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Women in Contemporary Society: Building Careers and Breaking Barriers

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INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the conversation surrounding women's roles in society has evolved, yet significant challenges remain, particularly in political and advocacy spheres. There are several barriers that have long influenced women's professional representation, restricting their participation in crucial spaces. These include deeply ingrained societal narratives, shaped by socialization, which continue to impede women's progress despite ongoing strides toward gender equality. By exploring the foundations of these barriers, it becomes clear how education can play a pivotal role in both social development and professional achievement.

This study focuses on the psychological and social factors that sustain barriers for women entering political and advocacy roles. By analyzing the narratives that perpetuate these obstacles, it seeks to understand how breaking societal norms affects women who pursue careers in these fields. The research delves into the systemic mechanisms that reinforce these barriers, offering insights into how women must navigate and overcome them in order to succeed in critical professional spaces. At the core of this research is the question of what it takes—both strategically and socially—for women to achieve positions of power in politics. By interviewing women who have been elected to office or hold administrative roles in political or professional settings, the study aims to uncover the socialized barriers that women face, how these barriers are embedded in societal expectations, and what it means for women

¹ Based at UC Berkeley's Institute of Governmental Studies, the Cal-in-Sacramento Fellowship Program sends approximately 30 Cal students to the state's capital every summer for eight-week public service internships. The Jo Freeman Women in Politics Fellowship supports Cal-in-Sac Fellows whose individual research projects focus on women in politics, including research on public policies that affect women.

to defy these norms, ultimately shedding light on the conditions that enable their success despite systemic opposition.

STUDYING GENDER IN POLITICS

Jennie Sweet-Cushman² highlights how in recent years, there has been a notable surge in political science research focusing on the psychological dimensions of gender, incorporating methodologies and theories from social psychology when analyzing the political sphere. This trend has led to a broadening understanding of the role of gender in politics, with an increasing number of scholars aligning their work with political psychology. As a result, the scholarly landscape now boasts a diverse array of studies contributing to our comprehension of gender's influence in political contexts. My understanding of gendered psychology's framing of political attitudes, phenomena, and identities is widened through reading how women leaders exhibit a wide array of presentation strategies throughout political campaigns, encompassing key stages such as candidate emergence, evaluation, and fundraising. These strategies are not uniform but tailored to the specific context, influenced by factors like race, party affiliation, and personal experiences. Such diversity underscores the nuanced approaches women take in engaging with the public, reflecting their adaptability in navigating the complexities of political landscapes.

The public's reaction to women leaders' presentation strategies is multifaceted and contingent upon various factors, including race, party affiliation, and gender. Furthermore, the intersectionality of gender with other identities, such as race, class, and appearance, further complicates public responses, highlighting the need for a nuanced understanding of the dynamics at play. Scholars contribute significantly to the understanding of gender dynamics in politics by employing psychological concepts and methodologies. Their research delves into how gender intersects with other identities, like race and party affiliation, to shape perceptions of women leaders. Methodological innovations, such as group-

² Sweet-Cushman, Jennie. "Introduction to the Special Issue on Gender and Political Psychology." *Journal of Women, Politics & Policy* 44, no. 1 (2023): 1–4. doi:10.1080/1554477X.2023.2155776.

based approaches to assess gender stereotypes, enhance comprehension of public attitudes toward women in leadership roles.

For this study, I interviewed Kydeeja Alam, the Executive Director at the California Commission on Asian and Pacific Islander American Affairs (CAPIAA), who shared her experience in career development spaces. She speaks to the impact on her career opportunities as a graduate from the University of California, Berkeley and the communities that came from this. The journey of the Executive Director at CAPIAA is a powerful testament to resilience, strategic networking, and the importance of community support in overcoming barriers. Her experience as a Pakistani immigrant who came to the United States in the eighth grade, struggling with language barriers and cultural shocks, parallels the structural inequalities discussed by feminist scholars like Amy Kroska. Despite the lack of guidance from her parents, who were working multiple jobs, Kydeeja attended UC Berkeley, a pivotal moment that reshaped her academic and professional trajectory. Her major in sociology and her deep interest in community psychology laid the foundation for her future work in advocacy, further illustrating the connection between one's educational background and career path, as explored in gender inequality theories. By looking closer at her intersectional experiences, it is notable that education plays a prominent role in breaking barriers and building careers.

In addition, I collected the testimony of Adelaida Caballero who is currently an administrator at the UC Berkeley School of Law's Clinical Program. Her role involves supporting students in experiential learning, speaking on panels, and participating in student-led symposia. Despite not holding a formal degree, Adelaida has extensive experience in operations across various industries and a strong passion for the criminal justice system reform, particularly its impact on incarcerated individuals. Her early interest in intellectual growth led her to develop a love for reading, which has informed much of her self-education on the prison system and social justice. Her journey into this role was driven by a desire to create change within the prison system while continuing to develop professionally. Her intersectional experience sheds light on overcoming barriers as a formerly incarcerated woman paving the way for non-traditional leaders in professional environments.

NAVIGATING PROFESSIONAL SPACES AS A WOMAN OF COLOR

Khydeeja Alam highlights the intersections she had to navigate with some older male colleagues when she first started her career. Navigating the workplace as a young woman of color in politics presented unique challenges that required her to overcompensate and work harder to be taken seriously. Being one of the youngest lobbyists in a predominantly male space, she faced both gender and racial biases, which were compounded by her age. These experiences also resonate with the feminist critique of traditional power dynamics in professional settings, as discussed in "Women's Ways of Knowing."

Women's ability to navigate societal expectations and stereotypes while presenting themselves in authentic and relatable ways is crucial for their professional advancement. Adelaida Caballero's trajectory as a formerly incarcerated woman who does not hold a formal degree but holds an administrative position at Berkeley Law School encapsulates the power of breaking barriers and leading the path for more non-traditional leaders. Moreover, the concept of intersectionality emerges as central, highlighting the complex interplay of gender with other social identities. Recognizing and addressing these dynamics is essential for fostering greater gender equity and inclusivity in political leadership roles. Intersectionality plays a crucial role in shaping both the presentation strategies of women leaders and the public's responses to them, highlighting the need for a comprehensive approach to studying gender in politics and professional spaces.

In Bermudez Figueroa's³ analysis, she adopts a feminist perspective to examine socio-legal phenomena, aiming to uncover and address structural inequalities that perpetuate gender disparities in both private and public spheres. Through this lens, she delves into the intricate connections between legal frameworks and broader social contexts, particularly focusing on their political, economic, and ideological dimensions. One key finding of Figueroa's work is the identification of hidden effects of social reproduction within legal and societal structures. She explores how entrenched gender roles are

³ Bermúdez Figueroa, Eva, Valerija Dabetić, Raquel Pastor Yuste, and Zara Saeidzadeh. "Gender and Structural Inequalities from a Socio-Legal Perspective." In Springer Textbooks in Law, First Online: 03 January 2023. https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-3-031-14360-1_4

constructed and perpetuated through various mechanisms, including laws, policies, and cultural norms. For example, she highlights how gender-sensitive education, or the lack thereof, can reinforce traditional gender roles and contribute to disparities in access to opportunities and resources. Moreover, Figueroa sheds light on the intersections between labor market dynamics and gender inequalities. She examines how legal frameworks, such as labor laws and workplace policies, can either perpetuate or challenge existing gender disparities in employment, wages, and career advancement.

Khydeeja Alam shares her experience as a mother of three, a wife, and a woman building a career in politics. She emphasizes the importance of having a support system and especially the role her husband and loved ones played in supporting her as she cultivated her professional stability. Despite the abundance of support, there were often those who would say she should stay at home with her kids. Khydeeja echoes her gratitude for her supportive partner and the impact that had on her professional and personal balance. Adelaida Caballero's testimony further highlights the fact that having a strong support system and guidance is crucial to achieving one's goals. As a mother, her priority has been caring for her son as he navigates the challenges of academia. Societal norms pose unrealistic standards for women in professional spaces, and Adelaida's career development trajectory has undoubtedly been impacted by the structural nature of gender inequalities.

Bermudez Figueroa's emphasis on the structural nature of gender inequalities aligns with the broader body of literature on gender socialization and its impact on career trajectories. Both studies highlight the pervasive influence of societal norms, institutions, and cultural practices in shaping individuals' opportunities and choices, particularly in the context of career development and advancement. Considering that looking at the impacts of socialization on gender inequality focuses more specifically on individual experiences and perceptions within the context of career-building, Figueroa's analysis takes a broader socio-legal perspective, examining the systemic roots of gender inequalities across various domains. Khydeeja speaks to the role higher education has played in accessing opportunities through her academic network and ultimately the influence this has had on her career trajectory. The significance of social networks, particularly the Berkeley community, played a crucial role

in her professional development and career opportunity. This testimony further underscores the need for comprehensive approaches to address gender inequalities, recognizing the interconnectedness of legal, social, and cultural factors shaping individuals' experiences and opportunities.

EDUCATION AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

Azza Karam⁴ addresses the way gender disparities in education perpetuate social inequalities and hinder development efforts. Education is crucial for women's empowerment, as illiteracy and limited education exacerbate gender-based disparities. Gender socialization perpetuates traditional gender roles and expectations, hindering efforts to achieve gender equality in education and beyond. One key finding of Karam's work is the detrimental impact of gender-based disparities in education on women's empowerment and societal progress. She underscores how factors such as illiteracy and limited access to education exacerbate existing gender inequalities, limiting women's opportunities for advancement and participation in various spheres of life. By elucidating these disparities, Karam sheds light on the urgent need to prioritize education as a means of addressing gender inequities and promoting inclusive development. As previously highlighted, Khydeeja Alam shares that going to UC Berkeley expanded her perspective on the impact that academia can have on the exposure to professional opportunities. She shares that her internship at UCSC, which introduced her to the world of lobbying and education policies, was a transformative experience that exemplifies the importance of being in the right spaces and connecting with the right people. The Berkeley network continued to support her career, with mentors recognizing her potential and providing opportunities that propelled her forward. This experience aligns with the social network and identity theories discussed above, which emphasize the role of networks in disseminating values and creating opportunities, especially for women of color in male-dominated fields.

⁴ Karam, A. (2011). *Education as the Pathway towards Gender Equality*. United Nations. <https://www.un.org/en/chronicle/article/education-pathway-towards-gender-equality>

Furthermore, Karam explores how gender socialization perpetuates traditional gender roles and expectations, particularly within educational settings. She highlights how cultural norms and societal expectations shape individuals' perceptions of gender and influence educational outcomes, reinforcing existing inequalities. Karam's analysis underscores the importance of challenging these entrenched norms and fostering inclusive educational environments that empower individuals of all genders to reach their full potential. Despite progress in recent years, Karam acknowledges that girls still face significant barriers to education globally, leading to disparities in enrollment and career-building opportunities. She identifies culturally embedded gender norms as key contributors to these persistent inequalities, emphasizing the need for comprehensive policy interventions and societal shifts towards gender equality in education. Khydeeja's testimony, in which she describes her ability to balance professional and personal responsibilities, including managing a long-distance marriage and raising three children, while advancing in her career, speaks to the resilience and determination that feminist scholars argue are essential for breaking through the "cracked ceiling." Her story is a reminder that while progress has been made, significant barriers still exist, and it is through continuous advocacy, support networks, and a deep understanding of one's purpose that women can navigate and succeed in challenging environments. As Khydeeja continues to lead and mentor others, she embodies the feminist ideals of empowerment and transformation, paving the way for the next generation of fearless leaders. By addressing the root causes of gender disparities, Karam advocates for transformative change that promotes inclusive and equitable educational opportunities for all.

Both Karam's and Figueroa's analyses highlight the interconnectedness of gender inequalities across various domains, emphasizing the need for comprehensive approaches to address structural barriers to gender equality. While Figueroa focuses on the socio-legal dimensions of gender disparities, Karam's analysis delves into the role of education as a catalyst for social change, which is also echoed in Khydeeja Alam's testimony. Furthermore, Karam's emphasis on the impact of cultural norms and gender socialization resonates with broader research on the social determinants of gender inequalities. Karam

shows how cultural norms and societal expectations shape individuals' experiences within educational settings, contributing to gender disparities in access to education and opportunities for advancement.

Both authors emphasize the need to challenge culturally embedded gender norms and foster inclusive environments that empower individuals of all genders to pursue their educational and career aspirations freely. By addressing the root causes of gender inequalities, including deeply ingrained cultural beliefs and social expectations, policymakers and stakeholders can work towards creating more equitable societies where all individuals have equal opportunities to thrive. This work contributes to a growing body of literature that recognizes the complex interplay between cultural, social, and institutional factors in shaping individuals' opportunities and experiences.

Karam's findings underscore the importance of education as a tool for challenging gender inequalities and promoting social justice. Adelaida's testimony captures similar sentiments as she shares that a major challenge she has faced in building her career is the lack of a formal degree, which has limited her opportunities. Reflecting on her upbringing, she notes that higher education was never prioritized in her family, and she was often guilted into working to support her household instead of pursuing her college ambitions. Despite this, she has become a mentor to college students, guiding them in their career paths, and she is actively involved in a mentorship committee.

GENDER ROLES IN THE WORKPLACE

Andrea Michel⁵ conducts a qualitative investigation that dives into the encounters of female leaders with gender norms, implicit bias, and microaggressions throughout their professional trajectories. Through in-depth interviews with twelve participants, Michel seeks to uncover prevalent gender norms, their behavioral manifestations in the workplace, and their effects on women's experiences and career trajectories. One key finding of Michel's study is the pervasive influence of gender norms and implicit

⁵ Michel, Andrea, "Understanding gender roles in the workplace: a qualitative research study" (2020). Theses and Dissertations. 1165.
<https://digitalcommons.pepperdine.edu/etd/1165>

bias on women's experiences in the workplace. Participants reported encountering various manifestations of gender norms, including stereotypes, expectations, and discriminatory practices, which often manifested as microaggressions. Adelaida speaks to this through her experience in navigating a discriminatory situation at a workplace during the earlier part of her career. She shared that one of her earliest experiences navigating a socially difficult situation occurred in 2012 while working for a trucking company. After her manager discovered her past incarceration through a background check, she began to experience exclusion from work-related social events and was given fewer responsibilities. When she addressed this with leadership, she was met with a dismissive attitude, being told “that’s how life is,” and to either deal with it or leave. Despite the discomfort, she chose to stay in the role to gain the necessary experience to transition into other positions. This period also marked a time of personal growth, as she relied on self-compassion and meditation to manage the situation. These experiences can have significant impacts on women's sense of belonging, confidence, and opportunities for career advancement. As Khydeeja’s testimony similarly highlights, she faced a series of implicit bias and microaggressions as she built her political career as a young woman of color in a male dominated field.

Michel's study also highlights the importance of organizational awareness and intervention in addressing these issues. Participants emphasized the need for learning and development initiatives aimed at mitigating bias and promoting inclusivity across leadership levels. Additionally, they called for a review of organizational structures to foster representation and create environments conducive to women's advancement and leadership. Crucially, Khydeeja Alam shared an experience she had with a mentor who made a few comments about her identities in the workplace, which highlights the generational and cultural gaps that can create additional hurdles for women in leadership and for diversifying representation. One of the most significant barriers Khydeeja encountered was when her boss questioned her decision to hire a candidate who shared her ethnic background and her gender. This incident revealed the deep-seated biases that still exist within organizations, where the presence of multiple individuals from the same minority background is often scrutinized. The decision to block the hire based on ethnicity rather than merit was a stark reminder of the ongoing challenges of diversity and

representation in leadership roles. This experience had a lasting impact on her decision-making and reinforced the need for mindful hiring practices that genuinely promote diversity without succumbing to tokenism. Despite these challenges, Khydeeja has remained committed to her advocacy work and has found strength in her identities as a Pakistani immigrant and a woman in leadership.

Connecting back to the impacts of socialization on gender inequality when highlighting women building careers in contemporary society, Michel's findings resonate with broader research on the socialization process and its impact on women's career trajectories by underscoring the pervasive influence of gender norms, implicit bias, and discriminatory practices in shaping women's experiences in the workplace. It further highlights the importance of organizational interventions aimed at addressing these issues and fostering inclusive environments conducive to women's advancement. Furthermore, Michel's study contributes to a growing body of literature on gender inequality in the workplace by providing qualitative insights into women's lived experiences. While similar themes may emerge in other research studies, Michel's qualitative approach offers rich, nuanced perspectives that deepen our understanding of the complex dynamics at play. By amplifying the voices of female leaders, Michel's study adds valuable insights to ongoing discussions about gender equality and organizational change. Both Adelaida's and Khydeeja's discriminatory experiences in the workplace affirm these insights and shed additional light on the various aspects that contribute to the influence of gender norms, implicit bias, and discrimination.

INTERSECTIONALITY AND NEW WAYS OF KNOWING

Amy Kroska⁶ offers a comprehensive review of social psychological theories and provides valuable insights into the multifaceted nature of gender inequality. By examining theories such as symbolic interactionist, social learning, structural, gender, network, identity, expectation states, affect control, and identity control theories, Kroska highlights the diverse processes contributing to the

⁶ Kroska, Amy. "The Social Psychology of Gender Inequality." In *Social Psychology and Inequality*, edited by Kroska, Amy, 485-514. doi: 10.1007/978-94-017-9002-4_20.

construction and perpetuation of gender disparities. These theories emphasize various factors, including socialization, structural position, interactional pressures, networks, identity adoption, and gender status beliefs, shedding light on the complex interplay of individual, interpersonal, and societal factors shaping gender inequality.

One key contribution of Kroska's review is the recognition of the need for future research to focus on testing propositions related to multi-level processes and intersectionality. By examining how factors at the individual, interpersonal, and structural levels intersect to produce and maintain gender disparities, researchers can develop more nuanced theoretical explanations of gender inequality. This aligns with broader discussions in the field about the importance of considering intersectionality in understanding social phenomena, including gender inequality. Kroska's review enhances our understanding of the social psychological processes underlying gender disparities in the workplace and highlights the role of socialization in shaping women's career trajectories. It also synthesizes insights from various social psychological theories, including symbolic interactionist, social learning, structural, gender, network, identity, expectation states, affect control, and identity control theories. Echoing these themes, Adelaida shared a bit about her healing journey and the role that workplace experiences have played in her relationship with herself, others, and holistic healing. Relating to the discriminatory experience she had at the trucking company she worked at, she spoke about how despite having been treated differently for being formerly incarcerated, years later, the manager responsible for her exclusion reached out to apologize, and she forgave him, believing in redemption for all. This holistic perspective underscores the complexity of gender dynamics and provides directions for future research to explore multi-level processes and intersectionality within the realms of organizational behavior, social policy, and cultural studies.

Anne Kornblut⁷ offers a detailed exploration of the challenges female leaders face within the political landscape, highlighting the intricate interplay of gender norms, implicit bias, and

⁷ Kornblut, Anne E. *Notes from the cracked ceiling: What it will take for a woman to win*. New York: Crown Publishing Group, 2011.

microaggressions. Through qualitative research methods, Kornblut delves into the specific experiences of female leaders, uncovering how societal expectations and stereotypes shape their professional trajectories. She reveals that female leaders often encounter implicit biases and microaggressions, such as dismissive attitudes or double standards, which hinder their effectiveness and advancement in politics. As previously highlighted, Khydeeja's experiences as a young woman of color who was tokenized and yet often dismissed for her age speaks volumes about the interconnectedness of implicit bias and microaggressions.

Kornblut's analysis emphasizes the critical role of political awareness and structural reforms in addressing these challenges and advancing gender equality. She suggests that heightened awareness of gender dynamics within political institutions can lead to more equitable policies and practices. Additionally, Kornblut argues for structural reforms aimed at dismantling systemic barriers to female leadership, such as gender-based discrimination and unequal access to resources and opportunities. This study connects to broader research on gender inequality in leadership positions, echoing findings from other studies that highlight the pervasive influence of gender norms and biases in shaping women's experiences in male-dominated fields. Kornblut's emphasis on political awareness and structural reforms aligns with recommendations from other scholars who advocate for institutional changes to promote gender equality and echoes Bermudez Figueroa's emphasis on the pervasive influence of gender norms and structural inequalities, highlighting how these factors hinder female leaders' advancement in politics and professional spaces. Both studies underscore the need for heightened awareness and structural reforms to address systemic barriers to gender equality, whether in the political sphere as examined by Kornblut or within socio-legal contexts as explored by Bermudez Figueroa.

Mary Anna Lundeberg⁸ explores the unique "ways of knowing" attributed to women and the transformative potential of feminist scholarship in academia. She reviews two books: "Women's Ways of Knowing: The Development of Self, Voice, and Mind" and "Changing Our Minds: Feminist

⁸ Lundeberg, M. A. (1989). Book Reviews: Women's Ways of Knowing: The Development of Self, Voice, and Mind. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 13(1), 127-130. <https://doi-org.libproxy.berkeley.edu/10.1111/j.1471-6402.1989.tb00990.x>

Transformations of Knowledge." Despite promising insights into women's intellectual perspectives, differences observed may also be influenced by factors such as race and class. Adelaida speaks about how her experiences with trauma and her identity as a woman of color have shaped how she is perceived as a leader. She often leads restorative spaces for holistic healing, focusing on deep listening and offering nonjudgmental support. Recognizing the significance of race and gender in shaping leadership perceptions, she discusses the importance of treating others with the same grace and understanding that we would extend to loved ones. Her experiences with the mistreatment of BIPOC individuals, both during her upbringing and in prison, have driven her to advocate for equitable treatment and compassionate leadership. She encourages others to extend kindness and support to strangers, believing that this practice could foster a more inclusive and harmonious society.

One key finding highlighted in Lundeberg's review is the significance of women's voices and experiences in shaping knowledge production and scholarship. Through interviews with 135 women across academic institutions, "Women's Ways of Knowing" uncovers diverse ways in which women engage with and contribute to knowledge creation, emphasizing the importance of self-authorship and voice development. Similarly, "Changing Our Minds" discusses reactions to feminist curriculum transformation projects, shedding light on the potential for feminist pedagogy to challenge traditional knowledge structures and foster more inclusive learning environments. These works collectively emphasize the transformative power of women's experiences in redefining traditional modes of learning and knowledge production. In light of this, Adelaida's journey from a home where higher education was discouraged to a role where she mentors college students can be seen as an embodiment of this redefinition of knowledge. Her reliance on self-directed learning through reading and the eventual cultivation of a mentoring role aligns with the notion of self-authorship described in "Women's Ways of Knowing." Her ability to offer guidance to others, despite not following a traditional educational path, reflects the type of voice development and empowerment that Lundeberg's review acknowledges as crucial in both personal and academic growth. It is crucial to emphasize that women must be encouraged from a young age to follow their aspirations freely and courageously.

However, Lundeberg also acknowledges the intersecting influences of race and class on women's experiences and perspectives. While these works provide valuable insights into women's intellectual development, differences observed may be influenced by intersecting identities and social contexts. This aligns with broader discussions in feminist scholarship about the importance of intersectionality in understanding the complexities of gendered experiences and inequalities. Connecting to broader research on feminist epistemology and pedagogy, Lundeberg's review underscores the importance of centering women's voices and experiences in knowledge production and curriculum development. While similar themes may emerge in other studies, Lundeberg's review offers a comprehensive synthesis of key findings and insights from multiple perspectives. Moreover, her analysis highlights the need for future research to further explore the intersecting influences of gender, race, class, and other identities on knowledge production and scholarship within academia. Lundeberg's review contributes to the ongoing discourse on women's ways of knowing and the transformative potential of feminist scholarship. She ultimately highlights the role of women's socialization and how societal factors influence women's intellectual development and perspectives. She delves into the ways in which women's unique ways of knowing are shaped by their experiences within academia and broader social contexts, specifically, how women's voices and experiences are often marginalized or silenced within traditional knowledge structures, reflecting broader patterns of gender socialization that prioritize male perspectives and contributions.

Women of color, particularly those who rise to leadership in non-traditional roles, have had a profound impact on feminist scholarship by sharing their lived experiences and challenging traditional knowledge structures. Adelaida Caballero, who built her career through extensive operational experience across various organizations, found her passion in working within Berkeley Law's Clinical Program to address issues related to the prison system. Although she does not hold a formal degree, her deep intellectual curiosity and self-education, fueled by reading about the prison system and social justice, equipped her to engage meaningfully with students through experiential learning. Speaking on panels and participating in student-led symposia has allowed her to amplify her voice and share her unique insights, contributing to feminist discourse in academia. This impact aligns with the findings in "Women's Ways

of Knowing" and Lundeberg's review, which emphasize how women's intellectual development is shaped by their socialization and experiences within broader social contexts. Women of color like Adelaida, who come from non-traditional backgrounds, often have their voices marginalized or silenced within traditional knowledge structures that prioritize male perspectives. However, through feminist scholarship and curriculum reforms, there is an increasing recognition of the importance of these women's experiences in reshaping and expanding academic conversations.

By sharing their stories in academic spaces, women of color challenge these exclusionary structures, ensuring that their voices are not only heard but are integral to the evolution of feminist knowledge production. Through their leadership on panels and in classrooms, they embody the potential for transforming traditional academia into a more inclusive and representative space. By examining the impact of feminist scholarship and curriculum transformations, Lundeberg highlights the potential for challenging and reshaping these traditional knowledge structures to be more inclusive of women's voices and experiences.

Moreover, Lundberg acknowledges the intersecting influences of race and class on women's experiences and perspectives, indicating that women's intellectual development is not only shaped by gender norms and expectations but also by intersecting identities and social contexts. Overall, Lundeberg's review contributes to our understanding of the socialization of women by illuminating how societal factors influence women's ways of knowing and their participation in knowledge production. It underscores the importance of recognizing and challenging gendered patterns of socialization within academia and society more broadly to create more equitable and inclusive environments for women's intellectual development and scholarship.

This discussion underscores the importance of the social-psychological aspect of career development experienced by women, in addition to the role education can play in breaking barriers. The U.S. is assumed to be a progressive country with respect to women's rights, but there are still many systemic barriers in place, particularly involving entry points into the political arena. Some women have been resilient and successful in achieving positions of power, in professional and political spheres. In my

navigation of higher education, there were very prominent themes of resilience and overcoming barriers. This issue was really brought home to me during my time participating in the Democracy Camp and Cal in Sacramento fellowship programs, where I had a chance to meet and hear from women in politics who shared their experiences of going against traditional feminine norms.

CONCLUSION

Through gathering these testimonies and situating them within the broader context of feminist scholarship, I hope to highlight some of the challenges women face when embarking on professional and political careers and how to overcome them. If we can learn more about what it takes for women to be successful in politics, particularly what obstacles are systemically reinforced, we can empower more women to become active in the political arena. Socialization begins early in life and encompasses various social, cultural, and institutional influences that shape individuals' beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors regarding gender roles and expectations. Culturally embedded gender norms play a central role in this process, shaping individuals' educational and career trajectories from childhood through adulthood. I hope to contribute to addressing gender inequity by sharing this research and my positionality as a young woman of color actively building a professional career. By providing a platform for women of color to speak about their experiences amidst an ever changing political and social culture that influences professional and political environments, we can begin to remove the barriers that stand in the way of achieving true and lasting gender equity.