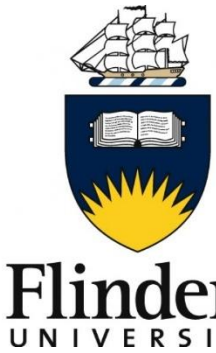

HOW DOES WOMEN'S ECONOMIC SITUATION RELATE TO INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE?

A MONGOLIAN CASE STUDY

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Thesis submitted as part of the requirement of
Master of Arts in Women's Studies
(WMST9018)

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Declaration of original work

This thesis does not contain any material previously published or written by another person unless where due reference is made in the text.

Signed 

Enkhmaa Tsedevsuren (2206472)

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Abstract

This thesis provides a feminist analysis of the relationship between women's economic situation and intimate partner violence (IPV) in Mongolia in the period since the country transitioned from socialism to a market economy and neoliberal style of government in the early 1990s. Starting from a literature review focusing on this relationship, it is evident that this topic has been extensively discussed in different contexts around the world. Mongolia, however, seems to be an exception despite the fact that these two aspects have been studied separately.

Women's economic situation in Mongolia has significantly worsened since the transition from socialism, and IPV has increased during this time. A strong tradition of women's strength and more recent gender equality remain but many of the social and economic gains for women achieved during the socialist period have been dismantled and traditional patriarchal gender norms have been revived. To elaborate the relationship between these parts of women's lives, the following two factors have been taken into consideration. On the one hand, Mongolian women's economic position has been extensively researched by means of women's bargaining power in their households, employment opportunities for women, work-place based discrimination, discrimination that businesswomen face, wage gaps, and property ownership. The thesis demonstrates how Mongolian women have been marginalized from owning property or land exclusively in their names and why it has been the case. Such historical features are taken into account to illustrate how women's roles have been perceived and what changes have taken place in this regard since the 1990s. The thesis also looks at the roles that respective policies have played in the formation of the current women's economic situation in Mongolia in the light of the dramatic changes undertaken in different periods of its history. On the other side of the spectrum, IPV in Mongolia has not yet been studied in detail. The nature of IPV in Mongolia has been elaborated as part of this thesis. Possible reasons for why women in Mongolia are facing IPV these days include the re-energising of persistent patriarchal gender norms and other socio-economic factors. The thesis then investigates how these two notions, women's economic situation and IPV, could be related as far as Mongolia is concerned.

The thesis concludes with a question. It asks whether historical conditions of Mongolian gender relations (nomadism, a democracy of the steppes, socialism and women's high educational levels) reduce the impact of declining women's economic position and whether it means that IPV is less prevalent in Mongolia *or* have the historical benefits for Mongolian women now been wiped out by neo-liberalism. For the sake of more complete understanding of the nature of the relationship between women's economic situation and IPV, these two must be contextualised within historical, cultural frameworks along with socio-economic factors. The findings of this thesis, therefore, call for future studies, both qualitative and quantitative, to focus on the context of Mongolia for the advancement of gender equality.

List of Abbreviation

ADB	Asian Development Bank
AHRM	Advocates for Human Rights Minneapolis
CSO	Civil society organization
DV	Domestic violence
NHRCM	National Human Rights Commission of Mongolia
IPV	Intimate partner violence
IRIM	Independent Research Institute of Mongolia
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
MPRP	Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party
MWC	Mongolian Women's Committee
NCAVM	National Center Against Violence Mongolia
NCGEM	National Committee on Gender Equality Mongolia
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NSOM	National Statistics Office Mongolia
WB	World Bank
WHO	World Health Organization

CHAPTER 1. Introduction

There is substantial evidence that more women than men worldwide face poverty mostly because they lack access to decent work, assets and formal credit (United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women 2015, p. 10). Meanwhile, according to the World Health Organization (WHO), 35 per cent of all women in the world experience either physical and/or sexual IPV or non-partner sexual violence. Most of these violent incidents are IPV - with almost 30 per cent of all women globally becoming victims of physical and/or sexual violence by their intimate partners (World Health Organization [WHO] 2013, p. 2).

In some developing countries, various initiatives have promoted women's economic participation, security, and the right to live free from violence. However, these two areas of work, increasing women's economic inclusion and combating IPV, are usually treated in separate programmes, which seems to be rather inefficient (Hughes et al. 2015, p. 280). In order to effectively respond to the feminization of poverty, gender inequality and IPV, these two areas of work should be considered as connected. This idea of interconnectedness is supported by Vyas (2013, p. 27), who argues that addressing women's economic disadvantages and IPV separately can lead to incomplete results. In general, women who are more economically secure and independent are usually better protected from various forms of violence thanks to the financial contributions to their families' living (Vyas & Watts 2009, p. 577). But programmes to improve women's economic situation can lead to an increase in risks of IPV (Aísa 2014, p. 10). This could happen when the women's increased earnings cause some threat to the typical roles of men, for example being the breadwinners of their households (Hidrobo & Fernald 2013, p. 305). Or this enhancement could cause some men to fear that they will lose their control of their partners (Anderberg and Rainer 2011, p. 3). Hughes et al. (2015, p. 280) highlighted the importance of considering these two development domains together based on their research findings, which have shown that the initiatives to improve women's economic position can, in some cases, increase the risk of domestic violence (DV). It does not mean that initiatives to improve women's economic situation are risky or unnecessary. Improving women's economic situation is particularly vital for promoting gender equality. These viewpoints inform the general trend of this thesis.

Mongolia is a landlocked country located in the heart of Asia and surrounded by the Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China. It has large land, a sparse population and

historically rich culture. Mongolian unique nomadic culture and 70 years of socialism have brought some advantages to Mongolian women. This has created women who are different from those in the neighbouring countries which have more sedentary cultures. However, the collapse of socialism and the shocking transition from the centrally planned economy to the market economy and the current neoliberal mode of government have not been favourable for them. They are suffering both in their economic and intimate lives.

How then is women's economic situation and IPV interrelated in the Mongolian context? Although the relationship between women's economic situation and IPV has been studied in the contexts of many countries, there is, to my knowledge, no research work to be found in the case of Mongolia. Mongolian women's economic situation and IPV have mostly been researched separately, meaning that their relationship is yet to be studied. This thesis provides a feminist analysis of the relationship between women's economic situation and IPV in Mongolia based on international literature on this link and available reports, research and literature on the Mongolian women's economic situation as well as the situation of IPV. The thesis begins with the literature review on the relationship between women's economic position and IPV globally before moving onto a general introduction to Mongolia and gender politics in this country. It then looks into women's economic situation and IPV in the context of Mongolia, seeking answers to the thesis question: "How does Mongolian women's economic situation relate to their IPV?".

Methodology and Terminology

I am a Mongolian woman who is over 40. I grew up in the socialist period and experienced dramatic socio-political changes in Mongolia when I was a teenager. Now, I am a citizen of a free market-based democratic country with a neoliberal form of government. I have worked in the community development area for 13 years, specialising in the areas of gender and development for the last five years. During my study for the Master of Arts (Women's studies), there have been two topics, gendered poverty and IPV, that I have found particularly interesting. I have read about the link between these two global issues and about initiatives to decrease the risk of IPV by improving women's economic status. I wanted to know more about women's economic situation and IPV because they share a common structural underpinning, gender inequality. Hence, I began my journey to seek more understanding

about this relationship between women's economic situation and IPV, especially in the context of my own country.

The theoretical framework used in this thesis to examine the relationship between women's economic situation and IPV is a feminist paradigm, which regards gender as a fundamental social division and signifier of life chances which often/usually leads to privilege men and subordinate women (Walter 2019, p. 18). This paradigm is developed by feminist scholars against a widely popular male-centric approach to the study of our social world, in part because women possess various experiences of social reality that differ from men's (Walter 2019, p. 18). This is articulated within the thesis by looking at issues of women's economic situation and IPV and their relationship through a feminist lens – how women are presented in these two areas of development. Particularly, I used an additional lens as an Asian woman from a low middle-income country who has experienced significant socio-economic and political changes in my life.

In this thesis, I used a qualitative research method. I rely on secondary data, including relevant academic literature, research, websites and reports of government and NGOs. I synthesise different bodies of literature, applying international literature to the Mongolian situation, asking questions that have not been asked in Mongolia.

In some places in the thesis, I used an autoethnography making use of my ethnographic self (Mills, Durepos & Wiebe 2010, p. 44) as an additional resource since I am a woman who experienced dramatic socio-economic changes in Mongolia, which have influenced Mongolian women's status as well as gender norms.

Gender-based violence (GBV) can be understood as violence against women. It is because it has been widely acknowledged that most GBV is perpetrated on women, by men (WHO 2020). GBV 'results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual, or mental harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life' (United Nations 1993).

'One of the most common forms of GBV and includes physical, sexual, and emotional abuse and controlling behaviours by an intimate partner' is IPV. The term 'DV' also means IPV in many countries (WHO 2012, p. 1). However, the 'DV' can also include abuse by any member of a household, such as child abuse, elder abuse and so on. In this thesis, the terms 'DV' and

'IPV' are used interchangeably. It should be noted that 'IPV' is used mostly; with 'DV' (meaning only 'IPV') being used only when it is cited directly from the literature (WHO 2012, p. 1).

CHAPTER 2. Mongolia at a glance

Mongolia is the birthplace of Chinggis Khaan and the home of the nomadic warriors who established the Mongol Empire in the thirteenth century. From the early 1920s to the 1990s, Mongolia was a socialist country and had a close tie with the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (Tumursukh 2018, p. 37). Within this timeframe, Mongolia managed to achieve significant levels of progress (Tumursukh 2018, p. 37). It developed a modern administrative system and an extensive public service network (Tumursukh 2018, p. 37). Other achievements include improved social protection mechanisms, elimination of illiteracy and venereal diseases, a trained and educated population, well-organized agriculture, highly developed light and heavy industries and establishment of modern cities (Tumursukh 2018, p. 37).

Since the beginning of the 1990s, Mongolia has undergone tremendous societal changes stemming from the country's political and economic transition (Tumursukh 2018, p. 32). This changing context has had a significant impact not only on the country's socio-cultural norms, but also on the dynamics of gender equality and the phenomenon of GBV (Tumursukh, 2018, p. 32). Mongolia is now a parliamentary democracy with a free-market economy and has four administrative regions (Eastern, Central, Khangai and Western), which are subdivided into and twenty-one provinces (Tumursukh 2018, p. 14). Ranking 19th in the world in terms of territory, it covers around 1,6 million sq.km (National Statistics Office Mongolia [NSOM] 2019a), which is approximately the size of the Australian state of Queensland. The population is, however, only around 3,3 million, and nearly half of it is now concentrated in the capital city of Ulaanbaatar (), where the population density is 328 persons per sq.km compared to only two persons per sq.km at the national level (NSOM 2019b). Ethnically, the population is rather homogenous. Khalkha Mongols account for 82.4 per cent, and Kazakhs, the largest ethnic minority are 3.9 per cent. The remaining population comprises the ethnic Mongols such as Tuvans, Buryads, Durvuds, and Bayads (NSOM 2010). Religion was suppressed during state-socialism in Mongolia, but now the Mongol ethnic groups are predominantly Buddhist-shamanist, only Kazakhs are Muslim, and the number of Christians has risen since the 1990s (Tumursukh 2018, p. 14). The official language is Mongolian, written in Cyrillic, based on the Khalkha dialect (Tumursukh 2018, p. 14).

Socio-economic and political transition in Mongolia

When the socialist regime collapsed in the 1990s in Mongolia, it was followed by a transition period which had a pattern similar to what was seen in Eastern European countries and Russia (Rana 1995, p. 1165). It can be contrasted with the gradual steps of other Asian socialist countries such as Myanmar, China, Vietnam and the Lao, where the transition appeared to have been motivated primarily by economic considerations (Rana 1995, p. 1165). Unlike these countries, Mongolia went through sudden political changes. The social costs of transition were higher than anticipated (Rana 1995, p. 1165).

These costs include high levels of unemployment and poverty caused by the dissolution of state enterprises and the reduction in public employment (Tumursukh 2018 p. 32). To make matters worse, cuts in social welfare including childcare facilities and rural school dorms were made (Tumursukh 2018, p. 32). In general, women are impacted the most by such social welfare cuts everywhere in the world. Divorce rates soared and violence against women and children became more widespread (Tumursukh 2018, p. 32). Crime, aggression, and alcoholism were on the rise and beggars and street children became commonplace (Tumursukh 2018, p. 32). All these demonstrate how hard the country was hit by the transition period, which entailed severe poverty in the country.

The privatization of livestock and state-owned enterprises was initiated in 1991, which led to a sharp fall in the productivity of the livestock sector. It ended up with a disproportionate accumulation of assets in the hands of the party elites (Bayartsetseg 2014, cited in Tumursukh 2018, p. 32). Furthermore, trade was liberalized, and as a result, domestic production went into 90 per cent decline (Bayartsetseg 2014, cited in Tumursukh, 2018, p. 32). These abrupt changes of privatization and trade liberalization brought about de-industrialization processes in the country (Tumursukh 2018, p. 32). These were justified by the stated need to restructure the economy, but the government decisions on the privatization were so sudden and were introduced in swift succession (Tumursukh 2018, p. 32). The fact that the neoliberal reforms imposed abruptly on the people who were uninformed had a tremendous social and economic impact (Tumursukh 2018, p. 32).

Rural herders were no longer organized in collectives due to privatization of livestock. Rural poverty was aggravated in the face of summer droughts and *dzud* - a severe winter in which

a large number of livestock die, primarily due to starvation due to being unable to graze - especially in 1999 and 2002. Such calamities decimated livestock, impoverishing herders who were not protected by government schemes (Fritz 2008, p. 782). Thus, thousands of rural migrants moved to the capital city, largely settling in informal, poorly serviced peri-urban districts, and thousands engaged in artisanal mining (mining by individuals with minimal tools) (Fritz 2008, p. 782).

Despite these hardships, rapid economic growth was experienced by the country starting from the year of 2003. Yet, it did not translate into a lower poverty rate. Rather, it widened the inequalities between the rich and the poor, between men and women, and between Ulaanbaatar and peripheries (Tumursukh 2018, p. 33).

In brief, the political and economic liberalization following the collapse of the socialist regime was widely promoted as it claimed to offer a humane, democratic and wealthy society (Tumursukh 2018, p. 37). Despite these promises, Mongolia has turned into a more stratified society, where most of the people are in grinding poverty while a small oligarchy has taken control of the political system that is largely male-dominated (Tumursukh 2018, p. 37).

Economic indicators

Mongolia is classified as a low-income economy. According to the World Bank (WB) (2019), the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of Mongolia is USD 13,853 million and it ranks 130th out of 203 countries. If Mongolia's economy is compared to other low-income economies in Asia, Mongolia ranks ninth in terms of poverty and fourth in terms of per capita GDP, indicating that per capita GDP does not determine a country's standard of living (Bayaraa 2018, p. 65). Mongolia's economic situation is very different from other low-income economies in Asia (Bayaraa 2018, p. 65). Most of these economies are based on agriculture, manufacturing, and services, while Mongolia's economy is heavily dependent on mining and exports (Bayaraa 2018, p. 65). As a heavily male-dominated industry with a heavily masculine culture, it is clear that this is not beneficial for women. As of 2018, the national poverty rate was almost 30 per cent and a further 15 per cent of the total population was clustered just above the national poverty line, vulnerable to slipping into poverty in the event of any unanticipated shocks. To make matters even worse, poverty in Mongolia is becoming intergenerational (WB 2020b). The country's Gini coefficient has remained at around 33 since 2009 (WB 2020a). Mongolia's

labour force is estimated at 1.3 million people aged 15 and above, and the labour force participation rate was at 60.1 per cent (67.4 per cent male and 53.5 per cent female). In 2019 the extractives sector was the largest employer (NSOM 2019c).

Mongolian women

Historically, Mongolian women have been relatively independent (Nielsen 2015, p. 9). They have had the right to own and inherit entitlements, which were not common for women in other countries (Nielsen 2015, p. 9). This can be explained by the fact that historically, Mongolian men often were at war for a very long time and a nomadic herding lifestyle required Mongolian women to take care of their family and household issues and make important decisions on where and how to herd their animals. Such circumstances seem to have made them independent (Nielsen 2015, p. 9). Tumursukh (2001, p. 124) claims that this gender arrangement was caused by the wars and the requirement for the majority of the male population to live in Buddhist monasteries. In the Manchu period, families were required to give at least one son to a Buddhist monastery. As a result, in the 19th century, half of the adult male population consisted of monks (Tumursukh 2001, p. 124). These gendered patterns of life played a role in ensuring the economic independence and sexual freedom of Mongolian women (Tumursukh 2001, p. 124). Nevertheless, Benwell (2009, cited in Nielsen, 2015, p. 9) argues that although Mongolian women's independence was relatively high, women's power remained limited by kinship structures, settlement rules, and the organization of life in the *ger*, creating a position for women in a lower position than men. (*Ger* is a Mongolian traditional dwelling which is round, portable and covered by felt.)

The 1921 revolution led to the establishment of a socialist economy. State-socialism profoundly transformed gender relations in Mongolia from the very beginning and radical changes in the position of women were seen (Tumursukh 2018, p. 25). In 1924, the Constitution of the People's Republic of Mongolia declared that ‘all people should be ensured equal rights without discrimination by origin, religion or sex’ (‘Bugd Nairamdakh Mongol Ard Ulsyn Ankhdugaar Undsen Khuuli [The first constitution of the People's Republic of Mongolia]’ 1924, cited in Tumursukh 2018, p. 25). Accordingly, some traditional practices oppressing women were banned. Arranged marriages, preventing girls from attending school, and kidnapping brides were no longer tolerated (Tumursukh 2018, p. 25). Women’s education,

development and 'civilization' were officially promoted for the first time with the establishment of the Mongolian Women's Committee (MWC) under the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party (MPRP) as early as in 1924 (Mongolian Women's Federation 2009, cited in Tumursukh 2018, p. 25).

Later, the MWC made efforts to enhance women's literacy levels and mobilize them into public meetings organized by the MPRP. It worked to assist the war efforts and overcome the difficulties of the war-period. (Mongolia was at war against Japan in 1945. Also, during World War II Mongolia, was a 'producer' and buffer in the Soviet Union defence system.) The MWC also facilitated the involvement of women in the development of cooperatives and collectives and in the promotion of 'civilization' and 'cultural improvements' (Mongolian Women's Federation 2009, cited in Tumursukh 2018, p. 25). Actions were taken to promote women's participation in education and employment, including sciences, and involve women in public affairs (Mongolian Women's Federation 2009, cited in Tumursukh 2018, p. 25). As a result, women's positions changed dramatically under socialism in a matter of a few generations. However, there is a doubt that a strong emphasis on women's equality in public life and workforce was tied to the Party- State's perennial worry about labour shortage (Tumursukh 2018, p. 25).

From 1960, the party-state strictly banned abortion and contraceptives in pursuance of its strong pronatalist policy to increase the population size (Altankhuyag, Falkingham & Brown 2007, p. 814). In effect, it can be said that the paternalistic authoritarian party-state assumed control over women's sexual and reproductive lives (Tumursukh 2001, p. 125), achieving a total fertility rate of seven to eight children per woman between 1963 to 1975 (Altankhuyag, Falkingham & Brown 2007, p. 801). The ban on contraceptives was relaxed in 1976 for some groups of women based on the number of children already produced, age and medical condition, and the strict prohibition of abortion was relaxed in 1985 (Altankhuyag, Falkingham & Brown 2007, p. 802). Having a large number of children was accompanied by a provision of free childcare, education, and health services and a range of other incentives (Tumursukh 2018, p. 27).

When it comes to decision-making levels and public life, there was an increase in women's participation that was noticed during the socialist period although there were always fewer women at senior levels than men (Robinson & Solongo 2000, p. 5). For instance, 1925 was the

year when the first female representatives/members had their positions in the local government. A female member was chosen in the People's Supreme Court for the first time in 1929. Two aimags (provinces) had female governors in 1931 and 30 per cent of local government officials were women. Later on, the proportion of women's participation was legally guaranteed, in parliament, in ministries and at government and government administrative units (Robinson & Solongo 2000, p. 5).

In brief, most feminist scholars claim that despite advancing equality in the economy and society, communist regimes do not advance equality within the household (Buyandelger 2008, p. 240; Schwartz 1979, p. 67). This view has a certain validity in the Mongolian context. For instance, women had to carry a triple burden in socialist Mongolia. They were exploited for their reproductive capacity to increase the total population figures, while expected to perform unpaid work and their labour extracted for the formal economy (Tumursukh 2018, p. 37). Yet, socialism, in its initial stage, liberated women from slavery under the feudal patriarchy and the party-state denounced patriarchal practices as 'residues of feudalism' (Tumursukh 2018, p. 29). Later on, in an effort to put in place cultural reforms and promote women's equality, the state successfully put some emphasis on women's equality in employment and education and sought to alter gender attitudes, behaviours and family lives by encouraging men to share domestic burdens of housework and child-rearing (Tumursukh 2018, p. 28).

Today, Mongolian women have a higher level of education than men (The Government of Mongolia 2012, pp. 46-7). Many women are becoming the main breadwinners of the family, while male unemployment is rising and some men are leaving the family altogether (Benwell 2009, cited in Nielsen, 2015, p. 9). While this is still the ideal situation, being a housewife means that many urban women have no choice. They are working, earning money and taking care of their children and household, issues which create a double burden for Mongolian women (Benwell 2009, cited in Nielsen, 2015, p. 9).

While women these days seem to enjoy rights over their reproductive lives, traditionalist discourses still see women as a 'means' to give birth, 'the same dehumanizing utilitarian approach', to increase the total population numbers in the name of national survival (Tumursukh 2018, p. 37). The neoliberal policies have also led to a situation where women's socio-economic status is undermined due to the expanding informal economy and

inadequate public services (Tumursukh 2018, p. 37). These policies have resulted in an overall decline in the socio-economic status of women and representation of women at political levels, along with rising violence against women, the proliferation of sexual objectification of women as well as middle-class housewife images in the media (Tumursukh 2018, p. 34).

Representations of Mongolian social life are controversial since different political forces emphasize different aspects of gender related issues depending on their programs. However, one thing in common is the image of the 'real' Mongolian woman (Tumursukh 2001, pp. 126-7). This has a significant impact on the situation of Mongolian women. On the one hand, this is profoundly patriarchal. Mongolian women are also represented as 'educated, professional and independent'. Other representations aim to control the sexual life of Mongolian women in order to maintain ethnic differences and national purity (Tumursukh 2001, pp. 126-7). Such ideologies are in the society with changing gender roles and are giving many 'choices' to younger generations now (Benwell 2009, cited in Nielsen 2015, p. 10).

Intimate partner violence in Mongolia

GBV is prevalent and remarkably widespread in Mongolia (United Nations Economic and Social Council 2015, p. 6). Notably, IPV has been one of the most significant human rights violations in Mongolia. This has been reaffirmed by findings of a first time, nationwide survey on GBV (NSOM 2018b, p. 13), which found that almost 60 per cent of Mongolian women have experienced one or more forms of gendered violence at least once in their lifetime and 31.2 per cent of women have experienced IPV (only physical and/or sexual violence) in their lifetime, which is adjacent to the global approximation of 30 per cent.

A legal framework for ensuring gender equality and eliminating violence against women has been shaped in Mongolia. The National Program on Gender Equality (2002-2015), approved in 2002, was followed by a number of laws including the Law on Combating Domestic Violence (2004), the Law on Promoting Gender Equality (2011), and the Law on Combating Human Trafficking (2012) (National Committee on Gender Equality Mongolia [NCGEM] & Asian Development Bank [ADB] 2019, p. 57). These laws have been enforced with considerable efforts and support from international and national non-governmental organizations (NGO) (NCGEM & ADB 2019, p. 57).

In spite of the legal advances, DV has remained a widespread problem in the country (Advocates for Human Rights Minneapolis [AHRM] & National Center Against Violence Mongolia [NCAVM] 2015, p. 5).

Feminism and women's civil society organizations in Mongolia

It should be noted that feminism has not been extensively studied among Mongolian women (Nielsen 2015, p. 11). This could mean that there is no Mongolian discourse of 'feminism'. Nielsen (2015, p. 11) observes that the meaning of the phrase 'feminism' employed in the Mongolian context varies. Rather, it seems that 'gender equality' is more commonly used.

Under the socialist party-state, the MWC was in charge of organizing and mobilizing women (Tumursukh 2018, p. 122). Then in the early 1990s, it detached itself from the MPRP and was renamed the Mongolian Women's Federation, (Tumursukh 2018, p. 122). However, there remained a strong influence of the party since the majority of the Federation members were MPRP members and the local councils of the Mongolian Women's Federation were closely tied to MPRP-controlled local governments (Tumursukh 2018, p. 122).

Currently, there are some civil society organizations (CSO) that focus on women's rights in Mongolia. The first women's CSOs were established in the early 1990s, after socialism (ADB 2019, p. 5). The first independent women's CSOs were the Liberal Women's Brain Pool and the Women for Social Progress Movement (Tumursukh 2018, p. 122). Their primary focus and missions were significantly different from the MWC (Tumursukh 2018, p. 122). These newly established women's CSOs were at the forefront of democracy and reform and increased women's participation in political, social and economic activities (ADB 2019, p. 5). Women's CSOs and women leaders played an important role in the development and approval of the National Program for Women (1996–2020) and combating GBV (ADB 2019, p. 6).

However, it seems that the Mongolian women's CSOs have failed to show a strong presence these days. This is mainly due to a reduction in funding from international organizations, especially United Nations agencies like United Nations Development Fund for Women (ADB 2019, p. 6). Another reason, as Ghodsee (2004, pp. 729-30) argues, is that CSOs formed in the post-socialist countries usually focus on what foreign donors want, not what local people want. Something similar may have happened in Mongolia (Nielsen 2015, p. 13).

CHAPTER 3. Literature review on the relationship between women's economic position and intimate partner violence

Many theories and empirical studies have attempted to explain the impact of various types of interventions to improve women's economic situation on IPV. This literature review chapter identifies two major themes which emerge repeatedly. These are, firstly, positive and negative consequences of the initiatives to enhance women's economic opportunities for IPV, and secondly, influential factors for such a complex nature of the relationship between enhanced women's economic status and IPV. Most of the studies reviewed originate in low- and middle-income countries, such as South Asian countries: Bangladesh, India; South and North American countries: Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Mexico and Uruguay; African countries: Kenya and South Africa. These countries' studies were the most available literature on this subject. In other words, it can be seen that interventions to combat IPV through enhancing women's economic situation have been implemented more in the developing world/the third world, rather than western countries. It seems that studies from countries similar to Mongolia, like Laos, Vietnam or some East European countries which were socialist too, do not exist. Alternatively, considering the relationship between women's economic status and IPV may be a quite new initiative in Asia. In terms of the chronological range of the literature reviewed, empirical studies were published within the last decade, theoretical studies were completed in the previous three decades.

Possible contributions of interventions to enhance women's economic situation to the decrease or increase in intimate partner violence

In much of the research literature, economic theories have been used to identify the link between women's economic situation and gender power relation (Hughes et al. 2015, p. 284). Firstly, Kabeer (1994) and Agarwal (1997) explained this link using the term 'bargaining power'. According to Kabeer (1994, p. 109), intersecting contractual relationships between different household members derive from a bargaining process, and these relationships act as the basis of household cooperation and help individuals specify their rights and obligations to others. However, sometimes household members have different bargaining powers (Agarwal 1997, p. 4; Kabeer 1994, p. 110). Kabeer (1994, p. 110) suggests that these differences are due to the following interlocking asymmetries; how the members'

contributions to the household resources are perceived; to what extent members identify their self-interests with their personal being; and whether there are any violent and abusive relationships in the family. Agarwal (1997, p. 4) highlights various resource allocation to family members, the division of household labour, income-generation and status among other family members as reasons for varied bargaining power. In many societies, these bases of power coalesce for men, and consequently, women possess less bargaining power than men (Kabeer 1994, p. 110).

Later on, Perova (2010, p. 1) more specifically studied the link between women's bargaining power and IPV and she demonstrates by her empirical test in Peru that women's economic empowerment might enhance their bargaining power, resulting in a potential decrease in the occurrence of IPV. It is sometimes argued that empowering women economically contributes to reducing IPV through decreased household conflict caused by poverty (Haneef et al. 2014, p. 3; Vyas & Watts 2009, p. 577). Vyas and Watts (2009, p. 577) undertake a systematic review of published evidence to identify how the different forms of economic empowerment relate to domestically violent incidents in low and middle-income countries. They find mixed outcomes. In spite of these varying outcomes, they concluded that poverty reduction has a potential influence on decreasing IPV (Vyas & Watts, 2009, p. 578). This conclusion could also be explained by the resource theory, in which a family is a power system (Vyas & Watts, 2009, p. 578). If men struggle from financial shortages, they are likely to use abuse as an additional resource to control their partners (Goode 1971, cited in Vyas & Watts 2009, p. 578). Haneef et al. (2014, p. 12) also argue that household poverty is one of the main reasons for DV. In many societies, men are seen as the primary breadwinners for the households; hence, if women ask for money from their husbands when there is economic hardship, husbands tend to react violently in many cases (Haneef et al. 2014, p. 12). In brief, there is a majority view in the literature that if household poverty is reduced, the conflicts between intimate partners caused by men's dissatisfaction and frustration will decrease, resulting in a decrease in IPV (Haneef et al. 2014, p. 3; Vyas & Watts 2009, p. 577).

The relationship between poverty and IPV can also be explained by the feminization of poverty – a view in line with the fact that women are generally poorer than men (Cagatay 1998, p. 2). IPV is believed to be a consequence of gender inequality, and it is generally

correlated with the feminization of poverty (Hughes et al. 2015, p. 284). A woman poorer than a man or economically dependent on a man cannot readily leave violent intimate relationships and are possibly forced to accept some level of violent behaviour (Farmer & Tiefenthaler 1997, p. 353). A woman generating her own income asks for less money from her husband resulting in fewer conflicts as well as less violence. In addition to that, there is substantial evidence from several sociological studies that women are more likely to abandon violent relationships if they are more economically independent from their partners and have better economic opportunities (Farmer & Tiefenthaler 1997, p. 353). Therefore, Farmer and Tiefenthaler (1997, p. 353) conclude that any initiative to combat the feminization of poverty is bound to decrease the level of violence in households.

In general, the typical roles of women are housekeeping and caregiving, which are highly likely to be unpaid and undervalued in many societies. Haneef et al. (2014, p. 6) argue that these traditional gender roles of women lead to gender discrimination, which oppresses women throughout their lives and results in women's lower status than that of men in their societies. For example, due to this lower status in the family as well as in the society, Bangladesh people consider IPV as typical and the society accepts the violence to a certain degree (Haneef et al. 2014, p. 6). Therefore, the Chars Livelihoods Programme (2004-2016) to decrease IPV through empowering women (through engaging women in income-generating activities, reducing poverty and educating) was implemented in rural areas of Bangladesh. All participants of the survey, which was conducted among the program beneficiaries, said that they became less dependent on their husbands' income and started to contribute to their household needs and resources significantly. They highlight that the financial benefit which they brought increased husbands' respect for them and their participation in decision-making and other family matters and decreased the conflict with their husbands (Haneef et al. 2014, p. 14). However, it should be noted that this is one possible outcome of such initiatives. The other possible contributions are considered in the following paragraphs.

It is sometimes claimed that the outcomes of improving women's economic situation could increase DV. The primary reason lies with the fact that increased women's economic opportunities usually challenge existing gender norms and roles. In doing so, such enhanced women's status facilitates new models of behaviour (Hughes et al. 2015, p. 284). This suggests that increased women's economic status raises awareness of and promotes changes to gender

roles and thus causing violence since men usually feel that their dominance is challenged. In this regard, a theoretical framework drawn from several empirical studies was by Anderberg and Rainer (2011, p. 3) proposed that IPV is instrumental and has a direct association with women's economic participation. For instance, 27 per cent of women who work in this study in India had experienced IPV, as opposed to women who do not work accounting less than 15 per cent (Kishor and Johnson 2004, cited in Anderberg & Rainer 2011, pp. 17-18). Moreover, around 46 per cent of working women faced IPV, while IPV was experienced by 36 per cent of non-working women. Reports from several studies conducted in some Latin American countries reveal similar observations (Anderberg & Rainer 2011, p. 18).

Findings of other empirical studies are in line with this theoretical perspective and they reveal how such schemes could possibly enhance the risk of IPV. Take the example of the conditional cash transfer program, called Oportunidades, which was conducted in Mexico. Although the intervention helped decrease violence against women, it ended up enhancing the risk of IPV (Bobonis, González-Brenes & Castro 2013). According to Angelucci (2008, p. 37), this was mainly due to traditional gender roles, with men feeling their status threatened when the wives had the additional income in their hands. A similar finding was suggested by an Oxfam study (Hughes et al. 2015, p. 287), in which it was noted that programmes encouraging women to earn money could threaten the husbands' identity, thus provoking conflicts.

Also, Flake (2005, pp. 365-6) suggested that women's employment can enhance DV in one community in Peru. It was found that unemployed women are significantly less likely to be abused by their partners than women working in some fields, including agricultural, service, or professional jobs. Krishnan et al. (2010, p. 1) argue that women who start new jobs are more vulnerable to IPV. A 2-year study in India shows that women who were unemployed and began employment experienced an 80 per cent increase in violence, as opposed to women who are still unemployed, mainly due to their husbands' unwillingness to have their wives go to public places or work (Krishnan et al. 2010, p. 1).

Some scholars say that IPV has increased with women's economic empowerment for two main reasons. Firstly, this negative relationship can be explained by IPV as a tool for men to express disappointment or anxiety or to improve their self-confidence (Hughes et al. 2015, p. 284). Although they might feel less pressured with financial challenges thanks to their wives' contribution to the household economy, they are likely to feel their masculine identity or status

as a family leader or breadwinner – the traditional male ego – being challenged and this can provoke violent behaviour as a way to express such feelings (Jewkes 2002, p. 1423). Besides poverty, men's lack of ability to control usually leads to IPV as a way to resolve the challenges to their exercise of power (Jewkes 2002, p. 1423). Secondly, the risk of enhancing women's economic situation to increase IPV is explained by Anderberg and Rainer (2011, p. 3) viewing IPV as an instrument to control female's behaviour or the distribution of money and resources. Due to the household disagreement about the allocation of resources, violence can be inflicted by men as a tool against income-generation activities. They may also try to gain some or even full control of their female counterparts' income (Schuler et al. 1996, cited in Hughes et al. 2015, p. 284).

The main factors of complex Interlinkages between enhanced women's economic situation and intimate partner violence

Improved women's economic opportunities have both negative and positive relationships to women's rights to live free of violence. While some studies solely focus either on the positive relationships or the negative ones, there is a substantial amount of research that takes both of them into account simultaneously. Hughes et al. (2015, pp. 287-288) reviewed the trail-blazing literature on these relationships, suggesting four sets of principal factors behind this complexity.

One of the main factors affecting the acceptance of IPV in the local community is the socio-cultural context of households (Hughes et al. 2015, p. 287). Rates of IPV are different within countries as well as across nations. The higher the acceptance rates of violence in communities, the greater the risks of negative relationships between IPV and activities to enhance women's economic status (Hughes et al. 2015, p. 287). In other words, where there is a patriarchal system, in which IPV is rooted strongly, the possibility of activities aiming to increase women's economic status to increase IPV might be more significant. For example, Koenig et al. (2003, p. 269) have found that in more conservative settings of Bangladesh, there are more intra-household conflicts as well as greater IPV due to the increased women's empowerment by micro-savings and credit programs. Also, García Aísa (2014, p. 1) investigates how a Mexican female-oriented conditional cash transfer program alters the chances of DV. The assessment result is that conditional cash transfer is more likely to increase rural women's risk of becoming victims of IPV than that of urban women (Aísa 2014,

p. 1). The reason, as Hughes et al. (2015, p. 287) suggest, is that the patriarchal system is more deeply rooted in rural areas.

Secondly, Hughes et al. (2015, p. 287) highlight the power and resource allocation within households, which were there before any influential activities to empower women economically. This means mixed results might depend on previous statuses of male and female partners regarding decision-making, paid and unpaid jobs, income-generation and education (Hughes et al. 2015, p. 287). For instance, if women already possess a lower level of education or economic status or decision-making power than men, more possibility of an increase in IPV could be seen (Hidrobo & Fernald 2013, p. 304). Hidrobo and Fernald (2013, p. 304) emphasise that Ecuador's unconditional cash transfer program decreases IPV of more educated women than less educated ones.

The next factor is the characteristics of individuals (Hughes et al. 2015, p. 288). As suggested in some studies, the risk of IPV is lowered in certain situations when women take part in a program to improve women's economic situation (Hidrobo & Fernald 2013, p. 311), possibilities to avoid unwanted marriages at an early stage of their lives (Heath 2014, p. 32), and being engaged in cash-paying jobs and having fewer children (in the case of conditional cash transfers) (Perova 2010), more extended social networks, and women's overall control over their income (Goetz & Gupta 1996, p. 50).

The final factor is the particularities of initiatives to improve women's economic status themselves. Hughes et al. (2015, p. 288) propose a number of factors based on his studies concerning women's economic empowerment processes and claim that these factors can be especially useful when they are integrated. Whether such processes include skills training and awareness-raising is of great importance because these are the components that enable men and women to effectively negotiate conflict and prevent violent situations more confidently by using their knowledge and gained information (Ahmed 2005, p. 99). Also, timeframes of programming aiming to increase women's economic situation need to be carefully considered. Women are less likely to face IPV in the long run when women's increased market-oriented activity becomes more accepted with the changes in men's individual and broader social attitudes, and also because women engage in more profitable economic activities (Ahmed 2005, p. 99). These sets of factors highlight the importance of context and heterogeneity, to which a number of authors have drawn their attention for the sake of better

understanding of IPV in the context of women's economic situation.

To conclude, although there is a lot of research and literature on the link between women's economic situation, there is an absence of consideration of this relationship in terms of historical as well as socio-economic contexts in the countries similar to Mongolia. This is the gap which I intend to fill with this thesis.

CHAPTER 4. Mongolian women's economic situation

In this chapter, I present an account of Mongolian women's economic situation. Accounting for more than 50 per cent of the country's population and 56 per cent of the workforce, women in Mongolia are a vital part of its economy (World Economic Forum 2018, p. 240). A substantial majority of them are highly educated, with high enrolment rates in secondary and tertiary education, 86 per cent and 80 per cent, respectively (World Economic Forum 2018, p. 240). Besides, they have a much higher rate than men in professional and technical positions, accounting for 63 per cent compared to only 37 per cent for men (World Economic Forum 2018, p. 240).

Although it seems that gender equality in Mongolia has been relatively sound in comparison with many other countries, recent studies and gender analyses have demonstrated that the economic transition from a centrally planned economy to a market economy has impacted men and women differently and created new gender gaps in many areas of economic and social development in Mongolia. Although gender equality laws, rules and regulations have been enforced there have been many distortions in economic development including discrimination against women in formal and informal labour markets, persistent wage gaps in all sectors, and the gender gap in property ownership and so on.

Economic transition

The economic transition from a centrally planned economy to a market economy in the 1990s brought about major changes in the nature of participation of women in the Mongolian society. Their public life participation shifted dramatically and their influence on policy-making was largely reduced (Robinson & Solongo 2000, p. 18). A more significant change was the economic participation of women, which can be elaborated in two respects in the local context of Mongolia.

Firstly, the economic transition in the 1990s led to some unexpected changes in the employment sector (Robinson & Solongo 2000, p. 18; Tumursukh 2001, pp. 124, 35). In the socialist period, it was the Government that provided the citizens with jobs (Robinson & Solongo 2000, p. 18). After the 1990s, however, many people, especially women, lost their jobs that were once considered to have been secure because of most state organizations'

closure and reduction in workforce (Robinson & Solongo 2000, p. 18). Consequently, a large number of people were made redundant (Robinson & Solongo 2000, p. 18). When the Government stopped providing childcare services and cancelled substantial state support for childbearing and caring, women were no longer able to lead their career life because they had to take care of their children (Robinson & Solongo 2000, p. 5). Even for those women who were employed, this role entailed a double burden (Robinson & Solongo 2000, p. 5).

Another major shift that took place in the Mongolian economy was that of property ownership. The process of privatization of properties caused a huge gap between men and women's ownership status (Robinson & Solongo 2000, p. 10). Women gained hardly any benefits from this privatization process, resulting in the limited opportunities for raising credits and loans to establish new businesses or to expand their current business activities (Robinson & Solongo 2000, p. 10).

Employment

Employment opportunity is one of the vitally crucial aspects of women's economic empowerment. It might seem that women in Mongolia are economically empowered compared to the East and Central Asian countries given the rate of 70 per cent of total women participating in the labour force (WB 2013, p. 10). This implies that women play a vital role in the Mongolian economy. Nevertheless, there is widespread gender discrimination against women in the labour market of Mongolia, such as gender segregations, workplace-based and self-employment discrimination as well as wage gaps.

Gender segregation in the formal labour market

Despite the advances in female education and employment, gender segregation seems to be prevalent in the Mongolian labour market (NCGEM & ADB 2019, p. 21). Horizontal gender segregation - a term which is defined as 'under (over) representation of a given group in occupations or sectors not ordered by any criterion and is often referred to as segregation tout court' (European Commission's Expert Group on Gender and Employment 2009, p. 4) - exists in Mongolian employment sectors (NCGEM & ADB 2019, p. 22). One of the significant knock-on causes of this phenomenon was the order A/204 of the Ministry of Health and Social Protection (1999), which listed the employment sectors that specifically prohibited women

from being employed. Such industries included mining extractive, construction, transportation, meat, textile, tailoring and publishing (WB 2013, pp. 13-14, 29). Although that order was annulled in 2008, it seems that Mongolian women's participation in major high-growth occupational areas including mining, construction and transport is remarkably limited (WB 2013, pp. 13-14).

Such legal restrictions are explained in relation to health and safety concerns (WB 2013, p. 13). However, this explanation is nonsense because it seems that gender discrimination is gender stereotype related to reproductive issues, in which women are considered as 'weak'. It is also evident from the fact that the list of restrictions was so extensive, preventing women from many jobs which would otherwise be considered to be safe in other countries (WB 2013, p. 13). Thus, as well as cultural biases, such labour regulations led to limited women's participation in these sectors, and their legacy is evident even today (Robinson & Solongo 2000, p. 5; WB 2013, pp. 13). According to official statistics of the last 15 years in the four largest sectors in the local economy (namely agriculture, forestry, fisheries and hunting; mining industry; wholesale and retail trade, car motorcycle maintenance service and processing industry), it is apparent that the number of men has been larger than that of women (NCGEM & ADB 2019, pp. 22-23). Notably, men's share in the mining industry workforce has been much more significant, making up 83 per cent of total employees in this industry. The small percentage of women in this sector mostly do administrative/office work (NCGEM & ADB, 2019, p. 23), which is culturally understood as 'feminine' and not as well paid as the core work of mining.

Apart from horizontal gender segregation, which has been prevalent in the Mongolian labour market, vertical gender segregation seems to be posing certain economic challenges to the working-age female population in the country (NCGEM & ADB 2019, p. 23). Vertical segregation is understood as 'the under (over) representation of the group in occupations or sectors at the top of ordering based on 'desirable' attributes – income, prestige, job stability etc.' (Bettio et al. 2009, p. 4). In the case of Mongolia, although the women at the managerial position accounted for 35 per cent in 2005 and 40 per cent in 2018, majority of them are middle-level managers (World Economic Forum 2018, p. 189). It should be noted that the higher the position gets, the less the number of female executive managers (NCGEM & ADB 2019, p. 23). This gives clear evidence of vertical gender segregation.

Workplace-based discrimination against women

Women face gender discrimination when they apply for a job and/or even after being employed. This is principally due to their 'traditional role' of childbearing and caring. Mongolia has experienced a steep rise in the childbirth rate since 2005, which coincided with a 1.8-fold growth from 2012 to 2016 in the number of women who became economically inactive due to their childcare roles. (NCGEM & ADB 2019, p. 24). This means that many young women stayed at home because of the gendered nature of childcare and took care of their children until their children reach school age, resulting in unpaid, informal employment of young women, those who make up the vast majority of the female labour force (NCGEM & ADB 2019, p. 24). In addition to that, this break from formal/paid employment has had a serious impact on the career opportunity of most women. An important recent report argues that it is vital to improve their social protection and support them to go back to their work and pursue their career following such a long break (NCGEM & ADB 2019, p. 24).

There is a broad tendency for employers to assume that recruiting young women usually causes economic burdens and operational setbacks for their organizations mainly due to their reproductive and childcaring responsibilities (NCGEM & ADB 2019, p. 24). This is because employer organizations are obliged by law to cover social insurance of their female staff who are on maternity leave or taking care of their children and it is their duty to keep the position for the women while they are on maternity leave for up to 3 years after giving birth (NCGEM & ADB 2019, p. 24). Employers seem to have little desire to recruit women of reproductive age and, on some occasions, violate the respective laws and regulations (NCGEM & ADB 2019, p. 24). For example, one commercial bank tried to avoid this 'risk' by means of their internal regulation. This policy states to carefully assess the family planning intentions of a newly recruited female worker. She will have no right to have maternity leave in the two subsequent years immediately following her recruitment and shall bear a duty to voluntarily initiate the cancellation of her labour contract in the case of a breach of this provision (The National Human Rights Commission of Mongolia [NHRCM] 2014, p. 84). Another example of such illegal activity can be found in a survey held in 2014 by NHRCM. Most employers responded that they did not usually ask job candidates any questions related to their reproductive rights. Despite this claim, 41 per cent of the job candidates said that they were asked about their marital status and/or whether or not they were pregnant or were planning

to have a child (NHRCM 2014, pp. 83-84). Hence, in order to ensure gender equality in employment and labour relations, NHRCM recommended to the Mongolian Parliament to make some relevant amendments in the Labour Law (NHRCM 2014, p. 102).

Discrimination against women running their own business

Apart from being employed, many women generate their income by running their own businesses. Currently, the range and quality of Mongolia's domestically manufactured products are enhancing gradually, and business organizations are growing in their numbers (NCGEM & ADB 2019, p. 30). In terms of entrepreneurship, small and medium enterprises prove a popular attraction for many Mongolians. Small and medium enterprises produce 25 per cent of the total GDP and employ 50 per cent of the whole workforce, many of which are women (NSOM 2017, cited in NCGEM & ADB, 2019, p. 30). Small and medium enterprises provide 34 per cent of services, 37 per cent of trade and 21 per cent of manufacturing. 64 per cent of the owners of the small and medium enterprises are women (The Overseas Private Investment Corporation 2017, cited in NCGEM & ADB 2019, p. 30).

However, in this female dominant sector, there are predicaments for business women that hinder them from doing their businesses. These include the high cost of conducting business for women who may lack accesses to financial resources, lack of necessary managerial skills, practical experiences, networking and relevant information, the double burden from paid- and unpaid work and patriarchal cultural norms (The European Bank 2017, p. 21; WB 2013, p. 7). Also, insufficient assets for collateral for a bank and the tendency of banks to consider their reproductive responsibilities as high-risk factors are some of the main challenges for women who want to conduct business. (NCGEM & ADB 2019, pp. 29, 31).

Wage gaps as a reflection of gender-based discrimination

Men generally earn more than women, which is more common at all levels of education and especially in urban and formal sectors (WB 2013, p. 17). When looking at the trend of the last two decades, despite an increase in monthly earnings of both men and women, a variance between their wages has risen (NSOM 2020). A wide gap was noticed in 2019, when the average monthly wages were USD383 for women and USD459 for men (NSOM 2020). In other words, in Mongolia, wage gaps have widened over the years since the transition to a market

economy. Wage gaps can be disaggregated into 'explained' and 'unexplained' portions (WB 2013, p. 17).

One of the main reasons given to explain this wage gap is the significant increase in the earnings in male-dominated sectors, such as the mining and professional, science and technology sectors as distinct from a slight income rise in the female-dominated sectors in recent years (NCGEM & ADB, 2019, p. 26). For example, from 2016 to 2017, the average monthly wages of professional, scientific and technological sectors increased by 24 per cent, while the average pay in the education sector, in which women predominate, demonstrated only 1.1 per cent increase (NSOM 2018a). It is also evident that some women lack work experience mainly due to the maternity leave (WB 2013, p. 17). As a result, some women end up being paid less than men.

On the other hand, as far as the wage gap is concerned, there is an aspect that cannot be easily explained by performance indicators because the possible reasons mentioned above fail to fully explain the gap. Women may be treated differently in the labour market despite the capabilities or experiences similar to those of men if not higher (WB 2013, p. 17). For instance, according to a 2009 labour force survey, women earning salary have better employment-related characteristics than men earning a salary. Women have marginally more years of study (13 and 12 years), and slightly less experience (17 and 18 years) (WB 2013, p. 18).

This is in line with what many researchers have found in their studies in developed and developing countries, suggesting that the gaps in the wages are not thoroughly explained by differences in the productivity indicators of women and men (WB 2013, p. 17). According to some sources, it is discrimination that provides a thorough explanation of this gap in income persisting between men and women.

Property ownership

Property and land ownership were a novel concept, introduced into Mongolia after the collapse of the socialist regime in the 1990s (NCGEM & ADB 2019, p. 19). By 2005, all livestock and housing had been passed into individuals and households' ownership, and the vast majority of state-owned enterprises had been privatized (NCGEM & ADB 2019, p. 19). This

process was the first stage of large-scale privatization, followed by land privatization (NCGEM & ADB 2019, p. 19).

Due to these private properties and land ownership changes, a new relationship between a wife and a husband has been built in households (NCGEM & ADB 2019, p. 19). Private property in Mongolia was banned for everyone during the socialist period (Ochir et al. 2003, cited in Tumursukh 2018). Since then, the concept of private property ownership has become relatively mature with the establishment of legal frameworks including, the Law on Promotion of Gender Equality (NCGEM & ADB 2019, pp. 19-20). This law states that all public and private sectors 'shall have a duty to ensure men and women equal access on equal terms to land and other immovable and movable property, budget allocations, financial assets, credit and other economic wealth and resources' (NCGEM & ADB 2019, pp. 19-20).

However, it is evident that women did not gain as much benefit as men from this privatization of state properties. Virtually every property (90 per cent) from the privatization process was registered in the names of heads of households (usually men were already the heads of households) at that time (Robinson & Solongo 2000, p. 5). This resulted in women having to get permission from their spouses if they want to apply for loan or credit by using their assets, as opposed to husbands who did not have to seek for the consent of their wives for the same reason (Robinson & Solongo 2000, p. 5).

Unfortunately, this gender discrimination in property ownership seems that while it may have been a part of 'traditional' (pre-socialist) Mongolian culture, it has been revitalised in the move to the market economy. Some recent research shows that there are substantial discrepancies between the men and women's ownership of properties. Considering the ownership of basic housing, which is the most important property for Mongolian households, 33 per cent of women and 60 per cent of men own their housing, with 27 per cent of women, and 55 per cent of men, having the official certificates of the ownership (Joshi et al. 2019, p. 11). A comparative study was undertaken on gendered asset ownership in Mongolia, Georgia, and the Philippines. (These three Asian countries were chosen for the pilot studies based on the availability to conduct standardized methodology and their interest to have better gender statistics. In addition to that diverse economic landscape, the legal environment for property ownership and gender norms were considered.) The largest gender gap was recorded in Mongolia, where the majority of homeowners are men (Joshi et al. 2019, p. 11).

When urban and rural residents' ownership was compared, 1.5 times more men than women in urban areas have their housing registered officially as opposed to 3 times more in rural areas (NCGEM & ADB 2019, p. 20). Voltolini et al. (2015, p. 44) reveal that 59 per cent of the household properties of herding families are registered in the husbands' names, 11 per cent of them are in both partners' names, 8.5 per cent are in wives' names and the remaining 21.5 per cent in children, grandchildren and mother and children's name. This huge gender gap in the countryside is not only seen in housing ownership but also in the ownership of other properties as well. It is also surveyed that 65 per cent of rural men and 42.8 per cent of rural women own livestock, and 6.4 per cent of men and 0.6 per cent of women own large equipment (Joshi et al. 2019, p. 17). Yet, in terms of financial assets, there is not a big difference between men and women (Joshi et al. 2019, p. 17).

One of the main reasons for this gender difference, especially in rural areas, could be the tradition that men/sons inherit the land, temporarily banned during the socialist period (NCGEM & ADB 2019, p. 20). For example, according to a survey of impacts on women's voice, bargaining power and household well-being, 2014, 72.4 per cent of respondents of focus group interviewees (Millennium Challenge Account Mongolia 2014, cited in NCGEM & ADB 2019, p. 20) said that they would leave their plots of land to their sons, while 17.6 per cent of participants answered they would give them to their daughters. Also, according to a survey (United Nations Development Programme Mongolia 2017, p. 32), women were passed down only 27.2 per cent of the inherited land. Another very common tradition is that properties are registered in the names of the head of the household (men) and the parents of a bridegroom are expected to prepare the dwelling for the new couple (NCGEM & ADB 2019, p. 20). Such traditions, especially in rural areas, have contributed to gender disparities in property ownership and they even restrict women's access to land and property. This has had some impact on women's coming to or expanding their business and accessing financial resources (NCGEM & ADB 2019, p. 20).

In short, there are many predicaments which limit Mongolian women's economic power and independence and their active participation in economic development. The continued influence of a labour regulation that prevented women from certain occupations was valid until 2008, and cultural norms have limited women's ability to participate fully in all sectors of the economy. According to some surveys, women's representation in senior management

positions is remarkably limited. Women are discriminated against in the formal labour market due to their reproductive responsibilities because employers consider that recruiting reproductive age women can cause an economic burden. Women make up the majority of the informal labour sector, and they mostly do unpaid work. It is hard for them to start or broaden their own business due to many financial and social barriers. Since the economic transition, the difference between men and women's salaries have increased. The number of properties owned by women is much lower than that of men, which limits their participation in economic activities. In line with cultural practices through which men inherit properties and land, the unequal privatization process in the 1990s has resulted in such gender inequality.

Because of relevant laws, rules and regulations on gender equality and its relatively high ranking in the Global Gender Gap Score, men and women seem to be relatively equal in Mongolia. Yet, significant gender inequality still persists in Mongolia, limiting women is economic empowerment.

CHAPTER 5. Current situation of intimate partner violence in Mongolia

This chapter will demonstrate the current situation of IPV in Mongolia and possible reasons for such violent incidents based on the reports from international organizations and NGOs over the past decade and an only national survey on GBV, which was carried out in 2018. Most of the IPV research conducted in Mongolia with the support of international organizations and NGOs were either of small scale or were considered to be a part of other socio-economic studies.

During the socialist period, IPV may have been widespread, but it was not officially addressed (Tumursukh 2018, p. 28). After the collapse of socialism, beyond the sudden loss of economic and social security, IPV even climbed along with the increasing crime, aggression, alcoholism, street children and poverty (Tumursukh 2018, p. 32).

Currently, IPV - most significant human right violations related to gender inequality and oppressive genders norms - is prevalent and remarkably widespread in Mongolia (United Nations Economic and Social Council 2015, p. 6). This has been reaffirmed by the findings of the nationwide survey on GBV (NSOM 2018b, p. 13). It was found that almost 60 per cent of Mongolian women have experienced one or more forms of gendered violence at least once in their lifetime and 31.2 per cent of women have experienced IPV (only physical and/or sexual violence) in their lifetime, which is adjacent to the global approximation of 30 per cent. Even so, it is widely believed by people in Mongolia who work in the area of gender that the rate of IPV is increasing currently although there is no hard evidence.

In an effort to combat IPV, a legal environment has been created. The Law on Combating Domestic Violence (2004) was approved in 2004. National NGOs, which were formed with support from western countries after the collapse of the socialist period, played an important role in initiating this law. However, this law was inefficient (NCGEM & ADB 2019, p. 58). For example, it used to consider DV only at the level of quarrel/conflict, which enforced punishments of merely imposing fines or detaining perpetrators for a short period, which, in turn, must have punished the victims. Also, the protection of survivors of DV was not reflected in this law (NCGEM & ADB 2019, p. 58). Therefore, based on the lessons learned from the implementation of Law on Combating Domestic Violence (observation of the cases of DV murders, grief and suffering of victims of DV as well as their loved ones), this law was further

amended and passed by the Parliament in December 2016 and the amended law criminalized DV for the first time in the country's history (NCGEM & ADB 2019, p. 57). Most notably, this amendment has offered more opportunities to implement the law at all levels (prevention, early detection and combating IPV and protection of victims of DV) (NCGEM & ADB 2019, p. 58). The law requires every police department of districts and provinces to establish an official job position responsible for DV-related matters (NCGEM & ADB 2019, p. 58). Front-line public servants are required to be a part of multi-disciplinary teams working at all primary level-administrative units (NCGEM & ADB 2019, p. 58). Unfortunately, due to lack of knowledge and understanding of the government workers about IPV and collaboration between agencies, these multi-disciplinary teams cannot work successfully.

Throughout the country, the number of shelters for victims has grown. From merely two shelters for victims of domestic and sexual violence in 2002, offering accommodation for up to 30 days, one in Ulaanbaatar and one in the Dundgobi province (run by a national NGO, NCAVM), there are now eight shelters and 14 one-stop-service centres throughout the country for victims of domestic and sexual violence and violence against children and human trafficking. These are managed by both the government organizations and national NGOs (NCGEM & ADB 2019, p. 57; NSOM & National Police Agency Mongolia 2020, p. 3).

Another step taken in this regard was that the National Police Agency started to separately record DV cases in their statistics on crimes and offences in 2008 (NCGEM & ADB 2019, p. 57). Their recordings have now become more sophisticated and there is an integrated online database system specifically used for DV case recordings (NCGEM & ADB 2019, p. 57). It allows provision of statistical data for policy-makers and decision-makers and was able to create an integrated data system of DV cases as well as perpetrators and victims.

Despite these measures, there are several concerns that have been highlighted by professional bodies and experts. For instance, it has been reported that the content and quality of behavioural change programs, legally mandated for violence perpetrators, have proven ineffective (NCGEM & ADB 2019, p. 12). Knowledge and understanding of relevant officials about DV is weak and the number of shelters and one-stop-service centres are still limited (AHRM & NCAVM 2014, p. 5). Additionally, data and information from DV service providers (except police) have not been fully covered in this central database of DV in the

National Police Agency (NCGEM & ADB 2019, p. 57). Urgent responses are needed to address remarkable and persisting tolerance of DV, inadequate assistance for victims of domestic abuse, the weak accountability mechanism, the ineffective behavioural change program and the lack of the comprehensive database of DV nationwide.

Besides DV crime data recordings from the National Police Agency, various surveys can provide considerable insight into DV. Previously undertaken by NGOs, which conducted in the particular community targeted surveys, the National Statistics Office undertook a first-time, nationwide survey, titled 'Breaking the silence for equality - Gender-Based Violence in Mongolia'. This survey was run in accordance with the internationally accepted methodology for GBV (NCGEM & ADB 2019, p. 57). Findings of this survey have provided a considerable opportunity to gain a comprehensive picture of GBV in Mongolia.

According to this nationwide GBV study, almost 60 per cent of ever-partnered Mongolian women have experienced one or more forms of IPV (physical, sexual, emotional, economic violence and controlling behaviours), over 30 per cent of them were exposed to physical and/or sexual violence and almost 20 per cent of them have experienced economic violence in their lifetime (NSOM 2018, p. 18). Nonetheless, this rate is different geographically. For example, when one or more forms of IPV experienced, ever-partnered women are concerned, the prevalence rate is the highest in Khentii province (in the eastern region), at around 68.6 per cent and the lowest in Zavkhan province (in the western region), at around 36.1 per cent (NSOM 2018, p. 60). In terms of the regions, the prevalence rate is the highest in the eastern region with 58.5 per cent and the lowest in the western region with 47.1 per cent (NSOM 2018, p. 60). 29.7 per cent of women have been physically abused by their partners, while 17.3 per cent abused by others, indicating that women are more likely to suffer from physical abuses by their intimate partners compared to non-partners (NSOM 2018, p. 16). 43 per cent of women abused by their partners are found to have been injured as a result of violent incidents (NSOM 2018, p. 60). 72 per cent of these victims have been seriously injured (NSOM 2018, p. 16). Women experiencing physical and/or sexual abuse assessed their general health as poor, and several symptoms of mental disorders have been observed (NSOM 2018, p. 16).

Possible reasons for intimate partner violence: Gender norms

There are many possible reasons and contributing factors of IPV in Mongolia. A rapid assessment of GBV, carried out by ADB (2016) in *ger* districts of Ulaanbaatar, has revealed that patriarchal culture and stereotypical gender roles have been highly valued by *ger* area residents. (Ger districts are the peri-urban areas of Ulaanbaatar, characterized by plots of land for dwellings and a lack of social and economic facilities and necessary infrastructure (Begzsuren & Joffre 2018, p. 5).) A substantial majority of male and female participants of this assessment believed that a man should be the main authoritative person and the breadwinner of the family (Begzsuren & Joffre 2018, p. 7).

The nationwide survey on GBV (NSOM 2018) also examined men and women's attitudes towards gender equality and partner violence. In accordance with the survey highlights, almost half of female participants agreed with the statement of 'a good wife obeys her husband even if she disagrees', demonstrating women's common belief that a husband is the backbone of the household (NSOM 2018, p. 79). The rate is lower in urban locations at around 45 per cent, compared to rural areas where it shows 60.5 per cent (NSOM 2018, p. 187). Regionally, accounting for approximately 61 per cent, the rate is higher in the eastern region while in the western region, it is around 55 per cent (NSOM 2018, p. 187). Moreover, this belief is more prevalent among those who have experienced physical and/or sexual IPV (55.4 per cent) as opposed to women who have never experienced partner violence (47.6 per cent) (NSOM 2018, p. 187).

A number of women consider that husbands hitting their wives could be justified for a variety of reasons. For example, 22.2 per cent of women who had not been physically or/and sexually abused agreed that men could beat their intimate partners if they found out that their partners had been unfaithful, while 35 per cent of women who have experienced intimate partner abuse agreed with this statement (NSOM 2018, p. 80). Other justifications include wives' disobedience, lack of ability to take good care of their children and to complete their household work to his satisfaction, the refusal of sexual relations, and so on (NSOM 2018, p. 80). Across all these, the acceptance of such 'punishment' was stronger among women who have experienced physical and/or sexual IPV than those who have not (NSOM 2018, p. 80).

The survey revealed common perceptions of stereotypical gender roles through in-depth interviews. It was generally the attitude that men (husbands and boyfriends) possess rights to demand their partners to be what they want and to meet their needs and expectations (NSOM 2018, p. 80). This is a paternalistic expectation. If a wife refuses to comply with any of these requirements, it tends to lead to IPV (NSOM 2018, p. 80). The following perceptions are observed during the survey (NSOM 2018, pp. 80-81): *Men make rules*. Husbands decide whether or not their wives hang out with their friends. *Women should support their husbands and be obedient.* Women should not ask their husbands any questions, blame, scold, quarrel, grumble, be jealous, and/or resist the violence of husbands. Also, they should not be angry when their husbands are drunk; instead, they should smooth them. In other words, wives should be submissive. *Women should be a good wife.* Women take substantial criticism from their husbands and in-laws for failing to be 'good' wives, such as not making home clean and tidy, not greeting her husband with a ready hot meal when he comes from his work, not cooking his favourite meal, not cooking a tasty meal, not supporting or contributing to the household matters and income and not staying at home. *Man is the backbone of the family.* Women should not spend money without their husband's permission and, even if they earn more, they should not boast about it. *Women should be faithful.* Wives should not refuse to fulfil their husband's sexual desires, talk to other men on the phone, do something secretly from their husbands, or cheat on their husbands with other men. It shows that the quantitative **s**urvey results were consistent with the qualitative research findings.

In short, there are complex factors associated with Mongolian culture, which contribute to men perpetrating IPV against women. According to the authoritative sources of data reviewed, the most notable reasons why men are violent in their intimate relationships is these traditional gender norms (NSOM 2018, p. 187; Oyunbileg et al., 2009, p. 1878).

Possible reasons for intimate partner violence: Socio-economic factors

Oyunbileg et al. (2009, p. 1878) argued that alcohol abuse, low income and high unemployment rates produce a greater risk of IPV in Mongolia. A desk study on attitudes toward gender equality (2014) conducted by the Independent Research Institute of Mongolia (IRIM) echoed this argument. Based on the review of research reports, this study revealed that poverty, alcoholism and unemployment are the main contributing factors to IPV (Independent Research Institute of Mongolia 2014, p. 43). In some reports, alcoholism has

been highlighted as the principal reason for committing IPV (IRIM 2014, p. 43; Asia Foundation 2013, p. 6). A possible explanation could be the strict expectations/stereotypes that Mongolian men must be physically strong and not soft and vulnerable (IRIM 2014, p.44). Such pressure on Mongolian men usually leads men to refuse when they need serious support, when they face addiction to alcohol, unemployment or anger management, resulting in excessive alcohol consumption which leads to a significant risk of IPV (IRIM 2014, p.44; Oyunbileg et al. 2009, p. 1878).

Both Oyunbileg et al. (2009, p. 1873) and the Asian Foundation's gender assessment of Mongolia (2013, p. 6) highlight men's unemployment issue as one of the main contributing factors to alcoholism as well as DV. Hence, Oyunbileg et al. (2009, p. 1873) suggest increasing men's employment as a possible primary solution to decrease poverty, alcohol abuse and, thus, DV.

Residential status. Mass migration from rural to urban areas for better living conditions and opportunities was a phenomenon as novel as poverty after the collapse of the Socialist regime (Population Training and Research Centre of the National University of Mongolia 2018, p. 1). Many herders moved to Ulaanbaatar after losing their livestock – their livelihoods - partially due to a natural disaster, *dzud*. For many of these rural to urban migrants, official residential status is a significant issue. Oyunbileg et al. (2009, p. 1876) consider this problem to be one of the possible risk factors of IPV. The local migrants from rural areas are required to register with the Mongolian State Registration system so that they can have their identification card renewed to be entitled to employment, health and social services (Oyunbileg et al. 2009, p. 1876). However, many of them fail to present their original personal documentation, or they simply cannot afford the registration fee (Oyunbileg et al. 2009, p. 1876). Oyunbileg et al. (2009, p. 1876) argue that such residential problems contribute to a higher risk of IPV. According to the survey, when unregistered, cohabiting family members and respondents face twice as much abuse compared to those officially registered and/or permanently settled (Oyunbileg et al. 2009, p. 1876).

Economic violence has been as serious as physical and sexual violence, which affects women more than any other forms of violence (NSOM 2018, p. 14). But this type of violence has not been easy to measure in surveys (NSOM 2018, p. 14). However, the GBV survey (NSOM 2018, p. 57) disclosed that one in five ever partnered women has experienced lifetime economic

violence (NSOM 2018, p. 57). Economic violence is a term which is defined, for the purpose of this survey, as referring to prohibiting women getting a job, participating in any income-generating activity, husbands taking their wives' earnings without their permission and not contributing anything to household expenses and spending their money only on their personal expenses such as cigarettes, alcohol and so on (NSOM 2018, p. 57).

According to the qualitative component of the GBV survey found that around 50 per cent of female victims of IPV participating in focus group discussions reported that they have suffered from economic abuse (NSOM 2018, p. 57). Obviously, one of the primary means to control women is to cause economic dependency on their intimate partners. This abuse has manifested in women's economic dependency on men in the following ways: wives are disallowed to be employed or do any income generation activities; wives are scolded and threatened because of spending money for themselves or their children as 'unnecessary wastefulness' and it is not culturally acceptable for wives to ask how husbands/men spend their money (NSOM 2018, pp. 57-58). Women earning money have experienced economic violence. For example, husbands often dismiss their wives' financial contribution to their households' income and despise their job by saying 'You're not doing something that no one else does, are you?' (NSOM 2018, pp. 57-58).

This type of violence is most prevalent among women who have never been in formal education (one in four victims) (NSOM 2018, p. 58). Experiences of economic violence are more prevalent among housewives (23.0 per cent) and unemployed women (25.2 per cent) compared with employed women (19.9 per cent) (NSOM 2018, p. 59). It shows that women who do not have their own income sources are more likely to be vulnerable to economic abuse (NSOM 2018, p. 59).

Property ownership. A qualitative study conducted by the Millennium Challenge Account in 2013 has revealed that women who officially own plots of land or houses or apartments are less likely to be abused than women who do not possess any such properties (IRIM 2014, p.45). This is because secure rights to own land or housing could provide women with an opportunity to have more bargaining power in their households as well as in their communities (IRIM 2014, p.45). It implies that women who do not acquire any such ownership are less likely to escape when IPV becomes intolerable (IRIM 2014, p.45). The role of such

ownership is far greater than it might sound. Even if a wife is the main income generator in the family, she is not any less of a target of IPV unless she possesses such ownership (IRIM 2014, p.45). On the other hand, women's ownership of housing or land can sometimes cause violence because her husband is uncomfortable with his wife registering the property in her name (NSOM 2018, p. 58).

In conclusion, it is apparent that incidences of IPV against women, including economic violence, have been prevalent in Mongolian society. Given the local context of Mongolia, patriarchal culture and stereotypical gender roles as well as socio-economic predicaments (poverty, unemployment and alcoholism) are mostly highlighted as the primary contributing factors of IPV in the literature. Also, I would like to acknowledge that economic violence and property ownership section in the report of the national survey on GBV (NSOM 2018) have recognised the links between women's economic situation and IPV in Mongolia in some extent.

CHAPTER 6. How does Mongolian women's economic situation relate to intimate partner violence?

Lack of women's economic opportunities and IPV are crucial issues to anyone concerned about gender equality. Economically, Mongolian women have less power than men – they access less credit than men, are underrepresented in high-paying industries and in large-scale business operations, and over-represented at low-paying fields and in small and own-account businesses. In addition, the gender pay gap in the labour force has persisted. It has even widened over the last few decades. Besides that, only a small minority of property owners in households are women. As far as IPV in Mongolia is concerned, almost 60 per cent of ever-partnered women have been exposed to one or more forms of such violence (NSOM 2018b, p. 13). Then, it leads us to this question: Is it possible to draw on literature in the contexts of other countries in order to explain the interconnectedness between women's economic status and IPV in Mongolia?

The relationship between Mongolian women's socio-economic status and intimate partner violence

In general, relatively speaking, Mongolian women's position in society as well as in the family is not low (Nielsen 2015, p. 9). Several factors have affected Mongolian women's position and as a result, gender inequality has been somewhat diminished.

Tumursukh (2018, p. 36), suggests that the unique Mongolian nomadic and military history must have played some role in creating women's relatively equal status gender relations and given Mongolian women a significant degree of freedom and power. This is because it appears that there has been greater social mobility in nomadic life. Also, it could be explained by the history of the military confederation of Mongolian tribes. When men were away on warfare expeditions for long periods, women were required to take care of households and make important and independent decisions. Some women even joined with military campaigns and participated in combat and some royal women-led military operations (Benwell 2009, cited in Nielsen 2015, p. 9). As a Mongolian woman, I believe that such power from our ancestors has been inherited by the women of Mongolia today through many stories and legends such as histories of Queen Mandukhai (1449-1510) and Mother Hoelun (the mother of Chinggis Khaan) (1142-1208).

Secondly, and more importantly, socialism (associated with the Soviet Union from the early 1920s to the early 1990s) brought dramatic changes to Mongolian women's lives. During this period, many women were liberated from feudal slavery and many traditional practices, which had persisted historically despite the nomadic and democratic influences. Another major change was that formal education became compulsory for girls, who had been prevented from attending schools. The state introduced cultural reforms to promote public advocacy of women's equality: especially in employment and education, initiatives to change gender attitudes, behaviours and family lives. Men were and even encouraged to share domestic burdens of housework and child-rearing. For example, I remember many Mongolian movies produced by the state such as *Aman khuur, (Mouth organ)* (B.Jamsran 1963)*, Ene khuukhnuud uu, (How cunning are women?)* (R. Dorjpalam 1963) *and Jargal daakhguin zovlon, (Suffering from happiness)* (D. Jigjid 1982)*,* in which the representation of women displays equal rights with men in terms of education, employment as well as household and caring roles. At that time, movies were one of the main social change weapons of the socialist ideology. Similarly, my family is one of the socialist reform products, where the members are relatively equal without strong traditional household work segregations and male-dominant decision-making. Gender equality is reflected in my view of life and even in choosing my partner. In brief, such efforts to promote women's empowerment originating from the socialist period seem to have had a significant impact on women's status in society as well as on household relations.

There were also persisting social and economic inequalities and women's exploitation during the socialist period. Such gender inequalities became even more prominent and have diminished economic power at the end of socialism. More women than men lost their jobs due to the closure of most state organizations and factories and the reduction in workforce numbers. It was women who were first made redundant as far as the formal employment sector was concerned. Some women were forced to retire earlier than expected, for which the excuses may have sounded humane, as they claimed that mothers were finally able to fully engage in child-rearing. But when the Government stopped providing childcare services and cancelled substantial state support for childbearing and caring, it resulted in a situation where women were unable to lead their career life due to the gendered nature of childcare (Robinson & Solongo 2000, p. 5). In addition, virtually every property from the privatization

process was registered in the names of men at that time (Robinson & Solongo 2000, p. 5). Divorce rates soared and IPV became more widespread (Tumursukh 2018, p. 32). In my opinion, the reason for the negative post-socialist influence of the end of socialism on women's lives compared to that of men's was existing gender inequality, which became more pronounced in the move to the market economy. Some aspects of cultural practices became revitalised.

More recently, although women account for more than half of Mongolian workforce, there have been many employment related issues challenging women's economic power (as shown in the previous chapter): vertical and horizontal gender segregations in the labour market, an increasing gender pay gap, as well as workplace gender discrimination based on women's reproductive responsibilities. Also, due to the neoliberal policies, public services have decreased and the informal economy has expanded, resulting in the undermining of women's socio-economic status. In other words, women are now overrepresented in the informal sector. There are many predicaments for women in this sector: a lack of access to financial resources in order to conduct businesses and lack of necessary skills, practical experiences, networking and relevant information.

Another very important contributing factor which limits women's employment and capacity to participate in income generation activities is their reproductive roles. As a country with a sparse population, Mongolia has a strong pro-natalist population growth policy. Unfortunately, this policy takes into account the role of women only in childbearing and childcaring, which reinforces the gender stereotype because it has left out the social services, especially access to state kindergartens. As a result, women's unpaid workload has risen. Women have been discriminated against in the formal labour market. They are no longer able to combine raising children and earning a living and accessing social wealth.

Property ownership is another major contributing factor affecting women's economic situation and defining the indications of IPV. Hughes et al. (2015, p. 286) argue that the property ownership of women has a greater impact on decreasing IPV than being the main breadwinner of the family. However, are these findings relevant to Mongolia?

Historically, banning private property in Mongolia during the socialist period seemed to support relative gender equality. Regrettably, after socialism, women did not gain as much

benefit as men from this privatization of state properties. Almost all property from the privatization process was registered in the names of men at that time due to Mongolian tradition which was revitalised by popular culture in the move to the market economy.

Gender discrimination in property ownership remains significant today. Properties are mostly registered under the men's name. Notably, there is a huge gender gap in the countryside which seems to indicate that patriarchal culture is still more prevalent in rural areas. This gender disparity in property ownership has resulted in women having to get permission from them if they want to apply for loan or credit by using assets. This then limits women's participation in economic activities to expand their business and gain access to financial resources. It leads women to have less bargaining power and to be more dependent and vulnerable in the case of violence. The main reasons for these current inequalities are cultural barriers: mostly men inherit properties and land; the parents of a bridegroom are expected to prepare the dwelling for the new couple.

In terms of the relationship between property ownership and IPV, research conducted outside of Mongolia reveal consistent findings that women who own land or housing are protected from IPV, when compared to those who did not (Hughes et al. 2015, p. 286). Mongolia shares a similar scenario. Hence, securing rights to assets is important to having good bargaining power in their families and communities, and therefore not to be as vulnerable to violence as they would otherwise be. This is especially true when considering the ownership status in a violent relationship. Women who participated in group discussion said that women with a property, notably a housing, were more likely to permanently leave the abusive relationship (IRIM 2014, p.45).

Given the historical records and current situation, it is apparent that women's economic status is decreasing and IPV is increasingly widespread. If we accept that the lack of women's economic opportunities might decrease their bargaining power, resulting in a potential increase in the occurrence of IPV (Perova 2010, p. 1), Mongolian women's declining economic situation might explain the increase in IPV in Mongolia in general. Also, changing gender norms, the state neoliberal policies possibly contribute to both issues as well as their interlinkage. In other words, Mongolian women's changing socio-economic status has negatively affected their bargaining power; thus, women's declining socio-economic status might explain the increasing incidence of IPV in Mongolia.

The relationship between poverty and intimate partner violence

Poverty was a new phenomenon in post-socialist Mongolia. Unemployment and poverty were exacerbated by the dissolution of state enterprises and the reduction in staff, combined with cuts in social spending and infrastructure. Now, poverty has become a serious problem and the gap between the disadvantaged mass and privileged groups has widened. As of 2018, the national poverty rate was almost 30 per cent and a further 15 per cent of the total population was clustered just above the national poverty line, posing a risk of slipping into poverty in the event of any unanticipated shocks. To make matters worse, poverty in Mongolia is becoming intergenerational (WB 2020b).

Vyas & Wattsargue (2009, p. 577) draw on research conducted in low and middle-income countries (7 African, 6 Asian, 3 European, 3 Central American, 1 North American 1 South American countries) to argue that poverty reduction at individual and household levels may have protective impacts on IPV. According to the individualistic theory of DV (Bullot 2019, p. 1), the conflict between intimate partners, caused by men's dissatisfaction and frustration, increases due to poverty, which, in turn, results in rising DV. Following this theory, the widespread IPV in Mongolia could also be explained by this increase in poverty. Pressure on Mongolian men - strict expectations of being the strong breadwinner of their families - usually leads to conflicts, entailing a significant risk of IPV (IRIM 2014, p.44).

Looking at the relevant literature on the link between poverty and IPV in the context of Mongolia, there is a tendency to consider poverty along with men's unemployment and men's alcoholism as primary contributing factors of intensifying the risk of IPV. To some extent, I agree with this point. It is because poverty and unemployment contribute to both excessive alcoholism and DV, with alcoholism increasing the propensity to commit DV. In Mongolia, alcoholism is a widespread social problem (6.9 litres of pure alcohol per year was consumed for each person aged 15 years and over. It ranks 81th out of 191 countries. The main type of alcohol beverage is spirits accounting for 54 per cent. When only spirits consumption is considered, Mongolia ranks 21th out of 191 countries (WHO 2018).

Another aspect to be taken into consideration in explaining the relationship between poverty and IPV is the feminization of poverty. This is a view in line with the fact that women are generally poorer than men (Cagatay 1998, p. 2). IPV is usually correlated with the feminization

of poverty/gendered poverty (Hughes et al., 2015, p. 284). It seems that the increasing feminization of poverty has occurred as Mongolia has moved away from socialism toward economic liberalism as a result of the socio-economic and political changes mentioned above. More women than men have fallen into poverty since the collapse of socialism (Robinson & Solongo 2000, p. 18).

In addition to that, there is substantial evidence from several relevant sociological studies. They suggest that better economic opportunities outside their homes tend to enable women to leave abusive relationships (Farmer & Tiefenthaler 1997, p. 353). Therefore, any initiative to combat the feminization of poverty is likely to contribute to the decrease in the level of violence in households, as women have better means to leave the relationship. Hence, empowering women economically should be a key step forward to contribute to reduced IPV through decreased poverty but also reducing the trend towards the feminization of poverty. Hence, empowering women economically should be a key step forward to contribute to reduced IPV through decreased poverty as well as decreased feminization of poverty.

Inconsistencies of the relationship between women's economic situation and intimate partner violence

According to the literature discussing the relationship between women's economic situation and IPV, there is no direct correlation between women's economic situation and IPV. The relationship depends on the context, the partnership and the time frame. Firstly, it depends on whether or not improved women's economic situation violates existing gender norms. Gender roles of women which lead to gender discrimination, which oppresses women throughout their lives and results in women's lower status than that of men in any society will increase the incidence of IPV. As Haneef et al. (2014, p. 6) suggest, when IPV is regarded as typical in the context and the society accepts the violence to a certain degree mainly due to such lower status in the family as well as in the society.

In Mongolia, it is also assumed that there is no direct correlation between women's economic situation and IPV. The typical roles of women are housekeeping and caregiving, which are mostly underestimated and underappreciated, and the men are the main authoritative subjects who are more privileged. It was affirmed by the study of NSOM (2018, p. 79), which reports that almost half of the female participants agreed with the statement: 'A good wife

obeys her husband even if she disagrees', demonstrating women's common belief that a husband is the backbone of the household. The rates are even higher in rural areas (NSOM 2018, p. 187). Not surprisingly, from an in-depth study, women highlighted that disobeying their husbands means not doing, or well-doing gender-segregated work or it is related to their typical roles of women, housekeeping and caregiving. In brief, in more patriarchal contexts (in the countryside/rural areas) and in contexts where there is persisting violence, enhanced women's economic situation may lead to increased IPV. There is some anecdotal evidence that says patriarchy as well as IPV can be more evident among Kazakh ethnic minority, which is the only Muslim community in Mongolia.

Generally, there are a number of possible factors that cause the uncertain nature of the relationship between women's economic situation and IPV. These include duration, particularities of women's economic opportunity (informal and formal labour), family power source allocation, age and/or sexual minority. There is a lack of survey data focusing on the Mongolian context in relation to women's economic situation and IPV. At this stage, it seems impossible to draw a strong and comprehensive conclusion incorporating all of these factors. On the other hand, quality research undertaken in other countries suggests possible relationships between women's economic situation and IPV.

CHAPTER 7. Conclusion

When compared with other East Asian countries, it might seem that Mongolian women enjoy greater gender equality thanks to a number of cultural and historical factors, such as the nomadic lifestyle, socialist ideology and higher educational achievement levels than Mongolian men. Yet, the dramatic changes, both social and economic, that took place after the fall of socialism have had a dire result on Mongolian women's status.

The transition from socialism has significantly worsened women's economic situation in Mongolia. The tradition of women's strength and gender equality achieved during the socialist period still remains, but many of the social and economic gains for women have been dismantled and traditional patriarchal gender norms have been revived.

One of the main contextual factors is the state neoliberal and pro-natalist policy. For example, this includes the national policy to encourage population growth due to a sparse population. The problem here is that, despite this policy, the government has failed to ensure the provision of kindergarten and/or childcare facilities in line with the demographic transition. Besides that, the social welfare system is not as sophisticated as it was during socialism. Therefore, it has resulted in a situation where women in Mongolia are frequently subject to the exclusive role of child-rearing. There is widespread gender-based discrimination against women on the job market, the enormous disparity of property ownership between men and women, and the increasing number of people suffering from poverty, especially women.

In addition to that, the rate of IPV soared in the transition from socialism to neoliberalism. It can be inferred that such increase in IPV has been brought about by the crisis that took place at the end of socialism - the social, cultural, personal, familial as well as economic deterioration. Back in the socialist period, IPV was implicit due to the fact that it was widely considered to be a family issue. Therefore, generally, no actions were taken by any agency outside the family. After socialism, however, the public has become more aware of human rights and, more specifically, IPV. This new awareness should be regarded as an improvement. Additionally, a legal and policy environment to combat IPV in this regard has begun to be created and the protection and prevention mechanisms have been enforced to a certain extent. Despite these improvements, the rate of IPV has soared in recent years, making this

issue one of the most crucial social challenges. In brief, since the end of socialism in Mongolia, IPV has increased and women's economic position has declined. The greater public awareness and weak legal and policy remedies seem like poor compensation.

Then what could be the relationship between women's economic situation and IPV in Mongolia? Although international literature suggests a clear connection between women's economic situation and IPV in Mongolia, there is a lack of research or study about this link. However, the Mongolian problems seem to be similar to those in the countries studied in the international literature review. The literature on this link probably applies to Mongolia. The literature says that if women have a stronger economic bargaining position, they are less vulnerable to violence. The increase in IPV could be explained by Mongolian women's declining economic position. The revival of gender inequality has not been favourable for women's economic situation and therefore, has probably resulted in increased IPV in Mongolia. In other words, decreased women's economic power could potentially lead to less bargaining power, making women more vulnerable economically and increasing the risks of violence against them.

However, it does not mean that only improving women's economic position can solve the problem of IPV. There are many cases that show that women who have more economic power are still at risk of IPV. The relationship between women's economic situation and IPV risk is said to be very complex (Buller et al. 2018; Hughes et al. 2015, p. 293; Vyas & Watts, 2009). Both grow out of socio-cultural and economic settings, the conventional gender norms and the culture of patriarchy persisting within the family or the society.

This complex nature of the relationship between women's economic situation and IPV established in international literature also depends on whether there is existing violence in the family or not. It suggests that enhanced women's economic situation can directly increase the risks of IPV if the male counterpart wants to gain control of their wife's financial circumstances in order to maintain his power and control over his spouse.

In the Mongolian context, except women's situation has gotten worse, the negative correlation between enhancement of women's economic situation and IPV was clearly affirmed by the findings of the nationwide survey on GBV (NSOM 2018). The main reasons for such negative relationships are oppressive gender norms, especially men's social

norms/expectations to be the breadwinner or the head of the family and men's fear to lose their control on their partners.

However, it should not be assumed that women's economic empowerment is to be avoided due to the greater risks of IPV possibly posed by improved women's economic situation. The reason is that increasing women's economic situation presents considerable challenges to gender inequality besides its positive effect on IPV. It is argued in 22 quantitative and qualitative studies undertaken in 13 low and middle-income nations that approximately 73 per cent of the initiatives to increase women's economic situation have contributed to a decrease in the number of IPV, 9 per cent of such programs have contributed to increase IPV and 18 per cent of initiatives have shown no impact on incidences of IPV (The Prevention Collaborative 2019, p. 2)

Therefore, it can be assumed that attempts to decrease IPV by means of increased women's economic situation are needed in Mongolia. Projects, currently running, should incorporate improving women's economic opportunities and IPV at the same time rather than separately focusing on them. This approach could be more effective in Mongolia given that the patriarchal culture in the country is not as strict as in some other countries with strong oppressive gender norms (for women). It can be justified with the advances in gender equality, with their social and historical implications that are still maintained and with the popular notion that says 'Women in Mongolia are powerful'. What is important to consider is that patriarchy is more prominent in rural areas and on the outskirts of the city and among the Kazakh ethnic minority. These are the places in Mongolia where women's improved economic situation may not be willingly accepted. Hence, increasing women's economic situation could be seen more as a threat to male identities and thus allowing more IPV to be committed/ encouraging IPV to become commonplace, which requires more careful initiatives.

In Mongolia, there is some tendency to consider improving men's employment opportunities and combating men's excessive alcoholism as leading solutions to IPV. Although such initiatives could contribute to decreasing IPV to some extent, it cannot be justified to be the most prominent, long-term solution. It is because the main reason for IPV is gender inequality in any society. Why would gender inequality in the form of improving men's economic position be supported in policies (especially if this comes at the cost of ignoring women's

position), when it is understood that gender inequality is the leading cause of IPV? Instead, if women's economic situation changes for the better, gendered poverty, poverty and IPV could be decreased. As a result, gender equality could be achieved. In a broader sense, the economic and social empowerment of women is regarded to play a central role in the fight against poverty, and this is why many development strategies address poor women (WHO, 2005).

Also, it seems that developing strong, independent, feminist civil society is vital in Mongolia to ensure gender equality. If there had been strong women's CSOs during the brutal transition period, disadvantages of this shift for Mongolian women could have been avoided to some extent. Women's CSOs have been formed after the collapse of socialism and have stood up for women's rights. However, these women's CSOs have struggled to develop and expand as strong civil societies and to sustain their independence due to lack of funding and support from the state or international organizations. In brief, in Mongolia, the participation of strong feminist CSOs is important to enhance Mongolian women's socio-economic status. Their voice, advocacy, strong influence, and insistence may be lacking in Mongolia. Feminist CSOs would, in any case, argue for improvements in state-provided welfare to benefit women, wouldn't they?

In conclusion, I argue that conditions existing in Mongolia now are similar to those in other countries as the low economic status of women with a high prevalence of IPV are linked. It could be the case that there is a connection between women's economic position and IPV in Mongolia. What is required now is applied social research to test the strength of the relationship in Mongolia. Do the historical conditions (nomadism, a democracy of the steppes, socialism and women's high educational levels) reduce the impact of declining women's economic position and does it mean that IPV is less prevalent in Mongolia or have the historical benefits for Mongolian women now been wiped out by neoliberalism? Turning back the clock and returning to socialism, while keeping the advances of liberalism, would be advantageous for women!

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