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Multiple Identities of Professional Women in Taiwan

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Submitted 2016

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MULTIPLE IDENTITIES OF PROFESSIONAL WOMEN IN TAIWAN

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2016 TAIWAN FELLOWSHIP VISITING SCHOLAR @ RIHSS/NTU



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1. THE MOTIVATION OF THE RESEARCH

It is assumed that part of today's societal difficulties, uncertainties and crisis worldwide can be attributed among others to the process of our competing multiple identities, to their intersections and their overlapping nature – on the level of nations, on the level of communities and also on the level of the individual. It is hypothesized that there is a strong interdependence of cultural heritage, human values and social traditions in the competition of identities. These questions, which are interrelated and interconnected with each other through a common denominator, namely “cultural-mental programming” (Hofstede 1997) and “reprogramming efforts”, are going to be pondered about in this study.

In the context of globalization the relevance of this topic is reinforced by the need to adapt to changes within the ever-intensifying shift from intercultural to multicultural environment in communities, in business and in work places. Attempts will be made to articulate some projections with respect to future trends that are to be expected: the way to go from *identities competing with each other* to establishing the concept of *identities completing each other*.

2. INTERSECTIONS OF OUR IDENTITIES

Social psychologists have been engaged in the study of identity and the individuals' self-identification for almost 50 years. It suffices to refer, in this regard, to the works by world-renowned scientist George Mead (1934). In fact, all of us carry several identities: gender and racial identities are innate (*biologically determined*) properties. And we might well believe that such identities constitute constant and unchangeable attributes. Yet, experience attests that different ages and different societies recognize, accept and tolerate such issues in diverse ways and that societies relate differently to the legal, social, moral and technical conditions associated with self-initiated changes in the above attributes. On the other hand, it is also noteworthy that different societies likewise judge and control these issues in diverse ways. Let us consider Michael Jackson's desperate attempts to undergo operations, through which he wished to

approximate his image to that of an ideal “white rockstar.” A similarly debated and widely-negotiated issue is the one currently on the table in Sweden: the individual can and will determine his/her gender identity. Accordingly, visa application forms, apart from the two traditional gender categories of “male” and “female,” also contain a third option called “undefined.”

In addition to the above, another set of identities is constituted either by features we are born with or features in which we are socialized: these make up *social identity*, including e.g. ethnic, national, religious and class identity. This identity means belonging to a specific social group. At the same time, however, it must be noted that the approval to satisfy demands either for the acceptance or for the change of such social group membership is similarly highly dependent on both the society and the culture concerned. Let us think about the Indian caste system, which had been sanctioning vertical social mobility for long-long centuries. As opposed to this, North American societies and public thinking celebrate vertical social mobility and deem it a virtue, which is well-reflected by the ideal of the “self-made man.” Ultimately, a great majority of our identities are *acquired identities*, which result partly from our professional relationships (job-related) and partly from our human relationships (family and friend roles and relationships). In a lucky scenario, the individual has a greater say in matters of acquired identities, even though some societies and cultures may actually restrict the opportunities and the rights of individuals to do so. Let us mention here the institution of arranged marriage, which has been flourishing in numerous cultures (e.g. in Indian, in Japanese, in Chinese, in some Arabic and African societies).

As a consequence of the above, all of us live and exist at the focal points of the intersections of identities and this is true even if the effects as well as the deepness and strength of the impact of such identities may vary from time to time, from age to age, from place to place and from situation to situation. Thus, one of the identities of a person may temporarily become stronger and may actually overwrite any task associated with any other of his/her identities (for example, motherhood may push into the background all other identities for a while). However, with changes in life, the sequencing of these identities and the priorities associated with them may easily alter. Trying to combine careers and family in some way means that women would have to make compromises that the men in their lives were far less likely to have to make. „...the women who have managed to be both mothers and top professionals are superhuman, rich, or

self-employed” states Slaughter in her famous article *Why Women Still Can't Have It all* (Slaughter: 2012, 3.) that resonated reactions world over.

Out of the above three types of identities (biological, social and acquired), the present study wishes to discuss and focus on social and acquired role identities of women, and on how these identities intersect with their other (biological) identity in Taiwan.

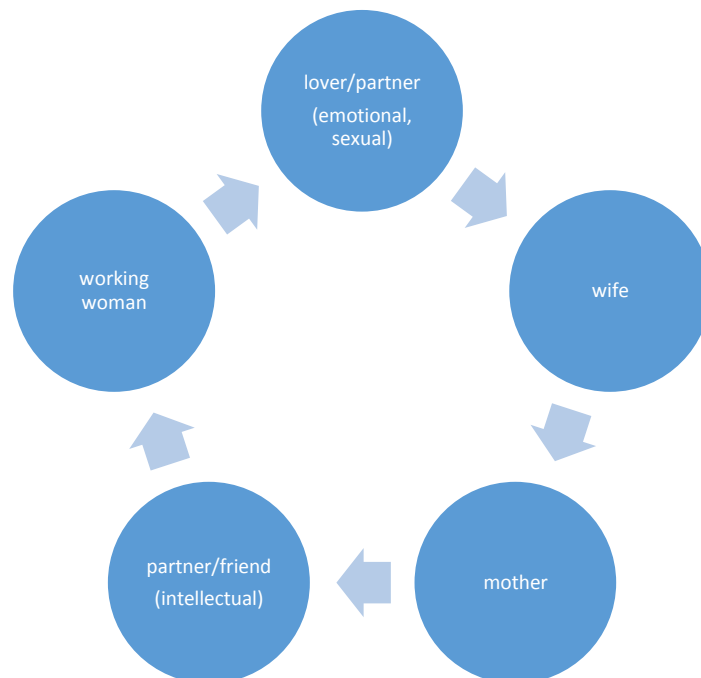
3. CHANGING LANDSCAPES FOR WOMEN IN THE 21st CENTURY

The figures and data, depicting the rate of female employment; political and economic empowerment of women; gender wage gap; the ratio of women in managerial positions – all reveal conditions that tell about the disadvantaged status of women in several countries of the world. This happens in spite of the fact, that unlike the past, most women nowadays are raised to get proper education, to make a career and be able to support themselves. More women than men seek out higher education worldwide. Women are more educated than men today: today women earn more bachelor degrees than men. In fact, the ratio of women in the labor force has been steadily growing in most countries of the developed world and has almost reached the level of that of men. So, it is no longer assumed that only men will be the “providers.” Women – if they wish to do so – can often provide for themselves now. The result is the growing number of career women, the growing number of singles, or postponed marriages at the least, with obvious consequences like decreasing number of children per family if any.

This vicious circle of paradigm changes is prevalent in many societies, but the driving forces and scenarios behind it differ. My research aims at pointing out the different nature of and expectations towards women’s roles in Taiwan and in Europe with a focus on Hungary.

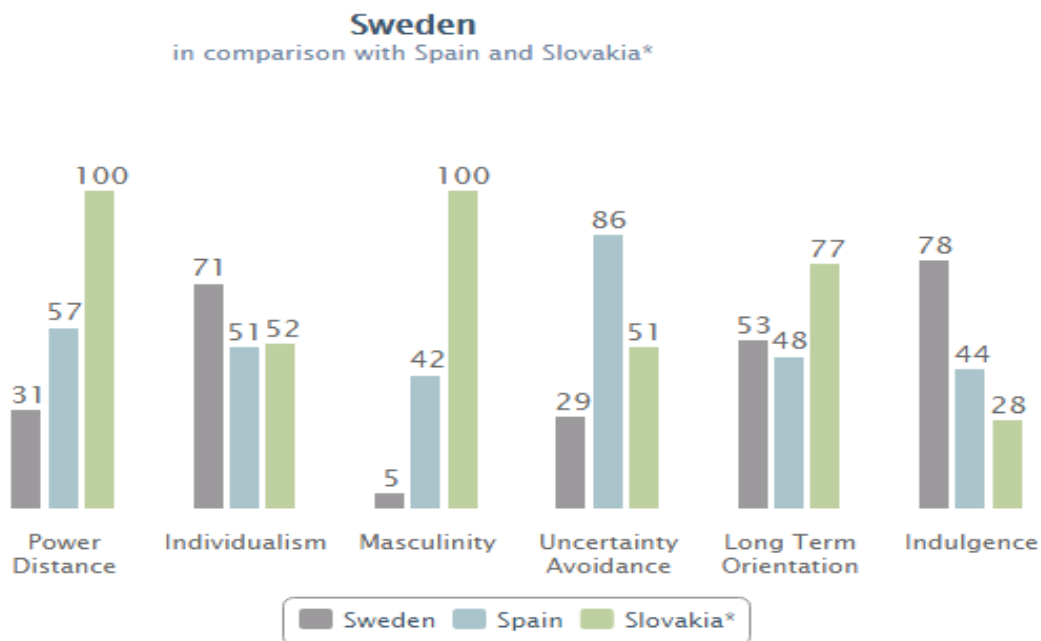
It is assumed that whereas in most countries of East Asia tasks and roles of women are digital in nature (one thing at a time, linear segmentation, concentrated attention, high quality standards - both on the level of expectations and also on the level of execution), in European cultures tasks and roles of women are more analog in nature (more things at a time: split attention, multi-tasking, but one has to admit, that the risk of lower quality performance prevails). While women in many countries of East Asia – particularly in the ones with strong Confucian heritage values – are expected to fulfill roles in a sequence, that is: the wife and the mother role are not expected to be conquered by career roles; in European cultures (or for that matter western cultures with a European cultural heritage, like USA or Canada) women are expected to be multifunctional from the very beginning: being a wife and raising children gives no excuse from job duties.

East-Asia	Europe
mono / bifunctionalism:	multi-functionalism :
more persons parallelly	same person same time
wife and/mother wife and bread-winner career woman friend and/or intellectual mate lover and/ hostess etc.	wife and mother and lover and friend and bread-winner
Synchronically held partners: partners are mostly role-specific	Diachronical relationships: one partner for each role If one role of the partner misfunctions, then the partner is to be changed >>>>(divorce)



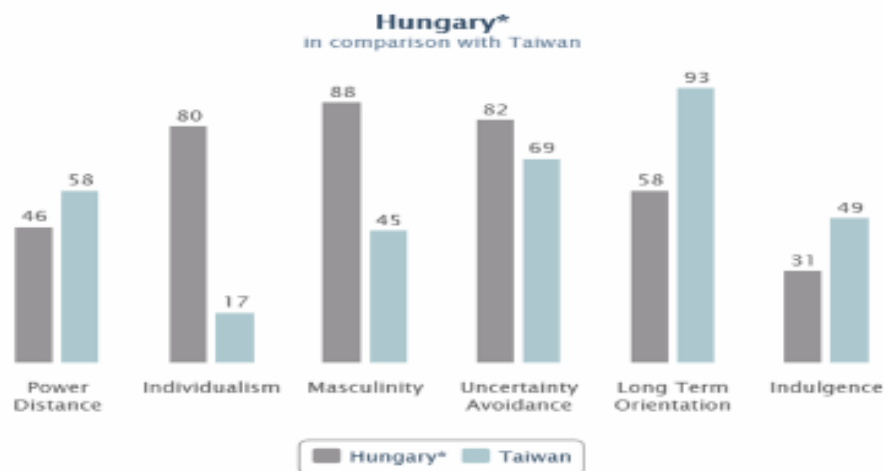
Geert Hofstede (1997), the world-known researcher of national and organizational cultures, has established a model based on six cultural dimensions that helps to describe, understand and to compare the attributes and

differences of cultures that ultimately govern our behavior. One of these dimensions is that of the Gender. The *Gender dimension* should be visualized as a scale of 100 scores, that has two extremes: masculinity and femininity. The *Masculinity* side of this dimension represents a preference in society for achievement, heroism, assertiveness and material rewards for success. Society at large is more competitive. Its opposite, *Femininity*, stands for a preference for cooperation, modesty, caring for the weak and quality of life. Society at large is more consensus-oriented. In the business context Masculinity versus Femininity is sometimes also related to as "tough versus tender" cultures. Countries and societies differ vastly as for the scores on the gender dimension. To illustrate this I present scores of three countries of the European Union, one Nordic, one mediterranean, and one East-European. While Sweden scores the lowest in Europe on the masculinity index (which means that it is strongly feminine) , Spain lies at a medium score, and Slovakia – a country which is trying to reestablish itself after a long transition period from socialism to capitalism, a period of fight for power – scores very high on masculinity.



If to apply Hofstede’s model for comparison to Hungary and Taiwan, then the significant discrepancy in scores is relevant.

Hofstede's cultural dimensions Hungary – Taiwan



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Whilst Hungary scores very high on masculinity (88), Taiwan's score of 45 predicts a much more balanced ratio between masculinity and femininity in terms of gender equality. In the upcoming chapters I intend to look behind the "why"-s.

4. METHODOLOGY OF THE RESEARCH

Most of all I wanted to understand

1. Why does Taiwan perform better in gender equality than many other countries in the world and particularly in the region – Japan and South Korea?
2. How women in Taiwan are coping with their multiple identities?
3. What are the lessons that can be learned from Taiwan?

In order to pursue my research I was working by applying and utilizing several methods and sources of information:

1. In order to be able to understand the gender status quo I identified available printed and internet sources as statistics, reports and studies;
2. I contacted official government agencies to gain in person information from officials: Gender Equality Center / Executive Yuan; Department of International and Cross-Strait Education/ Ministry of Education; Foundation of Women's Rights Promotion and Development, etc.;
3. I contacted experts of academia on gender issues, human rights and gender

education from several universities and research institutes: NCU; NCCU; NFU; NCNU; NCKSU; FJU, SCU, Academia Sinica; etc.;

4. I took interview with acknowledged experts and activists: Mme Jaclyn Tsai, or Tsai Yu-ling (Former Minister without Portfolio of Executive Yuan 2013-2016); Mme Lu Hsiu-lien Annette (Former Vice-president of ROC 2000-2008);
5. I visited and participated at some conferences, meetings, lecture-sessions related to gender issues at Academia Sinica, at NGO-s like Society of Taiwan Female Scholars, Taiwanese Gender Equity Education Association, etc.;
6. I talked to a number of students (representatives of young generation) at the universities I visited and asked them about their insights and opinions on gender issues in Taiwan.

This way, on one hand equipped with data, statistics and official narratives (quantitative research) I was able to gain some picture about the status quo of women in Taiwan; and on the other via meeting people – officials, academics, activists, men and women, young and senior – asking them, discussing with them the issues I could get their insights and perception (qualitative research)¹.

5. THE CASE OF EUROPE

Before analysing the gender status quo in Taiwan I briefly overview the situation in EU for a point of reference. I will present two approaches to measure and evaluate the gender situation. There are two sides of the coin: to look at the situation from “the glass half empty” perspective – that is to identify gaps or to look at the situation from “the glass half full” perspective – that is to measure gender equality.

The glass half empty: if to look at the recent *Global Gender Gap Report 2015* of the World Economic Forum, we can trace down the relevant data for several countries of the world, including all European countries. The *Global Gender Gap Index (GGI)* was first introduced by the World Economic Forum in 2006 as a framework for capturing the magnitude of gender-based disparities and tracking their progress. Year 2015 sees the 10th edition of the Index, allowing

¹ The interview questions are to be found in Annex 1.

for time-series analysis on the changing patterns of gender equality around the world and comparisons between and within countries. The Index benchmarks national gender gaps on economic, political, education and health criteria, and provides country rankings that allow for effective comparisons across regions and income groups.

In the 2015 report Hungary ranked 99th out of 145 countries, just below Cyprus and above Swaziland, with a score of 0.672 (<http://reports.weforum.org/global-gender-gap-report-2015/economies/#economy=HUN>). What is even more worrying though is that instead of making progress in decreasing the gender gap, it shows a slight fallback if to compare with the relevant 2014 data: 93 out of 142 countries with a score of 0.676 (<http://reports.weforum.org/global-gender-gap-report-2014/economies/#economy=HUN>). The *Global Gender Gap Report 2015* finds that gender disparities in Hungary are relatively small in *health and survival* (0.9791), and in *educational attainment* (0.9924) indicators, more pronounced in *economic participation and opportunity* (0.6683) and outstandingly great in *political empowerment* with a score of 0.0636 that puts the country to the 139! place in the world rank.

Despite of the prophecies of social scientists, of public-life analysts (Ternovszky 2013) and of psychologists (Vekerdy 2013), who assume that the 21st century is to be determined by women, claiming it to be „the century of women” (Zimbaro 2015), few if any signs of it can be seen in Hungary during the 15 years that have passed since the turn of the century. Currently, Hungarian companies do not make full use of the existing labour force potential, not speaking about the drastic underrepresentation of women in political empowerment.

The glass half full: Aiming to support more effective policymaking at EU level, the *European Institute for Gender Equality* developed the Gender Equality Index, first proposed in the European Commission’s ***‘Roadmap for equality between women and men 2006–2010’*** and ***launched in 2013***. The first Gender Equality Index revealed that the EU was only halfway towards reaching equality, demonstrating the need for further monitoring and more targeted gender equality policies. The Gender Equality Index is a composite indicator that provides— across Member States and over time — a measure of the complex concept of gender equality. It measures **gender gaps** and **achievements** within a range of areas relevant to the EU policy framework (work, money, knowledge, time, power, health, violence and intersecting inequalities), by combining these gender indicators into a single summary measure. <http://eige.europa.eu/gender-statistics/gender-equality-index>

Figure 2.2. Domains and sub-domains of the conceptual framework: Core Gender Equality Index



Based on the six domains (*work, money, knowledge, time, power, health*) and their sub-domains, plus two additional areas like *violence and intersecting inequalities*, the overall score for each country has been established as to be seen in the table below, where data for the year 2015 are shown:

The highest possible score is 1 (equality) and the lowest is 0 (inequality)

Finland	3	0,850	Latvia	20	0,753	Croatia	59	0,708
Sweden	4	0,823	Estonia	21	0,749	Romania	77	0,693
Ireland	5	0,807	Spain	25	0,742	Czech R.	81	0,687
Slovenia	9	0,784	Lithuania	31	0,740	Greece	87	0,685
Germany	11	0,779	Luxemburg	32	0,738	Slovakia	97	0,675
Netherlands	13	0,776	Austria	37	0,733	Hungary	99	0,672
Denmark	14	0,767	Portugal	39	0,731	Cyprus	100	0,671
France	15	0,761	Italy	41	0,726	Malta	104	0,668
UKingdom	18	0,758	Bulgaria	43	0,722			
Belgium	19	0,753	Poland	51	0,715			

It becomes clear that nordic countries like Finland and Sweden score highest, while southern countries and East-European countries score lowest.



Hungary – a landlocked country in Central-Eastern Europe, an island-country both in the linguistic and in the cultural sense (surrounded by Slavic, Germanic and Latin countries), a one-time member state of the Austro-Hungarian empire (1867-1918), and a later-time member state of the socialist countries block (1949 – 1990) –has been affected during its hectic history by so many influences, by so many political and economic models and hence by so many changes in systems, regimes, structures and legislature, that since the great regime-change in 1990 (from socialism to capitalism) it has been occupied with searching the most effective ways of construing a modern society – whilst maintaining its cultural and national identity. In its efforts to identify the most efficient track for economic development it parallelly needs to address issues of societal nature, among them the question of gender, the role of women in society and on the labour market.

In a detailed country profile of Hungary (The Current Situation 2012)² six groups of indicators show the status quo in 2011.

1. The *general participation rate of women* in the Hungarian labour market lies at 50.6%, which is below the EU average (58.5%) – the rate of women actively searching for work (11%) is higher than that of the EU-average (10%).

2. The rate of Hungarian *women working part-time* (8.8%) is significantly lower than the EU average (31.6%) – however, the female average part-time weekly working hours (23) are higher in Hungary than on EU-average (20). According to a Eurobarometer survey, however, an easier access to part-time work is ranked as important for 72% of Hungarians – this is the highest percentage in all of the EU. The part-time working hours as share of full-time working hours have been stagnating for

² This country fiche was financed by, and prepared for the use of the European Commission, Directorate-General Justice, Unit D2 "Gender Equality" in the framework of the service contract managed by Roland Berger Strategy Consultants GmbH in partnership with ergo Unternehmenskommunikation GmbH & Co. KG.

both women and men since 2002. The share is now slightly higher for female employees than for male employees.

3. *College/university (tertiary education) attainment* of Hungarian women has increased to 20.4% but still lies below the EU average (24.8%). The existence of "typically" female fields of education is notable in Hungary. 79.8% of all students in "teacher, training and education science" and 73.2% of all students in "health and welfare" are female. These numbers are lie around the EU-average for these fields of study (76.7% and 74.0%). In addition, the rate of women in "typically male" subjects is even lower in Hungary than in the EU-27: women represent 32.4% of all students in "science, maths and computing" (EU-average: 37.6%) and 18.1% in "engineering" (EU-average: 25.0%). Hence, gender segregation in fields of studies is even more pronounced in Hungary than on EU-average.

4. The under-/overrepresentation of women and men in occupations or sectors (*horizontal segregation*) is pronounced in Hungary as well as on EU average – it is necessary to motivate female graduates to enter gender "atypical" sectors. Three of the top five female sectors, "manufacturing", "wholesale & retail" and "public administration", are also among the top five male sectors. Added up, 43.1% of all female employees and 43.8% of all male employees work in these three sectors. On the other hand, the two remaining top-5 female sectors, "education" and "health & social work", are "typically female". For example, 14.0% of all employed women work in "education" whereas only 3.6% of men work in this sector. On the other hand, the second most popular sector for men is "construction" in which 12.7% of all employed men work. The share of employed women who work in this sector is very low with only 1.3 %. In order to compare the extent of horizontal segregation in Hungary with the overall EU- 28 average, two horizontal segregation indicators are calculated: (1) Sectorial Gender Segregation Indicator (SGS)¹¹, (2) Occupational Gender Segregation Indicator (OGS)

The extent of sectorial gender segregation (SGS) in Hungary is as high as the average of the overall SGS of the EU-28 (5.4 pp). Consequently, Hungary needs to focus on motivating women to enter "typically male" economic sectors and men to enter "typically female" economic sectors.

The extent of occupational gender segregation (OGS) in Hungary (5.1 pp) is slightly higher than the overall OGS of the EU-27 (4.6 pp). For this, in Hungary the challenge remains to focus on motivating women to enter "typically male" occupations and men to enter "typically female" occupations.

5. The under-/overrepresentation of women and men on hierarchical levels (*vertical segregation*) is stronger in Hungary than on EU average - the rate of women on boards lies at 5% (EU-average 14%) and the rate of women in national government is equally low with 9% (EU average 26%). Therefore, the challenge for Hungarian companies remains to continue promoting women into economic decision making positions and especially focus on increasing the number of women on boards.

6. The unadjusted gender pay gap – the overall difference in income between women and men – lies at 17.6% in Hungary which is slightly higher than the EU average (16.4%). More equality within the business sector and a reduction of the gender pay gap can only be sustainably realised if companies follow a comprehensive approach

including corporate strategy, management, operational implementation by business units and HR work organisation and monitoring ("strategic pillars"):

If to look at these figures in a time-dimension then we can see that in the case of Hungary the situation and hence data have not considerably improved during the years. The underlying reasons are manifold and the majority of them is interconnected with the regime-change, with the transition process and certain repositioning of moral and ethical values amidst the age of globalization. (Hidasi 2015; Hidasi 2016)

All this happens in spite of the strenuous efforts of EU organizations and institutions to improve gender equality as a fundamental EU value in all 28 EU member-states and to close albeit to lessen the gender gap in all relevant domains. The European Commission published its annual report for 2015 (EC 2016) on gender equality in the EU, which in a way renders also as stock-making of the achievements reached by its first vision plan *Strategy for equality between women and men 2010-2015* and at the same time serves as a baseline for developing its follow-up plan: *Strategic engagement for gender equality 2016-2019* (EU 2016). The Strategic engagement focuses on the following five priority areas:

1. Increasing female labor market participation and equal economic independence;
2. Reducing the gender pay, earnings and pension gaps and thus fighting poverty among women;
3. Promoting equality between women and men in decision-making;
4. Combating gender-based violence and protecting and supporting victims;
5. Promoting gender equality and women's rights across the world.

The Strategic engagement sets out objectives in each of these priority areas and identifies more than 30 concrete actions. It reaffirms commitment to gender mainstreaming: A gender equality perspective will be integrated into all EU policies as well as into EU funding programs. The Strategic engagement also supports the implementation of the gender equality dimension in the Europe 2020 Strategy.

6. THE CASE OF TAIWAN

Taiwan – alike many countries of the world – had to go a long way until gender equality issues have been put on the agenda of social narratives, of policy making and of legislation. The first wave of Taiwanese feminist movements started in the Japanese colonial era (Chen 2012) and the second wave was the feminist activism that Nationalists' anti-communist political forces enhanced in Taiwan. Some scholars consider though as first wave of Taiwan women's movement the period that followed after the appearance of Annette Hsiu-lien Lu's *New Feminism* (新女性主義) in 1974. She was Taiwan's foremost women's rights activist in the 1970s. Lu advocated that four views from Confucian teachings were the root of those times' women's low position and lack of self-confidence: 'continue the family-line'; 'three obediences and four virtues'; 'men outside – women inside' and 'one-sided chastity'.

The emergence and evolvement of women's movements in Taiwan during the subsequent decades arose from the *interplay of several impacting factors*: liberalization (human rights), modernisation and democratisation³. Taiwan, as one of Asia's Four Little Dragons (Wong 2003) has gained economic strength by the end of the century and became an important regional player, and its democratic achievements and economic prosperity have won recognition internationally.

In the meantime, thanks to scholarly academia efforts and social women movements (Lu ML 2012), the attitude and perception of gender issues have greatly improved, and with the growth of feminist consciousness the need to tackle gender disparities has appeared also on the level of legislation and governance (DGE 2016). The Ministry of Education (MOE) established the Gender Equity Education Committee in 1997 for promoting substantive gender equality, and the dignity. After the announcement of the Gender Equity Education Act on June 23rd, 2004, the Committee was renamed the Gender Equity Education Committee and a budget was drawn up for executing relevant works every year, including developing the policies in gender equity education, promoting the ideals of gender equity education, supervising the practices of gender equity education, designing the courses and teaching materials for gender

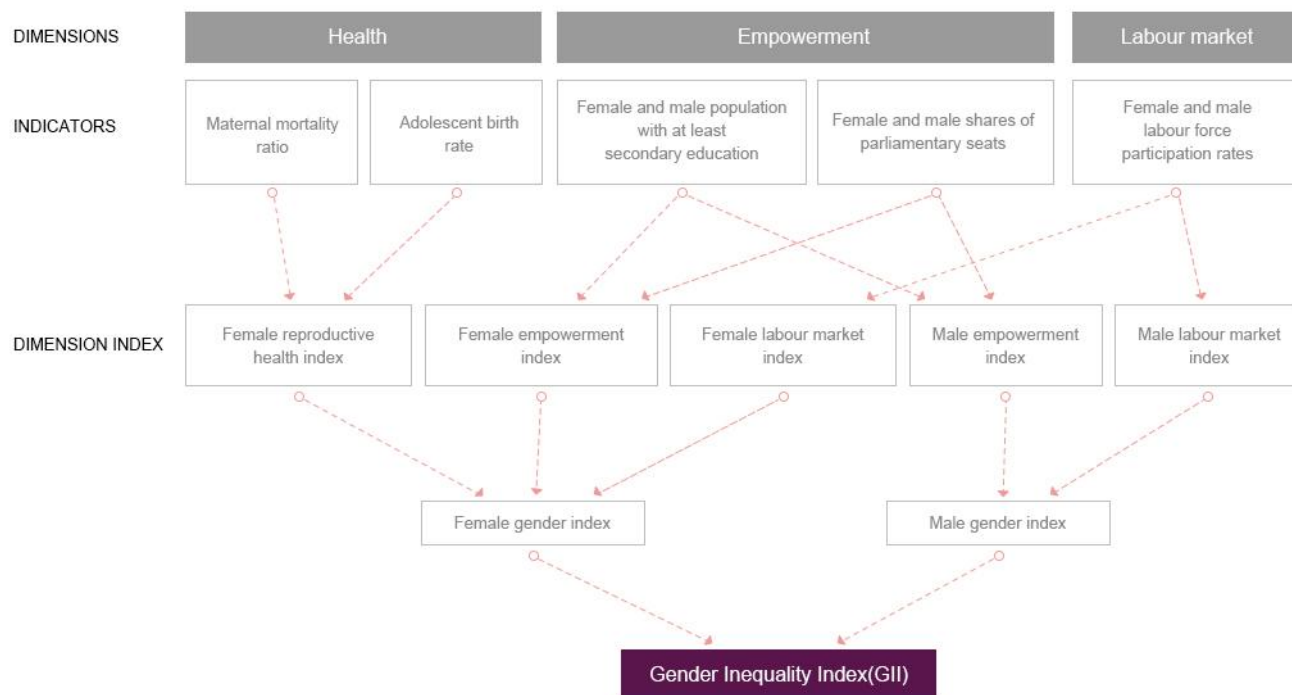
³ These processes are best understood by referring to three theoretical approaches: *relative deprivation theory* (Freeman 1975), *resource mobilization theory* (Henderson and Jeydel 2007) and *political opportunity theory* (Costain 1992).

equity education, evaluating the effectiveness in teaching, subsidizing activities held by NGOs, and popularizing gender equity education through media. The Ministry of Education built up operating procedures to supervise and investigate sexual assault and harassment cases according to the Regulations on the Prevention of Sexual Assault or Sexual Harassment on Campus.

According to Article 10 of the Gender Equity Education Act (announced in 2004, amended 2013), competent authorities of central, municipal, and county (city) government should, together with schools, draw up budgets for the implementation of the policies made by the Gender Equity Education Committee. Since 2005, the Taiwan Ministry of Education has budgeted over 3.1 billion to gender equity education. Continuing to deepen implementation of gender equity education, the Ministry of Education unveiled the “White Paper on Gender Equity Education” on March 8th, 2000, as a guideline for promoting relevant policies. The main missions included 6 categories, which were : Organization and system, Resources and space, Curriculums and Instructions, Educational personnel, Prevention and Procedures for Schools on Gender-related Issues, Education for Family and Society. Policy goals were scheduled by dividing them into short-term projects (1-2 years), medium-term projects (3-5 years), and long-term projects (6-10 years). <https://www.gender.edu.tw/web/index.php/home/index>

In December 2011, following numerous dialogues between government and civil society, the Committee on Women's Rights Promotion (now renamed as Gender Equality Committee) of Executive Yuan issued Gender Equality Policy Guideline as a blueprint for building a more diversified, inclusive and sustainable society in Taiwan.

The Gender at a Glance in R.O.C.(Taiwan) – Version 2016 (published by DGBAS, 行政院主計, DG of Budget, Accounting and Statistics/ Executive Yuan) gives a comprehensive overview of the gender status-quo of Taiwan in an international Comparison. It uses the composite Gender Inequality Index (GII) – proposed by United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in 2010.



As can be seen from the above table it measures gender inequalities by 5 indicators in 3 dimensions: reproductive health, empowerment, and the labor market. The overall GII score for Taiwan in 2014 stands at 0,052. Since it measures inequalities, the scores closer to 0, the better performance. This is the fifth best rank if compared to the 155 countries of the HDR (Human Development Report) of 2015. It is remarkable, that Taiwan scores better (0,052) than OECD average (0,231), and what is important from the point of view of this research, that it scores better than South Korea (0,125) or Japan (0,133).

If to look at Taiwan's achievements from the *Gender Equality* ranking point of view, then it can be affirmed that Taiwan had the second highest gender equality ranking in the world already back in 2012. All this is due to higher female participation in politics (Liu: *The China Post*, 2013, June 11). The main reason cited for the impressive result was that there were comparatively many female politicians in Taiwan. According to the DGBAS, among the 187 countries surveyed, the Netherlands topped the chart in 2012 in terms of least gender inequality, while Taiwan took second place, Sweden third, Switzerland and Denmark both fourth, and Norway fifth (as can be expected based on data of Scandinavian countries in Europe). Taiwan's ranking was noticeably better than both Japan and South Korea, the rankings of which were 22 and 28 respectively.

33.9 % of the parliamentary seats were held in 2012 by women in Taiwan, while the figure was 13.4 % in Japan⁴ and 15.7 % in South Korea. Cross-national studies in terms of women's share of parliamentary seats have shown, that proportional representation (PR) has been identified to have strong and significant effects on women's parliamentary representation as opposed to the single-member district system (SMD). Gender quotas have been used as a highly effective way of increasing the number of women in public office – both candidate quotas and reserved seats. Taiwan's electoral system (partly proportional representation system) and the constitution's mandate for reserving seats for women (25% since 1999) in the Legislative Yuan are assumed to have contributed to the high participation rate of women in politics.

On a side note: it is though widely argued in scholarly literature, what does 'representation' in fact mean? Is it 'descriptive representation' or 'substantive representation'? Statistical figures do not reflect the differences! Descriptive representation means 'standing for', while substantive representation means 'acting for' (Pitkin 1967). To represent women substantively, it is not enough to be in an elected position of power, one also has to get engaged in enhancing women's interests and enacting policies that would improve women's status. This is exactly the problem with statistical figures describing women's status in many South-Asian countries⁵ – or for that matter, in Japan.

Women's progress in attaining political power surely depends in part on the extent of progress they have made outside political activities (Kenworthy and Malami 1999). Regarding socioeconomic factors, scholars have identified levels of women's education, levels of women's labor force participation, and women's share in professional occupations as important variables that affect

⁴ The Abe government has announced in 2013 its 'womenomics' policy, that aims at radically raising female empowerment both in formal politics and in the economic arena. Goalsettings – including quotas – are impressive, but so far not much has been implemented in reality. In South-Korea quotas are limited to the percentage of women to be nominated by political parties and not to actual seats.

⁵ In Indonesia for instance the mandatory quota (30%) in political parties' nominees helps to provide opportunities for women to run in elections, most of whom are either members of political dynasties and families, celebrities (*caleg cantik*), professional women or business women. (Okky Asokawati, Lower House MP, Jakarta; Nur Indaqh Cintra Sukma Munsyi – Emilia Contessa – Upper House MP, Banyuwangi; Sylviana Murni, mayor of Middle-Jakarta (2008-2013); Retno Marsudi, Minister of Foreign Affairs, since 2014; Yahana Yembise, Minister for Women's Empowerment and Child Protection, since 2014; etc.)

women's access to the legislature. Tsai Ing-wen's landslide victory in the presidential election of Taiwan in January 2016 has only intensified female presence in politics. And what is more: unlike other female leaders in the region, she does not come from a political family⁶. True enough: Annette Lu, former vice-president (2000-2008) does not either. Both have reached their accomplishments thanks to their outstanding academic records, professional competences and leadership skills.

The overall increases in women's economic status and visibility in Taiwan are likely to have contributed to women's political power: 25% of managers and administrators were female in 2014. Having said that, the share of women managers in the private sector is still relatively low if compared to Singapore for instance (34%), but definitely much higher than in Japan or South-Korea (11%). All this happens in spite of the fact, that the education levels of women are becoming higher than their male counterparts world over.

If to look at it from the point of view of tendencies, then it becomes clear that the increase of women's share in managerial positions has accelerated considerably in Taiwan. (Taiwan's No.1. wealthy person: Ms. Cher Wang – founder of HTC Corp.) In my opinion this might be partly attributable to demographic changes. More and more families are left but with a single female-heir – and hence their fortune or business will be taken over by the female successor⁷. The entrepreneurial spirit and skills of Taiwanese women are outstanding. One example is that of Jaclyn Tsai (Tsai Yu-ling) who herself a founder and CEO of companies is putting efforts to establish the legal framework to provide greater flexibility to start-ups, and innovative solutions (for instance an advocate for Entrepreneur Visas - the Executive Yuan established the Innovation and Startups Taskforce, which is further split into four separate groups for promoting the plan to transform Taiwan into the Silicon Valley of Asia where young entrepreneurs may realize their dreams). In this process women's share is expected to grow significantly.

Despite Taiwan's relatively late expansion of higher education, women's educational attainment (in 2014 48 % of women aged 30-34 have completed

⁶ In Asia a striking number of women have been elected in recent decades as head of state, (among others Park Geun-hye 2013 in South Korea), many of whom derive legitimacy through their familial ties from a male leader, as wife, widow, daughter of sister (Sonia Gandhi, Khaleda Zia, Megawati Sukarnoputri, Aung San Suu Kyi, Chandrika Kumaratunga, Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, Hasina Wajed, ect.).

⁷ Unlike Japan, where the unique adoption system (either for passing on the family name; or for passing on business or inheritance) creates 'artificially' but legally male heirs.

four-year university) has increased considerably during the country's rapid industrial development. At the same time married women and mothers became increasingly needed by employers facing labor shortages – as a result of Taiwan's heavy reliance on exports from labor-intensive industries. In 2002 the Act of Gender Equity Employment (AGEE) was implemented, although even now there is no or only modest penalty for those who do not adopt the family-responsive measures (provision of work-schedule flexibility, childcare and nursing facilities, child-care leave, etc.) prescribed by the law. For small enterprises which make up the majority of businesses in Taiwan (in 2011 49% of Taiwanese workers were employed by firms with less than 30 employees), it is more beneficial to keep women in the workplace after marriage and childbearing than bear the costs of job turnover. Therefore, companies (particularly SME-s) have been traditionally more willing to accommodate family obligations and needs of their employees with children by facilitating work-family compatibility. The increase in married women's employment has led ultimately to a large percentage of dual-income families – particularly among the well-educated, the white collar workers. In 1990 the Taiwanese government removed the tax penalty for dual-earner families.⁸ The increasing tendency of Taiwanese women to continue their jobs upon marriage and childbearing is an important driving force for closing the gender gap in the workplace. Female hourly wages have been increasing since the early 1990s, reaching 85% of male wages in 2014 – which results in a 17,5% pay-gap calculated on the OECD's definition. The gap is much bigger in Japan (26.6%) and in Korea (36.6%).

Taiwan's female employment rate (51% in 2015) is only slightly higher than that of Japan (49%) or of South-Korea (50%). Differences among these three countries come not so much from the figures, but from the employment patterns behind the figures. Whereas in Japan⁹ and Korea the women labor participation curve gives an "M-shape" (many women participate in the labor market after graduation, withdraw upon child-birth, and return after 10-15 years of absence), in Taiwan it gives a "reverse V-shape" : with a peak around the age of 30, but only a moderate decline of job-leavers after child-birth.

⁸ In Japan for instance the tax penalty on double income is still in place – which prevents many women from taking jobs or at least from taking full-time jobs.

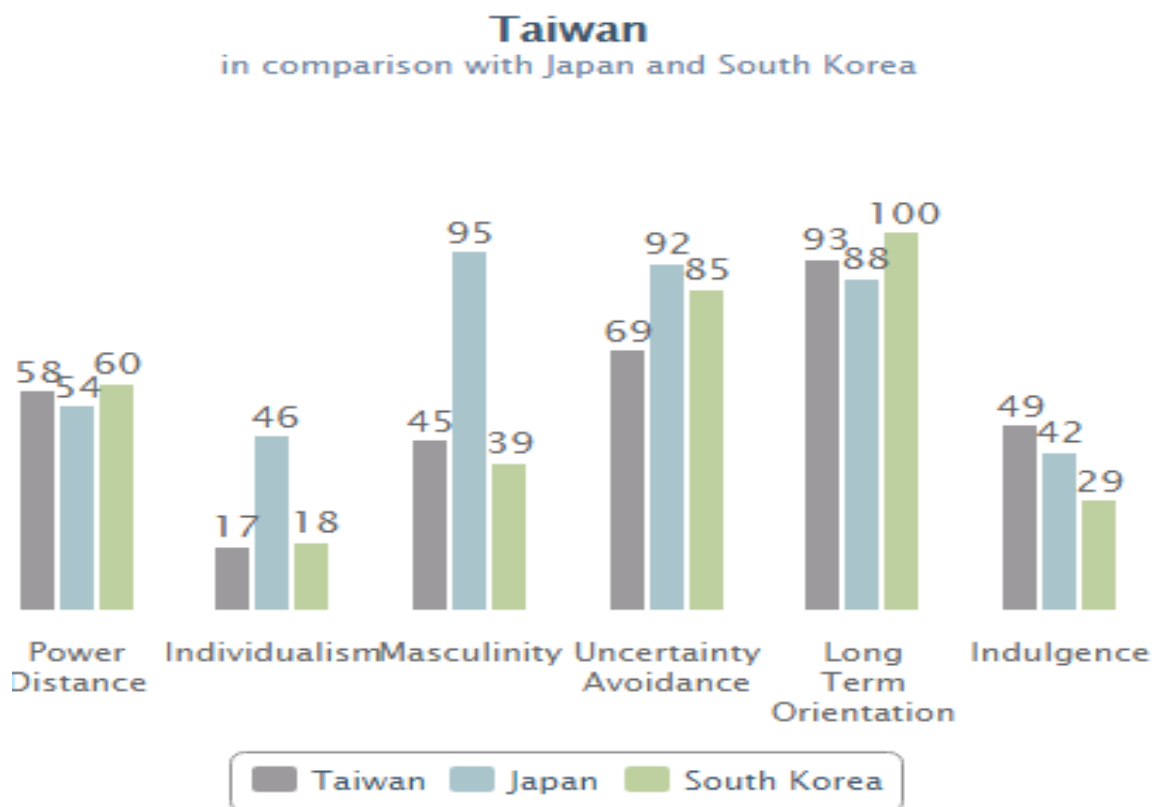
⁹ Yong P.T. and Nagy, SR. (2016): Japanese Corporate Culture and Demographic Decline: Tokyo Female Workers's Views on Career Advancement in the Workplace

7. WHY IS TAIWAN PERFORMING BEST IN TERMS OF GENDER EQUALITY IN THE EAST-ASIAN REGION?

As an introduction to this chapter I remind of the culture's consequences that was discussed earlier. As could be seen in the brief chapters on Europe, disparities of gender equality across the countries were significant and diverse in nature. This diversity has traditionally been mostly attributed to the differences in cultural values, which in their turn have been shaped during thousands of years by religions and ethics. Whilst the countries of the North (Scandinavia and Northern regions of Europe) are mostly protestants, the countries of the South (Mediterranean and many Central-Eastern European countries) follow Catholicism. Whilst protestants in general are hard-working people thinking in long-term (strongly investing into education for instance), people socialized on catholic values are less future-oriented, less thrifty, etc. (Hofstede 1987). Whilst Nordic countries are more egalitarian (and hence also more feminine), southern and Catholic countries are more hierarchical (and more masculine)¹⁰. That is it was possible to justify cultural and behavioral differences on the basis of differences in ethical values, of ethical denominators. Common ethical values and orientations predict a similar attitude to gender issues – at least in the case of Europe.

This assumption would then mean, that countries of East Asia sharing a similar ethical and philosophical background might have similar gender equality scores. Hence, it was a great discovery for me to see from statistical data and reports, that the common ethics denominator – Confucianism – notwithstanding, there were considerable disparities in gender issues among Taiwan, Japan and South-Korea – just to take these three countries of East-Asia. Looking at the three country scores using the model of Hofstede, the difference on gender is striking particularly between Taiwan and Japan, or for that matter between Japan and South-Korea.

¹⁰ Research by Kenworthy and Malami (1999) found that countries in which religions emphasize women's traditional roles tend to have fewer women in legislatures (p.257).



Hofstede's analysis¹¹ suggests, that:

The case of Japan is relatively clear: it is one of the most Masculine societies in the world. However, in combination with their mild collectivism, one does not often see assertive and competitive individual behaviors that often associated with Masculine culture. What we see though is a severe competition between groups. From very young age at kindergartens, children learn to compete on sports day for their groups. In corporate Japan, employees are most motivated when they are fighting in a winning team against their competitors. As an expression of Masculinity in Japan one also sees the drive for excellence and perfection in material production and in services (hotels and restaurants) and presentation (gift wrapping and food presentation) in every aspect of life. Notorious Japanese workaholism is another expression of the Masculinity. It is still hard for women to climb up the corporate ladders in Japan with the Masculine norm of hard and long working hours.

South Korea scores 39 on this dimension and is thus can be considered a Feminine society. In Feminine countries the focus is on "working in order to live", managers strive for consensus, people value equality, solidarity and quality in their working lives. Conflicts are resolved by compromise and negotiation. Incentives such as free time and flexibility are favoured. Focus is on well-being, status is not shown. An

¹¹ I do not definitely adopt all his insights – particularly the ones on South-Korea – but for reference I included it.

effective manager is a supportive one, and decision making is achieved through involvement.

Taiwan scores 45 on this dimension, a lower intermediate and is thus considered a slightly Feminine society. In Feminine countries the focus is on “working in order to live”, managers strive for consensus, people value equality, solidarity¹² and quality in their working lives. Conflicts are resolved by compromise and negotiation. Incentives such as free time and flexibility are favoured. Focus is on well-being, status is not shown. An effective manager is a supportive one, and decision making is achieved through involvement.

Although the Hofstede-ian scores across the three countries would predict that it is South-Korea where the least gender-disparities could be expected, but statistical data and resources prove that Taiwan stands way ahead in terms of gender equality in the region.

In the following pages I try to analyze the reasons, why in spite of the long-lasting impact of Confucianism in these countries, the status of gender equality shows different outcomes and levels of development in the first decades of the 21st century.

1. ***Taiwan is more international*** than its Asian neighbor countries. International in the sense of multiculturalism – not only because of indigenous communities and minorities, but also because of the relatively great number of mixed marriages, and the influx of workers from countries of East-Asia. And most importantly international in the sense of the mindset of its people: the great number of intellectuals that I had the opportunity to encounter during my research, were all highly educated and internationally educated. Many (I would say most) of them studied abroad, lived abroad, worked abroad – and their openness to the world and societal issues must have greatly contributed to the acceptance of diversity, to the appreciation of diverse values and to the respect of diverse mentalities. Taiwan’s international mindset can be compared in my opinion only that of Singapore’s – and is much more ahead than Japan or South-Korea.
2. In Taiwan women’s liberation and gender equality evolved hand-in-hand with political liberation from autocracy to democracy and human rights movements. These ***movements exerted a crossfertilizing*** influence on one another and hence proved to be very powerful. It was well understood that

¹² I was impressed to observe in Taiwan signs of solidarity and care towards the weak, the feeble, the elderly, pregnant women and families with children – on transport vehicles, subways, ticket-offices, etc. One has the feeling, that in Taiwan society “even underprivileged ones are not left behind”.

“advocacy alone is not enough, that power is needed to make a difference, and political will, financial resources and action are indispensable to accomplishing desirable objectives” (Lu Annette: 2011, 6.) In other countries of East Asia, these processes were happening more or less independently – and therefore the synergy that could have resulted from their working intertwining each other could not be attained to that extent as it did in Taiwan. What we see in Taiwan that the process of gender equality involvement is embedded in other important social processes – and therefore has become an irrefragable part of them.

3. In Taiwan the idea of gender equality is conceived and its implementation is happening not as an isolated concept but as an *integral part of several modernization accomplishments*: legislation endorsed Gender Equality in Employment Law (2002, amended 2007); Gender Equality Education Act 2004; Sexual Assault Prevention Act 1997; Domestic Violence Prevention Act 1998; Sexual Harrassment Prevention Act; etc. Organizations and agencies (inter-agency Committee of Women Rights Promotion=CWRP 1997; The Foundation for Women’s Rights Promotion and Development=FWRPD 1998; Committee for the Equal Rights and Advancement of Women; Gender Equality Committee=GEC 2012; etc.) have been working and acting in a cooperative manner to promote the rights and well-being of women. Presently the DGE (Department of Gender Equality/Executive Yuan) coordinates gender equality policies across various government bodies. In a sense I had the feeling that in Taiwan law is ahead of collective thinking! In Japan or in South-Korea these efforts are much less organized, much less systematized and much less moderated – and due to lack of strong authority coordination, energies get often wasted.
4. In Taiwan *gender equality is part of the curriculum*, that is it is not something young people have to learn about and become aware of after growing up, but they grow up in fact with this notion. The Ministry of Education initiated the Gender Equity Education Committee in 1997. Since the implementation of the law (Gender Equality Education Act), 2004, it underwent amendments on some 16 occasions – which only proves that experts keep their eyes on the changes in society, on changing needs – and make efforts to include these evolvments into the law. Accordingly the concept of gender equality as part of the education content is not a static law that stayed intact ever since its formulation – but it is *an ever-improving construct* – undergoing amendments, necessary improvements

and reforming. This assures, that it does not get outdated but rather renewed and accommodated to emerging changes. In neighboring countries – addressing the pressure mostly coming from NGO-s – certain steps have been taken to get gender equality involved in textbooks – but they are often limited to superficial measures like monitoring illustrations in textbooks as for equal representation of male and female characters, or their gender roles. In these countries it is rather media that could be utilized – if there was a political will – to exert influence on awareness raising in gender questions.

According to my observation the above four factors are the main drivers behind the undeniable accomplishments of gender equality in Taiwan. These results definitely set Taiwan apart from other countries in the region, which – for several particular reasons – are much behind in terms of gender equality.

8. PERSPECTIVES AND LESSONS TO LEARN FROM TAIWAN

The role of women in many parts of the world remains bound by traditional views, but more and more women come to power in the economic, academic or political arena. The past decade has witnessed a renewed interest in the main factors driving economic growth in countries world over. Women can contribute to the economy as much as men in today's knowledge based era. Therefore, it is in the best interest of a country to adopt a new mindset with regards to gender roles, so as to make full use of the ability and talent of both sexes to create a better, sustainable society.

Taiwan has taken significant steps on this route. My female informants when being asked about the compatibility of their multiple identities – as professionals, career women, providers, scholars, mothers or wives – did not complain. The ones that I had the chance to talk to, were all very assertive and positive. It is may be because the ones I was meeting were mostly „successful” women. They were successful in the sense of being able to compromise their multiple roles in a way that did not require them to give up their mental, spiritual and intellectual identity. As one of them put it: „to make your family successful is already an achievement” – and I cannot more than agree. In Chinese family traditions the great moderator role of mothers is legendary and many may feel satisfaction once they attain it. But the ones I was interviewing were successful in their professional careers as well. How they do it? Unlike western European

patterns (where family-work balance means that the husband takes off a considerable burden from the wife's shoulder by sharing household and childraising duties), here in Taiwan in many cases it is the family, relatives – the grandparents, aunties, etc. – that help out. (On a side note: this is – unlike most European countries – very similar to the case of Hungary). The tendency is clear: in 2013 51,8% of married females with a child under 3 years old care for the child themselves or their spouse (a drop of 16% as compared to 2000), but the ratio of those getting care by relatives (for instance grandparents) 38,1% and by babysitters 9,1 is definitely on the rise (DHBAS 2106, 12.). The more affluent the society, the more outside-family patterns (foreign servants, childcare centers, etc.) are likely to appear.

And there is great need to expand the number and services of high-quality childcare facilities, kindergartens and preschools at an affordable price, because the shrinking birth-rate seems to be one (if not the biggest) challenge for the Taiwanese society. Low birth-rate is a concern shared among countries in the region, but again the background as for reasons and perception widely differs. While in Japan in public thinking and communication having a child is perceived as a „duty” and a „sacrifice” (in terms of budget and energy), in Taiwan people still seem to perceive it as a source of joy and family happiness. No if any talk is done publicly on material sacrifices. I believe this is a sign of a healthy attitude towards family values. So it is may be still not too late to build on this attitude. This should be more emphasized and utilized (may be by media?) in order to encourage young generations to raise children – possibly two or three per family.

What I experienced during my talks and interviews with members of the senior or middle-age generation was that they were satisfied to see Taiwanese society change in a direction of growing gender equality. They were satisfied because they were seeing that the human resource pool can be better utilized by mobilizing female talents and competencies. Most of them were however not aware of Taiwan's elegant ranking on gender equality in the region – or for that matter in the world. It is presumably not by chance for instance, that on the Forum 2000 conference held in Prague (October 17-19 2016) former Foreign Minister (2004-2006) Mark Chen as a special envoy of President Tsai Ing-wen was invited to deliver a talk on Taiwan's efforts on gender equality in the 'Women as Agents of Social Change' section. (Former Vice-President Annette Lu was also invited to attend the conference).

What I see though as worrying, that members of the younger generation are not aware of the fact, that the level of gender equity attained in Taiwan is the result of a long fight for human rights and democratization, that it is an achievement that should be appreciated, and that it is in fact a process that needs to be polished and improved in the course of time. Many of the youth I met simply take the status quo as for granted, and they sometimes express dissatisfaction, and an expectation to get more in an occasionally impatiently articulated manner. Their dissatisfaction is mostly targeting parent-child relationships (too conservative control and gender-role expectations of parents) and LGBT culture.

Gender roles continue to influence crucial individual decisions: on education, on career paths, on working arrangements, on family and on fertility. These decisions in turn have an impact on the economy and society. It is therefore in everyone's interest to offer genuine choices equally for women and men throughout the different stages of their lives.

The lessons to be learned from Taiwan can be best summarized in three bullet-points:

- Openness and flexibility to socio-economic and human rights changes;
- Coordination of efforts and initiatives taken by government, legislation and NGO-s;
- Promotion and enforcement of Gender Equality concept as an integral part of education by law.

All this does not mean however that there is no room for improvement. On the one side, NGO-s (and their number is surprisingly high in Taiwan) continue to discuss, to analyze and to advocate women's (or in general minority groups' rights); work on the level of legislation is also active and compelling; and finally actions of implementation are a matter of everyday course.

This research is in a 'work-in-progress' phase. I am far from having learned enough about the status-quo, about fully understanding people's perception and expectations. But I have learned a lot and much of what I have seen can serve as a good lesson in improving gender equality in my own country.

9. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am indebted to MOFA for providing me with the Taiwan Fellowship Grant – with the help of which I could carry on research on site for four months. Both the academic and the infrastructural support that I received at the Center of Chinese Studies of National Central Library and at my host institution, the

Research Institute of Human and Social Sciences (RIHSS) of National Taiwan University were of outstanding quality and efficiency.

I cannot be grateful enough to my fellow-researchers, to professors and members of academia at the numerous universities I had the chance to visit for their insights, for their advises, for their sharing with me concerns and opinions. Their frankness and commitment have deeply impressed me – and helped me to understand more the complex picture of gender issues in Taiwan. I greatly appreciate the precious time of Mme Annette Lu and of Mme Jaclyn Tsai, that they devoted to me for answering my questions. And last but not least I am thankful to several students – undergraduate, graduate, post-graduate – whom I met on campuses of Taiwan, and who all readily shared with me their experience and thoughts on the issues of gender equality, of marriage, of child-raising and of professional career possibilities. Their dynamism, their enthusiasm and their awareness of these social issues left me with the feeling that Taiwan is at a cross-road as of directions for further improvement in gender issues.

Four months is of course too short a period for carrying out in-depth research. I still hope to have made a small step by my research in fostering women's potential to improving the mental, academic and societal welfare of our societies. If opportunity arises I would gladly continue it in the future.

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Annex 1.

Some questions in connection with the research of

Judit HIDASÍ on

MULTIPLE IDENTITIES OF PROFESSIONAL WOMEN IN TAIWAN

1. „Whatever women do they must do twice as well as men to be thought half as good”.
– Do you agree with it?
2. According to many scholars and thinkers „21st is to be a century of women”
 - a. do you agree with it?
 - b. are there any signs of it in Taiwan?
3. Statistics and data tell us that Taiwan is much ahead of other countries in the region in terms of gender equality.
 - a. Does perception match these data? Do people really feel that gender equality is working?
 - b. If yes, then in what domains?
 - c. If not, then in what domains?
4. Gender equality in Taiwan is best executed in which respect:
 - a. the rate of female employment;
 - b. political and economic empowerment of women;
 - c. gender wage gap;
 - d. the ratio of women in managerial positions
5. Out of the above which is the least successful and what do you think why?
6. Some scholars believe that the obstacle to women’s advancement is not a glass-ceiling but it is the self-imposed career blocks that prevent women from moving up. For instance, lack of self-confidence; fear from challenges; being shy and not asking for what they want; the belief that they have to act as men if they want to become successful....and the like.
 - a. What is your personal experience?
 - b. Are there any behavior traits that would prevent Taiwanese women from doing good careers?
 - c. Do they really want to be achievers, or prefer to remain with traditional female roles?
7. How Taiwanese men react to the new expectations, roles, values of leader-women? Do they watch? Do they protest? Do they try to prevent women from making careers? Do they cooperate? Do they wait out? Do they feel embarrassed or annoyed by seeing women’s making careers? Do they make remarks?

In the course of the conversation some other questions might come up. I greatly appreciate your kind cooperation and help!