



THE FEMALE BODY AS A CONTESTED TERRAIN: MICROPOLITICS OF EVERYDAY AND AGENCY

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Abstract: This paper aims to examine the argument that the female body as a micropolitical site, where under conventional patriarchal social institutions, the mechanisms of power, affect, and agency intersect. The paper draws arguments from feminist post-structuralist, and new materialist theories, thereby contesting that women's bodies are simultaneously discursive and material site through which gendered power is exercised, negotiated, and subtly resisted. The paper also contends how women navigate embodied constraints by deploying everyday manoeuvre that reshape and restructure the boundaries of restricted behaviour by drawing concepts of performativity, Foucault's notion of dispersed power, and Kandiyoti's theory of patriarchal bargaining. It demonstrates that the paradigm of reproductive and sexual agency emerges not as a singular individualistic choice but as a relational, affective negotiation shaped by desire, fear, temporality, marriage norms, and socio-cultural expectations by integrating from the school of new material insights on affect and assemblages. With the help of Goldfarb's "politics of small things," the study highlights how the discourse of micro-interaction, bodily practices, and intimate decisions become political acts that challenge or accommodate patriarchal regulation. The paper, therefore, conceptualises the female body as an active, dynamic and relational space through which women's everyday micropolitics generate subtly, covertly yet possess consequential shifts in power, autonomy and gendered normativity.

Keywords: affect, assemblages, everyday manoeuvre, feminist post-structuralist, micropolitics, new materialist theories, women's bodies

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Introductions

From Judith Butler (1990) to Simone de Beauvoir (1949, 1972), feminist scholars have explained that womanhood is a social construct that is constantly shaped by discursive, spatial, and cultural factors rather than a fixed state. Female corporeality is not merely biological, but rather a constellation of culturally defined ideas about what is deemed suitable for discourse mediation. Because daily existence is enacted, actualised, and understood through the body, the corporeal form becomes the centre of agency when the frameworks of power are re-established through spatial dimensions through everyday practices of movement and spatial occupation.

The female body is a conflicted space. Being built physiologically apart from the male counterpart, it still remains a site where power functions. The body's manifestation is structured by the same factors that affect social relationships. These include intersectionalities of gender, age, class, and ethnicity. Even though the discourse of body is very "personal," existing within individual's personal domain, it is still influenced by these external factors. Authority and power functions in a variety of ways according to a given situations. Women's bodies' can transcend from private realm into a political one, they have the meanings of sexuality, reproduction, and desire in a restricted patriarchal domain. But the catch is power may functions as both productive and repressive, as argued by Michel Foucault (1978). It has the potential to influence to one's behaviour, non-oral expressions and one's feelings. Through these complexities of spatial negotiations, bodily expressions and sense of emotions, women's agency grows within these power dynamics. For long, conventional feminist thoughts has always shown interest on the physical realm of a female body. But, the body, here, also acts as a space influenced by the discourse of language and societal ground rules apart from being just a biological figure. The intersectionalities of gender, identity and power intersect and manifests here.

Withinsuch a micropolitical field, the sexual and reproductive choices of women, for example, decisions about contraception, fertility, and intimacy, which are not simply personal decisions but also emotional negotiations influenced by the structures. According to Kandiyoti's (1988) theory of patriarchal bargaining, women skillfully navigate the prevailing norms to obtain agency and identity within the . Goldfarb's(2008) small politics of things argument fits well with this one by explaining how normal things like not speaking, not agreeing, or everyday disobedience have the power to be

democratic and opposing. On the other hand, postfeminist discourse (Gill, 2003, McRobbie, 2009) changes the concept of empowerment to that of self-management, thus showing how women's 'freedom' is frequently carried out in neoliberal affective economies.

The paper through the combination of these frameworks locates the everyday as a concept and a real unit of power where the phenomena of domination and resistance cohabit. It claims that the emotional and physical sensuously and through the body negotiations of women change the body to a political medium in which sexuality, reproduction, and emotion are the processes that become interdependent as both ones of submission and ones of change. In the end, this research is asserting that the ordinary domestic gestures of women's lives such as acts of care, silence, or refusal, make up an extensive micropolitics of survival, dignity, and resistance, thus, they reorganize the personal as political which is a well-known fact that these two are inseparably .

Objectives

- To analyse the discourse of body as a micropolitical location where the intersectionalities of structure, affect and agency intersect, examining how women's everyday affairs of embodied acts negotiate patriarchal power and reclaim autonomy.
- To explore the everyday micropolitics of negotiation and Kandiyoti's concept of patriarchal bargaining, an attempt to show how women's individual choices about reproduction and sexuality serve as tactical manoeuvre, emotional practices for adapting, resisting, and surviving in socially and restricted in spatial contexts.
- To show how gendered spaces, class structure, and emotional environments influence women's agency showing how power functions through the relationships between the body, language, and emotions.

Theoretical Framework

Gender as Performative

At the very outset of their social reality, all bodies are gendered which means that there is no "natural body" that exists before its cultural inscription. This would indicate what Judith Butler(1990) argued that gender is not a feature that one has, but rather something that one shows, an act, or if we are more

accurate, a set of acts, a verb rather than a noun, a “doing” instead of a “being” , aligning with her theoretical gender performative discourse that gender is not simply a natural being but a process, “a set of repeated acts within a highly rigid regulatory frame” as Butler .

Poststructuralist Feminism and Agency

Feminist post-structuralism challenges the rigid male/female binary by revealing how the constitutive forces of language actively shape our reality and showing that these categories aren't as fixed as they seem. Feminist post structuralism do not completely argue that there is ultimate freedom from the discourse of language and the structure of social rules but rather it argued and tries to comprehend on how social dynamics and historical occurrences mould or alter our own sense of being, which ultimately give us a doorway to argue against and criticise these societal interpretations. Therefore, through these comprehensions help us to view structures of power that restrict women and their subjectivity. This vantage point view agency as something as always being restricted, functioning within a boundary set by language and societal norms, which led us to understand that there is no existence of “free will.” Therefore our identities, our sense of being are not fixed but rather they are continuously reshaped through the discourse of negotiations and language.

Gill (2003) and McRobbie (2009) argued that the meaning of “being empowered” has been changed in post – feminist discourse, which laid importance in one's freedom of choice, expression and control over one's bodily movement. However, this emphasis hides the larger and widespread hegemonic structural gender inequality that continues to dominant the society. Here, the daily everyday affairs related to a women's body as in their expression in sexuality or their depiction of sense of being, are all under the strict scrutiny of social control. Women, thus consume and ultimately internalize these disciplines and act accordingly in the domain of gender identity and self – image.

Feminist post-structuralist research pushes beyond what we already know. Instead of just cataloging differences between men and women, it works to expand how we think about gender altogether. The goal is to break apart rigid binary of ‘male’ and ‘female’ categories and make room for subjectivities that don't fit neatly into either box—or that occupy both simultaneously. Power, in this view, gets made and remade through language and discourse, and it always operates in particular places and material conditions.

The Concept of Bodily Integrity and Autonomy

Women's fundamental right to have control and freedom over their own bodies comes under the purview of bodily integrity, which requires the whole of one's personhood, including one's personal identity, to be considered in all decisions made about you. One's personal rights including one's restrictions are legally acknowledged as human rights through lenses of bodily integrity, which also include being free from an enforced sterilization, any form of assault, violence, medical or treatment that could demean someone's self of being.

The freedom to make judgements concerning one's own body is known as bodily autonomy. It is a right to have complete dominance over your body with no interference from external influences, the social or regulatory pressure, violence, or discrimination. Having the idea of choice is essential to this. In terms of the rights and privileges associated with sexual and reproductive health, it involves having the freedom to make preferences around your sexuality and gender expression and identities.

Body as a Space and the Role of Negotiation

Harvey (1990) and Lefebvre (1991) both argued that one experience space through ones bodies, an embodied experience and not some abstract backdrop to our lives. This means space becomes gendered not simply because of how many men or women are present, but through the different ways men and women actually use and move through space. On the other hand, postmodern spatial theorists argue otherwise that social structures and space aren't just connected, they're constantly shaping each other in a dialectical relationship. Space is always in the process of being made and remade, in a constant state of becoming. In India specifically, women's bodies become sites where cultural expectations and social rules about what makes a "proper" or "desirable" woman get written and enforced. The rules for the presentation of bodily self in everyday life are clearly defined and they are socialised into conformity from a very early age. The identification of women with their bodies thus becomes the root cause of their oppression in a patriarchal culture. Women get reduced to their primary biological functions, viewed mainly as vehicles for male sexual pleasure and reproduction, which extends to childbearing, childrearing, and caregiving. Everything about a woman's life, her roles, her social position, her status, gets filtered through this primary bodily lens. The same logic shapes where women are allowed to be and how they can occupy space, always in reference to men.

women force themselves to uphold tradition, harmony, and social and submit to familial integrity deliberately and unintentionally. As a result, disparity between genders has been constructed and established upon the female body. Consequently, it becomes her primary objective to put the requirements and necessities of the family and community before her own needs.

Giddens (1984) and Bourdieu (1977) argued that human agency and social structures are in a relationship with each other. The perpetuation of social structure happens through the repetition of individual agent acts. Therefore, space has an essential function in determining the amount of agency women have in patriarchies which are formed geographically. Thus, these household spaces operate as both places where women from households with low incomes possess some agency in the face of domestic assault and spaces in which they may resist patriarchal control throughout the household.

Central to the analysis of negotiation, the role agency and power approaches relate to gender roles. Research suggests that a negotiator is expected to have agentic characteristics. We could argue that particular aspects of agency are only negotiated within an extremely particular framework in the Bourdieuan sense by making connections with feminist counterspaces. Within conventional patriarchy, "feminist counterspaces" exist within the dominating spaces of patriarchal structure.

In besides functioning as a geographical location for human interaction, space might restrict the experiences of marginalized populations and manifest the balance of power. Examining space is so vital because it might help in the cultivation of one's subjectivity. According to the geographer Massey (1984, 6), "It is not just that the spatial is socially constructed; the social is spatially constructed too."

Social role theory (Eagly, 1987; Eagly & Wood, 2012) argues that gender differences in emotions, thinking, and behaviour stem from gender role beliefs. The theory argues that people internalize these roles over time, and eventually those roles become part of their core identity. The different qualities assigned to men and women in widely shared beliefs about what men and women are "naturally" like what we call gender stereotypes. Women's social roles typically get linked to communal traits like caring about others, being friendly and helpful, showing warmth, expressing emotions openly, putting others first. These dispositions don't just describe women, they actively shape how women navigate their choices and exercise agency in a situated framework.

- The practice of using contraceptive measures and associated myths
- Negotiation power of persuading the use of safety measures
- Having Autonomy in Practicing Bodily Rights

Women's Reproductive and Sexual Agency

Inspired by Butler, Bartky (1990) asserted that feminine is something one achieves rather than something one is born with and stated that a sense of the female form shifts according to culture and age. She proceeded on to explain that women are far more confined than men with regard to of motion and lived spatiality. Young (1980) argued that a woman's space is an enclosed cage which constrains and puts her in position, making her unable to depart from it. Constricted postures and overall bodily routines, as well as lack of desire to extend, reach, or stretch the body, reflect this.

Prior study demonstrates how women's bodies have been subservient and controlled in comparison to men's, that some disciplinarian action forces concentrate women's bodies foremost especially through marketing purposes, and that a disciplinary power induces and molds complying bodies. In addition to the private and public domains, spatiality is important in cultural discourses like advertising and the subjectification process: "Space can also serve as a resource that people deliberately employ and transform to represent their identities, negotiate social relations, and express cultural desires, much like ideologies, money, symbols, tastes, and the body."

A study by Gill (2003), a new construction of femininity that centers around sexual agency can be laid out as the move from sexual objectification to sexual subjectification, in which subjects are at liberty to objectify their own self of being as this serves their "liberated" interests. Trevor Beattie's renowned Wonderbra Playtex commercial from 1994. In this ad, the upper body of the model Eva Herzigova is displayed wearing only a Wonderbra, looking down, smilingly, with the caption "Hello Boys." This humorous yet objectifying representation, here, Herzigova was presented as both a subject and an object of male desire, deliberately utilising and exploiting her sexual power. According to the poststructuralist perspective, there is no such thing as "free choice." Rather, all of the selections that consumers make, whether they are feminist or liberating, are ultimately pre-configured and advertised to them. The intention of choice feminism is to refrain from criticize the choices made by women. It's about making sure they have the freedom to make those decisions for themselves.

“An important section of the obsession with the body and the change from objectification to sexual subjectification is that this is shown in advertising through functions of playfulness, freedom, and most importantly, choice.” This marks the shift from sexual objectification to sexual subjectification. Therefore, post-structuralists argue that the only choices or personal autonomy one has are those within the limits of the discursive options that exist.

Therefore, it is not entirely unexpected that women are portrayed as sexual objects in advertising, albeit under different feminist guises, as they are generally seen as such within the larger framework of a patriarchal society. “The concept of the socialized body implies that a complex cultural ideology of the body underlies consumers’ satisfaction with their appearance, their sense of an ideal or more desirable body, and the consumption activities that these self-perceptions motivate.” Advertising, for example, is an expression of this cultural ideology that alters consumers’ meanings of the body’s symbolic ramifications as well as those of themselves and others. But given that no pair of bodies are the same, the bodily sensations and interpretations range. Thoughts of feminist sociology have conventionally seen agency as the ability to act within or against social structures. New materialist thought restudied and redefined this discourse of agency using the concept of affect, which refers to the body’s ability to affect and be affected (Fox & Alldred, 2022). From this viewpoint, women’s reproductive and sexual choices are not just conscious negotiations; they are also affective processes that arise from interactions between bodies, technologies, emotions, and discourses. Our bodily acts are shaped and reshaped by factors of hormones, reproductive health, sexuality, expressions like anxiety, societal norms. All these components of emotional expressions and tangibility explain how women react, as in, keeping quiet, delaying response, of excitement or simply denial, are all acts of micropolitics that alter the balance of hegemonic authority. Therefore, by this argument sexual and reproductive or fertility choices are understood as both an act of social bargaining or negotiation and manifestations of bodily expressions. These choices are what we understand as micropolitical acts within households.

When women’s agency contributes to a profound shift in perceptions, or “inner transformation,” they are enabled to recognize their own self-interest and freedom of choices and perceive that they are not only aware of making choices of their own, but also empowered to do so. Agency is both changing and reproductive, as stated by Hays (1994). Women gain autonomy when they

confront patriarchal structures, which brings about change. However, the power to negotiate and ability that women acquire and show throughout the process of shift are analogous to negotiation. Negotiation and resistance are essential components of women's reproductive agency, as argued by Unnithan-Kumar (2004). Through her understanding of patriarchal bargains, Kandiyoti (1991) proposes an introduction to this terminology: women aim to gain the greatest benefits for themselves by acting according to a patriarchal system of power and opt for what they find alluring or unsettling. In her chapter "Bargaining with Patriarchy" (Kandiyoti, 1988), Kandiyoti refers to this sort of patriarchy by arguing the argument that women who enter patrilocal spaces as new brides consequently become servile to both males and older women. To be able to ultimately acquire control and authority throughout household structures, women at the earliest succumb to these allocations. As consequently, women are awarded for their servitude and surrender by this unusual institutional script rooted in conventional patriarchy. While preserving the implications of larger institutional and cultural variables, Browner (2000) refers to the bargaining process as the interpersonal dynamic. Women exert their agency when they sense empowered through having access to assets, argues Malhotra & Schuler (2005).

Access to women's agency is considerably impacted by the notion of age. Women adopt a range of strategies for negotiating accessibility throughout their ages. When a woman gets hitched later in her life, she becomes more efficient she is of deciding for her household and exerting control. There is an apparent connection between an elevated level of fertility with early marriage. Younger women tend to be less empowered to take control of their own affairs and make choices for their households. Pauses, whether deliberate or not, might consequently end up in some women being empowered through labor or knowledge, these chances can further influence their views toward being married and having children as well as their age at marriage.

A wider age gap could mean that the husband will be more influential and that the communication between spouses could be more domineering on the part of the husband. A narrower gap means communication is less strained and more in the vein of a dialogue.

The particular day of one's birth is dictated by state laws and social customs. Age at first birth matters because early gestation usually reflects a woman's lack of authority over decisions.

Micropolitics of Negotiation

The paper tries to understand micropolitics as the everyday enactment of power in ordinary encounters, not only within institutions but also domestic and communal spaces like in homes, workplaces, and social relations. Foucault's notion of power which argued power as being distributed and constructive which are present (covertly) in everyday ordinary negotiations in spaces of private, domestic and communal domains, refers to as the "tactics of the weak", argued by Certeau (1984). These subtle, embodied practices are exhibited by women, which are often hidden, to cope with conventional patriarchal obligations while maintaining the social order without any overt dissent. These everyday routinely negotiations show us that power doesn't just drizzle from the top down, it moves through our daily gestures, emotions, and how we practice our bodies (Foucault, 1978). Political struggles aren't confined to parliaments or organized movements. They happen in tiny moments of negotiation, resistance, and adaptation that we might not even recognize as political. Micropolitics or micropolitical behaviour refers to these small-scale political behaviors, woven into our feelings, desires, and relationships with others.

The paper here emphasizes that gender itself is a micropolitical process, it is performed, negotiated and redefined in the daily interactions between individuals. Both the gender (men and women) participates in micropolitical process to reproduce or subvert norms through their embedded behaviour, speech etc. gendered micropolitics therefore reveal how macro structures (patriarchy, capitalism, heteronormativity) are reproduced through embodied routine acts.

Body as a Micropolitical Site

The body becomes a micro – arena where social structures are lived and contested. Everyday acts of how women move, speak or regulate emotion, these are all part of gendered micropolitical negotiations. Thus, body is where power, structure, and affect intersect and operate at the smallest scale of everyday life. For Bourdieu, the body is where habitus is inscribed (social norms, role expectations, gender roles are internalized). Her body remembers the social order and reproduces it (power working through embodiment). So, the body is a socially structured site. Butler pushes this further and argues that gender itself is performed through repetitive acts. Every bodily act (speaking

softly, submitting to patriarchal norms, avoiding gaze) repeats social scripts of “femininity.” Yet because it is performed, it can be subverted. A woman can tweak, disrupt, or parody those acts, that’s where agency and micropolitics enter.

According to New Materialist perspective, the realm of body isn’t just a passive surface of inscription but it’s alive with affective forces. Power moves through it as energy, sensation, and emotion. Affective flows (fear, desire, tension) constantly modulate what the body can do. The body represents a space of social power, mobility, emotional expressions. The women’s body, therefore, is comprehended to be a small area of politics where discourses of subjective experiences and wider structures of power intersect. In this very site, everyday bodily expressions, negotiations, small acts of gestures like silence, sexuality are tactically applied continuously to alter the social norms in a patriarchy.

Micropolitics is not only defined by dissent in macro domain but it could also mean resistance and agency in myopic level. Here, women do not assert to open protest to challenge the hegemonic authority, but rather they adopt intentional compliance, being joyful, subtle denial and myopic display of refusals, which aligns with the theory of “hidden transcripts” as proposed by Scott(1990) and Kandiyoti’s(1998) patriarchal bargaining.

Micropolitics of Negotiation and Patriarchal Bargaining

According to new materialist theorist, Fox and Alldred(2022), comprehend micropolitics as interpersonal and behavioural alterations structure of power that transcend the affairs of everyday. When the intersectionalities of factors like bodily expressions, objects, psychological state of mind, discourse of language and space intersects give rise to potentiality of what women are capable of doing. Our conventional way of understanding agency changes here. Challenging the conventional notion of agency, the paper has adopted the argument on the concept of affect here. According to new materialist school of thought, affect, here, means women’s potential to impact others and be shaped by surrounding rather than understanding that women’s affective behavior is the result of their intentional actions. Thereby, the action of agency comes from interacting in environments and opportunities rather than participating in conscious decisions.

These conventional bodily practices and submission to larger hegemonic norms tactfully are considered as tactful adjustments which acts within society’s

situated boundaries, which aligns with Kandiyoti's concept of patriarchal bargaining (1988). Women often go along with certain gender expectations to gain safety, mobility, or influence in other areas. This kind of bargaining does not show passivity; instead, it reflects a practical approach to survival, where women express both submission and agency at the same time.

Seen through a new materialist lens, these acts of negotiation are micropolitical, they operate in the micro-movements of daily life, where power and resistance are inseparable. The woman's body ultimately becomes a status of affective politics, continuously negotiating the social and material forces that seek to define it. Through this process, women act subtly reproduce, resist, and reconfigure patriarchy in an emic manner from within, transforming the ordinary into the political.

Politics of Small Things

Goldfarb's arguments reassess the definition of politics by situating it in the micro-relations of daily everyday affairs, where acts of control, resistance, and redefinition produce, reproduce and acts continuously. Drawing from arguments by Foucault's notion of discipline and governmentality, de Certeau's notion of tactics of everyday resistance, Mead's theory of socialization, and Goffman's dramaturgic model of interaction, Goldfarb argues that power is not only exercised by states and institutions but is also produced and negotiated at the local, interpersonal level. Both Mead and Goffman reveal that the political is embedded in the everyday. Both theorists focus on interaction, meaning-making, and the subtle regulation of behaviour exactly the domain where micropolitics operates. In Mead's theory of Sociolization (symbolic interactionism), its Core idea argues that the self emerges through social interaction, we learn who we are by taking the role of the "other" and internalizing social expectations. Everyday interactions thus become political, because they involve negotiating recognition, control, and conformity and through communication and gestures, people reproduce social order but also have room to improvise, to subtly reinterpret or resist norms. So, Mead shows that the micro-level of interaction is the birthplace of social power where individuals absorb, reproduce, or challenge dominant meanings.

This aligns with micropolitics of everyday exchanges of meaning and recognition. In Goffman's Dramaturgic model, he argues that social life is like a performance people play roles on the "front stage" and manage impressions to fit social expectations where everyday behaviour (how one speaks, dresses, or

moves) is therefore a strategic performance shaped by power and norms. But within that performance, there is also agency: people can adjust, manipulate, or subtly subvert the script. Goffman, therefore argues that the concept of micropolitics is viewed as performance which are the small negotiations or manoeuvre that individual functions to manage power, maintain dignity, or resist domination in interactional settings. Both Mead and Goffman reveal that the political is embedded in the everyday that power is not only institutional but relational, exercised through communication, body language, and emotion and resistance is often micro, appearing in gestures, silence, or controlled self-presentation. These micro-level acts accumulate to sustain or unsettle broader power relations. This is why Goldfarb (2008) drawing from both Mead and Goffman argues that the sociology of micropolitics must pay attention to “the politics of small things” as in how interaction itself becomes a site of political action and meaning-making.

Goldfarb argues that discipline and social control happen through surveillance, categorization, and the routine actions of both the occupiers and the occupied. However, in these same spaces, tactical and negotiated subversions, acts of dignity, and everyday negotiations reveal cracks and loopholes in dominant power structures. These micro-political dialogues are what Goldfarb calls as “the politics of small things.” Myopic everyday acts of conversations, dissent and reimagining definitions create political alternatives as argued by this theory. Here, micropolitics is defined as a major component of political governance but it also acts as an extension of larger political institutions. This help to glue or preserve the balance of political authority through factors of sense of expressions, surveillance and regulation. This helps us to comprehend the truth of daily myopic political expressions as well as the sovereignty of ordinary life.

We can understand here how women on a daily basis cope with everyday negotiations tacitly in a patriarchal surrounding whose very aim is to limit their existence and practices. Their sense of agency is preserved by these interactions which forms the very core of micropolitical nuances, which creeps in subtly, in covert manner, in everyday engagement through bodily practices and a sense of being. Therefore, the discourse of power can be understood as both strongly applied and but also weakened in our everyday affairs through these subtle negotiations. Here, by integrating new materialist thoughts and Goldfarb’s notion of “politics of small things”, the realm of body, therefore

becomes a political position, which leads us to conclude that material factors and existential expressions blend together to give rise to new opportunities for a space to cleverly negotiate, interpersonal power dynamics and dissent to resist the existing hegemony. Kandiyoti's (1988) patriarchal bargaining argues that women submit to conventional gender norms to gain power and authority in a situation, which aligns with Goldfarb's notion of micropolitics. As both the perspectives argue that power struggles take place in normal conversations and outside the political settings. Similarly, taking Butler's (1990) notion of performativity, the core gendered practices in a patriarchy manifest in the repeated acts of submission and compliance. Therefore, what forms the very bubble of micropolitics are the women's subtle bodily practices and expressions like denial, sexuality, silence, use of humour etc., and these everyday daily transactions are what turn into political acts of change and management. Through these micropolitics of everyday life, Goldfarb's argument comprehends how women's sexual and fertility choices function, which also aligns with feminist notion of gendered dissent. Daily normal doxic performances are all forms a part of politically charged space where women subtly resist against conventional power structures in accordance to their sexuality, reproduction.

Postfeminist discourse argues that women are not just submissive actors rather who conform to established social norms but they actively engage in the realm of sexuality. However, this autonomy is associated with factors of neo-liberalism, expressions of control, independence through individual obligations, here, sexual free will means another way of keeping women in a strict surveillance. Therefore, the patriarchal hegemony is not shattered by the change but rather power comes covertly where women themselves with internalizing those social norms strictly surveillance themselves only. Gill (2003) argued that contemporary media and advertising reframe femininity through a new form of sexual agency that is arranged around subjectification rather than objectification. Gill (2003) and McRobbie (2009) examines how postfeminist discourse has restudied and redefined empowerment through individual autonomy and choice, self-expression, and control over one's own body. The argument contends that this focus on the individual often hides or covers the structural gender inequalities in a conventional patriarchal situation that still exist and is very much alive. Therefore, in this context, controlling the body through consumption, sexuality, or self-presentation becomes a place of emotional control. Women internalize and act out freedom while

dealing with disciplinary power. Goldfarb's (2008) discourse of politics of small things aligns with this idea. It shows that even in liminal regulated and structurally closed spaces, covert, simple and micro - actions like silences, refusals, or small deviations can hold political weight. Therefore, micropolitics can be comprehended as how everyday negotiations arise out of resistance and compliance, where Goldfarb's micro-political acts and postfeminist empowerment cohabit. Women's sexual and reproductive negotiations thus emerge as deeply affective practices situated within this contradictory space at once shaped by neoliberal ideals of autonomy and animated by the quiet, relational politics of survival and dissent.

Concluding Remark

This essay has explored how women's sexual and reproductive autonomy is influenced in everyday life by the intersections of body, space, and agency. The paper contend and made an argument that power emerges not only through institutions or ideologies but also through the material and emotional negotiations of everyday life, using feminist-poststructuralist and new materialist frameworks. Women's bodies become micropolitical locations where structural factors like class, patriarchy, and cultural expectations are imprinted on them and subtly contested. Through acts of negotiation, repetition, and relational forms of self-determination, women continually challenge and rewrite the bounds of power in these embodied spaces.

Both Goldfarb and postfeminist theorist studies power in everyday life, especially in covert acts of interactions, emotions, and performances. Goldfarb's and postfeminist micropolitics both show that the personal and everyday aspects of life are deeply political. They are profoundly influenced by the interconnections and interactions among the notions of power, emotions, and social meanings. This common ground shows that the overt manoeuvre of domination and resistance happens not necessarily through overt and grand politics, but can also occur through the subtle, physical negotiations that happen in everyday life affairs which are often covert. The micropolitics of everyday life, whether flows through acts of conformity or submission, silence, or defiance, shows how women navigate, sustain, and subtly restructure or reshape conventional power structures in personal and social space. Hence, in this way, the ordinary becomes political, and the discourse of body acts as both the means and the place for these negotiated tactics.

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