provision of support to community-based organizations engaged in information, education, communication and training relating to the prevention of female genital mutilation. While many UNICEF country offices support activities targeted at eliminating the practice, these activities are often integrated into broader programmes in the areas of health, education, communication and the improvement of women's status (Eliminating Female genital mutilation: An interagency statement OHCHR, UNAIDS, UNDP, UNECA, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNIFEM, WHO, 2008:18).

As shown in the above excerpts, the implementation of "*new knowledge*" and "*approaches*" through a form of education and training are advanced. The concept of "*empowering education*" is presented in Excerpt 50 as an option to help practicing cultures examine themselves. This concept is not only framed in Western understanding of

knowledge and skills, it is also charged with efforts to create civilized identities. Moreover, Excerpt 51 demonstrates the assertion of control as the approaches promote programs that regulate scientific thought in addition to conducting behaviours of practicing cultures. The link between education and prevention of the practice is made so that practicing cultures are directed towards change away from their static cultural ways.

Marginalizing the Local

This theme emerges when discourse of IO are examined in statements that encourage the integration of scientifically set international standards. The following excerpt shows that internationally set standards focus on knowledge-making, implicitly discouraging alternative ways.

Excerpt 52:

The United Nations plays a crucial role in providing international standards and promoting and undertaking research, in collaboration with academic and development partners, to ensure that standards are grounded in sound evidence. United Nations agencies are particularly well placed to promote cooperation and coordination among all actors (Eliminating Female genital mutilation: An interagency statement OHCHR, UNAIDS, UNDP, UNECA, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNIFEM, WHO, 2008, p.20).

An assertion to set “*international standards*” demonstrates the need to create standard processes. To that end, as standards are set in scientifically-approved processes, their approaches are naturalized. Even though there is no direct deterrent to cultural approaches the acknowledgement of scientifically recognized standards means, those external to science are dismissed. Conclusively, the recognition of internationally standardized ways is made at the cost of marginalizing the local. Appendix B, summarizes

the integration of dominant scientific methodologies suggested by the US and UK governments.

Conclusion

This chapter deconstructed the discourse on female circumcision to reveal ways power relation is sustained in the body of Western discourses. It presented various themes that emerged during the textual analysis of statements coming from the UK, US and international organizations. The themes revealed the discursive application of control and power as well as the way values are imposed on practicing cultures by examining statements that outline the application of scientifically rationalized knowledge and values in expressing the practice. As well, various processes that ensured the application of rationality, science, knowledge and ways of being in achieving eliminating goals were analyzed to illustrate ways power relation is reproduced through the discourse on female circumcision.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS, STRENGTH AND LIMITATIONS, AND FUTURE DIRECTION

Introduction

This study aimed to present a gender based critical discourse analysis on the body of Western discourses on female circumcision. For this purpose, a comprehensive study was carried out to deconstruct the ways in which gender power relation is maintained in the body of Western discourses on female circumcision. The study examined reports and policy statements from the US, UK and IO to support the assumption that gendered power relations are found in the actions and the statements coming from states and international organizations. From the US it examined the USAID Policy on Female Genital of the year 2000, the USAID's Bureau for Global Health strategic report of 2004, and the 2008 CRS Report for Congress on International Violence Against Women. Documents from the UK include the 2007 issues paper and the 1998 report by DFID. The study also observed the 2008 and 1997 Joint Statements released by the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP). Additionally, the 2008 WHO Fact Sheet was also analyzed. Also important to this study, the 1997 Hosken Report was examined.

The study applied a textual analysis which examined the language use of each data document to inquire the representation of a gendered discourse. The focus on representation of a gendered discourse was made to scrutinize the reproduction of the socially constructed gender hierarchy in the body of Western discourses on female circumcision. Accordingly, the study examined the content of the nine documents focusing on statements within which

masculine and feminine appropriations took place. Masculine and feminine appropriations were examined to expose the way power is enacted through a discourse. Based on this examination, this study distinguished the enactment of power grounded on the claim of access to information and knowledge.

In this chapter, the study provides an overview of the findings informed by themes that emerged while analyzing the nine documents and responds to the four research questions. The four questions that guided this study were:

- 1) Why is a consistent discourse presented internationally on female circumcision?
- 2) Why are Western states and international organizations sharing the same view about female circumcision?
- 3) Why is the practice constructed universally as Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)?
- 4) What causes the silencing of the voices of practicing cultures, and how and why does this occur?

As such, discussion of the findings relative to each research question is presented in detail in the following section.

Answers to Research Questions

Why is a consistent discourse presented internationally on female circumcision?

The study found that the body of Western discourses on female circumcision is a controlled discourse. This control occurs as non-cultural interpretations are made to dominate the way the practice is understood. The US and IO particularly presented their own interpretation with the assumption that cultural explanations on the practice of female

circumcision are not satisfactory by condemning the practice in scientific terms and portraying people of female circumcision practicing cultures as irrational.

The rejection of cultural explanations in the body of Western discourses is an example whereby science is established as a dominant “ways of knowing” over other ways such as culture (Peterson, 1992 p.40). Furthermore, the portrayal of people of female circumcision practicing cultures as irrational portrays what Youngs (2006) claims as the exclusive construction of categories of “civilized/uncivilized, rational/irrational, developed/undeveloped” conforming Western superiority (p.9). A consistent discourse of rejecting cultural explanation and the construction of practicing cultures as irrational also reflect the establishment of a partial knowledge based on the experience and interpretation of the US and IO social and political reality (Grant and Newland, 1991, Peterson 1992).

In essence, a scientific rationale is used dominantly influencing the conceptualization of the practice exclusively in science. Arguably, the US and IO pertain to science as the ultimate arbiter of truth and value in describing the practice of female circumcision. In fact, cultural explanations are discouraged explicitly, and are dismissed effectively through the application of a scientific rationale setting a tentative tone to the practice.

Conclusively, the answer to research question one is that: a consistent discourse is presented internationally because Western states and IO control the way the practice of female circumcision and the people who participate in it are interpreted.

Why are Western states and international organizations sharing the same view about female circumcision?

From the analysis on the US, UK and IO documents, this study found an emphasis given to science and a preference to applying scientific processes. This focus inspired a demand for the accounts of people believed to be knowledgeable. As such, ample consideration is given to what experts and researchers portray about the practice of female circumcision. In fact, the studied texts observed an assumption that sufficient knowledge about the practice could not be acquired if information is to come directly from practicing cultures. What is being increasingly acknowledged is that, people of practicing cultures lack the ability to critically examine and compile information in an organized manner. As practicing cultures are presented to lack knowledge, a distinction is made between the ‘knowable’ (female practicing cultures) and ‘knowers’ (The US, UK and IO) whereby a knowledge hierarchy is constructed.

As Peterson (1992) explains the characteristics of ‘knowers’ is that they occupy a certain position where they possess power and the capacity to rationalize, reason, hold autonomy, objectivity and political identify different from the ‘knowable’. IO posses an institutional power where they monitor and organize an environment where generally accepted behaviours are carried out (Raven-Roberts, 2005). In essence, experts are used as a source of information and to control the type of information to be disseminated and also to determine what is useful in influencing a discourse of scientific content. According to Boyle (2002), IO socializing states to values suitable to the international community. Arguably, IO, the US, and UK enforce the use of expert knowledge and ensure that it is maintained to standardize the primary use of science.

This study also found that the US and IO propagate leadership based on an assumption that their rationale is better than that of female circumcision practicing cultures. More often than not, the claim to leadership is charged with their need to control information, set standards, and determine logic that pertains to scientific values. Accordingly, they conserve their leadership status in order to manipulate the uniformity of scientific point of view.

Conclusively, the answer to research question two is that: Western states and IO share the same view because; 1) they both rely on the accounts of scientific expertise who are guided by scientific rationale 2) they both prefer to engage and respond to logic of scientific content.

Why is the practice of female circumcision constructed universally as Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)?

It has been well established in the theoretical framework for this study that, the contact of women in the West with women of the colonized highlighted the division of ‘us’ and the “backward foreigner” (Mies, 1986, p.74). This separation was particularly marked with value given to having access to science which resulted in Western women’s contribution to the construction of the ‘Other’ (De Beauvoir 1953; Peterson 1992; Youngs 200), and hooks1984). It also created a power relation especially when the intellectual and cultural inferiority of the colonized was assumed (Mohanty, 1984; Mies, 1986; Anzaldúa, 1990). Similarly, Fran Hosken’s (1997) view can be interpreted to suggest that female circumcision is practiced because of the lack of knowledge on biology and sexuality. She made a striking link between lack of knowledge and traditional systems. She also affirms

that traditional systems are placed by men with the intention to subordinate women. In particular, she identified that patriarchy plays a role whereby men use female circumcision to dominate and control women.

While highlighting that patriarchy is the cause for the way women are treated in modern society, Hosken boasted that Western women's access to information gave them power to fight it. In fact, she concluded that female circumcision is a severe form of oppression which women of female circumcision practicing culture follow as a result of their ignorance. This conclusion refers back to the feminist movement's focus on the body politics which was universalized in a form of a "common oppression" on women in general (hooks, 1984, p.5-8; Mies, 1968; Butler, 1995).

Of great importance, Hosken's (1997) conclusion influenced the way female circumcision is constructed by the US, UK and IO leading to its recognition as a violent act. In essence, a universal conclusion was made that men of practicing cultures placed female circumcision as part of a traditional system to dominate women physically as well as intellectually. Based on this conclusion, an initial step was taken to awaken women by characterizing the practice of female circumcision as an act of mutilation. This role of awakening by the US, UK, and IO was particularly assumed asserting the superiority of values of civilization and progress which lead to considering civilizing efforts (Mies 1986, p.68, Enloe, 1989, p.200). Hence, the practice of female circumcision is portrayed as mutilation to emphasise to women of practicing cultures that their bodies are being damaged by men who use backward practices of tradition. Progressively, the term mutilation is applied to affirm that the practice also strips women off values of dignity, freedom and sexuality which are generally framed as an uncivilized way of living.

Conclusively, the answer to research question three is that: the practice is constructed as FGM because of a civilizing effort whereby knowledge of biology and sexuality are enforced on female circumcision practicing cultures that otherwise remain ignorant, irrational and unenlightened.

What causes the silencing of the voices of practicing cultures, and how and why does this occur?

The study found that the voices of female circumcision practicing culture are repressed and successfully omitted from the body of Western discourses through the credibility given to scientific explanations. In the sense that Peterson (1992) describes, the voice of practicing cultures is excluded since it represents ‘feminine’ form of knowing. It is also explained through the favoritism given to masculine representations (science) as opposed to feminine ones (culture) (Marchand & Runyan, 2001).

None of the documents analyzed in this study included views originating from female circumcision practicing cultures. When a reference to practicing cultures is made, it is either to present a stereotypical image of backwardness or with an obscure reference to their participation in international eradication efforts. However, a claim to practicing cultures’ participation in international efforts is made despite the fact that most strategies are designed and imposed on female circumcision practicing cultures by the US, UK and IO. Indeed, as contents of strategies indicate, much effort is put to regulate the thought of female circumcision practicing cultures. The regulation of thought is fundamental in the successful construction of a masculinized form of knowing. The concept of empowering education is an example whereby an intention to train in modern and scientific ways is portrayed with a

goal to manipulate people's mind and influence a scientific rationale. Ultimately, the discourse around strategies alienates female practicing cultures since their culturally-bound ideas do not fit that of rational thinking. The alienation of female circumcision practicing cultures demonstrates the favor to what is considered as mainstream accounts (Peterson, 2002).

The study also found that female circumcision is contextualized in gender terms. In all of the documents this study examined, women in female circumcision practicing culture are depicted as weak and powerless against men who perpetuate the practice. In essence, there is an assumption that women of practicing culture are fearful of the male-power in that they are unable to discuss their challenges openly. Once again, this assumption is based on feminists' understanding of the patriarchal system where system of male dominance was encouraged (Peterson, 1992; Mies, 1986). As a result, Western states and IO decide to communicate on behalf of women of practicing cultures who are powerless against the system of male dominance (Mies, 1986). However, as they speak on behalf of women they removed their voices completely from the international discourse. In essence, they adopted the 'protector' role constructing practicing cultures as weak that needs to be 'protected'. The protector role is particularly enforced considering that practicing cultures hold uncivilized values and are weak to defend themselves (Peterson, 1992). With the absence of voice of practicing cultures, the explanation of the practice in gender terms continues to dominate the body of Western discourses.

Conclusively, the answer to research question four is that: the silencing of the voices of practicing cultures is caused because scientific rationale dominates the discourse marginalizing cultural elucidations that present a stereotypical image of backwardness and

gender oppression. Cultural elucidations are disregarded so that science can be retained as the dominant way of knowing within the discourse of female circumcision.

Strength and Limitations

Most research on female circumcision focus on the debate that Western thought and norm are imposed on non-western culture. The primary strength of this study is that it focuses on an area of little previous research, examining the body of Western discourses on female circumcision. An additional strength is that, the study deconstructs the body of Western discourses using a gender based critical analysis guided by the ‘private’ and ‘public’ divide which allowed for detail investigation of the discursive reproduction of power. The other strength is that the study examined reports and policy statements that influence the current discourse on female circumcision to provide a detailed analysis into the discursive construction of inequality between female circumcision practicing cultures and Western states and international organizations.

However, the study is subject to two limitations. First, the documents from the UK did not provide enough information as was intended initially. Hence, the data analysis of the UK documents relied on implicit meanings in the statements guided by UK’s claim to a compliance with internationally set standard and its push for international commitments. While the choice of this data document is not regrettable, the lack of an in-depth analysis on this data affected the investigation on UK originated discourse. The second limitation is related to the researcher’s own background. The focus of the study is guided by my African cultural heritage as well as my gender. Hence, the content of the analysis are made based on a judgment derived as I first observed the discourse reflecting on its impact. My first

impression which questioned the tone of the discourse could have influenced the context within which I presented my argument.

Future Direction

The first future direction is suggested based on the first limitation of this study. Future research could provide an analysis of documents from the UK to furnish a more diverse source. A further analysis of UK documents could permit an in-depth examination of the international view on female circumcision. More broadly, this could be of importance to further investigate the international interest in eradicating the practice of female circumcision.

This study presented various claims made with regards to the effective development of programs and strategies. Further study can examine the implementation of the programs and strategies to investigate their effectiveness. This investigation can be achieved by conducting a study on how the programs are communicated and how they are received. Such study will be a crucial lead to examine the discourse of female circumcision within practicing cultures.

Further study could also assess other data from academic resources, print media, films and images to explore whether they influence state and international behavior, and if they also contribute to the reproduction of gendered power relation. In the future this study can be drawn upon to provide a methodology that incorporates feminist engagement with Orientalism to understand the construction of biased narratives.

Conclusion

This study was an attempt to begin a gender based critical discourse analysis on the body of Western discourses on female circumcision. The purpose was to explore the reproduction of system of gender hierarchy in the body of Western discourses. More specifically, this study aimed to examine the actions and statements of Western states and IO to illustrate the reproduction of power relations embedded in the socially constructed gender hierarchy. The patterns of analysis found that the body of Western discourses embraces a power relation through the preference given to scientific rationale. The research questions asked; “Why is a consistent discourse presented internationally on female circumcision?”, “Why are Western states and international organizations sharing the same view about female circumcision?”, “Why is the practice constructed universally as Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)?” and “What causes the silencing of the voices of practicing cultures, and how and why does this occur? The study found that a consistent discourse occurs as the conceptualization of the practice is controlled through a scientific rationale e that is dominantly organized by Western states and IO. Additionally, Western states and IO share the same view since information about the practice comes from the preferred source of expert information which is mostly guided by scientific rationale. The term FGM is used out of the desire to civilize practicing cultures that are considered to lack knowledge on biology and sexuality. In fact, the body of Western discourses is dominated by scientific content marginalizing cultural views to retain science as a dominant way of knowing. A logical conclusion for this critical discourse analysis is that the body of Western discourses on female circumcision is a discursive reproduction of a power relation where Western scientific rationale is legitimized and made superior over cultural elucidations.

APPENDIX A

DESCRIPTION OF CONCEPTS

Gender

A set of culturally shaped and defined characteristics associated with masculinity and femininity (Tickner, 1992, p.7).

Hegemony

A form of unnoticed power asserted by a powerful group over a group that does not have power in a non-violent and subtle way that the non-dominant group unknowingly consents to being dominated (Gramsci, 1949/1992).

Hegemonic masculinity

A type of culturally dominant masculinity distinguished from other subordinated masculinities, is a socially constructed cultural idea that, while it does not correspond to the actual personality of the majority of men, sustains patriarchal authority and legitimizes a patriarchal political and social order. Hegemonic Masculinity is sustained through its opposition to various subordinated and devalued masculinities, such as homosexuality, and, more important, through its relation to various devalued femininities (Tickner, 1992, p 6).

Power

Power is the capacity to impose and maintain a particular structuring of some domain or other- a particular way of dividing it into parts, of keeping the parts demarcated from each other, and a particular ordering of those parts in terms of hierarchical relations of domination and subordination (Fairclough, 1989, p.13).

Reproduction

Whenever people produce or interpret discourse, they necessarily draw upon orders of discourse and other aspects of social structure, internalized in their MR (Member's Resource), in order to do so. Through being drawn upon, these structures are constantly being created anew in discourse and practice generally.

Discourse and practice in general, in this sense are both the product of structures and the producers of structures. It is this process of being produced anew (re-produced) through being drawn upon that I refer to as reproduction. But structures may be produced anew with virtually no change, or (through the creative combinations referred to above) they may be produced anew in modified forms. Reproduction may be basically conservative, sustaining continuity, or basically reformatory, effecting changes (Fairclough, 1989, p.40).

The Other

An expression of duality of fundamental category of human thought that defines and differentiates the Self as opposed to the other (De Beauvoir, 1953, p xvii).

Western states

Refers to states in Europe, North America, and countries such as Australia and New Zealand. (Huntington, 1997, p.46)

Western discourse

Refers to discourses that reflect the political, social and economical values of western states. These values hold in them the following characteristics;

- 1) Classical legacies which include Greek philosophy and rationalism, Roman law, Latin and Christianity.
- 2) Religion, essentially Catholicism and Protestantism
- 3) Separation of spiritual and temporal authority
- 4) Rule of law
- 5) Social and class pluralism: the rise and diverse autonomous groups not based on blood relationships or marriage”
- 6) Individualism: (Huntington, 1997, p.69 – 72)

APPENDIX B
INTEGRATION OF DOMINANT SCIENTIFIC METHODOLOGIES

	US	UK
Abandonment Activities and methodologies	Teaching family planning and having it incorporated in policy, advocacy and services.	The use of broader sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) programming.
	Educate and train community and religious leaders and organize public education on the harmful effect of FGC.	Raise awareness of FGC. Scale-up evidence-based intervention.
	Standardize training materials, guidelines, and indicators.	Address wider social and economic barriers to access develop and apply new knowledge.
	Institutionalization of reduction programs at country level which will be monitored and evaluated through results framework.	Support advocacy.
Research and Development	Encourage research that foster behaviour change.	Support workshops that promote the protecting of girls from FGM and harmful traditional practices through a legal framework.
	Develop a framework for research and advocacy to promote collaboration and coordination of elimination efforts, share lessons learned, and stimulate public understanding of FGC.	Research that highlight the value of rights

	US	UK
Social Equity goals	Focus on the importance of women empowerment and the integration of this initiative into social and economic development programs of practicing cultures.	Work on gender equality is increasingly focused on issues of women's empowerment and social protection.
Partnership and Collaboration	<p>In terms of guiding future activities; support local NGOs, women's groups, community leaders and religious organizations to encourage eradication activities; promote broader education and dissemination of information on the harmful effects of FGC.</p> <p>Link local organizations, missions, national committees and other stakeholders to facilitate scaling up of programs.</p>	Support initiatives to improve young people's access to information about sex and sexuality; help develop social skills and gender awareness, improve access to gender sensitive; support the WHO in its efforts to develop policy and coordinate a better international response to the problem.
General Approach	A cross-sectoral approach which recognizes FGC affects female reproductive health, the status of women, democracy and human rights.	A twin-track approach to Gender equality: Addressing inequalities Between women and men in all strategic areas of our work; Supporting specific initiatives to enhance women's empowerment.

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