

CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

A. Background

This research attempts to understand the reason behind Norway's effort on combating Female Genital Mutilation in Ethiopia. As second-ranked country to have the highest gender equality index according to the Global Gender Gap Report, Norway has taken a step forward to eliminate all forms of discrimination and violence against women. Norway has been reported as an active participant on combating FGM. In Norway, all forms of female genital mutilation are prohibited, including 'sunna' circumcision. Removing a small part of the genitals is just as illegal as removing a lot. People who perform or assist female circumcision can be sentenced to up to ten years' imprisonment. Foreign nationals who are convicted can also be expelled from Norway (The Norwegian Directorate of Immigration (UDI), n.d.).

Eradicating FGM has become a key policy priority for Norway. On the 6th of February, Ambassador Hans Brattskar, Norway's Permanent Representative to the UN, opened a session highlighting the 15th Anniversary of the "International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation" at the United Nations in Geneva. Ambassador Brattskar stressed that FGM constitutes "a grave violation of human rights and represents an extreme form of discrimination against women". He also noted that FGM has serious consequences for women's and girls' lives and sexual and reproductive health, including mental health (Norway in Geneva, 2018).

Female Genital Mutilation is all procedures that involve partial or total removal of the external female genitalia, or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons (WHO, 2016). Female genital mutilation has its own type depending on what the needs of the occasion since it is related with the traditional norms that

conducted in the certain society. Families, communities and cultures in which FGM is performed, have different reasons for doing so. A major motivation is that the practice is believed to ensure the girl conforms to key social norms, such as those related to sexual restraint, femininity, respectability and maturity (Garcia-Moreno, Guedes, & Knerr, 2012).

Regardless of its circumstances, it has been internationally recognized as the violation of the human rights of girls and women. FGM has no health benefits, and it harms girls and women in many ways. It involves removing and damaging healthy and normal female genital tissue, and interferes with the natural functions of girls' and women's bodies. It reflects deep-rooted inequality between the sexes, and constitutes an extreme form of discrimination against women. It is nearly always carried out on minors and is a violation of the rights of children.

The data of Female Genital Mutilation case has been reported around the world. But the most practical of FGM case are easily found in African countries. The practice of FGM in Africa concentrated from the western coast of Africa to several parts of Asia. It is proximately two hundred million girls and women in the world are estimated to have undergone female genital mutilation (FGM) and another 3 million girls are at risk of experiencing it each year in high prevalence countries.

An example of African countries that has high number of FGM practice is Ethiopia. Norway chose Ethiopia as its pilot country to strengthen the effort of combating female genital mutilation since the prevalence of FGM practice in Ethiopia shows high numbers. According to the Demographic Health Survey (DHS), the estimated prevalence of FGM in girls and women (15-49 years) is 74.3% (DHS, 2005). FGM is widespread across Ethiopia and is carried out in the majority of regions and ethnic groups. FGM is most prevalent, depending on which statistics are used for reference in the Oromia region, with the rate of

FGM victims is reaching up to 9 million; Amhara region with about 7 million victims; Somali region, in the south east bordering Somalia, where the rate of the FGM victims is about 2 million; Addis Ababa with almost 1 million victims; Afar region in the north east of Ethiopia, is about 730,000; Dire Dawa, with the rate is about 150,000; Tigray in the north, with a rate of about 730,000. And the lowest of prevalence rate of FGM victims is located in Gambela, a small region in western Ethiopia, with a rate of about 50,000 (UNICEF, 2015).

Since becoming the active participant on combating FGM, several efforts has been done in order to support the elimination of this practice, such as:

1. In 2003, the *Norwegian Government's International Action Plan for Combating Female Genital Mutilation* was launched, in which engaging several ministries in order to combat the female genital mutilation such as Ministry of Children and Equality, Ministry of Justice and Police, Ministry of Health and Care Services and Ministry of Foreign Affairs;
2. Since 2007, Norway has channeled between NOK 40 and 60 million annually to the UNFPA-UNICEF Joint Program on Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting and double its allocation to civil society and international organizations working to eliminate FGM, from NOK 25 million to NOK 50 million, as of 2015;
3. Norway supports a strategic partnership launched by Save the Children Norway-Ethiopia and Norwegian Church Aid-Ethiopia, to fight FGM in the country (Regjeringen.no);
4. Seek to cooperate with the African Union to promote follow-up of the UN resolution on intensifying global efforts for the elimination of female genital mutilations;

5. Norway intends to put female genital mutilation on the agenda through political dialogue that includes a discussion of states' international human rights obligations and;
6. Promote social mobilization against and treat/rehabilitate girls and women who have undergone mutilation.

B. Research Question

Based on the explained background above, a question arises as “Why is Norway intensively putting effort to eradicate Female Genital Mutilation in Ethiopia?”

C. Theoretical Framework

1. Theory of Constructivism

Theory of constructivism is a thought that everything in the world is merely given (or created by itself), but rather than a result of social construction of human being (Steans & Pettiford, 2005). It is assumed to be different from the realist and neorealist (positivist) opinions which state things the opposite. This empirical social constructivism approach is distinguished from the positivist approach that emphasize on the approach of mechanical or material. First, to the extent that structures can be said to shape the behavior of social and political actors, be they individuals or states, constructivists hold that normative or ideational structures are just as important as material structures. Where neo-realists emphasize the material structure of the balance of military power, and Marxists stress the material structure of the capitalist world economy, constructivists argue that systems of shared ideas, beliefs and values also have structural characteristics, and that they exert a powerful influence on social and political action. (Reus Smith, 2005).

This view departs from the fact that the international system is not a physical entity but an entity that stand up and

constructed based on awareness of inter subjectivity or deal together. Therefore, the study of international relations must be focused also on norms, values, ideas, and beliefs that are recognized and underlie the behavior of interaction among actors who take a part in it.

Constructivists highlight the importance of values and of shared interests between individuals who interact on the global stage. Alexander Wendt, a prominent constructivist, described the relationship between agents (individuals) and structures (such as the state) as one in which structures not only constrain agents but also construct their identities and interests.

According to Alexander Wendt, theory of constructivism has several assumptions, those are:

1. State is the main actor in international relations and a unit of analysis on theory of international politic;
2. The main structure within the international system tends to be inter-subjective, rather than material as neo-realist and neo-liberalist thought and;
3. The identity and the national interest were built as the result of “social construction” that develop within the society and merely *given*.

From three points above, it can be seen that a country will create an idea/thought in order to understanding the phenomenon that happen in the international relations arena based on the structure emerge on where the interactions/practices took places and also make a decision based on what the construction they have made.

Beside, theory of constructivism were emerge out of four assumption according to Joseph Grieco, which are (a) a certain interest, whether it is individual, groups, or country is not given, but rather made out of identity from the actors and

how others see the actors are; (b) ideas, culture, knowledge, religion and normative beliefs are the basis of on how certain identity emerge; (c) elite agents are important on influencing the insight and behavior of society in certain country at international system; and (d) communication or interaction among elite agents with the network place they operated in order to create and change the identity to strengthen ideas and beliefs (Grieco, Ikenberry, mastanduno)

From the explanation about theory of constructivism above, it can be derived that phenomenon took place on international relations, is the result of human construction on see the international world and merely given. The process of decision making done by IR's actors are caused by the national interest with each identity's background. As in Norway who is known country to have most gender equal at almost every sector, has done several decision making regarding its national interest in which to protects every human rights, especially for women's rights, including the right to achieve health conditions, equal educations and opportunity to grow their capability to the maximum.

The essence of international relations exists in the interactions between people. After all, states do not interact; it is agents of those states, such as politicians and diplomats, who interact (McGlinchey, 2017).

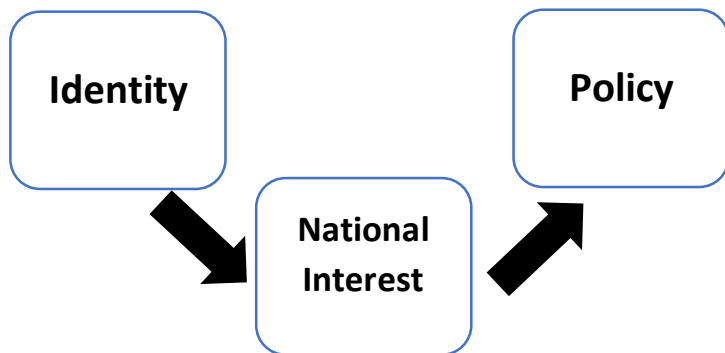


Figure 1 Process of Decision Making Policy according to Theory of Constructivism by Alexander Wendt

2. Logic of Appropriateness

The logic of appropriateness is a perspective on how human action is to be interpreted. Action, policy making included, is seen as driven by rules of appropriate or exemplary behavior, organized into institutions. The appropriateness of rules includes both cognitive and normative components (March & Olsen, 1995). Rules are followed because they are seen as natural, rightful, expected, and legitimate. Actors seek to fulfill the obligations encapsulated in a role, an identity, a membership in a political community or group, and the ethos, practices and expectations of its institutions. Embedded in a social collectivity, they do what they see as appropriate for themselves in a specific type of situation.

A logic of appropriateness governs what could perhaps better be called ‘rule-based’ (or ‘recognition-based’) action (March and Simon, 1993: 8), following a path that is guided by rules. Rules are relatively fixed responses to defined situations. ‘Appropriateness’ of the LoA does not primarily refer to moral or aesthetical appropriateness; rather, the key feature of the LoA is a matching of rules to situations. Actors recognize a situation and connect it to appropriate action consistent with relevant rules (often anchored in the identities of the actors; March, 1982). Because LoA relies on matching of (signals about) situations to rules, it can be considered as a ‘recognition-based’ logic of action (March and Simon, 1993: 8). The underlying cognitive processes are often based on intuition, and this can enable rapid response actions (Schulz, 2014).

Partnering with United Nations as the core for “international norms” and ratifying several agreement regarding of protecting human rights, Norway has been working on taking their foreign actions based on the obligation as partner countries to apply those norms and also based on how Norwegian society seek for policies to gender equality issue, where it is become such big normative

discussion within the society and the political agents of Norway took action on decision making based on this behavior and what is appropriate towards its conditions.

D. Research Hypothesis

Norway is intensively putting efforts on combating Female Genital Mutilation in Ethiopia because Norway wanted to change the social norms in Ethiopia since FGM is a form of violence against women and girls, whereas this is contradictive with Norway's national interest as it is implementing agenda of promoting the gender equality alongside with UN.

E. Research Methodology

This research used qualitative method, by writing down the information which supported by the current fact, later being concluded. As for the data collection, the author used bibliography technique. The available and used data are all collected from various sources, such as books, scientific journal, news, reports, online news, international treaties internet cite and other relevance sources in printed or electronic form for this research.

F. Writing System

I. Chapter I

In this chapter, the writer describes the background of the chosen case, research question relevant to the background, theoretical framework, argumentation, research methodology, and writing system.

II. Chapter II

In this chapter, the writer describes the history of feminism in Norway.

III. Chapter III

In this chapter, the writer explains feminism give big influence in multi sectors of Norwegian society, such as education, government and economy.

IV. Chapter IV

In this chapter, the writer explains the reason behind Norway's intensive effort on combating female genital mutilation in Ethiopia by elaborating the fact given in the Chapter III with theoretical framework used in this analysis.

V. Chapter V

In this chapter, the author closes the thesis by concluding the whole chapters explained previously.