

DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN IN THE MILITARY BASED ON MULAN MOVIE 2020

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ABSTRACT

Mulan movie released in 2020 raised the theme of women's struggle to be free to act according to their conscience, even though they are in a war. So, the purpose of this study is to find out the causes of discrimination that happened to Mulan, find out the acts of discrimination that occurred, and find out the impact of discrimination against Mulan. The analysis method in this research is a descriptive analysis using Naomi Wolf's theoretical approach. The result of this study is that the cause of discrimination that occurs is a manifestation of the cultural culture of traditional Chinese society, which is influenced by Confucius's teachings which assume that the position of women is subordinate to men. Meanwhile, the form of discrimination against Mulan was a form of expulsion to her because her disguise as a man was exposed. And lastly, the impact of Mulan on this discrimination is that Mulan rises and breaks the stereotype that women can save the emperor. Finally, she gets an award from the emperor as the emperor's guard.

Keywords: military discrimination, gender equality, Mulan

1. INTRODUCTION

Gender discrimination can occur in all walks of life, including the military. In reality, in the past, women were never involved in the war because women were considered weak and mentally unstable creatures. Therefore, the notion that women are troublesome when involved in war is also illustrated in written history. Several beliefs held by society and culture have contributed significantly to justifying that women are creatures whose position is below men.

Women have also been involved in war. Women are allowed to serve in the Swedish Armed Forces in roles that are traditionally reserved for men, such as combating social crimes that are frequently associated with times of conflict.

Violent crimes against civilian women, including rape and other forms of sexual assault, are examples of social crimes. In Sweden's armed forces, efforts to incorporate a gender perspective have already been met with considerable success (Egnell, Hojem, and Berts, 2014).

The low percentage of women serving in the armed forces is due to the following factors: (1) women have a lower level of English proficiency than male soldiers; (2) the husband did not allow the factor because, in general, they were already married; (3) the voice is not heard in making decisions; and (4) a patriarchal culture that assumes women should prioritize their responsibilities at home, which include taking care of their children and husbands.

In a number of films, the topic of discrimination against women in the armed forces is addressed by presenting facts and providing an analysis of the situation. Elizabeth Martin's *Mulan* is one of the various films that were produced. Lauren Hynek's *Rick Jaffa Amanda Silver*. For the sake of defending China against the Hun Empire, the Emperor of China issued a proclamation that stipulated that a male member of each family must enlist in the Chinese Imperial Army. Hua Mulan, the eldest daughter of a well-respected soldier, made preparations to take over for her sickly father. He was fired up, unwavering in his resolve, and quick on his feet. While posing as a guy by the name of Hua Jun, he was put through a series of challenges that forced him to make use of his tremendous power and acknowledge the extent of his true potential. Due to the fact that women in China at the time were regarded as being feeble and could only get the objective of this research was to find out if women in the military were poorly treated in the movie *Mulan*. Everyone

knows that men have masculinity and women have femininity, but Mulan is a woman and can show that women are not weak.

Because of his Chi, he could also do male tasks and fight against the emperor's enemies. In some scenes of the movie, Mulan does other heroic things. When she is already in the army and at war, she is called Ping-Ping, her name when she turns into a man. She does a lot to help protect the Emperor. With her bravery and intelligent planning, Mulan was able to beat their enemies. Even though Mulan is only a girl and is in the war to replace her father, she shows that she is a real warrior by doing her job as a soldier and giving everything she has to save her country. Mulan can also think like a man. The speed with which she thinks and plans the best strategy shows that she has the qualities of a man. Mulan saves the country by firing the last cannon to the top of the mountain, where it hits the snow and kills its enemies. The emperor and the government are happy about this.

2. LITERARY REVIEW

2.1 Discrimination

Human Rights Discrimination is defined by Indonesian law 39 of 1999 (Hak Asasi Manusia, 1999) as any limitation, harassment, or exclusion of a person based on their religion, ethnicity, race, group, class, social status, economic status, gender, language, or political beliefs, which leads to a reduction, deviation, or elimination of the recognition, implementation, or use of human rights and fundamental freedoms in life, both for the individual and for the group. Discrimination usually comes in the form of racial or ethnic bias (as defined by Indonesian law No. 40 of

2008) (Diskriminasi, 2008), gender bias, religious bias, bias against people with disabilities, or social bias.

The author is interested in how the military mistreats women in this research paper. Rand Corporation says that sexual harassment and discrimination against women and men at high-risk installations seem to be the same as at non-high-risk installations. But men and women in the active-component Army had very different experiences with sexual harassment and discrimination based on gender. Women are more likely than men to face discrimination based on gender, repeated attempts to start a romantic or sexual relationship that they don't want, and sexual comments about how they look. Still, men are told they don't act like men more often than women. Soldiers often have to deal with sexual harassment and discrimination based on gender. On average, women have to deal with more shorts of behavior than men. Both women and men often have to deal with rude or persistent sex jokes and conversations at work.

2.2 Feminism

The word "feminism" was first used in English in the 1890s. It comes from the French word "feminism," made up by the utopian socialist Charles Fourier. Feminism is a group of social, cultural, and political groups, ideas, and moral philosophies that work to make sure that men and women have the same rights. Historians of feminism have found that there have been three "waves" of ideas and actions by feminists. Britannica (2022) says that the first wave of feminism happened at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th. It grew out of urban industrialism and liberal, socialist politics. The main goal of this wave was

to give women more chances, and suffrage was a big part of that. Second-wave feminism looked at how few women were in the workplace. The third wave challenged middle-class white feminists in the late 20th century.

"Existence comes before essence," says De Beauvoir. This is why "one is not born a woman, but becomes one." Beauvoir said that women are mistreated because people think they are outsiders trying to be "normal." She said that women have always been seen as strange and wrong and that even Mary Wollstonecraft thought men were better.

2.3. Naomi Wolf's Theory of Power Feminism

Wolf places men and women as equals, complete human beings with inherent values. Wolf insists that either gender cannot be incubated. She further explained that anyone who fights for women's problems must try to get out of the western tradition of thinking, stating that when they are different, they prey on each other. Differences of opinion between fellow women do not mean they have to attack each other. According to Wolf, every women's movement is integrated on the basis of equality and remains to maintain diversity to enrich Feminist feel like a mosaic. So when the women's movement in a new frame emerges, the frame can be expanded flexibly. (Wolf, 1994)

In the era of openness, women's long struggle to achieve gender equality has reached a stage where women have the confidence to balance power between genders. However, it created obstacles that hindered the progress of the feminist movement. Wolf (1994) adds that many women are alienated from the movement of his people. A branch of feminism has fueled and spawned erroneous attitudes.

We are not sufficiently equipped with the psychology of women's power to keep pace with the new opportunities that lie before our eyes.

Furthermore, Wolf asserts that women have the right to achieve performance and power. In her view, to achieve power, women must go through two traditions, namely victim feminism and power feminism. A victim's femininity, according to Wolf, can slow down a woman's progress and put him as a victim. Victim feminism can be considered obsolete because women's psychological conditions and living conditions have changed quite a lot, so it is no longer possible to pretend that the urges to dominate, attack, take over or exploit others are the 'trademarks' of women—men only.

Meanwhile, the principle of power feminism is (1) Women and men both have a significant role in life, (2) women have the right to determine their destiny, and (3) women's experiences are meaningful, not just nonsense that is not important (4) women have the right to tell the truth about their experiences, (5) women deserve respect from others, respect for themselves, education, safety, health, representation, and finances. (Wolf, 1994)

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Mulan's Discrimination Cause

Analyzing the causes of woman prejudice in the Mulan movie's military action requires looking at the cultural and social features of traditional China, the movie's setting. Mulan faced harsh treatment in the fight because society considered women inferior to males. As in the movie, Mulan's community's norms and culture

place women in the correct place. Mulan's culture and customs put women at home caring for the family. In the movie, an honest lady is one who cares for her family at home. Mulan's mother told her father when she planned to marry her off. "You forget, Mulan is a daughter, not a son. A daughter brings honor through marriage. Any man would be fortunate to marry either of our daughters. Including Mulan." (Mulan, 2020, 00:03:59-00:04:11)



*Image 3.1 Mulan's mother discusses her daughter's actions with her father.
(Mulan, 2020)*

Men played a prominent role in traditional civilisation, especially in traditional China. Ancient women had a worse social and political status than men, according to Cartwright (2017). In the "three followings" or sancong system, women were obedient to their fathers, then their spouses, and if they were widows, to their sons. Ebrey (Ebrey 2019) says Confucianism helped establish this idea. Confucius presumably assumed these attitudes toward women since they were common in his society. He valued ancestral rites and familial traits like filial piety. He hoped rituals would help everyone perform their roles—male and female, rich and humble, old and young. Daughter, sister, wife, daughter-in-law, mother, and mother-in-law were women's principal roles. In each part, women were expected to fulfill the needs and requirements of close male relatives, such as their dads when they were young, their husbands when they were married, and their sons when they

were widows. Mencius, a Confucian follower, felt infertility was the worst unfilial crime. When having sons was emphasized in later periods, many people felt let down when they had a female. Men and women are yin and yang in Confucianism. Yin and yang recognizes the importance of women in society. Male (yang) with its associated attributes dominates and is discreetly deemed superior to female (ying): hard vs. soft, strong vs. submissive, level vs. curved, bright vs. dark, wealthy vs. impoverished, etc. (2017)

In the movie, a person's chi, or energy, is exposed. This is tied to Confucius' teachings, which were the Chinese people's most enormous belief at the time. This chi is gender-specific. Men have more chi. In the movie, Mulan has a strong chi. Mulan's mother says she's too open about her chi, risking a woman's honor. "Could you tell her that only a son could wield *chi*? That a daughter would risk shame, dishonor, exile?" (Mulan, 2020, 00:01:09-00:01:19)

Mulan must become a man to join the military. Her actions represent the assumption that it's socially and culturally wrong for a woman to go to war, which was certainly true during the movie's period. This impression is persistent throughout time and geography (Chinkin et al., 2020; Goldstein, 2003; Jansen, 2006), with women less inclined to participate in or support violent conflict.

The account of a lady who was discarded and exiled because she is a woman emphasizes actions against the social culture that women shouldn't be in this battle. She's a Hun sorceress. This gender inequality is revealed when she encounters Mulan after she has fought Bori Khan's son's warriors. Mulan was banished from the emperor's army after giving up her disguise as a man. The sorceress stated that

Mulan was like her because she was a lady. “I was a girl like you when people turned on me. You don't think I longed for a noble path? I've lived a life of exile. No country, no village, no family. We are the same.” (Mulan, 2020, 01:14:40-01:15:10)



*Image 4.3 A sorceress convinces Mulan that they're alike.
(Mulan, 2020)*

This is an essential contribution that better shows women's conflict engagement. Women who perform violent acts are divided from "normal" women who are calm, ethical, and restrained. Mulan, the movie's primary character, is a woman who shouldn't be in warfare or war. The emperor requested one male from each family in Mulan's village when it required more warriors. Mulan's family, the Huas, had no sons but Mulan's father, so he obeyed the emperor's commands and joined the war. Mulan felt sorry for her father, so she secretly enlisted in the military because he was too old to fight, and she had no brother to help with the war effort. This scene shows women's reluctance to join the military.

According to the movie's study, there are distinct differences between men's and women's roles in Chinese culture. Confucius believed a woman should be subservient and low-ranking. His viewpoint suggests this. During that time, women's life was difficult. (Ebrey, 2019) Mulan and her sister earned dignity via marriage and family humiliation (Hua Xiu). Despite having different

characteristics, Xiu and Mulan are brothers. Mulan acted like a guy while Xiu was a lady. He feared challenging their rules and conventions. Thus, the writer pointed to Chinese regulations or attitudes limiting women's choices.

3.2 Mulan's Discrimination

From the background of why Mulan as a woman doesn't get different treatment from a guy, the writer analyzes evidence of military discrimination in the film. In the scenario, Mulan has masked her true gender since joining the imperial army to replace her injured father. She suppressed her identity until Bori Khan's fall. Mulan feels confined and cannot act like a guy while hiding her identity. When imperial soldiers pledged loyalty, courage, and honesty, Mulan had to honor the oath. Mulan felt burdened by the commitment since she hid her identity, which was dishonest.

Mulan recalls how lying masked her identity. The oath of allegiance to imperial soldiers specifies that soldiers cannot have intercourse with women or bring ladies into battle, where the punishment is death. Dishonesty means banishment and family dishonor. Mulan felt guilty and apprehensive about joining the imperial warriors. According to the description, Mulan hides her identity since women in combat are unwelcome. This is due to Chinese tradition. Mulan revealed her identity after losing combat with Bori Khan. As explained above, this magical woman is treated similarly to Mulan, whose dream failed owing to society's negative opinion of women. The Imperial Army, led by Commander Tung, engaged Bori Khan's men, and Mulan's infantry troops chased Bori Khan away from the

battle. After failing to catch Bori Khan and losing several warriors, a sorceress enters, and they duel.

Mulan unravels her hair to free all of the male warrior traits she's wearing during her combat with the sorceress. Mulan felt free of her burdens and shackles afterward. Mulan aided cornered emperor soldiers fight Bori Khan's army. Mulan's wits killed Bori Khan's army. Mulan meets Commander Tung and the remaining imperial soldiers. Mulan's introduction to the imperial soldiers as Hua Mulan, not Hua Jun, shocked everyone. Commander Tung remarked, "You are an imposter. You've betrayed the regiment. You've brought disgrace to the Hua family. Your deceit is my shame. What is the punishment assigned to this imposter? Expulsion!" (Mulan, 2020, 01:12:48- 01:12:59)

Sergeant Qiang announces Mulan's penalty for fraudulence. "From this moment forward, you are expelled from the emperor's Imperial Army. If you show your face again, your wish to be executed will be granted." (Mulan, 2020, 01:13:15- 01:13:32). Mulan was banished from the army because she deceived Commander Tung and his soldiers.



*4.4.1 Mulan's femininity meets imperial soldiers
(Mulan, 2020)*

Mulan's dishonesty and gender made Commander Tung and the others feel duped twice. Traditional Chinese custom forbids women from fighting directly, a blow to Commander Tung, who believed in Mulan. Mulan's dishonesty cost her family humiliation and exile. This sort of expulsion is the outcome of violating one of the policy's three pillars, "honesty," and the punishment if not heeded. The writer assumes Mulan's dismissal is due to her dishonesty, not her gender. Mulan can't replace her father as a soldier if she doesn't hide her gender. Mulan acted compelled because her father could not join the imperial army due to his health, and her family had no other men. Mulan fears for her family's honor if she will not replace him.

3.3 Mulan's Discrimination Impact

After being exiled, Mulan felt guilty and destroyed her family's name until a sorceress asked to join her. As described above, this sorceress had the same experience as Mulan; she was ejected and exiled like Mulan. Mulan is invited to join him since she thinks she's like him. Mulan dismisses the sorceress's claim that she is the same because she is pursuing the wrong person.

Mulan rejects the sorceress' invitation and is convinced that Bori Khan and the sorcerers won't topple the empire. The characters' dialogue reveals this. Mulan overcame her shame by pledging her loyalty to the emperor and protecting him from harm.

In this scene, Mulan's refusal of the sorceress' invitation is an attitude where women have the same attitude as men, feeling that Mulan has a significant role to play in protecting the emperor from Bori Khan. Mulan feels she must get up and not drag on from sadness and surrender to fate as the sorceress did as a bullied

woman. This is in line with the ideas of women in the theory of power feminism, which proves that women have the same rights as men, women have the freedom to choose their future, and women's experiences are valuable, not human. (Wolf, 1994)

The attitude of Mulan shows her persistence since, despite being banished from the imperial army, she still wants to aid the emperor by telling Commander Tung that Bori Khan will attack him. By revealing Bori Khan's ambitions, Mulan illustrates that women have the right to speak out. Wolf (1994) says women have the same right as males, to tell the truth. Mulan's bravery and loyalty to the emperor made Commander Tung acknowledge her as a warring woman.

Loyalty and stubbornness make her fellow troops, and commander Tung accepts her as a female soldier and makes her fight Bori Khan. This scene shows Mulan receiving a male award. Wolf (1994) argues in his feminism theory of power that women have the same rights as men and should be respected. Mulan's loyalty and valor to the emperor win her the same status as male achievers in this film. Mulan leads male warriors. Mulan was made Emperor's guide after he saved her from Bori Khan's attack. Mulan declines because she wants to make amends for abandoning her family. The emperor let Mulan finish her family's business. As in the emperor's speech after Mulan saved him.

Mulan is seen as a lady who can act like a man and achieve more than men. Wolf (1994) said women demand respect from others, self-respect, education, safety, health, representation, and finances. After Mulan returned to her village, she visited with her family. Shortly after, the Emperor's emissary announced that Mulan

had saved the Emperor and was made an officer of the Empire's guard. At this moment, Mulan's family and village, who once looked down on her as a woman who acted like a man and had no right to, recognize her as a respectable lady. Mulan proves in this scene that women can do men's work and achieve success. In Mulan, culture impacts gender inequality. Mulan, the main character, is discriminated against due to her male-like demeanor. Mulan's need to replace her ill father forces her to hide her gender. Mulan is discharged from the royal army when her disguise reveals her femininity and dishonesty. With her perseverance, persistence, and dedication to the emperor to save her, Mulan overcomes the notion that respectable women stay at home. Mulan proved it by becoming the emperor's guard and gaining the respect and acceptance of her rural community.

4. CONCLUSION

It is possible to draw the conclusion that prejudice against women, most notably Mulan, is the result of traditional Chinese society, which is inspired by the concept held by Confucius that a woman should be subject to men and should fall under their authority. In the meantime, the depiction of gender discrimination in the military against Mulan as a woman results in the expulsion of Mulan as a woman who is directly involved in the fight. This is shown in the film. With her obstinacy and loyalty to the emperor, Mulan did not dissolve in her sadness and tried again to save the emperor. Mulan then succeeded in doing this and got an honorary award for her as the emperor's guard. In the meantime, to answer the third question regarding the impact on Mulan after receiving the discrimination, Mulan did not dissolve in her sadness and tried again to save the emperor.

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