Parahyangan Catholic University

Faculty of Social and Political Sciences

Department of International Relations

Accredited A

SK BAN –PT NO: 3095/SK/BAN-PT/Akred/S/VIII/2019

Escape the Corset Movement as a Response to Oppressive Beauty Standards

Undergraduate Thesis

By

Hazel Nadeline Darmawan

2017330104

Bandung

2021

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Name   : Hazel Nadeline Darmawan
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        Standards

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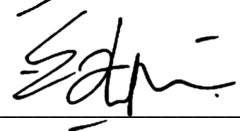And thereby declared **GRADUATED**

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Title   : Escape the Corset Movement as a Response to Oppressive Beauty Standards

Hereby assert that this thesis is the result of my own work, and it has not been previously proposed by any other party to attain academic degree. Any idea, information, or opinion from other parties are officially cited and written in accordance to the valid scientific writing method.

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Bandung, June 25, 2021

Hazel Nadeline Darmawan

ABSTRACT

Name   : Hazel Nadeline Darmawan

Student ID   : 2017330104

Title   : Escape the Corset Movement as a Response to Oppressive Beauty
Standards

Beauty standards have existed for a long time in many parts of the world. Unfortunately, they bring harm into the lives of women. Amidst the booming K-Beauty and conservative Korean society, some South Korean women rebelled against oppressive beauty standards through the Escape the Corset movement. Thus, this research focuses on Escape the Corset movement, a social movement in South Korea that encouraged women to take off their "corsets" and stop doing beauty practices. This research attempts to describe how the development of Escape the Corset as a social movement is affected by oppressive beauty standards. To answer the research question, the author used the concept of oppression, the concept of social movement, the concept of beauty standards, radical feminism perspective, and the concept of the stages of social movement. Through this research, it was found that oppressive beauty standards triggered the development of Escape the Corset movement by causing collective discontent during the emergence phase, which is the first phase of development of a social movement. However, discontent alone is not enough to sustain a social movement, because bureaucratization in the form of establishing a social movement organization is needed to ensure a movement has a long-term goal and can still perform its day-to-day function when there are no highly enthusiastic volunteers.

Keyword: social movement, radical feminism, beauty standards, oppression

ABSTRAK

Nama : Hazel Nadeline Darmawan
NPM : 2017330104
Judul : Gerakan "Escape the Corset" sebagai Respons terhadap Standar Kecantikan yang Opresif

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Standar kecantikan telah ada di berbagai belahan dunia untuk waktu yang lama. Akan tetapi, keberadaan standar ini merugikan perempuan. Di tengah masyarakat Korea yang konservatif dan industri kecantikan yang berkembang pesat, sekelompok perempuan Korea Selatan berusaha mengubah kenyataan itu dengan menggagas Gerakan "Escape the Corset" yang menjadi fokus dari penelitian ini. Penelitian ini bertujuan mendeskripsikan bagaimana perkembangan Gerakan "Escape the Corset" dipengaruhi oleh standar kecantikan yang opresif. Untuk menjawab pertanyaan penelitian, penulis menggunakan konsep opresi, konsep gerakan sosial, konsep standar kecantikan, perspektif feminisme radikal, dan konsep perkembangan gerakan sosial. Melalui penelitian ini, ditemukan bahwa standar kecantikan yang opresif memicu perkembangan Gerakan "Escape the Corset" dengan menyebabkan ketidakpuasan kolektif pada fase "emergence", yaitu fase pertama dari perkembangan gerakan sosial. Akan tetapi, ketidakpuasan semata tidak dapat menopang keberlanjutan dari sebuah gerakan sosial. Tahap birokratisasi dalam bentuk mendirikan sebuah organisasi gerakan sosial juga penting untuk memastikan bahwa sebuah gerakan sosial memiliki tujuan jangka panjang dan mampu menjalankan fungsi sehari-harinya ketika tidak ada sukarelawan yang dapat diandalkan secara penuh-waktu.

Kata kunci: Gerakan sosial, feminisme radikal, standar kecantikan, penindasan

PREFACE

First and foremost, the author would like to thank the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit for the blessings and the love that the author can complete this undergraduate thesis with the title of "Escape the Corset as a Response to Oppressive Beauty Standards." This undergraduate thesis was made to fulfill the author's final requirements in obtaining a Bachelor's Degree in the International Relations major in the Faculty of Social and Politics, Parahyangan Catholic University, Bandung.

This undergraduate thesis aims to explore how oppressive beauty standards lead to the development of the Escape the Corset movement in South Korea. The author hopes that this thesis would spark curiosity in readers' minds and become a gateway for future researchers to delve into feminism, beauty standards, and their implications on women's lives. However, the author realizes that this thesis is still far from perfect. Thus, the author welcomes any constructive criticism or insights in the name of knowledge.

Bandung, July 23, 2021

Hazel Nadeline Darmawan

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Background

Discourse about the definition of beauty and human beauty has taken place since Aristotle's era.[1] One of them implies that beauty is a socially constructed notion. At any given time and place, society usually has uniform models about how particular groups of individuals should look. This suggests the existence of the beauty standard. Beauty standard can be defined as "culturally prescribed and endorsed 'looks' that incorporate various features of the human face and body, and thus define the standards for physical attractiveness within a culture."[2] There are dominant ideals that are considered physically attractive by the majority ethnic group in a society, such as ideal height, weight, and skin color. [3]

In other words, beauty standard varies across societies and across groups in a society. [4] For example, people who wear heavy eye makeup with kohl are considered attractive in Ancient Egypt, while elite Romans who lived in the last part of the first century got their hair curled and made into an updo to be considered

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[1] Bishara Atiyeh and Shady N. Hayek, "Numeric Expression of Aesthetics and Beauty," *Aesthetic Plastic Surgery* 32, no. 2 (Apr 2008): 210, DOI: 10.1007/s00266-007-9074-x.
[2] Rachel M. Calogero, Michael Boroughs, and J. Kevin Thompson, "The Impact of Western Beauty Ideals on the Lives of Women: A Sociocultural Perspective," in *The Body Beautiful: Evolutionary and Sociocultural Perspectives*, ed. Viren Swarni and Adrian Furnham (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 261.
[3] Shyon Baumann, "The Moral Underpinnings of Beauty: A Meaning-Based Explanation for Light and Dark Complexions in Advertising," *Poetics* 36, no. 1 (2008): 4.
[4] Baumann, "The Moral Underpinnings of Beauty," 4.

beautiful.[5] Later on, the ideal women in the Western Hemisphere from the 15th century until the 18th century had plump, full figures. This can be seen in popular art from the era, such as in Sandro Botticelli's painting titled *The Birth of Venus* (Fig. 1). Venus, the goddess of beauty, was pictured as having an endomorphic pear-shaped body with a round face in the painting.[6]

Figure 1.1 The Birth of Venus by Sandro Botticelli (1484) in the Uffizi Gallery in Florence, Italy. Source: Uffizi Gallery[7]

In the 19th century, people began to see thin bodies as more preferable. It was during this era that beauty started to become standardized on a mass scale. The use of corset, a restrictive article of clothing that is worn to shape the female body, became widespread in the 19th century after being mandatory for aristocratic women in the 16th century. Corsets prop up, push out, and hold in particular parts of women's bodies, resulting in the impression of an idealized voluptuous body that was not attainable without restricting garments. Corseting was not without medical

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[5] Monica Serrano, "Jejak Kecantikan," *National Geographic Indonesia*, February 2020, 82.

[6] Calogero, Boroughs, and Thompson, "The Impact of Western Beauty Ideals," 261.

[7] Sandro Botticelli, "Birth of Venus," Le Gallerie Degli Uffizi, accessed on May 4, 2020, https://www.uffizi.it/en/artworks/birth-of-venus.

dangers, but women were still expected to alter their bodies to follow the unnatural beauty standards.[8]

The rise of the mass media in the 20th century further strengthened the grip of beauty standards and homogenized Western beauty ideals. Films and television were two of the new forms of mass communication introduced in the twentieth century.[9] They provided a medium for beauty standards to flourish, which is through visual representation. Thin women were represented more in the media and research found that the idealization of slimness originated in the 1920s. As an example, thinner bodies with well-developed breasts and long legs began to be on-trend in Hollywood.[10] Successful marketing of the fashion industry also contributed to the idealization of slimness. In industrialized wealthy societies, having a thin body became the standard of cultural beauty.[11]

In the 21st century, the globalization of the United States and its pop culture made beauty standards from the West reach various corners of the world. Beauty is increasingly commercialized in advertising, television shows, and movies. In Fiji, people perceived "fat" bodies as beautiful bodies before American TV shows were aired there. However, Fijian women began dieting and shopping to follow the American beauty standard that they saw on the TV.[12] These media products push

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[8] Calogero, Boroughs, and Thompson, "The Impact of Western Beauty Ideals," 261.
[9] Quint Randle, "A Historical Overview of the Effects of New Mass Media Introductions on Magazine Publishing During the 20th Century," *First Monday* 6, no. 9 (September 2001), https://firstmonday.org/article/view/885/794.
[10] Calogero, Boroughs, and Thompson, "The Impact of Western Beauty Ideals," 261-266.
[11] Paula Marques Hayasaki, "Effects of Media Exposure to Beauty Ideals on Body Image Concerns Among Adolescent Girls from Brazilian Origins Living in Spain," (Master's thesis, Universitat Pompeu Fabra, 2016), 6-7.
[12] Tanner Mirrlees, *Global Entertainment Media: Between Cultural Imperialism and Cultural Globalization* (New York: Routledge, 2013), 225-226.

forward the Western ideal version of beauty — white skin, blonde hair, young, slim, and upper class — as if there is only one acceptable standard of beauty.[13] Thus, women and girls are pressured to follow suit and leave their cultural and individual differences behind.[14]

In South Korea, the beauty standard once involved bodies with average weight.[15] Now, South Korean women undergo obsessive dieting and eyelid surgeries to pertain to the Korean beauty standard which features double eyelids and thin bodies.[16] Women are expected to follow a set of skincare regimens and apply makeup religiously under the beauty standard. This includes waking up hours before they are set to work to put on makeup and carry out ten or more steps of skincare after they got home.[17]

Beauty standard becomes more pervasive as the images that the media put up implies that women and girls' value generally rely on their physical appearance. It is also found that beauty is a source of power for women, both in relationships and in the professional setting. For instance, women who are considered conventionally attractive are more likely to be more popular and get hired. The multi-billion-dollar

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[13] Kate Conrad, Travis Dixon, and Yuanyuan Zhang, "Controversial Rap Themes, Gender Portrayals and Skin Tone Distortion: A Content Analysis of Rap Music Videos," *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media* 53, no. 1 (March 2009): 136, DOI: 10.1080/08838150802643795.

[14] Ashley Mckay, Shannon Moore, and Wendee Kubik, "Western Beauty Pressures and Their Impact on Young University Women," *International Journal of Gender and Women's Studies* 6, no. 2 (Dec 2018): 1-11, DOI: 10.15640/ijgws.v6n2p1.

[15] Mirrlees, *Global Entertainment Media*, 226.

[16] Rachael Rainwater-McClure, Weslynn Reed, and Erik Mark Kramer, "A World of Cookie-Cutter Faces," in *The Emerging Monoculture: Assimilation and the "Model Minority"*, ed. Erik Mark Kramer (Connecticut: Praeger, 2003), 227-228.

[17] Benjamin Haas, "'Escape the Corset': South Korean Women Rebel Against Strict Beauty Standards," *The Guardian*, Oct 26, 2018, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/oct/26/escape-the-corset-south-korean-women-rebel-against-strict-beauty-standards.

beauty industry uses the power of advertising in the media to make women believe that they can achieve Western beauty ideals by buying their way into it, namely by buying cosmetics, having cosmetic procedures, and dieting. The beauty industry benefits from women's insecurities and actively furthers unrealistic beauty standards to increase sales of beauty products.[18]

Existing beauty standards bring about various effects on the lives of women and girls of all ages everywhere. One of the examples is the Korean beauty standard that has been mentioned above, which expects women to grow out their hair, wear makeup, and stay thin. In a socially conservative country which does not fare well in terms of gender equality, Korean beauty standards show just one aspect on how unequal women and men are treated. In response to the standards, there is a growing social movement called "Escape the Corset" where women post videos of destroyed cosmetics on their social media.[19] Thus, this research takes a closer look to understand the implication of beauty standards on the development of "Escape the Corset" social movement.

1.2 Identification of the Problem
1.2.1 Identification of the Problem

Beauty standards have existed for a long time. Apparently, they have negative impacts on women's lives, and thus is not separate from the problem of gender inequality. From the 1970s, women have gotten legal and reproductive rights,

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[18] McKay, Moore, and Kubik, "Western Beauty Pressures and Their Impact on Young University Women," 1.
[19] Haas, "'Escape the Corset': South Korean Women Rebel Against Strict Beauty Standards."

finished higher education, become professionals in various fields, and changed traditional beliefs about their social role. However, beauty standards still restricted women's freedoms. It even seemed that the more women achieved legal and material freedoms, the stricter the beauty standards get. Feminist scholar Naomi Wolf even argued that beauty standards are used as a political weapon against feminism.[20]

Beauty standards are also found to oppress women. Oppression can be defined as a social injustice where a group of individuals is systematically and unjustly restrained or burdened. The social injustice is carried out by social groups through social institutions, practices, and norms.[21] In this case, one of the reasons beauty standards are seen as oppressive is because their existence causes women to be valued based on their superficial appearance instead of their competencies. Beauty standards also reduce women's emotional and economic resources by expecting them to do what it takes to conform to beauty standards, including spending money on makeup and surgeries.[22]

Women around the world are expected to cater to homogenous beauty standards, such as having a thin body, straight hair, and having white skin, although women have different body types and physical characteristics. As a result, women have grown to dislike their bodies. Studies conducted across 10 countries show that

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[20] Naomi Wolf, *The Beauty Myth: How Images of Beauty Are Used Against Women* (New York: HarperCollins, 1991), 9-10.
[21] Ann E. Cudd, "How to Explain Oppression: Criteria of Adequacy for Normative Explanatory Theories," *Philosophy of the Social Sciences* 35, no. 1 (March 2005): 21-22, DOI: 10.1177/0048393104271923.
[22] Gordon B. Forbes et al, "Sexism, Hostility toward Women, and Endorsement of Beauty Ideals and Practices: Are Beauty Ideals Associated with Oppressive Beliefs?" *Sex Roles* 56, no. 1 (2007): 265-266, DOI 10.1007/s11199-006-9161-5.

as much as 90% of women aged 15 to 64 want to alter at least a part of their physique. Not only that, but the survey also revealed that 67% of all women aged 15 to 64 have withdrawn from engaging and life-sustaining activities ranging from going to the doctor to dating because they feel insecure about their appearance.[23]

South Korea is one of the countries where beauty is highly regarded and also one of OECD countries that lags behind in terms of gender equality.[24] In the Global Gender Gap Report by World Economic Forum, South Korea is on rank #102 out of 156 countries, far behind Germany (#11), Mexico (#34), and Chile (#70).[25] As discrimination based on physical appearance increased, South Korean women have increasingly resorted to plastic surgeries to obtain features that are considered beautiful such as pointier noses, double eyelids, and larger eyes. External appearance is deemed as an essential factor in achieving success.[26] To put it into numbers, Korea has 2,150 plastic surgeons and performed 311,571 plastic surgeries on the face, which are both the highest in the world per capita. The cosmetic procedure industry in Korea is so pervasive that even newborns can get a massage service that claims to shape pointier noses and smaller faces.[27]

In response to oppressive standards imposed upon women, women from time to time have created social movements to resist those standards and provide an

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[23] Calogero, Boroughs, and Thompson, "The Impact of Western Beauty Ideals," 259.

[24] Xi Lin and Robert Rudolf, "Does K-pop Reinforce Gender Inequalities? Empirical Evidence from a New Data Set," *Asian Women* 33, no. 4 (Dec 2017): 28, https://doi.org/10.14431/aw.2017.12.33.4.27.

[25] "Global Gender Gap Report 2021," World Economic Forum, 10, http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GGGR_2021.pdf.

[26] Rachel H. Park, Paige L. Myers, and Howard N. Langstein, "Beliefs and Trends of Aesthetic Surgery in South Korean Young Adults," *Archives of Plastic Surgery* 46, no. 6 (Nov 2019): 612, https://doi.org/10.5999/aps.2018.01172.

[27] Kyungja Hong, "Life in a Lookist Society: Beauty and Self-Care in South Korea," Ipsos Flair Collection: South Korea 2020, 7.

alternate viewpoint. In the mid-nineteenth century, American women were expected to wear restricting undergarments to minimize their waist and alter their silhouettes. Not only that, women were also expected to wear long dresses all the time even as the dresses were proven to be impractical.[28]

Tired of the restrictions caused by corsets and long, tiered skirts, Elizabeth Smith Miller — daughter of wealthy abolitionists — then shortened her skirt and wore Turkish trousers underneath the skirt.[29] Miller then met Amelia Bloomer, editor of a women's rights periodical *The Lily*. Amelia Bloomer wrote about the new costume or "freedom dress" in *The Lily* and wore it publicly along with Miller and Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Miller's cousin. [30] It became a public reform, a social movement, and a public debate in the mid-nineteenth century. The press and the general public ridiculed the idea of women wearing trousers, upset of the idea that women could lose their femininity. This movement came to be known as the Dress Reform Movement, and the outfit came to be known as a "bloomer".[31]

These past few years, social movements such as fat acceptance and body positivity have become more popular. The rise of social media has helped these social movements to spread and challenge the ideal beauty standard ingrained in

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[28] Kimberly Chrisman-Campbell, "When American Suffragists Tried to 'Wear the Pants'", *The Atlantic*, June 12, 2019, https://www.theatlantic.com/entertainment/archive/2019/06/american-suffragists-bloomers-pants-history/591484/.

[29] Elizabeth Smith Miller, "Reflections on Woman's Dress, and the Record of a Personal Experience," *Arena* (September 1892): 493.

[30] Ana Stevenson, "'Bloomers' and the British World: Dress Reform in Transatlantic and Antipodean Print Culture," *Cultural and Social History,* no. 1 (2017):1-3, https://doi.org/10.1080/14780038.2017.1375706.

[31] Gayle V. Fischer, *Pantaloons & Power: A Nineteenth-Century Dress Reform in the United States* (Kent: The Kent State University Press, 2001), 79-85.

society.[32] Instead of constantly promoting beauty standards which include thin, white, flawless bodies, the body positivity movement centered attention around accepting one's body regardless of weight, stretch marks, cellulites, and other features which would otherwise be deemed as unwanted by the general public.[33] In Indonesia, there are communities such as Kelompok Gemuk Menawan Semarang and Komunitas Xtra Large in Jakarta that provides safe space for fat people to share about their experiences and uplift each other's confidence.[34] However, the body positivity movement is different from Escape the Corset movement, because body positivity encourages the acceptance of all bodies, especially fat bodies, while the Escape the Corset movement focuses on resisting feminized appearance.[35]

Meanwhile, in South Korea, there is a social movement called Escape the Corset. This movement started sporadically in 2015 with women trying to define whether the beauty practices they do daily constitute a metaphorical corset or not.[36] In a country that is known for its beauty products, Escape the Corset movement encouraged women to trash their makeup and wear gender-neutral clothes. Bae Eun-jeong is one of the women who joined the movement. She is a Youtuber who used to post makeup tutorials on Youtube under the name Lina Bae. She would

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[32] Adwoa A. Afful and Rose Ricciardelli, "Shaping the Online Fat Acceptance Movement: Talking about Body Image and Beauty Standards," *Journal of Gender Studies*, no. 1 (Apr 2015): 1-2, DOI: 10.1080/09589236.2015.1028523.

[33] Rachel Cohen, Toby Newton-John, and Amy Slater, "The Case for Body Positivity on Social Media: Perspectives on Current Advances and Future Directions," *Journal of Health Psychology*, no. 1 (2020): 2, https://doi.org/10.1177/1359105320912450.

[34] Genta Maghvira, "Implementasi Konsep Diri pada Kelompok Gemes (Gemuk Menawan Semarang)", *Jurnal Ilmiah Komunikasi Makna* 6, no. 2 (Aug 2015 – Jan 2016), 142-143.

[35] Hyejung Park, "Throwing off the Corset: A Contemporary History of the Beauty Resistance Movement in South Korea," *Dignity: A Journal on Sexual Exploitation and Violence* 5, no. 3 (December 2020): 9, DOI: 10.23860/dignity.2020.05.03.01.

[36] Park, "Throwing off the Corset," 6.

spend two hours before school to do her skincare and makeup, and she would feel unconfident with her bare face. When she saw young girls in her Youtube comment section mentioned about being ashamed of their bare face, Bae decided to post a video titled "I Am Not Pretty." In the video, she put on and erased her makeup while featuring hateful comments she received previously. In the end, she said that "it's okay to be not pretty" and that she wanted her followers to know that they do not need to change themselves for other people.[37]

Other women who joined this movement posted pictures of destroyed makeup in their social media as a symbol of their liberation from beauty standards.[38] Until March 3rd, 2020, more than 17.000 posts are featuring the hashtag '*talcorset*' – the Korean phrase for Escape the Corset – on Instagram. Women cut their hair and wore baggy clothes and pants as a protest on Korean beauty standards, where teachers have been known to pressure students to use makeup.[39]

This movement is part of the larger feminist awakening in South Korea, a developed country with the largest gender pay gap according to the Organization of Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).[40] The country has seen several protests regarding sexual assault and proliferating spy cameras in public toilets, and Escape the Corset movement is a part of it.[41] Women have called for looser rules

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[37] Sophie Jeong, "Escape the Corset: How South Koreans Are Pushing Back Against Beauty Standards," *CNN*, Jan 12, 2019, https://edition.cnn.com/style/article/south-korea-escape-the-corset-intl/index.html.

[38] Anthony Kuhn, "South Korean Women 'Escape the Corset' And Reject Their Country's Beauty Ideals," *NPR*, May 6, 2019, https://www.npr.org/2019/05/06/703749983/south-korean-women-escape-the-corset-and-reject-their-countrys-beauty-ideals.

[39] Hong, "Life in a Lookist Society," 10.

[40] Jung Yoon Kim, "South Korean Women Begin to Resist Intense Beauty Pressure," *Associated Press*, Feb 6, 2019, https://apnews.com/3ee3040d1f1245f88b524f0afa641cc2.

[41] E. Tammy Kim, "How Symbol of South Korea's Me Too Era Gave Voice to Women Silenced by Sexist Culture," *South China Morning Post Magazine*, Apr 11, 2019,

on their appearance in the airlines and broadcasting industry, where women are expected to wear contact lenses instead of glasses.[42] With the conservative South Korean society and the blossoming K-beauty industry in the background, this research aims to describe how oppressive beauty standard affects the development of Escape the Corset social movement.

1.2.2 Research Focus

This research focuses on the Escape the Corset social movement in South Korea because the movement shows how South Korean women resist oppressive beauty standards in their own way. The timeframe of this research spans from 2015–2018 because the development of the movement occurred during these three years. Furthermore, this research focuses solely on women.

1.2.3 Research Question

Based on the problems explained above, the research question of this thesis is "How is the development of Escape the Corset movement affected by oppressive beauty standards?".

1.3   Research Objectives and Purposes

1.3.1 Objective of the Research

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https://www.scmp.com/magazines/post-magazine/long-reads/article/3005556/how-book-became-symbol-south-koreas-metoo-era.

[42] Shim Sun-ah, "You Don't Have to Be Pretty: 'Corset-Free' Movement Spreads on Social Media," *Yonhap News Agency*, Jun 21, 2018, https://en.yna.co.kr/view/AEN20180620003700315.

The objective of the research is to describe how the development of Escape the Corset as a social movement is affected by oppressive beauty standards.

1.3.2 Purpose of the Research

This research can be a reference for further scholars who wish to write about social movement and oppressive beauty standards. The author also hopes that the research can be beneficial as an information source for readers who are interested in women's movement in South Korea.

1.4 Literature Review

There are numerous works of literature discussing social movements from the 1960s onwards. Notable social movements scholars include Ralph Turner and Lewis Killian with the 'Collective Behavior' perspective, Charles Tilly with the 'Political Process' perspective, and Mayer Zald and John McCarthy with their 'Resource Mobilization' theory.[43] In conducting this research, the author reviews three journal articles to determine the most suitable social movement concept to be used in the theoretical framework.

The first journal article that is reviewed is "Resource Mobilization and Social Movements: A Partial Theory" by Mayer N. Zald and John D. McCarthy. Zald and McCarthy defined social movements as 'a set of opinions and beliefs which represents preferences for changing some elements of the social structure and/or

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[43] Mario Diani, "The Concept of Social Movement," *The Sociological Review* 40, no. 1 (1992): 3, DOI: 10.1111/j.1467-954x.1992.tb02943.x.

reward distribution of a society'. True to its name, the Resource Mobilization Theory (RMT) focused on the financial aspect of social movements, paying close attention to the incentives, cost-reducing mechanisms, and career benefits that affect collective behavior. Zald and McCarthy deemed resources as important to understand social movement activity, and thus resources shall be aggregated to be used collectively. This resource aggregation needs a minimal level of organization, resulting in an implicit emphasis on the need of a social movement organization.[44]

The second journal article is "The Concept of Social Movement" by Mario Diani. Diani's writing is an attempt to synthesize various viewpoints. Upon encountering other perspectives, Diani concluded that there are three characteristics of social movement. The first characteristic is there is a presence of networks of informal interaction between individuals, groups, and/or organizations. The second characteristic is movement supporters have shared beliefs and solidarity. The third characteristic is the presence of collective action on conflictual issues, and so they are generally engaged in political or cultural conflicts. Social movements exist because there are actors who either support or oppose particular social change, whether at the systemic or non-systemic level. Hence, Diani's concept of social movement views a social movement as "a network of informal interactions between a plurality of individuals, groups and/or organizations, engaged in a political or cultural conflict, on the basis of a shared collective identity."[45]

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[44] John McCarthy and Mayer N. Zald, "Resource Mobilizatioin and Social Movements: A Partial Theory," *American Journal of Sociology* 82, no. 6 (May 1977): 1216-1218, http://www.jstor.org/stable/2777934.
[45] Diani, "The Concept of Social Movement," 7-13.

Lastly, the third journal article is "The Symbolic Challenge of Contemporary Movements" by Alberto Melucci. Melucci defined a social movement as a form of collective action which is based on solidarity, carries a conflict, and breaks the boundaries of the system where the action occurs. According to Melucci, social movements are action systems because they have structures, where the movement would not be able to continue existing if not for the integration and interdependence of individuals and groups. The structures themselves are the result of beliefs, goals, decisions, and interactions in a systemic field. In other words, social movement as a collective action cannot be explained without considering supporting elements such as the mobilization of resources, the management of organizational structures, and the leadership functions of the movement.[46]

From the works of literature stated above, it can be seen that different scholars have different emphasis and point of views regarding social movements. McCarthy and Zald sought to explain social movements from examining the process of resource mobilization, while Melucci focused more on viewing social movement as a system of analytical elements. Diani, on the other hand, sought to synthesize the ideas of other scholars and formulate characteristics of social movements in general. The author chose to use Diani's concept of social movement in the theoretical framework because it encompasses the other scholars' works and explains social movements comprehensively. In doing so, Diani simplifies complex terms while retaining essential knowledge of the concepts of social movements. His

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[46] Alberto Melucci, "The Symbolic Challenge of Contemporary Movements," *Social Research* 52, no. 4 (Winter 1985): 792-795, http://www.jstor.org/stable/40970398.

concept is also applicable to social movements in real life, thus making the concept practical and useful.

1.5   Theoretical Framework

A theoretical framework is a structure that contains concepts and existing theories that are correlated to the topic of the research paper.[47] In order to describe how Escape the Corset movement emerged due to oppressive beauty standards, the author uses radical feminism perspective, the concept of social movement, the stages of social movement, and the concept of oppression. The author also defines the concept of beauty standard in this part.

In International Relations, feminism emerged in the late 1980s.[48] The fall of the Soviet Union and the reevaluation of neorealism gave way to the gendering of International Relations.[49] Hence, feminist scholarship entered the vigorous intellectual climate of IR in the post-Cold War Period. One of the prominent works during the early days was Cynthia Enloe's *Bananas, Beaches and Bases*.[50]

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[47] "Organizing Your Social Sciences Research Paper: Theoretical Framework," USC Libraries Research Guides, last modified Feb 26, 2020, https://libguides.usc.edu/writingguide/theoreticalframework.

[48] E. A. Egboh and Ernest Toochi Aniche, "Feminization of International Relations and Internationalization of Feminism: Deconstructing Mainstream International Relations," in *Great Issues in Domestic and International Politics: Themes and Analyses*, eds. A. Okpaga, V.O.S. Okeke, and B. O. G. Nwanolue (Nimo: Rex Charles & Patrick Publications, 2011), DOI: 10.13140/RG.2.1.3600.5283.

[49] Eric M. Blanchard, "Gender, International Relations, and the Development of Feminist Security Theory," *Signs* 28, no. 4 (Summer 2003): 1291-1292, http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/368328.

[50] Marysia Zalewski, "Feminist Approaches to International Relations Theory in The Post- Cold War Period," in *The Age of Perplexity: Rethinking the World We Knew*, ed. Francisco Gonzalez (Madrid: BBVA OpenMind, 2018), 150, https://www.bbvaopenmind.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/BBVA-OpenMind-The-age-of-perplexity-rethinking-the-world-we-knew.pdf.

Feminism's core assumption is that women are structurally and materially disadvantaged compared to men. Feminism also explains how we tend to mask and enforce a gender hierarchy in international relations, where masculinity is viewed as superior to femininity. [51] Feminists analyzed the social and cultural roles of the body regarding gender, power, and patriarchy. Even though feminist theorists have differing opinions at times, they agree that "beauty standards and practices are seen as vehicles for the oppression of women." [52] Feminism also assumes that the emphasis on women's bodies and the beauty standards that they have to follow mirror and repeat power relations between women and men. [53]

Feminism is then divided into a number of strands, and one of them is radical feminism. Radical feminism has a view that "the personal is political". This breaking down of the distinction between the public and private sphere is seen as a necessity for radical feminists because they believe that "privacy" allows men to exercise dominance behind closed doors. From there, men expect women to expend their energies on emotional, housework, sexual, and reproductive tasks. By recognizing that the personal is political, women began to realize that issues they encounter in the private sphere such as despising their fat bodies or pretending to have a headache when they wanted to avoid sexual intercourse to prevent their male partner from getting angry were also the product of patriarchy, of a society with unequal power relations. When women are the only sex perpetually expected to

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[51] Robert Jackson and Georg Sorensen, *Introduction to International Relations: Theories and Approaches* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 232.
[52] Forbes et al, "Sexism, Hostility toward Women, and Endorsement of Beauty Ideals and Practices," 266.
[53] Tammy Shefer, "Feminist Theories of the Role of the Body Within Women's Oppression," *Critical Arts* 5, no. 2 (1990): 39.

adhere to beauty standards, it shows how women are objectified, seen primarily as beautiful objects. Thus, the practice of beauty and the way women felt about their bodies and themselves are also affected by male dominance. [54]

In the 1970s, radical feminists' critique on beauty practices and beauty standards were on the rise. Andrea Dworkin in her book "Women Hating" (1974) argued that beauty as it is constructed is one of the ways that women are hated in a male supremacist society. For thousands of years, across cultures, not one part of women's bodies is left unaltered. Beauty practices continuously harm women's bodies, their lives, and their self-esteem. Beauty standards dictate the relationship that a woman should have with her body, and even defined the extent of a woman's physical freedom.[55]

Radical feminism is then categorized into two groups, radical-libertarian feminists and radical-cultural feminists, as an attempt to reflect the differences between feminist thoughts. According to radical-libertarian feminists, "an exclusively feminine gender identity is likely to limit women's development as full human persons." The state when men are only allowed to show masculine characteristics and women only allowed to show feminine characteristics is harmful. Therefore, radical-libertarian feminists encourage women to embrace both their masculine and feminine side and become androgynous.[56] Joreen Freeman, one of the first radical-libertarian feminists, emphasized that women should be able to live

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[54] Sheila Jeffreys, *Beauty and Misogyny: Harmful Cultural Practices in the West* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 7-11.
[55] Andrea Dworkin, *Women Hating* (New York: Penguin Books, 1974), 110-114.
[56] Rosemarie Tong, *Feminist Thought: A More Comprehensive Introduction* (Charlotte: Westview Press, 2014), 2, 50-52.

her own life. She wrote this in her Bitch Manifesto, where she reclaimed the term "bitch" and defined it as a woman who goes against social construct of what is deemed as proper behavior of woman.[57]

On the other hand, radical-cultural feminists argue that femininity is not a problem of itself, but it becomes a problem because it has been constructed by men to serve the patriarchy. Women must be gentle, modest, humble, unselfish, and the list continues while enduring the low value that patriarchy assigns to feminine qualities. In order to become liberated, radical-cultural feminists encourage women to reject the femininity that has been imposed on them.[58] Both strands of radical feminism are utilized in this research.

Next, the concept that is used in this proposal is oppression. Oppression itself has four conditions: group condition, harm condition, privilege condition, and coercion condition. As for the group condition, oppression can be defined as a social injustice which is carried out by social groups through social institutions, practices, and norms upon other social groups.[59]

Another condition that must be present for a phenomenon to be categorized as oppression is the existence of harm or harm condition, where a group of individuals is systematically and unjustly restrained or burdened by psychological or material forces. Next, oppression usually gives rise to correlative social groups that get advantages, hence the privilege condition. Last but not least, the coercion

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[57] Joreen Freeman, "The Bitch Manifesto," *Notes from the Second Year: Women's Liberation*, January 1, 1970, 6.
[58] Tong, *Feminist Thought*, 3.
[59] Cudd, "How to Explain Oppression," 21-22.

condition means there is injustice that comes from coercively forced inequality or diminished choice. In other words, oppression has to be unjust.[60]

Aside from radical feminism perspective and the concept of oppression, the social movement concept is also used in this research. Similar to every social phenomenon, a single unified definition of social movement does not exist, and it has several definitions. According to Ralph Turner and Lewis Killian, social movement is "a collectivity acting with some continuity to promote or resist a change in the society or organization of which it is part." This group of individuals has an indefinite and shifting membership. Its leadership is affected more by informal response of members than by formal procedures of acquiring authority. Meanwhile, according to Mayer Zald and John McCarthy, social movement is a "set of opinions and beliefs which represents preferences for changing some elements of the social structure and/or reward distribution of a society." [61]

From the various definitions and explanations of social movement, Mario Diani identified that there are four characteristics of social movement which are emphasized. The first one is the presence of networks of informal interaction. This characteristic means that interactions happen between an array of actors, including individuals, groups, organizations, and also between constituents, adherents, and bystander publics. It also means that in social movements, the informality of the ties which link actors together is recognized.[62]

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[60] Cudd, "How to Explain Oppression," 22-24.

[61] Mario Diani, "The Concept of Social Movement," *The Sociological Review* 40, no. 1 (1992): 4, DOI: 10.1111/j.1467-954x.1992.tb02943.x.

[62] Diani, "The Concept of Social Movement," 7-8.

The second characteristic is the existence of shared beliefs and solidarity. In other words, actors in a social movement are determined by the specific collective identity they share. As Diani said it:

> Collective identity is both a matter of self- and external definition. Actors must define themselves as part of a broader movement and, at the same time, be perceived as such, by those within the same movement, and by opponents and/or external observers. In this sense, collective identity plays an essential role in defining the boundaries of a social movement. Only those actors, sharing the same beliefs and sense of belongingness, can be considered to be part of a social movement.

Thus, Diani defines the second characteristic of social movement as sharing a specific collective identity, which determines the boundaries of a social movement.[63]

The third characteristic of social movement is the presence of collective action on conflictual issues, and so they are generally engaged in political or cultural conflicts. Social movements exist because there are actors who either support or oppose particular social change, whether at the systemic or non-systemic level. Consequently, they are bound to be involved in political and/or cultural conflicts with other actors, such as institutions and countermovements. Conflicts in the cultural sphere involves challenging not only the uneven distribution of power and wealth, but also socially shared meanings.[64]

There exists a fourth characteristic of social movement among social movement scholars, which is the non-institutional nature of social movements. However, Diani thought that the relationship between social movements and non-

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[63] Diani, "The Concept of Social Movement," 8-9.
[64] Diani, "The Concept of Social Movement," 9-11.

institutional nature was not conclusive enough. Thus, he proceeded to define social movement only as "a network of informal interactions between a plurality of individuals, groups and/or organizations, engaged in a political or cultural conflict, on the basis of a shared collective identity."[65]

Other than the characteristics of social movement, this research also employs the concept of the stages of social movements to better elaborate how oppressive beauty standards lead to the development of Escape the Corset movement. One of the first scholars who categorized social movement processes into four stages was Herbert Blumer, who divided the process into "social ferment," "popular excitement," "formalization," and "institutionalization." While stages of social movement have been renamed and improved over the years by various scholars, the underlying theme of each phase has stayed the same. In this research, the author uses the emergence, coalescence, bureaucratization, and decline stages.[66]

The first stage is "Emergence". During this early phase of social movement, there is widespread discontent about a certain policy or social condition amongst the population. However, these potential movement participants have not acted upon their grievances. If they have, it is mostly individual action instead of collective action, since there is limited or no organization at all. There might also be a rise in news coverage about the unfavorable social condition or policies which plays a part in the increasing discontent. The emergence phase can also happen on the instance that a social movement organization (SMO) exists. A social movement

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[65] Diani, "The Concept of Social Movement," 11-13.
[66] Jonathan Christiansen, "Four Stages of Social Movements," in *EBSCO Research Starters* (Massachusetts: EBSCO Publishing, 2009), 1.

organization is an organization associated with a social movement that performs essential tasks needed for a social movement to survive. If an SMO exists, then the SMO along with its members function as agitators: actors who raise awareness regarding issues and consequently aid the growth of discontent among the people.[67]

The second stage of a social movement is coalescence, which means the process to form one mass or whole. It is often described as the "popular stage", where discontent is not only felt as a general sense of unease, but it is more clearly defined and people start to get aware of who or what causes the discontent. At this phase, discontent tends to become vocalized and collective. In his work about revolutionary processes, Rex D. Hopper explained that this stage "is the stage when individuals participating in the mass behavior of the preceding stage become aware of each other." He also stated that in the coalescence phase, "unrest is no longer covert, endemic, and esoteric; it becomes overt, epidemic, and exoteric." People start to share their negative reaction towards their situation and thus it begins to spread.[68] Leadership may emerge and plan of actions are laid out, while mass demonstrations may happen as a way to show the power and the demands of the social movement.[69]

The third stage of the development of a social movement is the bureaucratization stage, which is set apart from the previous stages by the presence of higher levels of organization and coalition-based strategies. Social movements in the bureaucratization stage have reached a certain level of awareness that a

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[67] Christiansen, "Four Stages of Social Movements," 2.
[68] Rex D. Hopper, "The Revolutionary Process: A Frame of Reference for the Study of Revolutionary Movements," *Social Forces* 28, no. 3 (March 1950): 273.
[69] Christiansen, "Four Stages of Social Movements," 3.

coordinated strategy between the social movement organizations is needed. Bureaucratization means the SMOs rely on paid, operating staffs who provide stability when highly enthusiastic volunteers are not present. This process of delegating operations is the reason why the bureaucratization stage is also called the formalization stage, as it may not be enough to depend on demonstrations and passionate leaders to further the movement's goals and broaden their constituencies. A lot of social movements did not succeed because they failed to bureaucratize and relied too much on emotional excitement and continued mobilization from voluntary members.[70]

Then, the fourth and final stage of the development of a social movement is the decline. Although decline might carry a negative connotation, this phase does not necessarily mean that the movement fails. The decline stage encompasses five ways social movements can undergo decline: repression, co-optation, success, failure, or being established with the mainstream. Repression happens when actors who are responsible for social control enact certain actions — including using force or coercion — to contain or subdue a social movement.[71] The certain actions may include designating the movement or organization as illegal, thus justifying violent attacks on the movement and the leaders. Consequently, repression makes it hard to social movements to survive and might even be the reason behind the decline of a social movement.[72]

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[70] Christiansen, "Four Stages of Social Movements," 3.
[71] Frederick D. Miller, "The End of SDS and the Emergence of Weatherman: Demise Through Success," in *Waves of Protest: Social Movements Since the Sixties*, ed. Jo Freeman and Victoria Johnson (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 1999), 304-305.
[72] Christiansen, "Four Stages of Social Movements," 4.

The second way a social movement can decline is through co-optation, which happens when leaders of a social movement "come to associate with authorities or movement targets more than with the social movement constituents." This process can take on different ways. The leaders may be offered to work with the target of the movement with the promises of changing things from the inside. A more straightforward way such as bribing the leaders to reorient the movement is also how a social movement can be co-opted.[73] In these instances, the leader forsakes the movement and its supporters to pursue personal goals. As a result, the social movement loses the leader or worse, gets taken over for a different purpose than it is initially built for.

The third way a social movement can decline is if it succeeds. Success is more likely to occur if the movement is localized and has specific goals. The women's suffrage movement was one of the examples of a social movement with specific goals that succeeded. However, social movements with less clearly-defined targets exist. The definition of success itself may also evolve as the social movement progresses, and it may contribute to the decline of the movement as well.

The fourth way a social movement can decline is if it fails. Failures can happen because of organizational or strategic failings. On the organizational level, failure either takes the form of factionalism or encapsulation. At times, it happens consecutively. When a movement reaches a certain point of success or undergoes rapid expansion, it may experience organizational strain.[74] Factionalism or the

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[73] Christiansen, "Four Stages of Social Movements," 4.
[74] Christiansen, "Four Stages of Social Movements," 4.

breakdown of movements into divisions or factions happens because a social movement organization cannot decide which direction to pursue. Although having different factions in a movement might not necessarily end it, disunity can break a movement. These factions control the organization and fight among themselves, preventing the social movement organization to progress externally and hindering policies from being set.[75]

Another threat to social movements is encapsulation, which means a social movement becomes increasingly isolated. Encapsulation can happen through a number of ways. One of it is through cutting off the access to join the movement. This is usually done to prevent infiltration in the event of repression. Another way that encapsulation can happen is when members of a movement develop strong cohesion to one another that it becomes hard for potential recruits to join the movement. Because the members spend time in prolonged interaction, they might form an ideology that is only comprehensible to internal members but hard to understand for outsiders who are not necessarily know the movement's assumptions. Thus, encapsulation hinders a movement's ability to expand, much less to produce social change.[76]

Last but not least, a social movement can decline if they get established with the mainstream. This means that the movement's goals and ideologies are accepted by mainstream society and the authorities. Therefore, the movement is no longer necessary.[77]

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[75] Miller, "The End of SDS and the Emergence of Weatherman," 307.
[76] Miller, "The End of SDS and the Emergence of Weatherman," 307-308.
[77] Christiansen, "Four Stages of Social Movements," 4.

Meanwhile, the definition of beauty standard that is used in this thesis is dominant ideals that are considered physically attractive by the majority ethnic group in society.[78] This definition is previously mentioned in the research background. The analysis of Escape the Corset movement is taken in the light of radical feminism perspective, while the concept of oppression, the concept of the stages of social movement, and the concept of social movement are used to provide an analytical explanation about the development of the Escape the Corset movement.

1.6 Research Method and Type of Research

1.6.1. Research Method

This research uses qualitative research method. According to John W. Creswell, qualitative research begins with assumptions. The qualitative method is used to examine and comprehend the meaning particular individuals or groups assigned to a social or human issue.[79] Theoretical frameworks are used in examining the meaning that individuals or groups assign to a social issue in order to shape the study.[80] Further on, the author interprets the data obtained and give them meaning.[81]

1.6.2. Type of Research

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[78] Baumann, "The Moral Underpinnings of Beauty," 4.
[79] John W. Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Method Approaches* (Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, Inc., 2009), 4.
[80] John W. Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches* (Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, Inc., 2007), 15.
[81] Umar Suryadi Bakry, *Metode Penelitian Hubungan Internasional* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2017), 15.

To answer the research question, the author employs case study as a type of research. According to John W. Creswell, "case studies are a strategy of inquiry in which the researcher explores in depth a program, event, activity, process, or one or more individuals."[82] This research proposal specifically studies Escape the Corset movement as a case study. The main data collection technique that is used is document studies, which include obtaining data from journal articles, books, reports, and news outlets.

1.7 Thesis Structure

This research is divided into four chapters. The first chapter provides an introduction to oppressive beauty standards and Escape the Corset movement. It starts with the research background, research problem identification, research question, research objective and purpose, literature review, theoretical framework, research method, data collection technique, and ends with thesis structure.

The second chapter describes and elaborates beauty standards, including the construction of beauty standards and Korean beauty standards which need to be elaborated because Escape the Corset movement in based in South Korea. Afterwards, Korean beauty standards are viewed using the concept of oppression and thus this part of the research delves upon why beauty standards can be considered as oppressive.

The third chapter focuses on how oppressive beauty standards lead to the development of Escape the Corset movement using the stages of social movement

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[82] Creswell, *Research Design*, 13.

concept and radical feminism perspective. This chapter also explains how Escape the Corset can be categorized as a social movement using Mario Diani's concept of social movement.

Finally, the fourth chapter contains the conclusion of the research and the answer to the research question.