



From Universities, Streets, to Contemporary Society Heroes: Becoming, Being, and Living as Women Activist

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Abstract

Historically, women faced patterns of prejudice and gender-based oppression, resulting in the denial of their fundamental rights. Through years of ingrained subordination under authoritarian regimes, activism birthed various movements and organizations that sought liberation. As militant groups gained traction, withstanding large-scale issues, women's struggles were seldom addressed within nationalist movements. Literature has documented the roots of activism, women's organizations, and the socio-political conditions throughout Philippine history. However, there is a narrow understanding of women's experiences and how these mold their individual identities in response to shared struggles. This study attempts to create a local framework elucidating the motivations and drivers behind women's activism. This narrative study conducted semi-structured interviews with an aged female activist who claimed to be a university graduate, living a moderate lifestyle. Through a modified thematic analysis using Braun and Clarke (2006), findings revealed her profound worldviews, motivations, and ideologies. Recounting her experiences, the participant's lifelong commitment to activism emerged as a notable discovery. Becoming, being, and living as an activist was a voluntary choice to discover, assert, and sustain her praxis. Through adaptations of the framework, future studies should continue to explore additional narratives of women, anti-imperialist, self-ascribed activists who work towards attaining an equitable society. By asserting their identities, affirming their actions, and nurturing their efforts towards nation-building, women's narratives serve as a stark implication that they survived amidst adversity. Hence, 'becoming' a woman activist transcends past experiences and struggles as she lives a life committed to meaningful change.

Keywords: activism; feminism; identity; Philippines; self-ascription