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### East Asian Women's Domestic Violence and Help-Seeking Experiences at the Intersection of Gender, Ethnic, and Migratory Disadvantages in Canada

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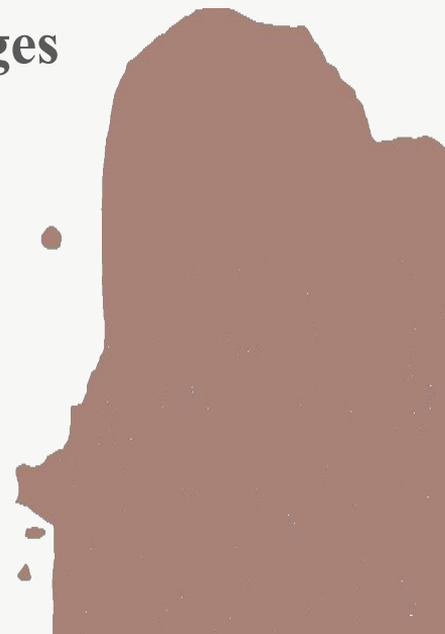


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# **East Asian Women's Domestic Violence and Help-Seeking Experiences at the Intersection of Gender, Ethnic, and Migratory Disadvantages**

Diwen Shi

# About Domestic Violence



**Domestic violence (DV)** is a pattern of behavior in a relationship to gain or maintain power and control over the intimate partner. It can be physical and sexual assaults, or threats to commit them. It is also embodied implicitly as emotional and financial abuse. A violent incident is usually accompanied by some other types of abuse, thus establishing a pattern of control in a relationship.

- Women are disproportionately represented, accounting for almost 80 percent of all victims of DV.
- Since the COVID-19 pandemic, reports of DV against women has risen by between 5% and 35% in a number of countries.
- DV does not affect every woman equally. The intersection of racial, gender, and migratory disadvantages can make a woman's experience of abuse unique and multifaceted.

# Understanding East Asian Women through the Lens of Intersectionality



## East Asian Women

The term “East Asian women” in this paper refers to migrant women from China, Japan, and Korea. They are categorized as “East Asia” because of the geographical proximity and historically shared cultural similarities.



## Intersectionality

It emphasizes the multiplicity of one’s identities, the interaction between these identities, and how this process produces qualitatively different effects.



## Challenges Faced by East Asian Women

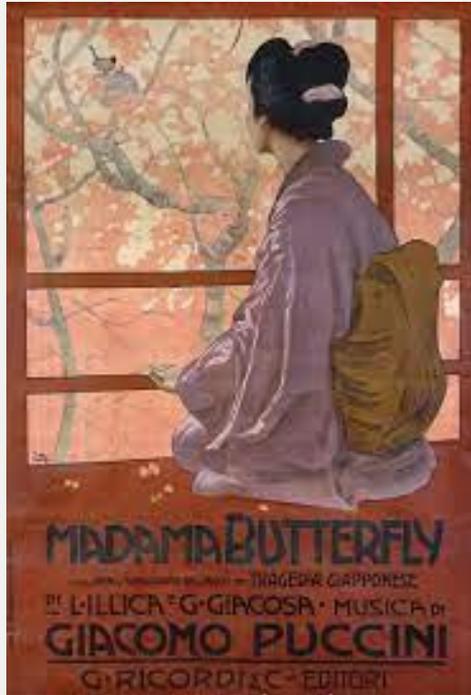
- Model minority and “perpetual foreigner”, shared with East Asian men.
- Racialized sexism/sexualized racism and Confucian patriarchy, setting them apart from East Asian men and women from other ethnic groups.



## “Model Minority and “Perpetual Foreigner”

- To assume East Asians as nerdy and socially awkward.
- East Asians are accused of being outsiders that “invaded” Canada, taking away opportunities from “real” Canadians, and undermining Canadian culture.
- Misconceptions about the English proficiency of East Asians.

# Racialized Sexism/Sexualized Racism



- The exoticized and sexually objectified images of East Asian women (e.g., “China Doll”, “Geisha Girl”).
- The assumption that East Asian are petite and cute: for those who happen to fit this stereotype, they may be perceived as immature and inexperienced; for the rest, they are pressured to conform to an insufficiently inclusive standard of physical appearance.

# Confucian Patriarchy as Distinguished from Western Patriarchy

- The female obedience required by Confucian patriarchy is intertwined with filial piety. A married woman is not only expected to obey her husband but also her in-laws.
- Disclosing spousal conflicts is seen as disrupting the family's reputation. The exposure of spousal conflicts is attributed to the wife's incompetence, as family is considered the female domain.
- The deeply-held concept that “an intact family is important for children” (even though the father is absent in child-rearing in many cases).



# Limited Opportunities in the Labor Market and Workplace

Women's employment does not occur in isolation from gender ideology and other structural constraints. Simply having a paid job is insufficient to change their vulnerability to DV.



## **Under/Unemployment**

The lack of Canadian experiences and the transferability of their foreign credentials.



## **Stable Job ≠ Enhanced Status at Home**

Spousal conflicts may arise if a man's authority in the family is diminished as a result of his wife's increased economic status.



## **Workplace Inequalities**

Cultural differences in communication patterns between East Asia and the West are problematized, exerting pressures on East Asians to “correct” their communication styles.



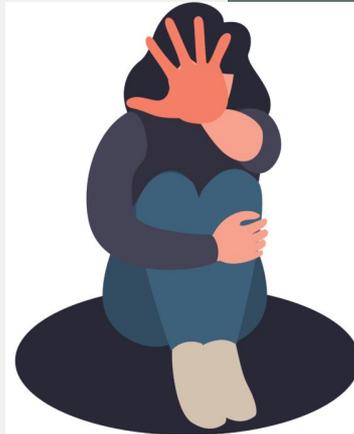
## **Double/Triple Shifts**

The reproductive tasks at home, productive tasks in the workplace, and the requirement to maintain the “orthodox gender roles” in the family.

# Framing Current Experiences with the Practices of Home Countries

## Judicial Practice in the Home Country

In East Asia, the mainstream consensus, cultural prescriptions, and laws still tend to label DV as a spousal conflict rather than a crime. This makes women not believe that calling the police is an effective way to protect themselves.



## Pressures from Family and Ethnic Community

- Battered women are expected to make concessions and forgive their violent husbands because the integrity of the marriage is thought important to their children.
- Women who refuse to compromise may be subject to “victim-blaming” (e.g., being questioned if they cheat in marriage to irritate their husbands to beat them).

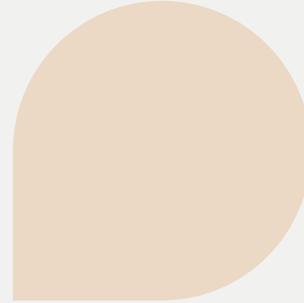
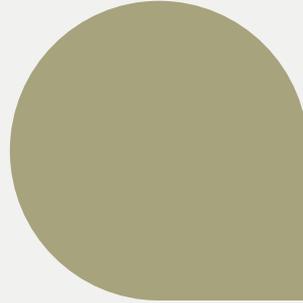
## The intersected Confucian Values and Model Minority

- Some people are reluctant to expose their DV experiences or prevent others from doing so, out of a desire to preserve their positive ethnic image in Canadian society.
- Identification with the model minority myth reinforces people’s attachment to the group. One way to express East Asian identity is to embrace East Asian values, such as conformity, tolerance, and service to the group, as required by Confucianism.

# Implications for Future Scholarship



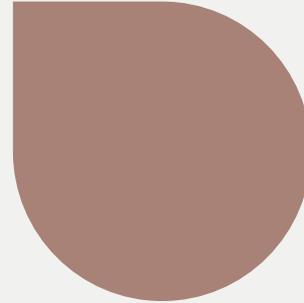
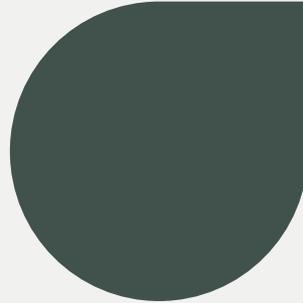
The sexually objectified image of East Asian women and assaults/murder targeted at them



Judicial and government assistance/barriers for battered women



Agency of women in unequal relations, and the dynamic and interactive nature of the relationship between the dominant and the subordinate



Assistance from social/non-profit organizations