

ADAM MICKIEWICZ UNIVERSITY IN POZNAŃ

Journal of Gender and Power

Vol. 1, No. 1, 2014



POZNAŃ 2014

Journal of Gender and Power is aimed at providing an international forum for discussing various issues and processes of gender construction. It is a scholarly, interdisciplinary journal, which features articles in all fields of gender studies, drawing on various paradigms and approaches. We invite scholars to submit articles and reviews reporting on theoretical considerations and empirical research.

Journal of Gender and Power is published
by Faculty of Educational Studies, Adam Mickiewicz University (Poznań – Poland).

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Publikacja sfinansowana przez Wydział Studiów Edukacyjnych UAM

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Wersja pierwotna czasopisma: drukowana

Redaktor techniczny: Elżbieta Rygielska

Łamanie komputerowe: Eugeniusz Strykowski

Opracowanie komputerowe okładek: K. & S. Szurpit

ISBN 978-83-232-2732-8

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Editor's Preface

We are pleased to present the first issue of the *Journal of Gender and Power* published by the Department of Multicultural Education and Social Inequality Research at the Faculty of Educational Studies at the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań.

The magazine is interdisciplinary in nature, and its main objective is to create a platform for debate focused on the question of how cultural gender is built and rebuilt in contemporary societies. Without doubt, the dynamics of changing sexual identities of femininity and masculinity in contemporary societies deserves detailed academic discussion (also through comparison with historical context). Some decades ago, it would seem easy to answer the question on what it means to be a woman and what it means to be a man. Currently, there are many ways of carrying out femininity and masculinity, or carrying out cultural gender. It is accompanied by increasing theoretical pluralism as far as approaches to femininity and masculinity go, and an increasing confrontation of various ideological approaches.

The foundation of the *Journal of Gender and Power* does not originate from any preassumptions, although the category of equality certainly is its elementary message. On the other hand, the category of power present in its title may have several connotations. One can refer to its post-structural interpretation where power constitutes truth and is part of a fight on the meanings ascribed to social life, and femininity and masculinity. However, power can also refer to opportunities as far as carrying out one's own subjectivity in building one's own femininity or masculinity goes. In turn, in analyses on power it is also possible to make attempts at understanding how it is used by dominating groups to build social inequalities, including gender inequalities.

We assume that the *Journal of Gender and Power* will be a forum for interdiscourse and interparadigmatic dialogue among representatives of various options, in the theoretical, ideological and methodological contexts. We also assume that each issue will include texts in culture studies

and sociology that go beyond the issue of gender in the strict sense of the word, providing a detailed background for understanding gender processes.

You are welcome to publish in *Journal of Gender and Power*.

Agnieszka Gromkowska-Melosik
Editor-in-Chief



Vol. 1, No. 1, 2014

Zygmunt Bauman
University of Leeds (United Kingdom)

Gender and Power – Introduction

“Power” means the ability *to have things done*. “Soft” power means persuading/cajoling/tempting/seducing the prospective doers to do them. “Hard” power means forcing/compelling them to do. The stake of all and any power struggle, whether deploying soft or hard arms, is the gaining or defending the already acquired ability to decide *which things are to be done*. On that latter point, adversaries in the power struggle are of different mind. They struggle because their selection of things that needs to be done differ.

The ability to decide what kind of things are to be done and which ones should be avoided or undone is called “politics.” In the last account, power struggle is a struggle for access to politics: for political rights – for genuine political rights, that is for the rights complemented with the capacity of deploying them. Such capacity demands possession of resources, which the use and effective application of possessed rights requires. There is quite a long list of such resources – starting from the ability to articulate and to voice own preferences, through the ability to make them heard where they need to be heard and listened to by those to whom they have been addressed, and up to the bargaining or fighting assets – that is the means of causing one’s own preferences to prevail over those of one’s adversaries. Power struggle are a common, indeed ubiquitous phenomenon in the life of society because the preferences, derived as a rule from individual or group interests or from what individuals and/or groups believe such interests to be, tend to become and remain differentiated and all too often at loggerheads with each other. Sometimes diverse interests are believed, rightly or wrongly, to be mutually irreconcilable. Power struggle is bound to remain a common occurrence as long as human interests or their group-related images stay in conflict.

We can read in the Wikipedia, believed to excel in fast updating of whatever passes currently for authoritative opinion, that “gender is a range of physical, mental, and behavioral characteristics distinguishing between masculinity and femininity. Depending on the context, the term may refer to biological sex (i.e. the state of being male, female or inter-sex), social roles (as in gender roles), or gender identity.” A closer scrutiny would reveal though that the ostensible authority of the quoted above definition is conditional on certain tacitly accepted assumptions that in their turn have been bestowed a well-nigh axiomatic status by overt though more often surreptitious and covert work already accomplished by hard and soft varieties of power.

The fact that one concept may encompass in a common and seldom challenged opinion features as distinct and above all as heterogeneous as biological differences between the two sexes of the human species and the roles assigned to them in the social division of labour and social assignment of identities is the sediment of that work of powers. Comprising biological and cultural features in one notion, treating them as attributes/aspects of the same entity, endorses an accomplishment of powers bent on “naturalizing the cultural”: that is, depicting the historical product of human choices as the no-appeal-allowed verdict of nature – as if the link was primordial and immune to manipulation. In other words, as if the social distribution of rights and duties, assets and liabilities followed the distinctions pre-designed and pre-determined by nature (nature being in this case a synonym of “staying beyond human power”).

But the differentiation of social standings does not follow nature-produced distinctions. In the building of social order (another name for a social hierarchy of privileges and deprivations) nature-produced distinctions are used at the utmost as building blocks or reference points for a mechanism of creating and putting in operation an altogether different set of *social* distinctions only loosely related to their alleged natural causes and in no way determined by them. Claude Levi-Strauss, the great 20th Century anthropologist, pinpointed the human-made (invented by humans and by humans imposed on human reality) prohibition of incest – norm that used blood bonds to segregate women into eligible and non-eligible for sexual intercourse – as a hypothetic starting, but also pattern-setting point of such procedure; a procedure millennia-old yet still very much in use in the current introductions and promotions of cultural norms. Investigation of the role of power in the creation of gen-

der-related diversification of socially ascribed human roles, behavioral patterns and identities is by no means limited in its eye-opening potential to the practitioners of the specialist gender studies. It may, if properly conducted, offer an invaluable insight into the power-driven mechanisms omnipresent in the production and reproduction of all and any manifestations of human diversity, divisions and multi-dimensional inequality.



ARTICLES



Vol. 1, No. 1, 2014

Lawrence Grossberg
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Some preliminary conjunctural thoughts on countercultures

ABSTRACT. The article is devoted to analysis of various countercultures aspects. The Author hypothesizes that the forms of contemporary politics are the result of two fundamentally inter-related strategic vectors. First is built upon a politics of resentment, setting "ordinary" folks against the socio-cultural elite which constituted to the "new right" movement. Second vector is originated of counterculture of the 1960s. The author states that counterculture exists without a singular identity. It is a space of hybridity and heterogeneity. On the other hand counterculture is related to the concept of contemporary ambivalence as well it transforms of affective experience of everyday life. Another feature of counterculture is connected with the conviction that counterculture stands against of dominant culture. Also the author puts counterculture movements against various aspects of new american modernity including reconstruction of the practice of the hegemony, as well as through popular culture and reconstruction of the „left" and „right" ideology and practice.

KEYWORDS: counterculture, hegemony, „left," „right," popular culture, american modernity

Politics in the United States – I leave open questions of other places, and also the broader questions of global politics – have been strange for well over fifty years and they are getting stranger almost every week. Intermittently, during this half-century, they have also been very scary, and this (May 2010) is one of those moments I fear. I have been trying for some time to think about the uncanny nature of contemporary politics, and why it sometimes shades into the threatening, and how it is so powerfully articulated through and to the popular. I want to present here both a backward glance at some of my efforts and an early and tentative set of questions as I glance forward.

Any history of the present has to have multiple starting points, but regardless of what story one is trying to tell, one of the starting points has to be the 1960s, and it is not coincidental that, over the past years, comparisons of the present have increased dramatically: Obama and JFK, Iraq-Afghanistan and Vietnam, the Cold War and the War on Terrorism, and most controversially, the counterculture and the Tea Parties.

In fact, I might hypothesize that the forms and configurations of contemporary politics are the result of two fundamentally interrelated strategic vectors that “originated in the 60s: on the one hand, Nixon’s invention and deployment (after his defeat by JFK) of a strategy built upon a politics of *ressentiment*, setting “ordinary” folks against the socio-cultural elite (although it was the very ability to manipulate the distribution of the population into these categories that was the heart of this strategy).¹ This became, and has remained, a dominant political practice of at least some key fractions of the “new right.”

And on the other hand, from the Left as it were, the politics of the past fifty years have been shaped by the vectors defined, set loose and precluded by the so-called counterculture of the 1960s. In fact, we can say not only that the new right emerges in part as a reaction against the counterculture and its consequences, but that it also has adopted, over the decades, a variety of countercultural strategies. In fact, the questions I want to explore involve the existence – on the right and on the left – of countercultures today. Or to put it differently, I wonder if the concept of a counterculture may not be useful in understanding key moments of U.S. politics over the past half-century, including the present moment.

But if that is the case, we have to think about what is at stake in the notion of a counterculture. The term was, after all, invented in the 60s, ostensibly to describe what its inventor, Theodore Roszak, thought to be a new phenomenon.² Yet, as insightful and popular as his original work may have been, I want to suggest that Roszak confused empirical description with conceptual invention. In Roszak’s terms – and apparently, according to many of its current defenders who vehemently object to the term being applied to any right wing movements such as the tea parties, any counterculture would have to closely resemble that of the 1960s; but this seems to me to preclude any effort to use the concept to understand the specificity of the political assemblage in ways that might prove useful beyond the specific actualization in the 60s. That is, I want to think of countercultures both conceptually and conjuncturally. I do not

¹ Obviously, it is not a matter of Nixon’s authorship, but rather his ability to make such a practice viable over a span of decades. I am well aware that Nixon is often accused of having formulated a contemporary politics of race, and while this is also true, the uniqueness of his appeals to racism was precisely their articulation into this more general politics.

² There is some controversy about the origin of the term ... but the most common story supports Roszak’s claim.

want to define it by the sixties, but rather, to define the 60s as one conjunctural actualization of a counterculture.

Let me then try to define the specific discursive formation or machinic assemblage that constitutes the existence of a countercultural politics. For the moment, I do not assume that they are all necessary but I do assume that, taken together, they are sufficient for the existence of a counterculture. I would propose six characteristics:

1. A counterculture exists without a singular identity; it has no unifying value, politics, ideology, etc. It is rather a space of variation, hybridity and experimentation, whose practices, movements, formations and struggles are dispersed throughout the spaces of social institutions and everyday life.

That heterogeneity can be described in any number of different dimensions or cartographies including: (a) political (e.g. using Williams' distinctions between oppositional, alternative and independent on the one hand, and dominant, residual and emergent on the other); (b) normative – as a map of values and themes (the map of the 60s counterculture included central notions of love, experience, creativity, the present, authentic individuality, etc. as well as any number of contradictions, e.g., individual/community), but there are no guarantees what those values are or how they are differently configured; (c) pragmatic – as a map of the variety of practices, including political, spiritual, communal-lifestyle, and cultural; and finally, (d) a subcultural map, describing the dispersed space that, in the 1960s, would have included the political radicals, the new communalists (and spiritualists) and the more aesthetico-political groups such as the Yippies., with much of the space filled in by various – in fact the majority population – hybrid formations, groups and individuals.

2. If a counterculture is a space of diversity and multiplicity, it also occupies a unique temporality, which I will call a temporal ambivalence, which gives rise to a specific ambiguity about its own sense of agency and its place in time or, to put it differently, about the inevitability of change and hence, about its role or responsibility to that change. This was, in the 1960s, embodied in the very idea of the Age of Aquarius, which was coming whether we accepted it or not, although at the same time, the members of the counterculture assumed that they had a responsibility to usher in that new era, if not to bring it about. Perhaps more John the Baptist than Jesus, the very act of heralding change brings about the very change it announces.

3. A counterculture is lived by its population as a vital (and sometimes overwhelming) reality; it transforms the affective experience of everyday life, defining an integral and highly charged intensive part or dimension of shared life. While it is not necessarily lived as a visible subcultural identity (although it is for some, at least at certain times), it does provide a self-defining sense of one's place within the larger social spaces.

4. Despite number (1) above, a counterculture does have a sense of unity, which maybe constituted, as it was in the 60s, partly through shared map of values, but it is better characterized as an affective unity, lived as cartographies of orientations and mobilities. That sense of unity may be defined by a shared sense of opposition (see number 5) or, again as in the 60s, by a shared sociological identity (e.g. generational). More often than not, that unity is created from the outside (by the media) and depends on the central role of culture in countercultures (see no. 6).

5. A counterculture stands against the "mainstream/dominant" culture; its judgment is totalizing, rejecting the ground of fundamental structures, the ways of being, established and protected by the existing formations and practices of power. At least in the 60s, taken as a unity, the counterculture had no design on or desire to take over the institutions of power. In that sense, it was a revolution against the state itself as both a site of power and its possible solution. Seen from another angle, the counterculture can be understood to have stood against power itself, even if it seemed at times to want to change specific relations and institutions of power.

6. All of this both demands and is made possible by the centrality of culture in a counterculture. Culture is its pervasive environment. Countercultures work on, in, with and through cultural formations and practices; they are bound together through the popular – e.g., drugs, style and music – so that we can say that the counterculture produced the very culture that in turn constituted its very unity and gave expression to its totalizing judgment of the status quo. It is/was the culture that defines a field – a set of apparatuses – of belonging for its population. Culture defines not a shared identity (there are many identities, including some subcultural identities, possible within a counterculture) but a space and logic of identifications. And consequently, it simultaneously defines a system of vectors of attraction and movement into the counterculture (or what in more traditional terms might be described as mechanisms of recruitment).

The centrality of culture may help to explain the crucial importance of education (and the university) in the 1960s. But the result of the structuring dominance of the popular as affective realm to the counter-culture's sense of itself and its position against the dominant culture was that it left the "enemy" largely undefined (the system, the man, Catch-22) and under-analyzed, so that many different groups understood it differently. In an odd sense, the fact that the core of the counterculture is located in the popular means that it is always more likely that its attention will be focused on forms of difference from (and even resistance – broadly defined – to) the mainstream, rather than on researching and theorizing that mainstream.

Understanding the emergence of such a cultural-political machine requires locating it within its conjuncture, in this case at least, post WWII United States, characterized by: on the one hand, the hegemony of a particular set of institutional structures and compromises, combining specific forms of capitalism, democracy, difference and exclusion, social mobility, cold war politics (nuclear and containment militarisms), etc.; and on the other hand, a particular complex and contradictory structure of feeling constituted by, at the very least, a demand for conformity and consensus based on a sense of accomplishment, relief, comfort (economic boom) and superiority, a powerful experience of anxiety (the bomb, communism), the celebration of expertise on the one hand and youth on the other. Articulated together, these shaped the fragile establishment, the apparent victory, of a certain way of being modern, a certain understanding of "America," although it had been in the making for at least fifty to seventy years, comprising what I have called "liberal modernity."

But this is an insufficient conjunctural story, for just as this formation was becoming hegemonic (or at least appeared to be), it was also being resisted, attacked and sometimes just ignored as a way of living and as a way of being modern. What is really interesting is that such struggles against the mainstream came from all directions, from all sides and aspects of the political, social and cultural life of the nation. It is in this context that I understand the emergence of the particular configuration of youth and popular music/culture that I have called the "rock formation." Refusing for the most part (except at very specific moments, often as much by the mainstream as by those in the formation itself) to be articulated to either ideological or institutional politics, it offered an affective politics aimed against the dominant structure of feeling and its

lived expression in everyday life.³ It defined a different kind of politics (I am not claiming that it was historically new or unconditioned), refusing the reification of the political and its demand for unities.⁴ The counterculture emerged out of this quotidian and affective formation, as the result of a series of events and articulations.

After thirty years of attacks from the right and the left, from various identity formations and even various capitalist formations, the liberal modern mainstream has become little more than a veneer. In fact, it has been supplanted by a series of less stable, less confident scenarios, constituted by a continuously morphing struggles, as a variety of temporary settlements among various fractions and alliances, seeking to establish a new dominant and within it, perhaps less necessarily, perhaps less obviously, a new mainstream, which taken together would again define a new American modernity, a new way of being modern and American. This new structure of feeling, however difficult to pin down, is characterized by an increasing sense of anxiety and insecurity (brought on largely through government deregulation, allowing risk to be moved down the economic scale), a sacralization of markets as defining both freedom and morality, a sense of national decline with an almost paranoid sense of superiority and/or inferiority, and a growing partisanship and refusal not only to compromise but to grant any respect to the other side (cutting across politics, culture and knowledge) and characterizing a growing array of social, cultural and political positions. I might suggest that if the liberal modernity of the post war formation established everyday life as the primary plane on which people defined their lives (and power struggles appear to be waged), the contemporary conjuncture has at the very least made everyday life increasingly precarious, and might even be in the process of dismantling everyday life itself.

That means that, increasingly but beginning after the Second World War, politics is being played out on the plane of affective, quotidian politics, the plane on which first the rock formation and then the counterculture were established. Raising the question of counterculture today is then not a matter of nostalgia (although there may be positive moments of nostalgia involved) nor a question of judging when and if some au-

³ I use everyday life here not as equivalent with daily life but as a specific historical possibility, following Lefebvre and my own writings on the subject.

⁴ This is not the same as an alliance politics, which is based on a series of compromises between various unities.

thentic counterculture has been “co-opted,”⁵ either by the right or the left. In the contemporary context, the question of countercultures raises – in no uncertain terms – the problem of the popular and the cultural side of the problematics of capitalism on the one hand and democracy on the other (against all vanguardisms).⁶ It makes visible – almost unavoidable – questions about how one mobilizes people’s affective alienations – dissatisfactions, anger, uncertainties, collapsed dreams – and expectations, hopes, and dreams, with the state of society, into new forms of political practice and agency. It returns us, albeit read differently, to Gramsci’s understanding of hegemony as working on and through the popular and to a reformed problematic of political agency: how one mobilizes people affectively into or away from political projects.

At the same time, it has to be said that, if I am right to suggest that the conditions of hegemonic struggle, as well as the structures of feeling, have changed so much, then the terms of analysis with which one might have understood the “rock formation” are unlikely to work today, although I do not mean to suggest that the rock formation does not continue to have an affective presence and force at least at some social sites. But it no longer describes the most powerful logics and articulations of the popular. This is not to say that popular culture – or popular music – does not matter to its fans, but that it does not matter in the same way, for very complex reasons, including the changing affective place of “youth” and the increasing importance of both technology and economics as sites of popular insecurity and investment.

Let me now return to the question of the continuing presence, emergence, articulation and re-articulation of contemporary countercultures. One has to, following on what I have said here, ask what formations, what struggles, what spaces emerging and existing today can or even should be described as countercultures or whether they are, despite superficial similarities, something else conceptually. Here I can only begin to speculate and offer some observations about the right and the left (recognizing that these terms do not work as effortlessly and seam-

⁵ After all, the 1960s in the U.S. was a moment in which largely commercial popular culture (origins do not after all determine one’s place in an economic system) was, in a variety of ways, articulated to the political. This was the source of at least some of both its weaknesses and its strengths.

⁶ In that sense, the US counterculture of the 1960s is more useful at this moment than the intellectually and politically more interesting European versions, whether in France or Italy, in the 1960s.

lessly as they were thought to in the past, and that many people would refuse such binary designations).

I want to suggest that that the contemporary left is in fact characterized by just the sort of space of differences and creativity that is the beginning of a countercultural formation. This includes: the anti- and alter-globalization movements; new and long-standing communalist groups, sometimes referred to as the “social and consciousness movement” (see the work of David Korten’s *Great Turning*, Paul Hawken’s *Blessed Unrest*, and Paul Ray’s *Cultural Creatives*, as examples); some versions of social entrepreneurialism; new spiritualisms; techno-utopians; various progressive political struggles; certain popular music formations (e.g., techno-nomads); and various groups committed to a variety of cultural, performative and aesthetic practices of politics. In fact, this explosion of diversity and creativity far exceeds anything in the 60s, so that it can sometimes seem like there are just too many groups, too many issues, etc. This is partly explainable because of the increasing global awareness and operation of such groups juxtaposed to their often increasing localism, the increasing tendency to organize in terms of single-issue struggles (even if they do understand that everything is connected) and the increasing sense of the possibilities for struggle (and hence for more pragmatic strategies) within “the mainstream” itself.

Many of these groups and formations overlap. All of them (according to Hawken, they number literally in the millions) believe in alternative futures, alternative worlds, alternative economies, although they may mean different things by such terms. For many of the participants in these many groups and practices, these struggles are vital and constitutive elements of their lives without constituting a simple or single identity. And yet, while all of this suggests the existence of something we might want to call a counterculture, at least two interesting and significant elements seems to argue against it. First, even while some of these groups do see themselves as part of a “movement of movement,” more often than not, that space of diversity is limited to their own formation. Many of these groups and formations simply do not know that the others exist or, just as problematically, they do not acknowledge a commonality with each other. For example, too often, the splits that emerged in the 60s between hippies, yippies and politicians (an artificial distinction since most countercultural participants existed in the hybrid spaces between these formations), have become even more reified as different political strategies (independent, alternative and oppositional – but now one

would have to add yet another category for resistance within the mainstream).

Second, and perhaps even more importantly, the enormous diversity of the counterculture not only in terms of values, definitions of “the enemy,” strategies and practices, and groups, has resulted in enormous social diversity as well. This is no longer a generationally centered counterculture, but one dispersed across all the possible social categories, including generations, nationalities and ethnicities, class, etc. It is not surprising, therefore, that there is no common culture, but I think, the current potentiality of a counterculture (or of a multiplicity of countercultures) is constrained by the absence of any cultural forms or practices capable of constituting an affective space of belonging together, a space of identification and, as I have already argued, a space by which people can follow vectors into the counterculture. This largely explains the paradox: if the potential counterculture is as large and active as I have suggested, why is it so invisible? The question is: Is it possible to have a counterculture without a popular discourse, “without a song”?

The situation on the right is even more difficult, and I must admit that I have only begun to try to understand the landscape. I have argued before that the success of the New Right (with and following the rise of Ronald Reagan, etc.) depends in part on its ability to appropriate and rearticulate a variety of countercultural strategies from the rock formation and the 60s counterculture. The “tea party movement” – however frightening it may be – poses interesting and real questions for anyone interested in contemporary cultural and political struggles. Yet, the left continues to tell the same stories and dismiss such popular movements as based in false consciousness, or ignorance, or even bigotry. Such decisions to ignore “where people are” and to refuse to engage with the popular hopes, fears, languages and logics of calculation – as well as with the strategies of other political positions engaged in the same struggle over the imagination of the coming modernity is one of the very reasons that the various articulations of a new conservatism continue to reassert themselves in sometimes very successful and influential ways. After all, bad stories make bad politics! If nothing else, the left, it seems to me, has failed to see or take seriously just how polarized the political culture of the United States has become, and how various left fractions have themselves contributed to many of the dimensions of this polarization.

The tea party movement is ambiguously placed in relation to traditional party politics – both inside and outside. Defining themselves

somewhere between the political (against big government and taxes) and the cultural (nationalism, constitutionalism, often religion), the tea parties were called into existence at the intersection of George W. Bush's failed presidency (failed because, retrospectively – and only retrospectively – it failed to meet the expectations and hopes of certain conservative fractions and values) and the election of Barack Obama (and the apparent resurgence of liberalism that it expressed). It is, without any doubt, a populist movement, without any obvious leaders – although they do have a variegated and even contradictory set of expressive spokespersons taken from various public domains, each speaking to some sub-set of groups. The movement is a space of diversity – and yes, even creativity and experimentation – with some groups leaning toward party and electoral politics (strategizing to get rid of incumbents and even, perhaps, take back the Republican Party through involvement at the precinct level⁷), others threatening violence (and explicitly forming alliances with the militia movement) and still others more ambiguously expressing dissatisfaction with the political and social direction of the country and engaging in often more cultural forms of protest. It has even proved to be difficult to get a demographic portrait of the movement, presumably because it is impossible to define membership or even a strictly representative event. Instead, in terms of values, practices or politics, the tea party movement is an emergent formation without a center.

That the movement is affective is rather obvious, because their “ideological position” is so visibly contradictory. It is an anti-democratic war waged in the name of democracy. It is willing to defend the constitution at all costs, including violating the most fundamental principles and articles of the constitution. In the name of the people, it attacks the popular. And in the name of the popular, it attacks the people who would dare assert their values over that of the market or the movement. But if we try to understand it ideologically, we will fail – because what drives it is less a coherent political position, or a set of values and principles, but a loosely configured chaos of responses to a profoundly troubled and deeply felt affective dissatisfaction or alienation; it is the expression of widely felt fears – in a context of norms and hopes that are no longer possible to actualize. And consequently, these movements enact their politics in and through cultural forms rather than the more tradition and

⁷ Which is how Goldwater's supporters first took over the Republican Party.

obvious political tactics. They are, much like the left, fighting the wrong battle with the wrong strategies and tolls. But unlike the left, they speak to a sense of immediacy and frustration that is both deeply personal and deeply historical. It comes not from a position of ethical judgment (or an economy of abstract political sympathy) but from a sense of the lived impossibility of the current conjuncture. And because it speaks of and through the popular, in cultural terms that are widely accessible, it has the potential to have a profound impact. At the very least, we need to take seriously the possibility that it is, in significant ways, a countercultural movement that has to be taken seriously.



Vol. 1, No. 1, 2014

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The masculinization of identity among successful career women? A case study of Polish female managers

ABSTRACT. One of the most fundamental principles which underpins the functioning of Western societies is the gender binary system, based on the eternal division into men and women as well as their social and biological predestination. Critiques of the binary system claim that there is an apparent lack of symmetry between the polar opposites constituting the binary system. The male-female dichotomy appears to be asymmetrical since the binary opposition is viewed as unequal: females are dominated and controlled by males and forced to perform less significant, minor (less valued) social roles. Binarism refers to identity and social roles, as well as to physical attributes of females and males. The consequence of binarism on the realm of physicality is the view that a woman is obliged to constantly improve her attractiveness so that she could be “won over in an impressive way” by “the best possible partner.” The main aim of this article is examination of social anxiety over the effects of women’s emancipation, which is believed to give rise to the masculinization of females, particularly those who have achieved social and professional success, and aspire to (or have already acquired) a high social status, income, or professional position. The theoretical considerations are confronted with results of the qualitative research related to female managers’ identity.

KEYWORDS: masculinization, identity, career, emancipation, female managers

One of the most fundamental principles which underpins the functioning of Western societies is the gender binary system, based on the eternal division into men and women as well as their social and biological predestination. Critiques of the binary system claim that there is an apparent lack of symmetry between the polar opposites constituting the binary system (Melosik, 1996, p. 28). The male-female dichotomy appears to be asymmetrical since the binary opposition is viewed as unequal: females are dominated and controlled by males and forced to perform less significant, minor (less valued) social roles. Binarism refers to identity and social roles, as well as to physical attributes of females and males. The consequence of binarism on the realm of physicality is the view that a woman is obliged to constantly improve her attractiveness so that she could be “won over in an impressive way” by “the best possible partner.” The es-

sence of the binary approach, which surprisingly seems to interweave Orthodox Christian beliefs with the views put forward by socio-biologists such as D. Morris (2000, 1997, 2006), lies in unavoidable biological essentialism, which refers to both males' and females' identity characteristics as well as to the attributes of their appearance. The main criticism about the concept of binarism is that it provides an explanation for a patriarchal structure of society, and perpetuates social inequality as well as the phenomenon of social exclusion of women (Gromkowska, 2002; Melosik, 2010; Bem, 2000; Bordieu, 2004; Sloop, 2004).

As a result of the process of women's emancipation the principle of binarism was gradually undermined. It turned out that the concept of essentialism, which refers to the characteristics exhibited by females and males, and to different social roles they perform, is no longer considered to be "unavoidable," but proves to have been formulated and applied by men, in a male-dominated power structure. It seems that the essentialist view was imposed on the society in order to provide justification for the existence of the type of relationships between men and women which would sanction male dominance over females. It has been established beyond doubt that women's emancipation affected these relationships, giving rise to changes in identity as well as in appearance. Decade-to-decade observations revealed that female and male characteristics have been "blending," which is observable in all aspects and dimensions of men's and women's functioning. However, aspirations towards becoming a "real" woman or a "real" man in the traditional sense still exist both in "collective" social awareness and in the minds of millions of individual females and males. Thus, paradoxically, it appears that currently the phenomenon of decreasing the gender differences coincides with dreams of an embodiment of "absolute" femininity or masculinity, which constitute an intrinsic element of patriarchal ideology.

The aforementioned comments should serve as an introduction to further examination of social anxiety over the effects of women's emancipation, which is believed to give rise to the masculinization of females, particularly those who have achieved social and professional success, and aspire to (or have already acquired) a high social status, income, or professional position.

Upon this a question arises: whether it is true that the principles which govern the functioning of large hierarchized organizations and social institutions refer also to the features that underlie a traditional male identity? It seems that the question should be answered in the af-

firmative. Large organizations and institutions, particularly corporations and large business companies are, metaphorically speaking, rational, self-confident, determined, success- (profit-) and power- oriented, and focused on efficiency and good results. They are also "dispassionate" and able to undertake accurate and precise operations. The aforementioned characteristics are believed have been displayed by men in traditionally patriarchal societies. However, organizations and institutions cannot exhibit the features which in traditional societies were regarded as attributes of traditional femininity, that is to say, they cannot be emotional, empathic, thoughtful, delicate or sensual since this would significantly decrease their competitiveness or even threaten their existence. Metaphorically speaking, a large firm "is a male." Accordingly, making successful professional career in such an institution is possible only for individuals who embody its "principles," that is to put it simply, its masculinity (decidedly in its traditional form). History of large institutions shows that it was predominantly men who, owing to their male identity characteristics corresponding to the masculine features (and meeting expectations) of the firm, had an opportunity to "work their way up the career ladder" and achieve professional and institutional success. There is no escaping the fact that through traditional socialization, men developed certain traits which are identified as indispensable in institutional and professional life; whereas women assumed specific roles related to their positions in the private sphere (e.g. a mother, a wife or a housewife), as well as traditional "subservient" and "female" roles related to their professional career, which they started to perform having entered the job market (e.g. a nurse, a shop-assistant or a teacher).

It is beyond doubt that the western women who are focused on institutional and professional success are forced to compete against men. However, it should be remembered that through the process of socialization men acquired the traits which are identified as useful for large firms. Whereas, (traditional) socialization of women seems to defy the logic of the companies. Hence, in order to achieve success, women are forced to accept "masculinity" of the firms they work for, and adjust their social and identity functioning to the principles of a traditional male identity. It is also obvious that a woman who enters the competition against men, and wants to "climb the ladder of professional career," cannot, metaphorically speaking, "afford to cry." In other words, she is not allowed to express the aforementioned emotions in an excessive way, or be carried away by mood swings, empathy, compassion or con-

cern. In order to achieve institutional success, a woman needs to be able to function in compliance with the logic of the institution which she is working for, that is to say, she must be "very masculine."

In the light of the aforementioned observations, it would be interesting to mention the "fear of masculinization," which many females tend to experience more or less consciously when entering the professions that have been labeled as typically masculine. C. F. Epstein points to a clash between discourses of traditional femininity, remaining in Western society, and the qualities required for a professional woman. In order to become a professional achiever (particularly in such fields as medicine, law or management) a female has to possess such "personality attributes" which are generally recognized as masculine. Moreover, the sociologist maintains that women in traditionally male occupations are, as it were, deprived of their gender characteristics. Consequently, they are faced with a choice whether to maintain identity characteristics corresponding to traditional femininity, or to adopt a masculine persona (Epstein, 1973, p. 22-3). (The television series *Ally McBeal*, focusing on American women lawyers, proves to be a perfect example of controversy surrounding the identity of a female high-achiever) (Gromkowska-Melosik, 2002).

It is also a fact that a woman who aspires to achieve professional success, particularly to gain a position of power and decision-making, gets, as it were, "caught in a trap." If she displays traditional characteristics of her cultural gender (femininity), a woman will undoubtedly be doomed to professional failure since her power and authority can easily be challenged by her male subordinates, or the men who compete with her. On the other hand, if a woman decides to assume stereotypical masculine traits of a team leader, she certainly lays herself open to the charge that she is "losing her femininity." What strategies do females employ to cope with the problem of masculinization of their identity and appearance? Some of them tend to mitigate the problem at the very outset, by making specific educational choices. A large body of research shows that both females and males regard professional success, social prestige and income as important criteria of life success. Then, one might expect that women would enroll in and graduate from programmes of study that would lead to better-paying and higher-status positions in the future (Bradley, 2000, p. 3).

In practice, however, a crucial factor which determines women's educational choices that lead to low-paying and low-status occupations importance is cultural transmission (Bradley, 2000, p. 4).

In this way women escape the masculinization of their identity and life. Those of the females who are ready to compete with men, following the principles of male logic and rationality, do not feel “ambivalent” about, or have trouble accepting and adopting a masculine identity. They graduate from the fields that are regarded as masculine, enter traditionally male-dominated occupations and decide to make a successful career in large corporations. Accordingly, women “eradicate” their useless traditionally feminine characteristics, and willingly adopt a masculine “corporate persona,” accepting all the consequences and avoiding establishing emotionally committed relationships with men, since the females don’t want their personal lives to be “thrown into turmoil,” which is likely to jeopardize the chance of their professional success (Melosik, 2006, p. 59-60).

The hypothesis concerning the masculinization of female high-achievers was also confirmed by research findings which indicate that women in managerial positions are more likely to show resemblance to their professional colleagues than to other women who are not managers. Moreover, as it has been observed by B. Budrowska, the differences between female managers and other women prove to be much bigger than those between male managers and other men. Furthermore, women who hold managerial positions do not build stable relationships with their partners; and are believed to be “self-confident, success-oriented, eager to come to power and focused on making a career” (Budrowska, 2003, p. 79).

There is also an easily observable tendency among such females towards changing their appearance in order to look more (stereotypically) “reliable,” “serious” and “responsible” (in other words – more masculine). They tend to have their hair cut shorter and avoid blonde hair colour (which is likely to trigger stereotypical associations); they keep their lace skirts hidden in closets and put on “female” men’s suits (men’s suits for women). The females usually wear cold-scented perfumes – they opt for fragrances that evoke the atmosphere of “frosty winter” rather a lily or a rose. Occasionally, they undergo various cosmetic procedures such as botox injections or cosmetic surgeries including nose job or chin reshaping, which is aimed at making their facial features more “business-like.” However, while creating their masculine image, they do not forget about female “accessories” which help them maintain their femininity (which is designed to weaken the impression of masculine appearance), which undoubtedly include high-heeled shoes (however, due to the fact

that they are designed to increase height, high heels, to a certain extent, seem to correspond with the logic of masculinization); and jewellery, such as earrings or finger rings (the mechanism seems to resemble that which occurs among female bodybuilders, who tend to enhance their masculine appearance with heavy make-up and saucy female accessories in order to convey the following message to the excited male audience: "I am a woman, after all" (Gromkowska, 1999).

Some of the women who consciously decide to reject traditional female traits in favour of male identity characteristics tend to devalue femininity and adopt the strategies and methods which men employ in their professional life (Kennelly, 2002, p. 610) (it is also E. Mandal who maintains that some female high-achievers accept a male system of values and tend to devalue everything that is associated with femininity; 2000, p. 62-3). It is indeed true that some of the females who hold high professional positions frequently express great contempt for women who are focused on family life, regarding them as "house-bound mothers," and, paradoxically, clinging to the opinion that the latter fail to realize both their life and ... female potential. Such a stance seems to result from the fact that some modern women consider professional success to be an intrinsic part of the process of realization of femininity. This in turn leads to rejection of the fundamental, most widespread Western cultural pre-assumptions regarding women's and men's "nature."

The aforementioned phenomenon has been labeled as the Queen Bee Syndrome, and was first defined by G. L. Staines, T. E. Jayaratne, and C. Tavis in 1973.¹ The term was coined to describe the general phenomenon that successful career females, who accept male-defined standards and value systems, are likely to show disregard for traditional female values as well as other women². Such females, as E. Mandal claims, try to demonstrate their distinctness and tend to distance themselves from other women, since they feel no bonds of gender. According

¹ The term was first used by G. Staines, C. Tavis, T. E. Jayaratne, in the article entitled "The Queen Bee Syndrome" in *The Female Experience*, which was published in a book edited by C. Tavis (Del Mar, California: CRM Books, 1973), as cited in: Blau, DeVaro, 2006, p. 16.

² Interesting results of the research aimed at investigating the Queen Bee Syndrome among female professors were reported by Ellemers *et al.* (2004, p. 325-6) (females who have been successful in an academic career in the fields perceived as male-dominated, are more likely to oppose promoting women in these fields. Moreover, their self-evaluation points to lack of gender identity in this group of females, and demonstrates that they are inclined to view other members of their gender group in gender-stereotypical terms).

to K. Horney, such females try to “escape” from femininity which they regard as worse and less valued than masculinity (Mandal, 2000, p. 21). It would be interesting to mention the results of research concerning the way female leaders of public life in Kenya are perceived. The studies revealed that women who used to achieve success in “big” politics, and were admired for maintaining “quality standards,” are currently considered to be “masculinized conservatives.” Here is a quotation from the research report: „These women were perceived to have become more arrogant, violent and oppressive than men and this change was viewed as detrimental to women leadership as a whole. Such women set an example of ineffective and perverse leadership and prove that —women can’t lead; they just want to replace men” (Daunt Escandon, Mbura Kamungi, 2008).

Thus, having examined the aforementioned aspect of masculinization, especially with respect to successful women’s tendency towards identifying themselves with men, a conclusion can be drawn that there is yet another paradoxical context of women’s emancipation. The females who have achieved career success on the terms dictated by males, while working in firms which function based on traditional male logic, represent, in the neoliberal world, a symbol of emancipated femininity. For who could be a better symbol of emancipative dreams of equality? However, on the other hand, successful women seem to confirm the androcentric (and patriarchal) character of modern culture, particularly “organizational” one, not to mention “corporate culture.”

There is, however, a certain flaw in such reasoning. It needs to be rejected if we assume that essential traditional femininity does not exist “as such,” and that it is solely a form of power that males exert over females. Thus, a woman who adopts a corporate persona, does not lose her original identity, but gets rid of the identity which men have been imposing on her for ages in an attempt to create, or construct themselves in accordance with their views on femininity and life aspirations. It is difficult to settle the issue conclusively.

It is also necessary to emphasize another context of the masculinization of women who are in positions of power. In modern societies women are still viewed as “sex objects” to “conquer.” Consequently, from society’s perspective, one of the most fundamental forms of social stratification of women is not determined by sociological factors (such as social class, education or socio-economic status), but it stems from specific socio-biological criteria related to sexual attractiveness. Research

findings demonstrate that a sense of attractiveness proves to be the most essential component of women's self-esteem. This certainly also applies to successful career women in positions of power. However, in the light of this observation it emerges that women in high power positions are, as it were, "trapped." This results from the fact that on the one hand, the females are perceived by their male subordinates as "sex objects," which they frequently accept in order to realize their femininity (they find various ways of emphasizing "traditional" components of their femininity; some of them even frequently compare their own attractiveness to the attractiveness of their female subordinates). On the other hand, the females seem to be aware of the fact that since they are viewed as "sex objects," there is a risk that their role is limited to such objects (Gromkowska, 2002). This in turn undermines their authority, effectiveness as well as the very "essence" of their power. So how can women in powerful positions remain sexually attractive, and at the same time maintain full control and power? The simplest possible solution is to adopt the traditional male model of functioning and exercising power, and combine it with keeping distance from male colleagues (subordinates) at work. Employing such a strategy would help a woman create the image which is likely to convey the following message: "I might be a beautiful woman on the outside, but I'm a tough man on the inside," which inevitably gives rise to the masculinization of her identity.

Upon this the following questions arise: in what way can a woman cope with the problem of identity masculinization, particularly in the context of the "corporate roles" she is obliged to play? Is it likely that the phenomenon of feminization of power, based predominantly on democratic and horizontal relationships, which is rooted in "traditional femininity," will be accepted in the manipulative world of business and management? (cf. Eagly, Johannesen-Schmidt, 2001, quoted after: Mandal 2008; Mandal, 2008, p. 34, 59; Budrowska, 2003, p. 81; Goodchilds, 1979, quoted after: Mandal 2008).

It seems that in practice, the aforementioned process is likely to occur solely in the area of lower level decision-making. Hence, it is fairly feasible that masculinization will pose a growing dilemma due to an increasing number of "successful career females."

The phenomenon of masculinization of successful career women is the main issue addressed by the present author in the qualitative research, which was conducted in a population of female managers and university academics, using the in-depth semi-structured narrative in-

interview method. The main purpose of the current study was to examine the problem of women's unequal chances of educational, social, and life success; as well as their limited possibilities of adopting the particular types of identity, in the context of females' perception of their access to social and professional career opportunities.

The primary research question has been phrased as follows:

"How do women assess their chances and limitations of using education in life, and how do they view their access to social and professional career opportunities?"

One of the sub-questions addressed in the present study concerned the attitude of the examined females towards the phenomenon of masculinization, and was formulated as follows:

"What is the attitude of career-oriented women towards the potential masculinization of their own appearance, identity as well as the nature of interpersonal relations, and their life style?"

The females comprising the qualitative research sample were selected intentionally. The fundamental selection criteria included sex (only females were included as study subjects) and professional career success (it has to be emphasized that all research participants were higher education graduates). All the female managers who participated in the research are likely to be regarded as successful due to their professional achievements and the positions they currently hold. Each of the female humanist academics has at least a doctoral degree and has been pursuing her academic career. Taking into consideration the standards prevailing in our society, all study participants had broken out of traditional biographical patterns and rejected the gender roles which had been assigned to them by the society, and currently are successful career females (all of the study subjects exhibit the characteristics of A-type personality, and according to A. Mitchell's classification are likely to be categorized as "achievement-oriented" (Mitchell, 1983, p. 17). The research participants included 9 females working in Polish higher education institutions, all of whom had at least a doctoral degree in humanities and social sciences; and 9 Polish females holding managerial positions in corporations. The current author conducted narrative interviews with the females, which was aimed at assessing their attitude towards the phenomenon of the masculinization of identity (and occasionally also appearance). Analysis of the narratives, presented below, focuses on the views expressed by the female managers. An attempt was made to answer the following questions: Do the interviewees fear that

their success is likely to be interpreted as denial of femininity? Are the examined individuals aware of stereotypically “male” patterns of a career, existing in Polish society, and the consequent necessity to exhibit the traits traditionally identified as masculine? The narratives below reveal female managers’ stance on masculinization of businesswomen, which is commonly understood to denote the phenomenon of assuming the traits which are traditionally regarded as masculine.

It is beyond doubt that the examined individuals display an ambivalent attitude towards the aforementioned phenomenon, which is evident from the statement quoted below. Its author expresses her indignation at the fact that some women deliberately undergo the process of masculinization, which they view as a chance of achieving corporate career success (although in another part of the interview the same person admits that she has assumed some male characteristics). The interviewee claims that women are “equipped” with the traits that men do not exhibit, which gives them an advantage over their male colleagues with regard to professional success. As such, they should not renounce these qualities.

I think it's nonsense to say that a woman who is making a career, is adopting male characteristics, and if this really happens, it shouldn't be like that. If a woman wears a suit, it doesn't mean that she is more competent. If she is more masculine in bearing, and it is purposeful because the woman believes that she will be more successful, she makes a mistake. Women have an advantage over men when it comes to professional career, and can effectively achieve professional goals using their femininity. I don't mean these primitive elements of feminine appearance like short skirts or low-cut necklines, but rather intuition, the faculty which men lack (...). [MARIANNA]

Majority of the female managers examined in this study maintain that successful career women are doomed to undergo the process of masculinization. They also emphasize that it is a common occurrence that some women have been exhibiting traditionally masculine characteristics since their childhood. This can be well illustrated by the statements of other interviewees, which are related to biological determinism or to the social process of adoption of the traits that are traditionally labeled as masculine.

I sometimes think that women want to assume such masculine personality traits because then they feel stronger, more serious, maybe more respectable; perhaps then more people feel respect for them. The example I'm going

to give might be stupid because it is not connected with career-making. I don't like watching my sister driving a car, because the way she does it is very "feminine." I don't mean she is a bad driver, or that she causes accidents. What I mean is the way she is holding a steering wheel, changing gears and sitting behind the wheel. Personally, I absolutely adore big, "masculine" cars and a "masculine" style of driving. And I don't mean fast or dangerous driving, but the manner the person behaves in a car. It seems that men's manner [of functioning] is more interesting than women's one. That's why I think that a woman sometimes wants to adopt such masculine behavioral characteristics, because she feels stronger. [MILENA]

Certainly, there are such characteristics which have to be adopted, or learned by women, the traits which help a woman develop a get-tough approach to people (...) – I know it from my own experience. Being a woman, I had to learn how to be self-confident, but I'm sure there are such women whose confidence was nurtured by their family, so now they find life much easier. [MONIKA]

One of the female managers reports difficulties she has in her close relationships with men, which are commonly experienced by successful career women who undergo the process of masculinization. When 'confronted with' a self-confident, mentally strong and financially self-reliant woman, a man is not able to perform the traditional roles of a caretaker and a breadwinner. This seems to point to a concealed assumption that a woman finds a particular man attractive only if he has a mental as well as material advantage over her (e.g. he is mentally stronger and has higher earnings). If a man fails to fulfill this condition, he does not conform to the archetype of masculinity. Deprived of control over a woman, a male tends to develop complexes and employ psychosocial defence mechanisms. It seems that successful career women not only undermine the masculine archetypes of a leader and a breadwinner, but also evoke a sense of danger and resentment in men.

Then, it is definitely a problem, since we are being perceived slightly differently. The situation requires us to act and behave extremely tactfully and cautiously because men who deal with the so called successful career women frequently fear that such females are butches. And this doesn't surprise me at all, because if I were a man and had to deal with a self-sufficient woman, who out-earns me, and whose social status is the same as or above mine (...), [I would think] I don't need such a man. You would

have to be a really masculine man if you wanted to believe that this woman still needs you. Because if she doesn't need you to support her and the children, to provide her with accommodation, to drive her somewhere, to ask her out for dinner, or to take her to the cinema, what exactly does she need you for? From my experience, I know that men tend to select such women who they can easily give something to, because they find it easy to figure out what the women lack. It is easier to make money and bring it home than to be an emotional and intellectual partner. The requirements that we [successful females] set out are simply different, higher. [MAŁGORZATA]

Majority of the female managers participating in the present study claim that the transformation process that they have experienced, wherein their typical feminine qualities have been gradually replaced by the characteristics that are traditionally perceived as masculine, is rooted in the specific character of their jobs, which does not conform to the stereotype of a fragile, delicate and emotional woman. The females maintain that the obstacles which they have encountered on their career paths and which they had to overcome made them stronger and less sentimental. There are grounds for supposing that the individuals who did not undergo the aforementioned process, either abandoned their professions, or maintained lower positions in the occupational hierarchy.

I became more pragmatic, decisive and assertive; and less sentimental, less inclined towards being affected by various situations. [MAGDALENA]

[I am] definitely less feminine now than if I had a different job. It is not because of my inborn personality characteristics. I became tougher, more decisive. Once, when talking to my husband I said: "You know what, I have turned into a real butch. [MARIA]

[A female manager] has to adopt masculine qualities. Yes, you have to get a drubbing, so that one day you could get back up and adopt a more level-headed approach to the surrounding world. [MARLENA]

Definitely, I am becoming more decisive, and of course more assertive, because otherwise I wouldn't be able to get ahead at work. On the other hand, I can't say that I am becoming more masculine. [MARTA]

One of the interviewees expressed the view that changes in her identity had occurred not so much as a result of the masculinization of her personality but of the process of growing in maturity, understood as gaining more experience.

The older I get and the more life experience I have, the more difficult it is for me to get emotionally involved (...) However, if you are 30 and have a bit of life experience, not every film moves you to tears. [MAŁGORZATA]

Other female managers examined in the present study claim that the “masculine qualities” which they have adopted are displayed solely in their working environment. Then, their genuine emotions and real feminine traits are disguised, only to be shown in private life (it seems that thus the females, when at work, “release” their femininity, which they tend to “hide” behind the mask of masculinity). While examining the narratives presented below, it would be interesting to ponder whether it is likely that when performing their professional roles women tend to exhibit traditionally masculine traits, whereas in their private lives, they seem to embody the essence of traditional femininity. The question is whether it is possible that a woman can be assertive or even aggressive in one social context, and delicate and empathic in another? It is valid to speculate that over time, in dozens of social micro-situations, these traditional feminine characteristics gradually become blurred.

I am becoming more assertive, that's for sure. I get emotional in many situations; this is what I am like. So if don't burst out at the given moment, when I'm at work, I let off steam afterwards, after work. So I release these emotions. The point is I've learned how to control these emotions and step back to assess the given situation (...) In the course of training, or talking to couches, you can develop the skill of managing emotions, and learn how to be assertive. However, this does not lead to disappearance of the so called feminine characteristics. No, not at all. They are revealed in other situations, anyway. [MONIKA]

I'm a normal person while on holiday. Then, I can unwind a bit, 'because here [at work] one needs to put on a mask to be tough and demanding, in order to feel fulfilled while working with these guys. That's the truth. [MARIA]

This was the case in my professional life [I became more masculine]. But out of my firm, I've got this feeling that I make up for my lost femininity, I feel so light and airy. And other people out of my workplace have a similar opinion; they say that I'm not the same person at work and in my private life. [MARIANNA]

The final narrative which illustrates the female manager's views on the issue of the masculinization of identity seems to stand in glaring contradiction to previously quoted statements, which probably stems

from the life experience of its author (the woman is undoubtedly referring to the phenomenon which in the subject literature is commonly understood to mean “masculinity crisis”) (Melosik, 2008).

In my experience, women, compared with men, are stronger. They cope better with failures and problems. Contrary to common beliefs, they are less self-pitying. Modern men are weak, which, unfortunately, is frequently our, women's, fault. [MAŁGORZATA]

Another issue addressed in the current study was the potential masculinization of women's appearance. It is in the females' statements on this topic that their paradoxical attitude towards femininity, masculinity and specific professional roles was most clearly revealed. The ideal of feminine appearance, which has traditionally included long, curly, blond hair, long lashes and a lace skirt is inevitably associated by female managers with a romantic version of femininity, which by nature stands in contradiction to the prospect of pursuing professional career. It seems that the characterological traits which female managers tend to attribute to this type of image (e.g. empathy, intimacy orientation and the habit of entering interpersonal relations imbued with emotions) decidedly do not correspond with the concept of aloof and dispassionate professionalism which characterizes the world of business. It seems that female managers (sometimes vigorously) reject the thesis that masculine image is helpful in the area of business. But then they discredit traditional feminine appearance.

The starting point for the interpretation of further narratives is the issue of a “dress code” which is understood to mean a set of rules that govern the dressing styles of people in various professions. The author of the current study focuses on a dress code policy among managers. The fact remains that compliance with dress code rules is likely to help an individual adopt the role of a real professional who is able to act absolutely rationally, and who is endowed with an “ideal” professional identity which is represented by the person's attire (the dress code phenomenon proves to be inconsistent with the idea of “classlessness” of clothing, a symbol of which might be blue jeans; it also contradicts the concept of utilizing clothes in the process of post-modern “decentration, fragmentation and performance” of identity, which occurs as a result of the extremely eclectic blending of various dressing styles) (Melosik, 1996, p. 103-5). Hence the view that a person's outfit is not a mask that hides something, but it should be perceived as an integral part of identity (but

only a professional one, which is illustrated by the narratives quoted below).

I try to observe the dress code in our business organization. I wouldn't dare to violate it. But to me, it's obvious. Definitely, I wouldn't wear a low-cut neckline, a short skirt or, let's say, sandals, cut out clothes, jeans, or bright, garish-coloured clothes. I think I shouldn't dress like that. There is a certain range of colours which you can wear. I wouldn't go for garish pink because this colour is too extravagant to wear in my workplace, and I have to follow the rules of the office dress code. If you work in an organizational structure, you have to obey its rules. And I have accepted this. [MONIKA]

And it is good that you have to adhere to a dress code, because this introduces a certain order. [MARTYNA]

I (...) took on a business-like style: a suit, a jacket, because it is obligatory (...). Such a dress code has been approved by the society. [MAGDALENA]

I think that we abide by the rules which have been imposed on us in order to improve our functioning (...). I don't think that the obligation to wear a suit while being a member of a certain professional caste is a bad rule. There are certain situations or places [for example the court] in which we have to be aware of the seriousness of such places. It is just as if someone came to a wedding party wearing flip-flops and Bermuda shorts. Then the person might offend the wedding couple, showing a lack of respect for their big day (...). [MARTYNA]

The female managers interviewed in the study claim that appearance serves as a vehicle for self-expression; it speaks for the person. They emphasize that women should no longer express their femininity through girly looks or other forms of presentation which are considered to be unprofessional or lacking dignity. They should shun traditional feminine colours, such as red, and avoid wearing flashy jewellery.

When I go to a business meeting, I usually wear more official clothes. I have to look good and professional, and not like a girl. I prefer soft colours, subdued grey, black, white or purple. I don't wear garish red. My make-up is also subdued. I tend to steer clear from large earrings, necklaces and garish rings. I prefer discreet, unobtrusive jewellery. [MARLENA]

I keep it in mind that (...) I perform a certain function, and I try to stick to the rules which I have imposed on myself. I'm not going to wear a strappy

top for work even in 30 degree heat, but I try to cover my shoulders (...). When I've got a meeting with my client, I try to follow these rules, because I think that in this way I show my respect for the meeting (...). I want to be treated seriously. [MARTYNA]

There has always been the following dress code for work – a suit, a black or gray jacket, a skirt, trousers, and a white blouse - not a red or pink one. Only soft, subdued colours, but everything must suit the body shape. One needs to look more serious (...). Here, you must look more professional. Recently, bead necklaces have come into fashion. This used to be unthinkable some time ago. [MARIA]

Interestingly, one of the interviewees expressed the view that a suit complemented with a tie is not so much masculine as stylish and chic.

To be honest, I like when women wear suits. I myself wear suits. When I go to some official meeting, I very often put on a tie, and I like it very much. But I don't think I look masculine. This look is simply elegant and tidy (...). I think that a women's suit also makes a female look credible. [MILENA]

One of the female managers puts emphasis on the phenomenon of violation of a dress code, interpreted as a vehicle for challenging common stereotypes about females. It seems that the woman's viewpoint places her outside the mainstream of the opinions quoted above, and it also stands in contradiction to the views she had expressed in the narratives presented earlier in this study. She uses an image of a "sugary-sweet blond," yet highly professional female, who utilizes feminine attire to break the female stereotypes, as well as to manifest her strong personality.

Perhaps wearing a lace dress, a woman doesn't maintain the common standards of appearance; she is out of dress code. But it is also possible to speculate that in this way the female shows that she is strong enough to break the "uniform" stereotype (...). And again we get back to us, women. To what extent are we able to challenge the stereotype and show that it is possible to wear pink and be a competent professional at the same time? On the other hand, do we really have to manifest this in such a way? I think a certain balance should be maintained. [MARTYNA]

The issue of dress code violation was also raised by another study participant; however, it is interesting to emphasize the fact that the person views the phenomenon from a completely different perspective. The

woman claims that feminine attire stereotypically represents lower intellectual capacity, therefore she strongly rejects it, opting for masculine clothes (such as military trousers and combat boots), which the study subject perceives as unisex. Such clothes do not correspond with the demands of a dress code, but, as the woman suggests, seem to function as a form of rebellion against the dress code enforced in the firm. Moreover, the interviewee maintains that such attire allows her to “dissociate herself from” other women working for the same firm, who she discredits, referring to the common “dumb blonde” stereotype. According to the interviewee, such attributes of femininity as women’s suits or high heeled shoes, which are commonly accepted elements of professional appearance, represent absolute conformity to the rules defined and imposed by the women who lack a strong personality and managerial talent. The aforementioned stance can be examined in the context of the Queen Bee Syndrome and a tendency towards showing disregard for one’s own gender, which was addressed in the first part of this paper.

I still wear combat boots at work. There was a period of time when my superiors used not so much to battle with me over my appearance as to discuss the matter with me. There was a time when a dress code was enforced in the firm, but it changed soon, after the conversation I had with my boss, who suggested that I should wear, just like all my female colleagues, women’s suits and high-heeled shoes, and I was wearing combat trousers then. I said that it was ok with me, but I added that if he wanted me to dress like all those blondes, I would also adopt their working style. After a moment’s thought, he came up and said that in fact he liked combat trousers himself. Now, despite the fact that I’m a manager, I wear my Converse sneakers, a black sweatshirt and jeans. I put on elegant clothes only if it is absolutely necessary, for example when I have meetings with my clients, but it is usually no great shakes though. The only female accessories I really like are earrings, and I wear them practically every day. So, as you see, I go for some attributes of femininity, but these are usually components of my personal style rather than elements of appearance that are imposed on me by the dress code policy in my workplace. [MAŁGORZATA]

It is also the narrative quoted below that illustrates the view that persons in high positions feel no constraint in violating the rules of a dress code.

We’ve got a standardized dress code policy. However, no one knows what clothes a woman should wear. The code says: a women’s suit, a skirt (...)

I do not fully comply with these rules, because I will never put on a dark blue women's suit and a knee-length skirt. It is not me; I have to wear clothes that make me feel good. My position in the firm allows me to do so. [MARLENA]

Taking into consideration the issue of the relationship between appearance, identity and social perception of the representatives of certain professions, the female managers interviewed in the present study partly agree that masculine appearance helps them achieve success. The study participants make attempts at explaining the phenomenon, referring to the stereotypes that are common in society. The study subjects seem to be aware of the fact that they have internalized them.

I think I myself would like to entrust my most serious matters to [a man]. If I had to select a lawyer or a broker during a casting, seeing through a Venetian mirror, I would make the same choice. And if I knew the blonde female was highly competent, this wouldn't bother me. If the woman is good at what she is doing, and wears sweet pink dresses and has such a sense of taste, this doesn't bother me at all. [MARTYNA]

My divorce was handled by a petite woman. Perhaps this [a tendency towards preferring masculine appearance over feminine one in certain professions] results from the fact that women are viewed as more delicate and emotional than men. It is believed that, compared with males, females are unable to be in full control of themselves. And working in the stock market or a bank requires such qualities as great self-control and the ability to take a dispassionate attitude towards various issues. I think that these are the characteristics that people tend to associate more with men than with women. [MONIKA]

There is a certain model of business, which is featured in billboards and commercials. The most common image is a man wearing a white shirt, with a mobile phone in his hand and a computer. A professional. And this is a copy of a real life. When a man sets up his own business, the first thing he buys is a suit, a mobile phone, a laptop, a good quality briefcase and a watch. But I do not fall for a gray suit. I tend to examine the firm effectiveness. However, I think that those beautiful grey suits affect our first decisions. But a person who often uses such services is able to judge also other things. [MARIANNA]

The females' statements concerning the issue of masculinized appearance reveal a certain paradox. The interviewees claim that in the world of business attractiveness and femininity are considered to be the

most important assets if accompanied by intelligence and professional competence. Moreover, they maintain that female attractiveness is of great significance and value in professional situations. They seem to promote an ideal of a “beautiful female professional,” since an “ugly female professional” is doomed to develop complexes (however, the extent of approval of the aforementioned ideal, which is shown in the statements quoted below, is somewhat astonishing).

Masculine appearance? God forbid. A super model, a great body shape, great legs plus the brains. Men? They judge by appearances, they just can't help it. So if an attractive woman says something and shows that she's got the brains, she will immediately become more popular with men than a less attractive female. [MARIA]

It is better to work with good-looking people than with less attractive ones. It is easier to come into contact with attractive people (...). Those of my female colleagues who are more feminine, tend to be more self-confident, they are better workers, managers. Those who care less about their appearance, who don't focus so much on emphasizing their femininity, suffer from complexes, which are revealed at a certain moment of cooperation. In my experience, men, and perhaps women, too, prefer to work with feminine looking women. [MARLENA]

The author of the narrative quoted below emphasizes the fact that the factor which predicts a woman's success is not her appearance but a strong personality.

Majority of the woman [who hold managerial positions in our firm] are rather small, dainty and petite. There are maybe two well-built hags. (...) The women in managerial positions are small and dainty (...) The president (...) was a petite, frail, slightly-built woman, a real weakling, size 32, and she earned tremendous respect of her subordinates. [MARTA]

The issue of attire is a recurrent theme in the statements of the female managers interviewed in the present study. They seem to demonstrate, at least verbally, their preference for a feminine style, although the study subjects still emphasize certain dress code restrictions. They opt for subdued colours as well as a specific length and cut of a skirt. The women tend to avoid frills, low-cut necklines and colourful jewellery. The aforementioned tendency facilitates the process of blurring the differences between males and females, which occurs in the corporate are-

na. However, the narratives quoted below illustrate also certain exceptions to the rule.

A woman should have a few feminine attributes, and this does not prevent her from being a woman, but there are obviously certain limitations like no red nails or lace clothes. It's because we come here to do business, and not to have a date with someone whose low-cut neckline we're going to admire. [MAGDALENA]

I usually wear skirts at work. The only exception is a men's suit. But I hate white men's shirts. If we have meetings with our clients, we try to wear more elegant clothes, so we put on skirts and jackets – I hate jackets. But we always wear really nice earrings and high-heeled shoes – I can't imagine not wearing high-heels. [MARTA]

According to the female managers who participated in the current study masculine appearance fails to help women practice certain professions. In fact quite the reverse is true: it makes them less credible. The interviewees hold the view that women who make themselves look masculine are fake, artificial and graceless (obviously, it is likely that the appearance which the female managers perceive as “still feminine,” will be viewed as “already masculine” by female representatives of other professions). It is interesting to indicate that when essentially female attributes are taken into consideration, the theme of sexualisation of professional relationships emerges, which seems to be somewhat paradoxical in the context of the previously addressed issues. It is understood to mean the process wherein a female becomes a sex object, however she does not perceive herself as a “helpless prey,” but considers herself to be a “hunting predator” ,aware of the manipulation tool she is “equipped” with, which she can use to attain her business objectives.

Masculine appearance? No, absolutely not, rather more feminine. It helps to soften up men. [MAŁGORZATA]

In my firm, women are more feminine. They work together with men. Since 90% of the employees are men, then if a woman wants to force something through, she has to be feminine, because it is not always that she can find the right arguments to support her ideas (...). I always wear very low-cut necklines, and men like it very much, and nobody causes troubles. [MARTA]

I don't like women who pretend that they are men, who make themselves to look masculine and strong. Men don't like it. They are not idiots. By

changing her appearance, putting on a men's suit or a women's dinner jacket, wearing trousers and white shirts every day, a woman will not be able to gain professional qualifications. I think that if she follows a business dress code policy, wears some minimalist dresses and shows off a bit of her calf, then she has a higher chance of making it to the top (...). I use the fact that I'm a woman. I try to be feminine. [MARTYNA]

There were situations (...) in which men, while taking part in business meetings, were made to agree to do certain tasks, affected by female attractiveness (...). [MONIKA]

(...) For example nails, my nails are red today, but it is not every day that I can wear red nail polish, because red nails are sometimes inappropriate, they might look too sexy (...). However, if I know that red nails might be my asset, the argument which I'm going to need to gain something in the business conversation with a man who finds me attractive, and I know it, although I am aware of the fact that he is my business partner, then I do paint my nails red and use this attribute. [MARTYNA]

The final observation made by the present author refers to the fact that the female managers who participated in this study claim that their identity and appearance have not undergone the process of masculinization. It was also found out that the very notion of masculinization seems to cause anxiety among the study participants (a similar tendency was detected among the general public, which stems from the fact that, as S. A. Inness maintains, "One reason the tough woman who adopts a persona that is strongly coded as masculine is disturbing to many is that she reveals the artificiality of femininity as the „normal” state of women. The masculine tough woman reveals that femininity is a carefully crafted social construct that requires effort to maintain and perpetuate") (Inness 1999, p. 21). The fact remains, however, that female managers exhibit a tendency towards reshaping the perceptions of their own identity. They tend to incorporate the traditional masculine characteristics of identity and appearance into an accepted, or even mandatory, masculine version of femininity.

Acknowledgments

Parts of the article draw on research described in author's book: *Edukacja i (nie)równość społeczna kobiet. Studium dynamiki dostępu*, Kraków 2011

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Vol. 1, No. 1, 2014

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Issues of power in relation to gender and sexuality in the EFL classroom – An overview

ABSTRACT. Schools in general and classrooms in particular are among society's primary socializing institutions (Freeman & McElhinny, 1996, p. 261; Adger, 2001). In particular, education, as an institution of Gramsci's 'civil society' (Jones, 2006), can be considered a grassroots space where hegemonic gendered and sexual identities are constructed and regulated. This article looks at the context of the EFL classroom – a discursive space where learners are potentially (re-)constructed in relation to various (gender) roles in society as well as learning the practices, values and rules of a given society at large. In this paper we explore and discuss how the categories of gender and sexuality are represented, (re-)constructed and generally dealt with in this learning environment. We follow Foucault's (1978, 1979) conceptualization of power as something which "weaves itself discursively through social organizations, meanings, relations and the construction of speakers' subjectivities or identities" (Baxter, 2003, p. 8) and is enacted and contested in every interaction (see Mullany, 2007). We see power as being produced, reproduced, challenged and resisted in the EFL classroom in connection with the construction of gender and sexuality. The article discusses how views on what/who is 'powerful' in the context of the EFL classroom have changed over the years, from the early privileging of textbooks to the currently advocated central role of the teacher in addressing and promoting (or not) traditional and/or progressive discourses of gender and sexuality. Critical pedagogies and queer pedagogies are discussed as offering educators potent insights and tools to deal with heteronormativity and various forms of discrimination in the EFL classroom as well as helpful means for empowering *all* students by addressing their various identities. It is thus our contention that relationships between gender, sexuality and EFL education are in need of urgent (re)addressing as existing research is outdated, lacks methodological sophistication or is lacking in the Polish context.

KEYWORDS: critical pedagogies, EFL classroom, gender, heteronormativity, power, queer pedagogies, sexuality, talk-around-the-text, textbooks

Introduction: Power and the EFL context

This article provides an overview of research into how the categories of gender and sexuality are constructed in 'English as a foreign language' textbooks as well as in the context of teachers' mediation of textbooks'

(gendered) contents in classroom interactions. Gender and sexuality are two of the most salient social categories thus their (re-)construction and negotiation almost always entail the exercise of power, for instance, which discourse of gender relations prevails in classroom interaction is a matter of whose *voice* (publishers'?, teachers'?, students'?, parents'?) is more powerful in the current social but also local interactional context. The discussion to follow presents some complex intricacies involved in construction of gender and sexuality in the EFL context in relation to power. It also discusses critical pedagogies and queer pedagogies as important perspectives offering tools for both practitioners and analysts to (re-)address the unequal power relations in the EFL classroom.

Schools in general and EFL classes in particular are not clearly only in part responsible for teaching boys and girls about gender-differentiated social roles (cf. Gordon, 2004). Yet schools are in a unique position here. For example, through encouraging particular curricular choices for girls and for boys, and through gender-differential classroom interaction (in terms of teacher attention to boys and to girls, e.g. Kelly, 1988), they are in fact able to reinforce, for instance, the subordinate role of girls and women and the dominant role of boys and men (Freeman & McElhinny, 1996, p. 261). Teachers of all curricular subjects are also able, through simple casual remarks, to promote an unthinking heteronormativity (see Morrish, 2002).

Linke (2007; see also Sunderland, 2000) however talks about the low profile of gender in foreign language teaching, while Decke-Cornill and Volkmann (2007, p. 7) argue that "gender continues to be conceived in a trivialized, everyday, unquestioned form, and the common-sense belief in an essentialist, self-evident existence of 'women' and 'men' remains uncontested." Linke (2007) attributes a great deal of the neglect of gendered features of the target language to teachers' preoccupation with the 'language issue' itself:

the constant struggle by language learners and language teachers to find the right words and the appropriate grammatical forms to satisfy even basic communicative needs leaves little scope to take account of non-sexist language (Linke, 2007, p. 137).

Such a 'neutral' stance denies the fact that no language (including that produced in the foreign language learning environment) is ever produced in a social vacuum, as even the grammatical structures commonly practiced in the EFL classroom are almost always peopled with

individuals who are recognizably men or women. All in all, Linke (2007) referring to a global educational setting, regards neglecting gender issues by schools as a professional failure.

Education as an institution not only constructs but also *regulates* gendered identities (Jones, 2006), typically endorsing hegemonic identities (often hegemonic masculinity, emphasized femininity, and heterosexuality-as-the-norm). In this sense, following Fairclough (1989), education and the EFL classroom emerge as powerful entities with regulatory and prescriptive positions: “power in discourse is to do with powerful participants controlling and constraining the contributions of non-powerful participants” (1989, p. 46).¹ Fairclough (2001) underlines the significance of language here but also signals the role of language in resistance and potential change of social relations of power.

We see power in the educational EFL setting not as unidirectional or monolithic but as ‘a net like organization’ in which all participants in the learning process (teachers and students in the current discussion) are active ‘vehicles of power’, “always in the position of simultaneously undergoing and exercising this power” (Foucault, 1981, p. 98). In this fluid model of power, “discourse transmits and produces power; it reinforces it, but also undermines it and exposes it, renders it fragile and makes it possible to thwart it” (Foucault, 1978, p. 101). Consequently, power can be enacted but also contested in every interaction (Mills, 2002, 2003). This means that dominant, hegemonic discourse deployed in the EFL textbook can not only be challenged by the teacher but alternative, progressive discourses promoted. These can then be shared, taken on board or at least considered – or resisted, by students. Recognizing the *constitutive* nature of discourse means however that all language choices made in the EFL classroom can confront and potentially transform discriminatory practices and ideological values (Fairclough, 1989, 1992). Language then can be a primary factor through which traditional, sexist and heteronormative gender representations – like others – are explicitly and implicitly both perpetrated and challenged (McClure, 1992, p. 39). Given that Foucault’s and Fairclough’s theorizations of power enable resistance to the normative gender assumptions, when applied to the EFL context, these make classroom interaction epistemologically and ideologically very dynamic and complex, with a great deal of negotiation (at the level of textbooks, teacher-student interactions, student-student

¹ See Pennycook (1994) on English and linguistic imperialism.

interactions) of gender roles, gender stereotypes and gendered and heteronormative discourse potentially taking place.

While textbooks may play a role in social construction (see Gordon, 2004), as argued by Shardakova and Pavlenko (2004), language textbooks may more specifically empower or disempower language learners. The big question though is: what does it depend on? This is taken up in the next two sections of the article.

The power of textbooks?

Textbooks seem the most prototypical as well as the most researched of language learning materials (Sunderland, 1994, p. 55). In the 1970s and 1980s extensive research into gender representation in foreign language textbooks was conducted. Most of the analyses were content or linguistic oriented with the focus on the text-as-product (Sunderland *et al.*, 2002, p. 225). In this sense textbook content was treated as non-negotiable and the fact that learners may have (potentially different) responses to the textbooks' content was barely considered. Consequently, textbooks were conceived of as very powerful resources with the potential to convey non-negotiable portrayals of men and women.

Still, the analyses of the 1970s and 1980s generated a number of consistent findings concerning the representation of women and men, girls and boys in English language textbooks. As Sunderland *et al.* (2002, p. 223) describe, the findings relating to the (earlier) portrayals of women can be aptly described with such terms as 'Exclusion', 'Subordination', 'Distortion' and 'Degradation'. Early content analyses of language textbooks found males to be over-represented (e.g., Porecca, 1984). Various researchers also found gendered patterns of occupational stereotyping in both type and range of jobs. Men were found to occupy a greater range of occupational roles than women (e.g., Schmitz, 1975). More specifically, analysts identified an 'inadequate male' stereotype, i.e., male protagonists performing housework tasks badly (Pascoe, 1989). Relationship stereotyping was another finding where women were seen more often in relation to men than men were to women, usually in a relationship of 'flaunted heterosexuality' or a perpetually happy nuclear family and associated strongly with the domestic sphere (Pihlaja, 2008). Women were also found to be stereotypically over-emotional and timid (e.g., Talansky, 1986) as well as "more likely than men to be the butt of jokes" (Sunder-

land *et al.*, 2002, p. 223). The linguistic analyses also found disempowering discourse roles for female characters in the analyzed English language textbooks. In general women were found to perform a narrower range of discourse roles compared to men (e.g., Hartman & Judd, 1978; Talansky, 1986; see also Poulou, 1997). Hellinger's research revealed that the verbs associated with female characters reflected "some of the traditional stereotypic female behavioral patterns" (Hellinger, 1980, p. 272).

Even though the early analyses of foreign language textbooks disregarded the process of interaction between text and reader and assumed authoritative position of the text, they testified to the unequal representation of male and female characters. If we accept that discourse is always concurrently socially representational *and* socially constitutive (Fairclough, 2001), these images can be seen to have the potential to legitimate the relative 'Exclusion' and 'Subordination' of female characters and 'Distortion' of gender relations in general – depending, *inter alia*, how they are used and talked about in class. Some of these early findings still await attention on part of syllabus designers and textbook authors (see Kobia, 2009; Gharbavi & Mousavi, 2012). However, Jones and colleagues (1997), who looked at three EFL textbooks (*Headway Intermediate*, *Hotline Intermediate* and *Look Ahead 2*) to analyze specifically the language of dialogues (a characteristic feature of language textbooks), found an encouraging level of gender fairness, achieved through the creation of gender balance in social and occupational roles.

At this point the booklet "On Balance" should be mentioned as a publication written for publishers with the aim of raising awareness of gender bias. The booklet also provides teachers with ideas as how they could respond to 'gender bias' encountered in textbooks. For example, teachers are recommended to get involved in awareness-raising through discussion, subversion, and careful selection of texts and textbooks (Sunderland, 1994; see also Sunderland *et al.*, 2002).

The question that Sunderland *et al.* (2002, p. 224) pose is: "what, if anything, may gender stereotyping in written texts (and other forms of gender representation) mean for the learner's gender identity." Learners can inwardly resist what they read as well as outwardly contest it but in fact "reader's responses are unpredictable" (Sunderland *et al.*, 2002, p. 225). Sunderland (2000, p. 154) discussing various scenarios concludes that "looking at the text alone may be a fruitless endeavor."

There are a number of issues to be considered by writers, publishers and analysts in relation to textbooks and their use by students and

teachers. For instance, to what extent should textbooks reflect – if only symbolically – the way the world really is? Relatedly, should textbooks construct more ‘progressive’ images of femininity and masculinity than currently obtain? There may for example be a clash between women’s/girls’ professional aspirations and the stereotypical portrayals of women in their EFL textbooks. Another issue relates to learners’ interaction with the text at conscious and unconscious levels – are they aware of gender stereotyping? Do they think it is important? Do they say anything about this – to the teacher or fellow students?

Sunderland (in Mills & Mustapha, forthcoming) details an agenda for future textbook studies. She advocates *inter alia* analyzing specific textbook sub-genres such as ‘reading comprehension texts’, ‘dialogues’, ‘grammar exercises’ as well as looking at the polysemy of meaning of given textbook texts, and points to the value of the methods and insights of critical discourse analysis (for example, analysis of transitivity, in particular agent and patient, and if these are gendered). Also of particular importance in the context of the current predominance of visual culture is the focus on image analysis and multimodality of the textbooks’ content (see also Giaschi, 2000; Fairclough, 2001, p. 3). For example, is a potentially gender progressive text accompanied by equally progressive image(s) or, if there is a lack of congruence between text and visual, what do they ‘mean’ when seen together?

In the 1990s there has been a decline in content and linguistic analyses of gender in language textbooks. One of the reasons, as suggested by Jones *et al.* (1997), may be that gender bias is now in general less evident than hitherto. There was also a call for analyses that would incorporate less content analysis and more critical and linguistic theories (see Sunderland, 2000). Most importantly however, “theoretical developments suggested that text itself may not be the most appropriate focus of study” (Sunderland, 2000, p. 152).

Teacher’s talk around the (textbook) text

In 2000 in her article entitled “New understanding of gender and language classroom research: Texts, teacher talk and student talk,” Sunderland proposed a new perspective as to how textbooks should be analyzed in terms of gender representation and gendered discourse, starting with “let us consider the possibility that looking at the text alone may

be a fruitless endeavor” (Sunderland, 2000, p. 154). What she advocated in this and further publications (e.g. Sunderland *et al.*, 2002) is that what needs to be investigated is the teacher’s discourse in relation to gendered texts as these may be ‘available resources’ for his or her learners’ continually developing identities. This approach to looking at the textbooks underlines the teacher’s agency in the treatment of the text but at the same time does not predict how a given textbook text will be addressed by the teacher. This approach extensively diverges from a deterministic treatment of text and incorporates critical discourse perspectives (Fairclough, 1992).

Sunderland *et al.* (2002) use the term “talk around the text” (a concept from literacy studies) to explicate how the language teacher in his/her ‘read aloud’ role talks about gender in textbooks. From a critical discourse perspective ‘talk around the text’ exemplifies one form of ‘consumption’ of the text and “as soon as a text is ‘consumed’, it ceases to be text alone” (Sunderland *et al.*, 2002, p. 229). The early rather deterministic positioning of textbooks’ content and indeed influence has been replaced with one that allows for different and various (even opposing) *handling* of the same text and thus producing a variety of interpretations. A teacher’s ‘talk around the text’ can in the case of (some) EFL instructors constitute an example of a so-called ‘teachable moment’ (Havighurst, 1952), i.e., an ideal learning opportunity to offer some insight to students. Thus a teacher’s progressive (and appealing) treatment of a gendered text may for example lend itself to a lively classroom discussion during which students are able to explore a variety of progressive and non-progressive roles (including non-heteronormative ones) that men and women occupy in a particular community, along with their social implications and consequences (see Nelson, 2007).

Explorations of ‘talk-around-the text’ in terms of gender representation need to focus on those textbook texts in which gender is somehow evident – what Sunderland *et al.* (2002) call a ‘gender critical point’. This extends to many representations of women, men, boys, girls and gender relations more widely, progressive, traditional, or both. Teachers then need to do something *about* the particular gender critical point (Sunderland *et al.*, 2002, p. 231). There are of course a myriad of possibilities here ranging from ignoring it to accepting potentially discriminatory content by passive acceptance to active and forceful rejection of sexist content and presenting it in a way that allows for an emergence of a more progressive portrayal of gender relations (see Sunderland *et al.*,

2002). Consequently, gender-based texts are not necessarily vehicles of discrimination if teachers choose to use them critically in the classroom, as a means of challenging students' presuppositions – a teacher can 'rescue' a sexist or extremely heteronormative text. On the other hand, the most non-sexist textbook can become sexist in the hands of a teacher with sexist attitudes (Sunderland, 1994, p. 64):

a text is arguably as good or as bad as the treatment it receives from the teacher who is using it; in particular, a text riddled with gender bias can be rescued and that bias put to good effect, pedagogic and otherwise (Sunderland, 2000, p. 155).

The teacher's role then emerges as indeed crucial in dealing with issues of gender and sexuality as he or she usually not only decides on the selection of texts to be covered in class but also remains very much in charge of how these texts are treated. He or she further facilitates (particular) classroom discussion topics with the power to endorse some views, refute others and repress/ignore still others. Consequently the teacher's discourse and classroom discourse management during interaction have enormous potential for promoting or not certain gender discourses and hence gender relations in ways that (dis-)empower students.

'Don't ask don't tell' in (EFL) education: Heteronormativity

Although arguably underplayed by present day mainstream Applied Linguistics, research into sexuality in educational settings is, we argue, a current social imperative.² Bullying and harassment leading to homelessness (Rosario *et al.*, 2012) and acts of suicide (Agostinone-Wilson, 2010; Świerszcz, 2012), both with respect to non-normative sexuality in schooling contexts, have been extensively documented (Horn *et al.*, 2009). Language use in education provides fertile ground for exploring unequal power distribution between the various social actors involved in schooling. While the Foucauldian notion of 'elusive power' (Foucault, 1978) is applicable here, it is also imperative to pinpoint specific (dis)empowered actors in this research scene, i.e. teachers (of varying sexualities), students (or varying sexualities), parents, and governments

² In fact, it has been noted that the number of publications in the field of social justice and equity in education has been on the rise for at least a decade (Kaur, 2012, p. 485).

or other funding bodies.³ Indeed, power and language performed on a number of different levels (e.g. teacher-student, curriculum designers-teacher) in this context leads to the formation of sociocultural discursive practices and thus to the “inculcation of particular cultural meanings and values, social relationships and identities, and pedagogies” (Fariclough, 2010, p. 532). The following overview of findings in the field of language and sexuality in the EFL includes textbooks, classroom interaction as well curriculum design and a mounting resistance to institutional normativities – resistance which take the form of *critical* and *queer pedagogies*.

One of the areas of greatest interest for researchers in the field of language and sexuality is the means of sustaining heterosexuality as the norm, i.e. research into *heteronormativity*. The concept is most often understood as “all linguistic mechanisms that lead to heterosexuality being perceived as the naturalized norm” (Motschenbacher, 2010, p. 11).⁴ A related concept is that of *heterosexism*, defined as “distinction in which non-heterosexual forms of activity, identity, and community are denigrated or penalized and heterosexuality is privileged” (Queen, 2006, p. 288) which is imbued with issues of power imbalance. It is these issues, along with that of accompanying homophobic language use, that are at the heart of research into language and sexuality in educational settings.

Education and (sexual) equality research has been conducted with varying intensity. As far as Poland is concerned, sexual-identity-based research is something of a novelty. So far, broadly anti-discriminatory projects have been conducted (Abramowicz, 2011; Żukowski, 2004) followed by narrow investigations of non-heteronormative students at the University of Warsaw (Drozdowski, 2011) and the examination of treatment of LGBTQ issues in textbooks used in Polish schools (Kochanowski *et al.*, 2013). In some other countries the situation seems healthier with numerous books, projects, reports and journals devoted to social justice and equity in education, including the situation of LGBTQ students in schools (Elia, 2010; Franck, 2002; Gorski & Goodman, 2011; Hickman & Porfilio, 2012; Kehily, 2002; Toomey *et al.*, 2012). What is the reason for this quantitative (and qualitative) discrepancy? It is indisputable that research is somehow related to the political climate

³ This list should be treated as open-ended.

⁴ See also Motschenbacher (2011) on Queer Linguistics.

of a given country. The powerful responsible for allocating research funds (be it government bodies or researchers themselves) are in a position to either hinder or foster certain inquiry paradigms. Gray (2013, p. 43) theorizes heterosexuality in terms of “strategically privileged” in the era of capitalism, and thus also in the ELT undiversified market. In Poland, all the projects mentioned above, along with the one that the authors of this paper are involved in, have been funded by external sources.⁵

Monosexuality: The power of textbooks (and reference works⁶)

In his autobiography (2010), Michał Głowiński, a famous Polish literary critic, writes about his quest for finding a label for his sexual identity. Once he had come across the lemma ‘homosexual’ in the *Guttenberg Encyclopaedia* he felt relieved, even though the definition⁷ would be considered far from acceptable nowadays. This exemplifies the power reference works, such as dictionaries and encyclopaedias, have yielded over marginalised groups, not least in terms of identity. However, far from being objective, these publications have authorised subjective, ideologically-loaded meanings and discourses which have the potential of contributing to the oppression of the less powerful (Braun & Kitzinger, 2001; Kramarae, 1992; Moon, 1989; Treichler, 1989).

Trends in research similar to the investigations of the representation/construction of ‘gender’ in textbooks can be noticed with respect to the category of ‘sexuality’. These studies, however, have been carried out mainly outside the EFL context (Hawkins, 2012; Hickman, 2012; Jennings & Macgillivray, 2011; Kochanowski *et al.*, 2013; Suarez & Balaji, 2007).⁸ Gross negligence and ideological bias have been documented in a number of textbooks. To start with the most predictable flaw, most

⁵ All Polish research projects mentioned so far have been financed by the Stefan Batory Foundation. The research into gender and sexuality in the context of Polish EFL (carried out by Jane Sunderland, Joanna Pawelczyk, and Łukasz Pakuła) has been funded by the British Council.

⁶ *Reference works* is a term encompassing encyclopaedias, dictionaries, thesauruses etc. (Hartmann, 2001).

⁷ The definition can be found in Głowiński (2010, p. 47-8).

⁸ Examples of the curricular subjects include biology, civics, and sociology.

textbooks are permeated with heteronormativity, for example, by mentioning only nuclear families. However, more disturbing are instances of behavioural definitions of homosexuality (found in Polish textbooks for Family Education⁹) as the effect of a prolonged exposure to pornography along with the ‘information’ that it is curable and can be treated with, *inter alia*, electrotherapy (Kochanowski *et al.*, 2013). This policing of – assumed and at the same time unnamed – heterosexuality communicated to students who might not have fully developed critical text reception constructs non-normative sexualities as deviant and unwanted. Viewed from the perspective of the EFL students, uncontested by teacher authority, these legitimised discriminatory discourses may then start circulating in- and outside the classroom, “making students feel more alienated and, as a result hinder[ing] their language learning process” (Gray, 2013, p. 57; Nelson, 2007, p. 69).¹⁰ Gray (2013) notes that EFL textbooks aimed at international audiences feature exclusively heterosexual identities thus exhibiting “monosexualising tendencies” (Nelson, 2006). Our own experience, for example, suggests that nuclear families, with two married opposite-sex parents are common in EFL textbooks, as is the topic of heterosexual attraction and romance. Yet, Gray (2013) also observes that some materials tailored to meet the needs of more specific localised audiences take up the subject of homosexuality.

(De)sexualised classrooms: Queer pedagogies?

Seen as a forum for research-informed discussions, the classroom as a site imbued with heteronormativity has recently come under scrutiny (Rothing, 2008). Liddicoat (2009), in his analysis of classroom talk, notes contestation and resistance to non-heterosexual identities in this allegedly desexualized environment. Numerous examples adduced in his study testify to the fact that heterosexual framing of students’ identities is the norm, and he argues that this has the potential to hinder linguistic attainment.

In the world of EFL, Cynthia Nelson (1999, 2012, 2008, 2007) has championed utilizing the insights of Queer Theory (see Sullivan, 2003)

⁹ Polish name of the subject: *Wychowanie do życia w rodzinie*.

¹⁰ This has been corroborated by King (2008), who draws on the concept of ‘imagined communities’ (Anderson, 1983) to show yet another possible motivation for foreign language learning: constructing sexual identities in a non-native language.

to provide a diversity-inclusive environment in the classroom; similar attempts have been observed in the academic context (Morrish & Sauntson, 2007). Nelson (2007) argues that, rather than catering for the LGBTQ minority, the classroom should be open to a wide spectrum of identities (e.g. ethnic as well as sexual) and be prepared to handle relevant discussions. Here, the teacher may need to waive their power in favour of empowering students and acting as a facilitator of in-class discussions. Yet should the homophobic views emerge, teachers need to be prepared to exert their power to challenge them. Nelson (2007) also advocates incorporating lesbian and gay themes to explore divergent cultural meanings and meaning-making practices with the intention of unpacking students' normative questions about gay people with a view of challenging heterosexual hegemony. This could, she suggests, involve examining the life history narratives of queer residents who are part of the same local communities as the language learners. Such practices have been subject to empirical scrutiny by testing students' perceptions of the ratio of hetero- to homosexual themes introduced in the context of the classroom: even gay-friendly students viewed gay themes as more frequent than straight ones even though the actual ratio was 2:1 respectively (Ripley *et al.*, 2012).¹¹ Other researchers (De Vincenti *et al.*, 2007) have tentatively probed into integrating queer perspectives into their own language teaching practices. For example, in line with Nelson's proposals is O'Mochain's (2006) attempt at introducing local queer narratives into the EFL classroom in Japan. This contribution provides initial evidence that non-normative themes can be successfully dealt with even in what might seem like potentially unfavourable conditions¹² (for other examples, see Pavlenko, 2004; Benesch, 1999).

The recent blossoming of research into the issues of inequality in education seems to have resulted in raising the awareness of practitioners. As Świerszcz (2012) points out although some teachers see the lack of professional training as problematic in acting against homophobic rhetoric, they feel the call to do so. Zack *et al.* (2010) found that other groups of teachers include "confronters" and "integrators." While the former see themselves as capable of embracing egalitarian worldviews and promoting them during classroom interaction, the latter recognizes

¹¹ Such results are explained by the phenomena of novelty attachment and content substitution.

¹² The site of research was a women-only Christian college.

the power of existing curricula but still attempt to incorporate anti-homophobic rhetoric into the local teaching practice (Zack *et al.*, 2010). Another powerful change as regards teaching sexual diversity in the classroom in the UK context has been the revision of the *Handbook for Inspection of Further Education and Skills* by OFSTED¹³ (see Gray, 2013). Furthermore, anti-discriminatory teacher training in the UK is offered by *Inclusion for All*¹⁴, where homophobic bullying is an important concern.

Less optimistically, it should be emphasised that while the issue of heterosexism was signalled in the Anglophone educational context over a decade ago, 'sexuality' as a culturally (and linguistically) important identity category has been insufficiently addressed or recognised in few other educational contexts. There is, however, a palpable demand for intensified make-up for the arrears, not least as this state-of-affairs has been shown in e.g. the UK to lead to excessive verbal and physical manifestations of homo- and transphobia.¹⁵ Lack of research in this area contributes to the maintenance of the status quo of heteronormativity along with the lack of culture-specific methods for countering institutionalised discriminatory practices.

Conclusions:

Acquiring broader perspective via critical pedagogies

The research presented so far can be inscribed in a broader and relatively recent educational project under the label of *critical pedagogies* (Monchinski, 2008; Norton, 2008). As regards language learning, Norton and Toohey (2004) identify four key themes: seeking critical classroom practices, creating and adapting materials for critical pedagogies, exploring diverse representations of knowledge, and seeking critical research practices. *Pedagogies* is intentionally plural to reflect the dynamism of different techniques and methods of teaching that, while addressing issues of unequal power distribution and inequality, are culture-sensitive (and recognize that, for example, what may be seen as oppressive in one cultural context may be seen as liberating by those in that

¹³ Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills, which carries out inspections and regulatory visits of schools (<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk>).

¹⁴ <http://www.shaundellenty.com> [accessed: Feb. 2, 2014].

¹⁵ Transphobia is defined as "fear or hatred of transsexual or transgender people" by the Oxford English Dictionary [accessed: Feb. 2, 2014].

context). Critical teachers are also aware of the constitutive power of language and of different languages – which both reflect and may construct our lived experiences. The idea of critical pedagogies seems particularly relevant here as ‘power’, ‘access’ and ‘identity formation’ are critical concepts whose blending seems not to have been fully appreciated in the educational research, including the Polish EFL context.

Work in the field of critical pedagogies importantly extends to the social categories and identity labels of ‘gender’ and ‘sexuality’. Viewed in the postmodern fashion (Foucault, 1978), as fluid and constantly being redefined, in part through social actors’ own agency and resistance, both critical pedagogies and queer pedagogies constitute relatively novel approaches to exploring, understanding and potentially improving the learning conditions of the disempowered social groups, such as women and LGBTQ people, in particular in the Polish context. More importantly, however, any research carried out through these approaches is intended to travel beyond the academia to teacher education and to actual classroom practice (see Norton, 2008). In the words of Zack *et al.* (2010) – as regards sexuality, but as also applied to gender issues:

We must ... provide the skills and knowledge that will aid young educators in effectively challenging homophobic rhetoric and behaviors wherever and whenever they occur. Only then can public schools begin to transform the homophobic and heteronormative attitudes that perpetuate hate and derision (Zack et al., 2010, p. 110).

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Vol. 1, No. 1, 2014

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Women's sequential and cyclic careers: implications for the career theory

ABSTRACT. The article takes up discourse on the development of the career theory that demands taking into account multicontextual changes in the world of work that pose new challenges for women. The subjective shading of the career phenomenon that treats career as an individual's „property” was clearly stressed. When analysing individual paths of career development for both women and men it is necessary to take its wide scope of conditions into account, as well as inquire into semantic meanings assigned to the reality by the subject in order to interpret and understand past and new experiences. The focus on professional behaviours among women led to considerations on the change of the career concept in its general sense and meaning. Literature on the subject consistently underlines that career patterns will be less and less of a linear character, and more frequently of a sequential and cyclical one. The increase in the role assigned to career forces one to approach it within the category of professional identity development, planning and management skills, and the ability of monitoring one's career in a lifelong perspective.

KEYWORDS: career, career theory, career development, women's careers, sequential career, cyclical career, professional identity

Contemporary processes of globalization of the world economy, its reorganization and restructuring induce us to think about the characteristics and dominant of the neoliberal world order.¹ Undoubtedly, one of the components of the global cultural ecumene are changes in the working environment, work structure, perception of work, as well as in the sphere of features, meanings and values assigned to work. It is a world of strategies that have been individually achieved and made reality; strategies that have to be suitable for the pace of changes that the world undergoes (Ziewiec, 2009, p. 83-92). It is difficult to overestimate the

¹ The narration is a fragment of research on professional careers in the world of „boundless” careers as perceived from the perspective of university students, published in a paper titled *Młodość akademicka a kariera zawodowa* (Cybal-Michalska, 2013). What is more, the topics of globalization on political and economic levels mentioned in the introduction is further developed by the author in a much wider context in the work titled *Tożsamość młodości w perspektywie globalnego świata. Studium socjopedagogiczne* (Cybal-Michalska, 2006).

influence of these changes on the quality of building and developing women's careers, and modifying their individualized paths. The multifaceted and multilayer structure of social reality that, according to K. Dąbrowski, means „all the phenomena that occur in the external and internal environment of the man and are perceived by them, expressed and experienced with the use of senses and actions related to thinking, emotions, imagination and intuition, all interlinked” (Tylikowska, 2000, p. 233), points to the special relevance of questions on the meaning and scope of the „identity” notion. Also, in this context, it leads to the necessity to search for answers on the possibilities and capabilities of a subject to plan and create career paths, and shape women's identity in their professional careers. This topic becomes particularly important in the context of curiosities in patterns of women's careers.

Social and cultural changes introduced a novelty to the understanding of a career in the life of an individual. The focus on professional activities among women brought about a discussion on the change in the career concept in its general sense and meaning. In literature on this topic, it is consistently underlined that career patterns will be less and less linear, and more and more sequential and cyclical. From this point of view, a career will be created with a combination of many posts, roles, and tasks undertaken. As a result, a career refers to the meaning an individual (understood as a career creator) gives to the pattern of professional and non-professional activities and possibilities. According to Herr, a career cannot be presented as a synonym for work or profession. Perceiving oneself as a career manager means lifelong management of one's own career. To a large extent, a singled-out view on the career construct resembles the experience of many women. Traditional definitions of career would refer to patterns of male careers. Men used to choose their career paths in their youth and remain loyal to their choice. Female careers were treated as temporary, because it was claimed that a real full-time female „career” was maternity and looking after the household. As a result, many women's careers are a sequence of various posts intertwined with periods for bringing up children. Consequently, the patterns of women's professional behaviour are more complex when compared with men's (according to Super, it will be a discontinued career, destabilized career and a career of repeated attempts), but it does not mean that they are specific. Cyclical and sequential patterns of career reflect the professional experience of many individuals in the world where „the career has a career” (Patton & McMahon, 2006, p. 116).

The According to J. H. Greenhaus and S. Foley, being „between” professional and family affairs is not treated as a women's „issue,” but as a state that is characteristic of both women and men who are supposed to be responsible for their professional and family lives. What is more, the participation in the professional *and* family spheres at the same time may lead to psychological well-being for both women and men. This does not mean, however, that it is not worth posing the following question: do men and women have to deal with similar or different experiences when linking professional and family lives. As the authors claim, literature on the subject is a source of few premises to acknowledge that women experience a greater conflict in the context of work and family. It is also difficult to confirm what Pleck claimed about men experiencing WFC (work-family conflict) more, and women experiencing FWC (family-work conflict) more. The explanation for the lack of significant differences between the sexes in the work-family conflict can be found in the fading division between professional and home work, to the extent that men and women experience the same degree of conflict between professional and family roles. Furthermore, it cannot be ruled out, and hypotheses are formulated, that women reduced their engagement in work in order to avoid the conflict with family obligations, or in order to maintain the continuity of their identity are less eager to admit that their work collides with their family role (Greenhaus & Foley, 2007, p. 140-1).

The career theory distances itself from a linear understanding of a career path, channelling the narration into the notion of phases (cycles) that reflect the changing needs of the man in the course of their lives. There are also postulates to juxtapose the archetypically female „spiral” and the archetypically male „arrow” as two patterns that are interlinked and are at the core of professional identity. The linear presentation of career is replaced with thinking about the career domain as a scheme of *sequential* stages; each phase is based on achievements or solving conflicts from previous stages. The process of perfection and adopting new roles (women, in many ways and sequentially, combine work, marriage and maternity: they enter a role, give up their role in one field to take up a new role on a different field) focuses its attention on an individual, feeling of integration and fulfilment, and not on „building” one's image or achieving a better social status (Marshall, 2004, p. 285-6).

The issues of identity crystallize the subject of the path of individual career development and building the professional identity of a person. From this point of view, just like „every other formalized narration, it is something that has to be developed and naturally requires creative input” (Giddens, 2001, p. 107) and a reflective approach to one’s own biography. Identity is a „reflective loop where by starting from oneself, one comes back to oneself” (Zawadzki, 2003, p. 5). In the context of changes in the contemporary world, it seems especially important that women seek and give a precise answer to the question of „Who am I in this fast-changing world?” (a dynamic question). When answering a complex question of a dynamic character, according to their worldview and plans for career perspectives, noticing the pace and intensity of changes, an individual tries to establish the extent to which they are an active subject of prospective changes taking place in cultural and social contexts (Misztal, 2000, p. 158-60).

As women feel that their lives can be organised around many diverse alternatives (and this feeling is not only observed but also experienced), women are assigned a task of deciding what their relations with this world are, which does not leave their quality of career planning and management, and modifying its individualized paths, unaffected. The significance and dynamics of changes imply changes in the aspects of social life related to identity where women seek and define themselves in a career. In the sense that is of interest for us, crystallizing one’s own identity defines the direction for the development of career perspectives and adds meaning to it. The unprecedented variety of individualized lifestyles understood as „a culturally conditioned method of satisfying needs, habits and norms” (Fatyga & Rogala-Obłękowska, 2002, p. 24) means that it is possible to live with the change and one should live with it, with everyone „having to become a model for the era that we are willing to create” (Illich I., quoted after: Kwieciński, 2000, p. 269). In this sense, the loss and permanent changes in individual points of reference make the problem of new types of women’s careers valid, as well as the issue of „how identity is created and changed” (Jawłowska, 2001, p. 54) depending on the social context and quality of involving women in the process of exploration. Recognizing and understanding oneself in the career is beneficial for developing the feeling of the prime mover and taking responsibility for the prime mover. Undoubtedly, these processes are important when women plan their own careers; a career treated as „property,” i.e. stressing its subjective sense.

A career can be of a „mosaic“ structure where the linked net of life experiences „moves the individual forward“ on their way to self-fulfilment in the career. In case of women, experiences such as maternity, full-time or half-time employment, or volunteering are also part of this career structure, because they are exemplifications of the self-development of an individual. According to Gallos, a career is not a linear march „to the summit“ and is treated as a mechanical training on how to combine maternity, children and work. In their research into future patterns of professional and family life, Hallett and Gilbert selected two models: conventional (the woman is above all responsible for home and bringing up children) and division of roles (both spouses actively create their careers as well as are engaged in taking care of home and bringing up children). On the other hand, Crompton and Harris (1998) proposed a model of women's careers that takes into account women's desires directed at the development of both the „professional“ and „family“ careers. The authors underline that both in the professional and family lives women's orientation is complex and changeable. As a result, they resemble careers treated as the „property“ of an individual. This in turn means that the traditional, linear career concept will also be part of professional experiences of women. From this point of view, there is a need to find a new approach to the career domain and building a career theory that also takes into account life experiences of an individual. An alternative approach to the career is focused on developing the identity in a life career and refers to both men and women. Raynor clearly stated that what we do defines who we are, and who we are determines what we do (Patton & McMahon, 2006, p. 117).

In the contemporary individualised society creating new lifestyles, the „new way of thinking about career,“ becomes a fundamental issue in general. The conceptualisation of the qualitatively new approach to career as an individual's „property“ (coexisting in the vicinity of the traditional understanding of career as a structural property of an organisation or profession) points to a multilayered character of the contemporary discourse that combines the implications of an interdisciplinary dialogue and creates the need the review theoretical considerations on the ways of understanding the career, and conditions and indicators of its shaping.

When trying to define the concept category of „career,“ it is difficult to oversee the lack of sharpness and ambiguities in the semantic meanings assigned to this notion. What is more, a characteristic point in

thinking of the career is the diversity of meanings this notion is used in. The scope of the „career” notion can be its subjective and objective sense structure, evaluative (also with negative nuances, such as the categories of „careerist” and „careerism”)² and non-evaluative (that indicates thinking of a career as an individual’s „property”) understanding or presenting the notion from the perspective of an organisation or subject.

A career can be discussed as a social phenomenon. When presenting the topic from the sociological perspective, the career ethos remains closely linked to the values acknowledged in the society, it is widespread in its culture and by transmitting it, becomes localized and deeply rooted in the social awareness. Undoubtedly, it is socially propagated, which does not leave orienting human activity unaffected. As a result, aiming at achieving it is socially accepted (Rokicka, 1992, p. 116). The category of „career” can be defined as a constellation of many roles played by an individual simultaneously or sequentially in their entire life. The roles played by the individual can supplement or replace one another, and they can also be conflicting. As a point of reference in the approach to the notion of „career” discussed, D. Super and M. Bohn adopt a definition of a role that is understood as „a selection of social expectations that a society or social group has towards an individual that has a certain position in this community” (Paszkowska-Rogacz, 2005, p. 112). Career development strategies are updated through the social roles that one plays (Paszkowska-Rogacz, 2005, p. 107-10). At the same time, as pointed out by D. Super, a career perceived as a streak of events that form a sequence of professions and roles performed by an individual in their life according to their individualised pattern of self-regulation (Szymański, 2010, p. 77) is „an individual’s opportunity to make the concept of oneself real” (Miś, 2006, p. 483), which indirectly stresses the subjective dimension within the considerations on the possible career course of both men and women.

Gottfredson’s model that focuses on the processes of limitations and compromise relevant for women and men is an example of a universal theory. Gottfredson developed the theory of awareness of one’s own identity assuming that awareness is a link between personality variables and environment variables that are combined with the choices related to

² According to Z. Bauman’s systematization, a career is also a moral term associated with a specific evaluation system of life attitudes, relationships with the environment, as well as obligations arising from these relations.

the career. Consisting of the knowledge of gender expectations and social class affiliation, as well as of intelligence, interests and values, awareness interacts with professional images in order for an individual to define the details of their professional preferences, research into professional opportunities and barriers. Gottfredson's model underlines the meaning of socialisation in the roles that are undertaken and assigned, and the influence of gender on the choice of a career. The author arrived at a conclusion that individuals look for a compromise between their preferences and professional reality, and expanded the scope of her research to the meaning of gender in the process of career development. She suggested that there is a need to analyse the factors that determine the „risky” nature of an individual in their choices referring to their career. Among others, the factors include cultural and geographical isolation, and poor education. In this sense, these can refer to both women and men of different ethnic groups. However, it has to be added that – as is underlined by Hackett and Lent – various „risk” factors can affect men and women in different ways, and creating any scheme can bring about some limitations (Patton & McMahon, 2006, p. 125). At this point, it is difficult not to refer to Astin's model that was one of the main attempts at proposing a versatile theory that would explain the career development of both women and men. The author believed that the social and psychological model that she had built would be suitable for explaining the professional behaviour of women and men, because she assumed that professional motivation is the same for women and men, but they make different choices due to their different early experiences in socialization and possibilities that they came across in the structure. Astin's model refers to four aspects: motivation, professional expectations, socialization to play a gender role and the structure of professional opportunities. The author decided that the professional motivation of a subject is linked to the need of survival, pleasure and contribution to the society. In this context, in Astin's model choices that are significant for career development are linked not only to the availability of different professions, but also to an individual's expectations in order to satisfy the above-mentioned needs. In consequence, changes in the structure of professional possibilities determine changes in professional expectations of women (Patton & McMahon, 2006, p. 124). At the same time, society has become an area for individuals to show initiative, a space with no limit for creation, a bank for many possibilities, opportunities and perspectives available for everyone who is interested in their avail-

ability (Bauman, 1960, p. 15). This thesis matches the perspective currently adopted by psychologists that presents a career as the „property” of an individual. As described by B. G. Glaser and A. L. Strauss, individuals „wander’ from a status to a status that they co-create in cooperation and interactions with others, with feedback that gives them a confirmation of their own self-conception and the notion of their identity” (Rokicka, 1992, p. 116). This important observation on subjective aspects of a career such as: an individual’s status, self-conception and social reactions to playing various roles make individuals be perceived as an „unstable being.” The relational ego that is created as a result of socialization processes is rather „a multitude of realities than one reality” (Hałas, 2007, p. 115). As far as the notion of career goes, E. Goffman claims that it creates an opportunity for moving „forwards” or „backwards” between the I and society that is important for the I (Blankenship, 1973, p. 92).

Viewing the career as an „individual’s property” means adopting an individualistic assumption that the quality of everyone’s career is unique because it is a „collection of a series of unique posts, jobs, positions and work experiences by an individual” (Bańka, 2005b, p. 23) and the responsibility for building one’s career. A feature of the career is undoubtedly its processual character. In the context of a career defined by the „professional” adjectival marker, the process that an individual undergoes with experience and professional practice is pointed to. On the ground of the well-known theories on the development of career, among others referring to the theoretical perspectives of Miller and Form (1951), D. T. Hall and Nougoin (1968), D. Supper (1980), J. G. Greenhaus and G. A. Callalan (1994), A. Paczkowski (1998), A. Kargulowa (2005), J. Szczupaczyński, „career development begins with the beginning of life and is continued incessantly till its end” (Wołk, 2009, p. 20). A similar direction of research was taken by D. T. Hall (1986). He defined „career” as a life process that consists of a sequence of activities, stances and behaviours that are characteristic of the professional life of an individual (Adekola, 2011, p. 100). In the notion of „career” discussed by the author as a sequence of experiences linked to the role played, the essence rests in the experience mentioned and its influence on shaping and consolidating the psychological processes that according to the researcher include: self-assessment, attitudes, system of values, aspirations, level of satisfaction (Szymański, 2010, p. 79). This course of considerations is also reflected in A. Kargulowa’s definitions. Their subjective shades al-

low the author to assume that career is a „list of events forming life, sequences of professions and other life roles that all together express the attitude towards a person and towards work from the point of view of its complete development process” (Kargulowa, 2005, p. 21).

The view on the career presented is reflected in J. G. Greenhaus's considerations (2000). His views on career were defined by, on the one hand, showing the experiences related to work (decisions related to work, the positions held, duties, functions and professional roles) and on the other hand, subjective interpretations of professional events (pointing to aspirations, values, needs, attitudes, feelings and expectations related to specific professional experiences) in the entire life of an individual (Adekola, 2011, p. 100). According to J. H. Greenhaus and G. A. Callanan (1994), a career is the quality of experiences focused on work setting the direction for the quality of life of an individual (1994, p. 5). As an individual gains experience, the possibilities of planning the career path widen and acquire features necessary for a holistic approach towards it. The theoretical considerations on the subject of a „career” proposed by E. L. Herr and S. H. Cramer are an attempt at getting closer to that approach. Unique for every individual (structurally filled with what the individual has or has not chosen), dynamic and changeable, a career „contains not only one's profession, but also the decisions from before taking up a job and all those the individual takes after professional activity, as well as the connections between work and other roles played by the individual in their family, community and leisure time” (Szymański, 2010, p. 81). When attempting to make a synthesis of knowledge on the current views on the nature of an individual's career, A. Miś underlined that it is a „unique sequence of professions and posts, values and roles played by the individual in their life, shaped by the period that precedes professional work and influencing the period afterwards” (Miś, 2006, p. 478).

The current definition of career is not limited just to aspects related to the practice of promotions, having a particular profession, a satisfying professional situation of an individual or the stability of internal links of the content of the profession that one practices. The notion of „career” denotes and connotes much more; it also includes „apart from a fully professional situation (...), a level of psychological well-being, understood as a lack of tensions that disorganise an individual's activity, economic and social wealth, and a successful family situation” (Bańka, 2005a, p. 8).

Current views on career underline the importance of activities that are not directly related to work, such as: ways of spending leisure time, forms of recreation, education, playing family roles, which are related to employment" (Bańka, 2005b, p. 26). In this less restrictive approach to defining „career,” the importance of building (and not choosing) a career are underlined for designing the quality of life (Maree, 2010, p. 362). From this perspective, according to D. T. Hall, career means a sequence of experiences of an individual (understood as „shaping the individual's internal processes, such as drives and aspirations, satisfaction, self-images, attitudes towards work under the influence of changing roles”; Miś, 2006, p. 477) related to the professional role they play that builds the history of their professional life. As A. S. King claims, the psychological power of one's self-identity and the perseverance in aiming at the completion of one's career objectives represent the main component of motivation and engagement in a career, as well as cooperation within an organisation (Adekola, 2011, p. 104). A person as an individual assigns specific individual meanings to elements of reality selected thanks to the ability of reading cultural codes, creates their own individual history and has history ahead. They build their own lives and, consequently, their personal careers through assigning meanings to their own professional behaviours and experiences in workplaces (Maree, 2010, p. 363), also assigning meaning to the context where these experiences occur. Probably the most characteristic course of considerations focused on the subjective aspect of career (next to stressing the objective aspect of presenting it, characteristic of interactionism) is the Goffman's category of a „moral career,” understood as reactions of an individual towards themselves in particular situations, causing permanent changes in the conception of their own I. The theoretical orientation presented underlines researching career in an internal dimension, which means studying the changes that occur in the identity of an individual and their self-conceptions, as well as their conceptions on other subjects of social life (Rokicka, 1992, p. 125). Taking up responsibility for searching for the individual's own role in the profession practiced, whose source according to Ch. Handy, the author of a work titled *The Age of Paradox*, lies in: direction (individual feeling of acting for a good cause), continuity (subject's faith in the survival and continuation of the results of their work) and connection (participation in a community that we identify ourselves with and that we co-create), is a lifelong process and a task for lifelong learning (Piotrowska, 2006, p. 11). The British scholar also adds that

„the meaning will come upon those who develop their own sense of direction, continuity and connection” (Biolos *et al.*, 2006, p. 30) in what they do professionally.

The essence is a sequential development of an individual (integrated with the development of their career) in the course of the individual's whole life. Not accidentally, taking into account the cognitive practice in building a model of professional counselling, V. G. Zunker assigns the key role in designing a life integrated with building one's career to: the perception of success by the subject, their motivation to work, their individual need of internal satisfaction, roles taken up, quality of relations with other life partners, developmental and contextual changes (Maree, 2010, p. 364). From this perspective, according to J. H. Greenhaus, among others, „career” is described as a „model of experiences related to work that embraces and defines the elementary direction of an individual's life” (Bańka, 2005b, p. 24). In this sense, one can quote after J. Arnold that „a wide perspective on career assumes that it is a sequence of posts related to employment, roles, activities and experiences” (Bańka, 2005b, p. 24) gained by a subject in their lifelong growth.

Acknowledging the need of a multifaceted approach to research on the issue of career and recognition of the quality of women's career domain, referring to new models of its construction casts new light on the peculiarities of discussing the domain of women's careers. From the cognitive point of view, referring to the factor of identity engagement in the subject of women's careers makes it analytically important, because it serves the development of the career theory.

To sum up, it is worth underlining that the clearly subjective, personal traits in discussing „career” are an important element of the discourse. Career is assigned to a specific person, it is their possession and it is the career that gives the individual a specific meaning. It is not the profession practiced that is stressed (e.g. I practice the profession of ...) but „being” a representative of the profession practiced (e.g. I am ...). The profession is merely a context for developing one's own career that is contributed to by everyone who works or even (in case of the unemployed) looks for a job (Bańka, 2005b, p. 25). In this sense, every subjective career has a unique character. It is not strange at all, because individual dreams, desires, longings and conceptions build one's own, most personal model of a life ideal (Bauman, 1960, p. 18). Analysing career from an individual's perspective, as an individual's „property,” and updating the traits that are characteristic of the subject, should be integrat-

ed with their personality features and type of career orientation typical of them. A universal message about the need to update an subject's potential, about the need to update proactive behaviour and shape the pro-growth orientation is a reflection of dreams about the new way of being in the world, a world of individualised careers.

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Vol. 1, No. 1, 2014

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Guarantee of equality in politics? The media discourse analysis on the subject of introducing the gender parity into electoral law in Poland

ABSTRACT. The project is aiming at the quality analysis of a media discussion about introducing the gender parity to electoral law and the analysis of the activities of the Association of Congress of Women. Selected press publications are the basis of the quality analysis (according to the Critical Discourse Analysis) taken from the most opinion-creating journals. The objective of this paper is to identify the discourse (civil; non-civil) of analyzed journals.

KEYWORDS: gender parity, electoral lists, quota solution, Poland, rhetoric of the equality, CDA

Opportunities and barriers to increase participation of the Polish women in the political space

It is said that the authority (both actual and symbolic) belongs to the category of the oldest social relations, which are inextricably linked not only with violence, but also with freedom. To understand, as Magdalena Środa says, „the sources and forms of violence is to put a major step on the road to freedom” (2009, p. 9). That is why a reason to reflect on the problem of women and men in the sphere of domination, power and gender relations in society and the public sphere in Poland already has its own tradition. Today, it is manifested not only in the number of scientific articles (Agacinski, 2000; Malinowska, 2000; Graff, 2001; Titkow, 2003, 2011; Siemieńska, 2005; Firlit-Fesnak, 2005; Fuszara, 2006; Walczewska, 2006; Środa, 2009; Krzyżanowska, 2012a, 2012b), but mainly in the form of collective action. While reconstructing the history of women in the twentieth century (who were) willing to participate in politics) it is difficult to resist the feeling that not much has changed in the twenty-first century. Since women won active and passive voting rights for themselves in 1918, (which, contrary to a popular belief, was

no standard at that time on the European continent) women, neither in the pre-war nor the post-war politics were sufficiently large, strong group (so-called critical mass), which could have an impact on the course of action taken under it (and it seems that for the time being the trend is to be continued). Many studies reveal the fact of women's under-representation at both central and local levels (Niżyńska, 2011, p. 5). According to various studies (Fuszara, 2007a, 2007b, 2011b; Siemieńska, 2000, 2003; Titkow, 2003) the reasons for this phenomenon, are varied and fall mainly into two categories: reasons known as cultural and institutional. The first group includes stereotypes and different expectations assigned to women and men, and the latter one concerns mechanisms in political parties which make difficult for women to be among people who have the opportunity to be chosen (Fuszara, 2011b, p. 4). The efforts of liberal feminism are centered around the creation and the protection of equal opportunities for women through legislation and other means of democracy in order to achieve justice and equality – the gender justice (Putnam Tong, 2002, p. 8). As Małgorzata Fuszara writes: it is not enough to just remove discrimination in order to create gender equality but it is necessary to give power (2006, p. 273). In view of that, the establishment of the liberal wing of the feminist thought would be a theoretical point of reference in this thesis.

If we talk about the power we should recall strategies of increasing the number of candidates on electoral lists' (in the typology of Joni Lovenduski). These are: (1) the guarantee of equality (parity or system volume); (2) the promotion of equality (including workshops, training for women); (3) the rhetoric of equality (the general acceptance of the pursuit of balanced representation, „political discourse, speech and the texts of political leaders – call for women to stand for election and electoral participation” (Childs, Lovenduski & Campbell, 2005, p. 24, for: Niżyńska, 2011, p. 5).

When we analyze the quality of Polish debate we will see that there are problems in distinguishing between the concept of „parity” of the concept of „amount,” so they are worth emphasizing. The law of the proportion of the number of candidates are written in the constitution and / or in the elections statute that determine the proportion of both sexes on the electoral lists of all political parties. They determine for example the minimum number of an under-represented group – in this case, women – which gives them proportional representation to correct the existing imbalance. In case of parity (Fr. *Parite*, Lat. *Paritas* – equality) it is 50

percent and in case of quota it is 35 percent. Quota system is used frequently along with the „slider” or alternate system – placing of male and female candidates on the list in turns – in order to increase the effectiveness of regulatory framework. The amounts should be treated as a specific measure used temporarily, in order to accelerate the actual equality in politics (Graff, 2001: 52).

Five years of congress of women (1st–5th Congress of Women)

Revitalize the debate on parity and bill pritties

As shown above, the measures directed towards gender equality are not a new phenomenon in the twenty-first century. However, after a number of previous efforts, the debate on the issue of equal participation of women and men in Poland gained the status of the public only in 2009 (Fuszara, 2011a, p. 121-6). You can point at the specific social time here – the celebration of the 20th anniversary of the transformation of Polish democracy and the initiative Congress of Women, a social movement, association and the annual conference (forum) at the same time, the aim of which was to diagnose and improve the status of Polish women in several areas of social and political life. Congress was seen as a minor even a little „crazy” event, later called „woman populism.” And the demand of Congress who „pushed a model of gender democracy” to all skeptics and critics seemed to be trivial and ridiculous (Bilska, 2010). The 1st Congress of Women, which took place in June 2009 in Warsaw gathered several thousands of women from across the country and has formulated a number of proposals. The most important one and the most urgent was the requirement to introduce parity on electoral lists.

Voices and fate of the Congress of Women post quota solutions

Civic draft law on parity, prepared by 1st Congress of Women and experts working with him, was submitted to Parliament on 21st December 2009. It gathered 156 thousand signatures, which was an indicator of its social acceptance.

Bronisław Komorowski – even as a presidential candidate – announced during the 2nd Congress of Women, that if he wins the election, he will approve the law on the equal participation of both sexes on the electoral lists. However, despite several months of negotiations and numerous promises from the highest authorities it did not happen. Parity strongly divided not only journalists and experts, but also the people on whom the fate of the Act depended – namely – the politicians. Consequently, a draft law on the parliamentary amendments changing 50 percent of the par amount of the 35 percent was adopted. The Parliament did not accept the alternate placement of women in the first five places on electoral lists or the need to ensure the amount in quota in case of the resignation of any of the candidates (Stowarzyszenie, 2010).

Following a significant modification of the original version of the civil draft and the observation the process of the preparation of electoral rolls in batches, the Women's Congress stated that the quota Act is an insufficient solution. Therefore, a draft amendment to the law of increasing to 45 percent the number of women on the lists and introducing a system of „slide” was introduced at the 3rd Congress of Women. According to Danuta Hübner it was also diagnosed that: „although the parties comply with their obligation to that 35 percent of women on electoral lists is ensured, but most often it is a formal and quantitative treatment” (*Wiadomości*, 2011).

Suggestions and recommendations of the Congress – supported by the results of scientific studies – did not bring the expected results. Social excitement and enthusiasm also gradually fell. Hence at the end of the 4th Congress of Women in 2012 the introduction of gender parity and alternans on electoral lists was re-introduced (the first attempt was made three years earlier) (www.stowarzyszeniekongreskobiet.pl).

Unfulfilled, although once promised, the subject to increase quotas for electoral lists was not quite as pointedly emphasized at the 5th Congress of Women in 2013 and has been marginalized in favor of other issues and demands (Kongres Kobiet, 2013).

Public opinion about legal guarantees gender equality policy

While in the 1st Congress of Women, on the wave of public enthusiasm, the organizers of the Congress formulated the most important and most urgent demand – the introduction of parity to the electoral

code, a month after the Congress (July 2009), opponents of the introduction of regulations initiated contraction. That contraction, 'an environment' opposed to the idea of gender parity, was treated as a kind of civic manifesto. It took the form of an open letter „We do not want parity” (Michaliszyn, 2010). The letter was published in two of the most widely read and influential socio-political newspapers – *Gazeta Wyborcza* and *Rzeczpospolita* (*Gazeta Wyborcza*, 2009). The publication of the letter, and as a result the enrichment of the debate have ended the joint initiative of skeptics and opponents of parity. However, as a consequence of popularizing issues of equal number of women in politics, research centers of public opinion have recognized the need of testing the Poles opinion on the subject. The study mainly checked the opinion on gender parity on electoral lists. All surveys quoted below were conducted on a nationwide, random and representative sample of the Polish adults.

According to one of the largest and most renowned public opinion research institutes in Poland, in 2010, the respondents declared themselves as advocates of increasing the participation of women in the political sphere. According to almost half of the respondents (47 percent), „now in politics there are too few women, and therefore steps should be taken to change this state of affairs” (CBOS, 2010). In addition, other research has shown clearly that „the Polish society recognizes the problem of insufficient participation of women in politics and acknowledges that it has to do also with the barriers present in the political parties to create lists of candidates” (IPA, 2010).

The most indicated by the Polish people way to increase the percentage of women in political life was to encourage women to be active in this area. As to the question of imposing a percentage of the minimum number of women on electoral lists (as a form of Act) public opinion was divided. Proponents of this type of control pointed to the „unequal opportunities for women in the access to important decision-making positions in the country. Opponents appealed to the slogan of positive discrimination, which – in their opinion – favors women at the expense of men” (CBOS, 2010). Hypothetical explanation for skepticism about the law or the quota parity solution could be the reluctance of citizens – remembering the times of communism in Poland – „the top-down regulation of the electoral and indirect enforcement of voting citizens” (CBOS, 2010).

Media discourse analysis on the implementation of gender parity to the electoral code

But before civil bill was sent to the Parliament, and advocated by the Congress voted ratio was changed to 35 percent of the amount without the „slider,” media discussions on women in politics did not stop. *Gazeta Wyborcza* and *Rzeczpospolita* – two of the largest, most influential (IMM, 2009) and at the same time for a long time arguing with each other dailies have played a special role in the spread of the discourse. The main objective of an analysis given above was to make the following analysis of critical discourse analysis of media for the introduction of gender parity on electoral lists. The representatives of the symbolic elites, who through the mass media form their opinions, identify issues for discussion, exchange arguments and use the specific vocabulary to describe social reality are responsible shaping public discourse (Jabłońska, 2009, p. 16). Press publications published in *Gazeta Wyborcza* and *Rzeczpospolita* 22nd June 2009 (after the 1st Congress of Women) to 22nd December 2009 (the day after the Congress of Women gave the Marshal of the Sejm the list of signatures under civil parity bill) served as a research material. It should be noted that the analyzed time period was special due to the fact that during the 1st Congress of Women the demand for the introduction of parity was proposed. What is more, there has been the debate on women in politics at that time and it had the widest-reaching unprecedented scale in Poland.

The people decided to analyze the contents of the press to focus on the critical discourse analysis purpose – to expose social inequality expressed and reinforced through language and work towards the emancipation of disadvantaged groups who are excluded from participation in the discourse or marginalized (Habermas, 1999; van Dijk, 2001). As Walery Pisarek says: It can perform the function of a specific tool to help to describe and sometimes even „discover the real characteristics of the newspaper as a stream of messages” (1983, p. 59). Critical Discourse Analysis in Teun A. van Dijk’s model also allows us to answer the question of the specificity of the new bias (2001, p. 19). For this reason the attitude of *Gazeta Wyborcza* and *Rzeczpospolita* to introduce gender parity on electoral lists to determine the discursive profile of each log and classify the test titles for the appropriate model of civil discourse or non-civil has been done the subject of research. During the research the assumptions of the theory of communicative action and the concept of

the Jürgen Habermas public sphere and the theory of symbolic violence and the political field concept of Pierre Bourdieu were used (Habermas, 1999; Bourdieu & Wacquant, 2001). Bourdieu's assumptions completes the concepts of power ministry (pastoral) and the discourse of power by Michel Foucault (1977, 2002).

The main objective of this article is to determine whether legal guarantees for women (in the form of parity law) are a new kind of elite bias symbolic expressed in public discourse. Characteristics that are relevant to examine the relationship of *Gazeta Wyborcza* and *Rzeczpospolita* to introduce gender parity on electoral lists were: (1) the number of articles and existing thematic strands within the selected issue (its multifaceted, or the topics which were ignored) in the participation of the foreign politicians, experts and commentators; (2) vocabulary and argumentative line types which dominate on the pages of various newspapers, allowing the identification of a closed or open nature of the discourse (the vocabulary consensual or war); (3) internal and external combinations, that appeared in the discussion initiated in the press. The journalists understood 'connections within the debates' as the appeal of the magazine to other writers appearing on the pages of the same newspaper (internal connection), and references to the authors of the contributors to the pages of other newspapers (external connections). These connections make up the so-called grid discursive – the network of cross-cutting references in the area of which opinions and polemics were exchanged.

Number of articles and main topics

During the studies fourteen articles were published in the *Rzeczpospolita* newspaper. In most of them readers demanded parity. And *Gazeta Wyborcza* published forty-three articles (mainly in the form of current information on the activities of the Women's Congress and negotiations with politicians on par Act) (Figure 1).

Articles on parity appeared in the press irregularly. The most lively discussion both in *Gazeta Wyborcza* and *Rzeczpospolita* took place in July 2009, after the Congress of Women. According to Natalia Krzyżanowska that was „probably stimulated by the surprise effect caused by scale of the events” (2012b, p. 208). In the coming months, *Gazeta Wyborcza* systematically, although with less intensity informed about the issue of parity, while *Rzeczpospolita* rarely published articles on the subject.

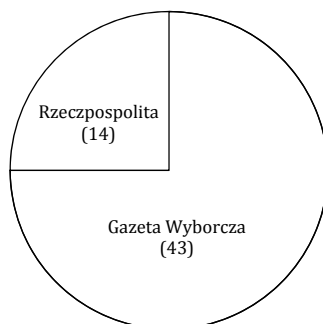


Figure 1. Number of articles in *Gazeta Wyborcza* and *Rzeczpospolita*.

Source: Own calculations on the basis of press

Despite the quantitative differences (*Gazeta Wyborcza* published more than three times more articles than *Rzeczpospolita*) it should be noted the qualitative differences in how newspapers analyzed the issue in terms of themes and contexts in which is depicted gender parity. More precisely, what was the relationship of the author to the presented content and what form of journalism prevailed. Parity was widely presented in *Gazeta Wyborcza* (both reports, commentaries and newspaper columns), in the studied timeframe number and content of press was quite extensive and diverse in terms of the presented ideas and opinions on issues of gender parity on electoral lists. *Gazeta Wyborcza* kept informed about the activities of the Women's Congress towards the draft law for civil par. As a result, a wide range of expression of particular symbolic elites, related to the idea of parity was presented in the newspaper. An overall analysis shows that parity was received with both enthusiasm and hope, as well as with irony or hostility. There were twenty-one „for parity” votes, fourteen „neutral” and eight „against parity.”

The discourse of *Rzeczpospolita* was mainly based on journalistic digressions, which do not refer to the facts. *Rzeczpospolita*'s press material of the analyzed issues were extremely modest. A distinctive feature of the journal was its 'position', which was clearly „against parity.” The chart shows that another characteristic feature of *Rzeczpospolita* was a clear lack of information from the country – its content was mostly dominated by unilateral publicists, sociologists and other experts. During the study, the vast majority of articles published in the pages of *Rzeczpospolita* were texts condemning the idea of gender parity on electoral lists. There were nine such votes, four were „neutral” and one „for parity.”

Dominant phraseology and types of argumentative lines

Parity was described in *Gazeta Wyborcza*, with usage of diverse vocabulary. That was dominated by the term „neutral,” such as the legal guarantees of women, a leveling mechanism, the adjustment of the system, or simply par. In addition to the terms „neutral” about the parity itself people talk with approval: „principle of justice” [GW. 06.07.2009, 16.07.2009], „tool to solve the problems of women” [GW. 17.08.2009], „unlock tool” [GW. 07-08.11.2009]. In the newspaper critical synonymous concepts such as „social engineering” [GW. 07.07.2009, 25.08.2009, 04.09.2009], „awkward barrier” [GW. 05.08.2009], or „artificial solution” [GW. 26.08.2009] can also be found. As the analysis in *Gazeta Wyborcza* shows the phraseology that presented the idea of parity in a heterogeneous manner was used. Although *Gazeta Wyborcza* presented clearly approving position on civil parity bill initiative (support the initiative of collecting signatures for a civil bill) we can talk about the complexity of the feedback and comments. The newspaper presented views of both Polish and foreign politicians, sociologists, psychologists, other experts and other representatives of the symbolic elites.

On the pages of *Rzeczpospolita* parity is explained mainly by pejoratively colored vocabulary. About the parity on the newspaper there were names as follows: „forced participation of women” [Rz. 10.07.2009], „fetish of the leftwing politics,” „curse,” „extreme injustice,” „prosthetic parity” [Rz. 14.07.2009], „social engineering” [Rz. 14.07.2009, 19.11.2009], „numerus clausus” [Rz. 24.07.2009], „artificial support,” „imposing collective identity” [Rz. 19.11.2009], „schizophrenia” [Rz. 21.12.2009]. At the same time the phraseology of war was strongly present as well. The proof for this can be numerous titles of articles which were critical to the idea of parity, as well as their content filled with vocabulary of war such as „fight for top positions,” „fight for positions,” „urge to power,” [Rz. 09.07.2009], „rivalry between the original hordes” [Rz. 24.07.2009], „the struggle for parity” [Rz. 19.11.2009]. On the basis of clearly accented line of argument, a specific rhetorical community (manifested in such phrases as „we know those routes,” „forcing us” [Rz. 19.11.2009], and „everyone admitted that” has developed [Rz. 21.12.2009]). Therefore, it cannot be identified with the community of communication within the meaning of Habermas, because it does not meet the basic conditions of civil discourse, as shown in the following analysis. The specificity of the closed community of rhetoric is to present the world

according to the distribution of „we-they” (Figure 2). In this way, *Rzeczpospolita* performs pastoral authority within the meaning of Foucault, when for the sake of „herd” it directs it, decide what is good for it and what is bad, thus depriving it of the possibility self-evaluation and selection. It is therefore highly persuasive picture, acting on the imagination of readers, which extremely simplifies and distorts reality. It is the creation of the world with a clear distinction between „us” and „them,” the category of „we” reflects all the positive qualities while the other, assign only negative traits.

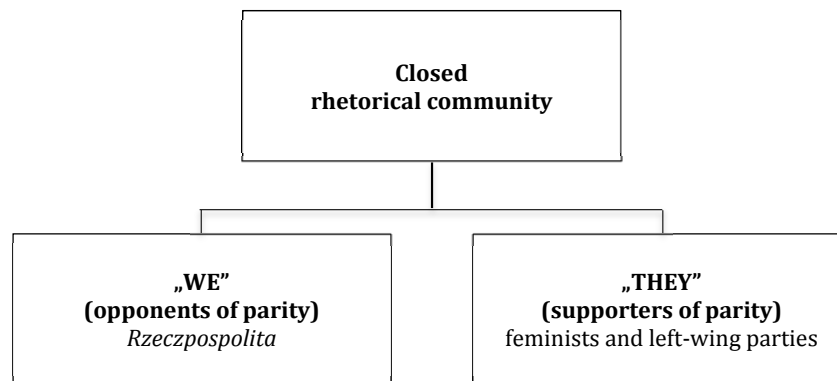


Figure 2. Create a closed community of rhetoric as an example of *Rzeczpospolita*.
Source: Own calculations on the basis of press

The identification of discursive profile was important to analyze the argumentative strategies used by elite symbolic. An overall analysis shows that the line of argument used by *Rzeczpospolita* was based primarily on the attack. It was conducted using a variety of eristic techniques, including *argumentum ad personam*, in which the subject matter is transferred to the personal plane of competition and is intended to overcome, not convince the opponent. This treatment is also characteristic for press publications of *Gazeta Wyborcza*, but to a much lesser intensity. It should be noted, however, that both in *Rzeczpospolita* and in *Gazeta Wyborcza* examples of the use of rational argument, in which the sender's intention was to convince their own reasons for using rational proof were found as well. Moreover, the part of argumentation expressed reasoning, respect and appreciation for different views, as well

as a desire to reach an agreement (such examples occur often in *Gazeta Wyborcza*, and to a much lesser extent in *Rzeczpospolita*). This means that, de facto, that in *Gazeta Wyborcza* communication procedures have been complied with in accordance with the objectives of civil discourse. The contents of the two analyzed logs were the basis for creation of collective typologies of dominant argument, supporters and opponents of the introduction of gender parity to the electoral code (Table 1, Table 2).

Table 1.

Types of arguments for supporters of the introduction of gender parity in electoral lists

Type I	The more women, the better the quality of the policy: the increased participation of women in politics will result in better quality, because it will be fewer fights and aggression, and more substantive discussion and action.
Type II	The destruction of the glass ceiling: parity should be introduced because it is harder for women to get access to places that men consider attractive.
Type III	Parity is not so terrible, so you might want to take a chance: if the legal guarantees would facilitate and enable societal transformations represent the society in which women are the majority, it's worth the risk to introduce parity.

Source: Own calculations on the basis of press

Table 2.

Types of arguments for opponents of the introduction of gender parity in electoral lists

Type I	Parity handicapping and humiliates women: all the legal safeguards that promote women are synonymous with lack of self-reliance, self-confidence and desperate women who want to usurp the right to support them just because they are women.
Type II	Education instead of the law: to educate and thereby alter the consciousness of society, that men and women believe in a woman, and not resort to the „artificial” solutions in the form of legislation.
Type III	Unjustified fashion for women: to promote women talk a lot now, creating new trends and recognizing the priority of equality at all costs.
Type IV	Fear of „chain reaction”: if quotas are introduced to political life, then you probably will go beyond the narrow confines of entering the proportions 50/50 also in supervisory boards and scientific boards.
Type V	Parity is a propaganda and a waste of time: efforts to introduce parity are bad, short-sighted and irrational. The argument that „democracy without women is half of democracy” is absurd.
Type VI	More women means more questionable quality policy: greater presence of women in politics do not result in the better quality, because most women „do not know anything about politics.”

Source: Own calculations on the basis of press

Discursive net

When you identify the type of discursive profile, examining the discursive net of related articles, that appeals for release of journalists to other writers appearing on the pages of the same newspaper (so-called internal calls), and references to the authors of the contributors to the pages of other newspapers (so-called external connections) is also important. The final results of the analysis showed that the majority of internal references appeared in *Gazeta Wyborcza*. This means that the newspaper columnists frequently referred to their arguments and alluded polemics, at the same time presenting their own point of view. Eight such connections are identified, including two with approving emotions ('emotional' in Figure 3 marked „+”), four are critical ('emotional' in Figure 3 marked „-”), and two ambivalent (no mark). Most reactions were given to arguments presented by the proponents of parity advocating its introduction due to the fact that the increased participation of women in politics will result in the better quality. There are these articles which focused most polemics and opinion exchanges (in particular, provoking criticism).

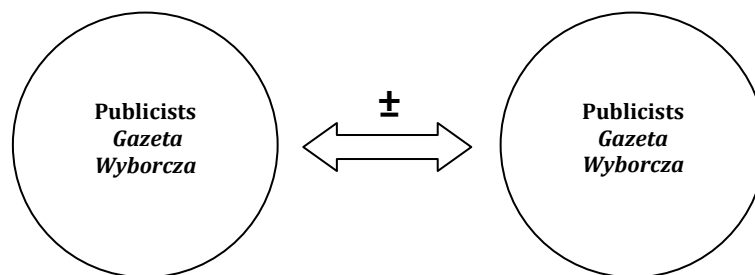


Figure 3. Discursive net *Gazeta Wyborcza*.

Source: Own calculations on the basis of press

However, less-developed network of discursive was identified in *Rzeczpospolita*. Six connections between newspaper articles were found, three internal and three external. It should be noted that the journalists of the newspaper appealed to their texts in an approving way ('emotional' in Figure 4 labeled „+”), confirming the critical attitude of the newspaper to parity. Therefore, despite the fact that in *Rzeczpospolita* internal links were identified, this could not be considered as an indication of

civil discourse because most of the appeals was to maintain a monolithic argument of opponents of parity. The journalism of this newspaper was based on the ritual repetition of the arguments that have long been established. As for external connections, in *Rzeczpospolita* the line of argument was based primarily on the attack, directed exclusively toward the editors of *Gazeta Wyborcza* ('emotional' in Figure 4 marked „-“). It should be noted that the daily *Gazeta Wyborcza* has no direct polemics towards *Rzeczpospolita* within the analyzed issue. Hence, no external connections were identified in *Gazeta Wyborcza*. In conclusion, the *Rzeczpospolita* discourse does not build a community of communications, but excludes from it in the sense that (with minor exceptions) does not allow for different points of view. What is more, the primary response to the diversity of worldviews is attack – directed mainly towards the editors of *Gazeta Wyborcza*. Thus, the profile of the *Rzeczpospolita* discursive is a part of the unsocial model of discourse, which is characterized by blocking the agreement and the creation of symbolic divisions („they” are the ones who belong to the communities of feminist and/or left-wing parties). At the same time such profile has the characteristics which disseminate domination and coercion, because the intentions of the sender are in fact hidden (through the usage of treatments which distort the image of social reality).

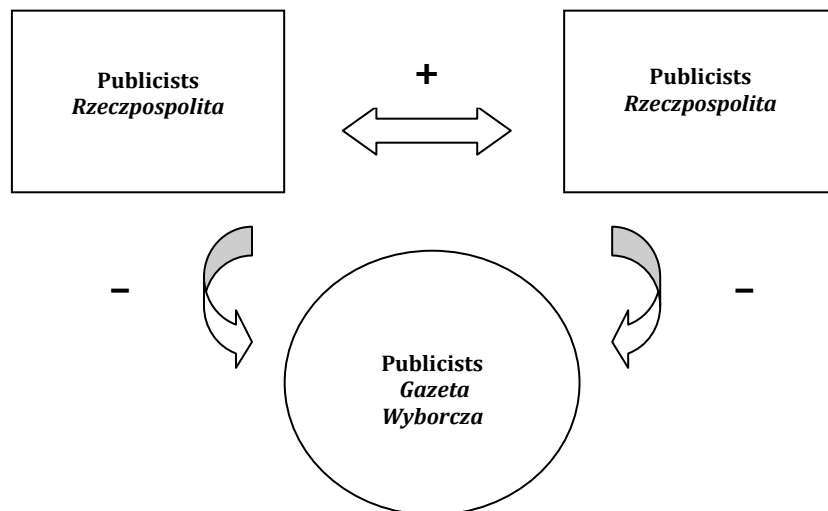


Figure 4. Discursive net *Rzeczpospolita*.

Source: Own calculations on the basis of press

Conclusions

The main objective of this debate was to make a critical analysis of the media discourse on the issue of the introduction of gender parity on electoral lists in Poland. Research was based on articles published in *Gazeta Wyborcza* and *Rzeczpospolita* – two of the most widely read and influential socio-political newspapers in Poland. In the analyzed press more characteristics in favor of closed (and thus non-civil) discourse have been identified. The closest to the ideal type of an open discourse (or civil) was *Gazeta Wyborcza*. This feature could be attributed to *Rzeczpospolita* to a much lesser extent.

Based on analyzed discussions, monitoring the activities of the Association of Congress of Women, and observing the fate of the parity law – as amended by the parliamentarians of quota – it can be said that the legal guarantee for women (in the form of parity law) is a new kind of symbolic elites notice. Prejudice is expressed in a kind of public discourse, the discourse of power and authority. You can also draw a further conclusion that this is a form of discourse that reflects the Polish public sphere that (in the present case) stands out limited possibilities of reconciliation of claims and cooperation of social actors. Consequently, this results on the one hand in marginalization (Wnuk-Lipiński, 2008, p. 272) and the objectification of disadvantaged (reducing their perpetration and significance), on the other hand strengthening the privileged (Hodge & Kress, 1988).

Design by representatives of the Congress of Women, and other experts – the legal principle of gender parity on electoral lists alternans – despite the status of one of the most popular, relevant and at the same time controversial topics (effectively marginalized by the dominant elite) is slowly losing its importance. Therefore it can be concluded that the acceptance and adoption of the law recommended by the Congress of Women in this shape/form, is – in this specific social time – an unattainable postulate. Perhaps that is why the Congress activists are currently considering whether to remain a social movement or turn into a party and take part in the next parliamentary elections in 2015. For now, activists have decided to set up a Political Council, whose task will be to support women seeking an electoral mandate (*Puls Biznesu*, 2013).

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Vol. 1, No. 1, 2014

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Gifted Education in the United States: Perspectives of Gender Equity

ABSTRACT. An overview of education for gifted and talented children and adolescents in the United States will be presented. Issues of gender equity will be discussed and suggestions for creating equal opportunities for all students will be outlined.

KEYWORDS: gender equity, gifted education, equal opportunity

Introduction

The National Association for Gifted Children in the United States estimates that approximately 6% of the population of school-age children should be identified as gifted. However, the percentage varies from school district to school district and from state to state; yet, it is most typically between 5-7%. This translates to about three million students in the public school system who need supplemental materials to learn at their high ability level in school. A larger percentage of males are identified as gifted and talented in the United States with many programs being 3:1 or 5:1 males to females (Prado & Wiczerkowski, 1990). This manuscript will discuss issues related to this specific population of children and adolescents and focus on gender equity issues among the public school system in the United States.

Myths about giftedness in the United States

It is often believed that children who are gifted and talented are bored by school. However, most individuals who are gifted are well adjusted to school and to the community around them. In addition, it is commonly believed that 3.5% of the population in the United States should be identified as gifted, but it actually depends on the definitions

used. In some school districts, just 1% of the population is identified as gifted whereas up to 6% can be identified in other school districts.

Another myth is that giftedness is a stable trait that is always consistent throughout life. However, some children who are gifted are not recognized as gifted until much later in life. Different factors can affect this such as the gender of the child, teacher knowledge of giftedness, resources available to identify and support those who gifted, and the personality of the child.

One final myth of giftedness in the United States is the belief that people who are gifted do everything well. While it is definitely true that people who are gifted have superior talents and abilities, it is evident that there are areas of strength and areas of weakness similar to someone who is not identified as gifted.

Defining giftedness

There are many words used to define someone who is gifted including precocious, insightful, genius, creative, and talented. Yet there has been debate on whether one is born gifted or whether giftedness is developed within a child. Many definitions in the United States focus only on a specific intelligence quotient as a result of performance on tests. For example, a student might need to achieve a score of at least 130 on an intelligence test such as the Wechsler Intelligence Scale – Revised (Vaughn, Bos & Schumm, 2013) for a school district to identify him/her as gifted. Although IQ tests have been proven to be culturally and linguistically unfair, many districts still use them to determine eligibility for gifted programs.

There is not one uniform definition for giftedness in the United States across the 50 states (Stephens & Karnes, 2000). However, it is important to determine which children need supplemental materials so that gifted programs and services can be developed and implemented. It is also interesting to determine the definition of giftedness and whether the definition is gender specific or if it can benefit one gender over the other.

The task force that created the Marland report in the early 1970s was the first committee to study the effectiveness of gifted programs in the United States. Besides citing many inadequacies of the current educational programming available for children who had already been identified as gifted and talented, the report's most instrumental contribution

was the first federal definition of giftedness. The following definition has been criticized for its inability to be easily applied to the school system and its lack of clarity in identifying who is truly gifted (Vaughn, Bos, & Schumm, 2013).

Gifted and talented children are those identified by professionally qualified persons who by virtue of outstanding abilities, are capable of high performance. These are children who require differentiated educational programs and/or services beyond those normally provided by the regular school program in order to realize their contribution to self and society. Children capable of high performance include those with demonstrated achievement and potential ability in the following areas:

- General intellectual ability,
- Specific academic aptitude,
- Creative or productive thinking,
- Leadership ability,
- Visual or performing arts,
- Psychomotor ability (Marland, 1972).

In 1978 the definition was altered with the removal of psychomotor ability. In 1988, the definition was adjusted as follows:

The term “gifted and talented students” means children and youth who give evidence of high-performance capability in areas such as intellectual, creative, artistic, or leadership capacity, or in specific academic fields, and who require services or activities not ordinarily provided by the school in order to fully develop such capabilities (Public Law 100-297, Title IV, Section 4103. Definitions).

In 1994 the definition was again amended and differed from previously used definitions in the United States by removing the term “gifted” and instead focusing on talents which would be more inclusive of both genders and children from diverse socio-economic backgrounds. The belief was that more children from underrepresented cultures and ethnicities would qualify for gifted and talented programs in the school districts.

Characteristics of students who are gifted and talented

Although children identified as gifted and talented possess different characteristics, there are some commonalities that educators can use to determine eligibility for special programming. These characteristics include intellectually gifted and creatively gifted or talented.

Children who are intellectually gifted tend to score high on standardized tests, yet think “outside of the box.” They may hold a plethora of ideas and knowledge that can be expressed both orally and in written form in a fashion that far exceeds similar aged peers. Males tend to especially score high on math achievement assessments and have consistently scored higher than females in this area.

Children who are considered to be creatively gifted and talented will express their thoughts and ideas through the visual or performing arts. These children usually have an extraordinary amount of enthusiasm for the arts and must have an outlet to express this creativity. Thus, teachers who have children who are gifted creatively in their classes must give them many opportunities for interaction with others and supplemental resources to keep them from getting bored in the general education class.

Under-identification by group

Three groups of children are under-identified for gifted programs. The first group includes the children from minority groups. This underrepresentation is attributed to assessment tools and procedures that are normed on groups that do not include children from diverse cultural backgrounds. Schools and districts should make sure to identify other assessment tools rather than norm-referenced assessments so that students from diverse backgrounds who demonstrate high academic aptitude can also be included in gifted and talented programs in the United States. This issue of equity for educational opportunity will greatly enhance the lives of children from minority groups.

The second group of children who are under-identified for gifted programs are those with disabilities. Children in this group are often overlooked because they are receiving special education services so are not frequently considered to be intellectually or creatively gifted. However, in the United States, a small percentage of students may be considered to be “twice exceptional” which means that they are gifted as well as demonstrate a learning disability. Children and adolescents in this category can be artistically superior and demonstrate other types of talents.

The final group of children who are still under-identified are females. In the United States, the gap between the genders has narrowed in re-

cent years, yet there is still a smaller percentage of girls in gifted programs. One interesting finding is that girls who are early high achievers do tend to have diminishing giftedness as they enter adolescence and beyond (Vaughn, Bos, & Schumm, 2013). This will be discussed in subsequent sections as this must be addressed to level the playing field for girls who are identified as gifted and talented at an early age in the United States.

Influences of teachers' diagnoses of giftedness – impact on girls

Teachers have been proven to have more difficulty in identifying giftedness in girls rather than boys (Endepohis-Ulpe, 2008). Teacher nomination to gifted programs is an important factor in determining class placement for children in gifted programs. Unfortunately, evidence has been shown that the validity of teachers' judgments must be questioned (Rost & Hanses, 1997). In addition, parents judgments of their daughters' cognitive capabilities are also underestimated when compared to their sons' (Endepohis-Ulpe, 2008). If the perceptions of both teachers and parents toward girls who are gifted and talented can be adjusted, girls will have many more opportunities for success.

The critical feature in identifying a child as gifted and talented is demonstrating and submitting exemplary work in school. Children may be overlooked if they are not achieving to their full potential and are not submitting outstanding work, yet they may have and extraordinarily high intellect. Boys have tended to be high achievers in the mathematical arena (although girls are quickly catching up); thus, teachers may refer them to gifted and talented programs earlier.

Gender stereotypes by teachers in general may be partially to blame for more males than females in gifted and talented programs. These gender expectations tend to negatively influence females in the mathematics and science areas (Rustemeyer, Wilde, & Fischer, 2006). Thus, teachers may notice males more for their abilities in these areas. Teachers may also be more aware of boys who are gifted and talented because they are more likely to display behaviors that are less adaptive than girls when they are bored or unchallenged. Therefore, teachers may realize that a boy has already mastered the curriculum being taught if they are demonstrating behaviors that are not conducive to classroom learning.

These disruptions as well as possible increased aptitude in the areas of math and science may be two factors which explain why teachers refer males to gifted and talented programs more readily than females.

Models of gifted curriculum

Acceleration and enrichment

In the United States, models of curriculum for students who are gifted and talented vary widely. Individual states and schools have programs that are not aligned across the public school system. This freedom to address individual needs is beneficial for teachers and for students. Teachers can then address the differing needs of male and female students who may each have different levels of gifts and talents. Most programs use both acceleration of content as well as enrichment of the required content to address the needs of the students. Both of these programs benefit boys and girls equally if they are being identified and referred to gifted and talented programs equally.

Acceleration of the content enables students to demonstrate mastery on specific topics or units and more quickly complete grade level expectations than the students placed in general education. This can be done in a regular classroom or a classroom designated for students who are gifted and talented. There are two types of acceleration: student acceleration and content acceleration. Student acceleration is the practice of moving students through years of schooling quickly. There are examples of students who have been admitted to a university when still a young teen or even to medical school years prior to the average age of admittance. Meanwhile, content acceleration allows students to rapidly move through the curriculum. They are able to learn the content in greater depth or to deal with more complex and higher levels of subject matter (Feldhusen, Van Tassel-Baska, & Seeley, 1989). Content acceleration also allows students to focus on specific subjects for which they have greater interest so teachers can allow male and female students to choose different topics as their interests dictate. Students are allowed to have advanced curriculum beyond what their grade level requires; thus, they move more quickly through the grade levels.

Enrichment is another way to meet the needs of males and females who are gifted and talented in the classroom. Students are provided with

supplementary curriculum opportunities to greater challenge and motivate them to reach their full potential. They are allowed to move beyond the basic grade level curriculum and complete activities such as the following:

- Extended reading on additional related topics of interest,
- Creative research on a specific topic,
- Art projects demonstrating the learning,
- Community service projects,
- Field trips,
- Internet activities.

Typically, a combination of several types of instruction are used in schools and districts to educate students in gifted and talented programs throughout the United States.

Classroom design

Students who are gifted and talented may be educated in many different administrative arrangements depending on the classroom or school. Typically, programs are either resource rooms, self-contained programs or inclusion programs. The type of program varies greatly throughout the United States.

Students are grouped with other students who are identified as gifted and talented in resource programs where just part of the day is focused on their special needs. In elementary schools, these programs are typically pull-out programs where the students who are gifted and talented are removed from the general education program for a few hours per day to gain additional acceleration through the content and enrichment to enhance their learning interests and content level. Although it is different in each school, a teacher from that school who is trained in gifted and talented curriculum may be the one to lead the group or an itinerant teacher may travel from school to school. The advantage to a pull-out program is that students are able to receive individual instruction rather than possibly becoming bored by content they have already mastered.

Self-contained programs are also common and this is where students at the elementary school level who are gifted and talented receive all of their instruction in one classroom throughout the day. Students at the secondary level are placed in honors courses for each subject for which

they test at a higher level so they are in more challenging courses overall. Larger schools and districts are able to have self-contained programs because they have more students that they serve. Some larger school districts target one school as the magnet school for students who are gifted and talented. There are even some states within the United States that have residential school sites for students who are gifted and talented.

Students identified as gifted and talented are also commonly educated in heterogeneous classrooms where children of different achievement levels are taught by one teacher. This is most typical in smaller school systems where the administrator does not have enough students in the gifted and talented program to create separate programming. This can be problematic as students may not receive the education that they need due to too many levels of students within the same classroom. A systematic plan is needed to educate students high academic achievement levels; thus, if students are educated in an inclusive classroom, teachers must be diligent about their planning and organization for these students. Ideas for supporting gifted and talented students in inclusive classrooms include the following strategies:

- Communicating high expectations,
- Creating a positive classroom environment,
- Building strong classroom management,
- Developing appropriate supplemental materials for enrichment,
- Organizing ability level groups.

Overall, students in gifted and talented programs may be taught in different models, but the key is that individual needs are addressed and interest levels are encouraged by gender so that motivation is enhanced. The more that male and female students in gifted and talented programs are supported, the more they will be able to give back to the classroom and school. Continuing high expectations for all achievers will benefit the community as a whole.

Gendered practices

Research has found that in early childhood and throughout the elementary school years, there is a only small gap between boys and girls who are identified as gifted and talented (Davis & Rimm, 1989) and some research has found no gap at all (Gurian, 2013). However, at around age twelve, gifted boys tend to begin to outnumber gifted girls

and this trend continues into adulthood. There are several possible reasons for this that will be discussed later in subsequent sections of this paper.

Children are typically identified as gifted at around the age of 8. Girls enter school with better academic skills than boys. They can read, talk and count earlier than boys. In the preschool years, girls score higher than boys on IQ tests. They tend to be ready for formal schooling much earlier and have been documented to earn higher grades than boys in elementary school.

When children hit the adolescent years, many girls tend to become embarrassed if they are labeled as gifted. Being popular is much more important than being academically gifted to the adolescent female. Girls in general are more socially adept and choose to adapt to the ability level of their age-mates (Silverman, 1993). Gurian (2013) highlighted reasons why it is “not smart to look smart” which forces girls to deny, camouflage, or abandon their superior gifts and talents. Girls in adolescence can see their uniqueness as a disadvantage and downplay their cognitive and artistic abilities.

Boys and girls who are identified as gifted and talented also may have different attitudes and perceptions about life in general. One study (Reis, Callahan, & Goldsmith, 1994) analyzed the attitudes of 144 gifted girls and 140 gifted boys in grades six through eight. They looked at different aspects of the students’ lives including expectations about their future education, career and family, attitudes about school and school achievement, and their concept of gender differences. All three areas found differences between the genders. Boys who were gifted had strong opinions about their futures and their career and life goals. However, they felt that their wives should stay home to raise the family and not pursue a career. They also believed that girls in general should spend more time at home taking care of the family in contrast to the boys.

Attitudes of gifted males and females

As described before, many gifted females are underachievers. For instance, only 6% of patents in the United States are issued to women (Reis, Callahan, & Goldsmith, 1994). Only 36% of National Merit semi-finalists are female (Ordovensky, 1998). In addition, there are few women on the United States Supreme Court and in the United States Senate

when compared to males. There has never been a female president in the United States. All of these examples clearly demonstrate that females who are gifted are under-achievers.

One reason for this underachievement of females in the United States may be sex-role stereotyping from infancy to adulthood, lack of inclusion in women's accomplishments as compared to men in literature or school textbooks, lower teacher and parental expectations for gifted females compared to gifted males, and the absence of adult female role models in both non-traditional and traditional professional roles (Reis, Callahan, & Goldsmith, 1994). Historically in the United States, males and females have chosen different career goals with girls focusing on homemaking and parenting while choosing teaching or nursing as their profession. But early on in life, boys and girls are similar in their confidence about their intelligence and their ability to work hard in college and in careers. This should be channeled so that girls continue to feel this confident throughout their schooling experiences.

Implications for future research

Girls who have been identified as gifted and talented should continue to be encouraged and nurtured to reach their career and life goals. Future empirical studies should focus on determining effective programs to develop instructional programs in all subject areas to further support the interests and strengths of girls. While single gender schools are still commonly chosen by parents in the United States (Gurian, 2013), schools where both genders are educated should focus on developing the full range of abilities by all children. As more gifted girls become gifted adults, society in the United States will change and support these unlimited aspirations of gifted females. Support studies should follow to determine effective practices within communities to continue this tradition of reaching the fullest potential for every child in the United States.

Conclusion

Overall, gifted programs in the United States have many different models and vary depending on the school, district, and state. Although males are represented more heavily throughout these programs, efforts

are being made to strengthen the interests of females and to more equally support both genders in reaching their highest potential in school programs in the United States. While sex discrimination is well documented in the United States, women are proud of their work and are reaching new heights in career positions. The possibility of a United States president may even be on the horizon.

While research has demonstrated that more boys are given guidance on career choice in higher level professions, this is slowly changing throughout the United States where girls are being given more opportunities than ever before. It may be a few short years away when boys and girls who are gifted and talented will experience equity in school programs, career guidance, and future endeavors to reach their full potential.

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Vol. 1, No. 1, 2014

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Gender, Power, and Feminisms in Breast Cancer Advocacy: Lessons from the United States and Poland

ABSTRACT. The United States breast cancer movement helped to transform breast cancer's social and medical landscape domestically and, in some ways, internationally. However, differences in gender identities, power relations, and the role of feminism(s) cross-culturally also shaped breast cancer advocacy itself. After giving a brief introduction to the socio-historical context of the U.S. and Polish breast cancer movements, this article illuminates some of the linkages and divergences between the United States and Poland to demonstrate the role of gender and power in social movements that concentrate exclusively on women's (health) issues, namely breast cancer. This comparison of social phenomena from two countries illuminates the impact of cultural patterns on models of activism as they relate to feminism and traditional gender roles.

KEYWORDS: breast cancer, epistemology, feminism, gender, health social movements, cross-national comparison

The United States breast cancer movement helped to transform breast cancer's social and medical landscape domestically and, in some ways, internationally. However, differences in gender identities, power relations, and the role of feminism(s) cross-culturally also shaped breast cancer advocacy itself. After giving a brief introduction to the socio-historical context of the U.S. and Polish breast cancer movements, this article illuminates some of the linkages and divergences between the United States and Poland to demonstrate the role of gender and power in social movements that concentrate exclusively on women's (health) issues, namely breast cancer. This comparison of social phenomena from two countries illuminates the impact of cultural patterns on models of activism as they relate to feminism and traditional gender roles.

Introduction

The status of women vis-à-vis the medical system in the United States changed profoundly in the last century. Katherine Lee Bates's account of the illness and death of historian and social reformer Katharine Coman (1857-1915), which was distributed to family and friends, and eventually published nine decades later, appears to have been the earliest example of an "illness narrative," revealing the importance of social contexts on the individual experience of illness (Leopold, 2014). The letters (from 1917 to 1922) from pseudonymous Barbara Mueller to her surgeon William Stewart Halsted – the medical pioneer who developed the invasive and debilitating radical mastectomy that removed the breast, axillary lymph nodes, and chest muscles – likewise highlight what it was like for a woman to experience breast cancer amid gendered, paternalistic doctor-patient interactions and the rising eminence of modern surgery (Leopold, 1999). Three decades later, mastectomy patient Terese Lasser founded the first formalized, all-volunteer, peer-to-peer program to provide practical and emotional support to breast cancer patients treated with the Halsted mastectomy (Reach to Recovery, 1952). Read against the abundance of contemporary breast cancer narratives that focus on personal empowerment and informed decision-making illuminate profound changes in what is now known about breast cancer and in women's roles as patients/consumers of health care and biomedicine.

Breast cancer illness narratives and social activism over time reveal women's responses (some explicitly feminist and others not) to the social stigma of cancer, fear of death, inaccessible medical language, invasive treatments, authoritative doctor-patient relationships, and limited social and practical support for the diagnosed. One of the earliest non-religious organizations focused on cancer, the American Society for the Control of Cancer (now the American Cancer Society) established a Women's Field Army in the 1930s to wage a domestic war on the disease (Davis, 2007). The 2-million-woman-volunteer-network buoyed, rather than resisted, traditional gender expectations as it focused on breast cancer's devastation to women's roles in, and obligations to, the American family. Women canvassed friends and neighbors to raise money, gain supporters, influence public perceptions, and encourage women to adhere to conventional medicine. Though disbanded in the early 1950s, the Field Army left a legacy that continued to shape American

attitudes about breast cancer and women's role in the fight (Lerner, 2001).

With powerful allies in private and public sectors, the American Cancer Society continued to be a primary source of information to the public about breast cancer and to promote women's conciliatory behavior in relation to the medical establishment (Sulik, 2014, p. 37). Concerned that women feared breast cancer treatment more than the disease (i.e., the debilitating Halsted mastectomy remained standard treatment for breast cancer well into the 1970s despite evidence that the procedure did not reduce breast cancer mortality), the Society adopted Terese Lasser's Reach to Recovery program in 1969. The program provided temporary breast prostheses to enable women to conform to their wardrobes and normalize their appearance. Program volunteers were breast cancer survivors who would enter medical settings to share information about the program. What's more, they would serve as walking evidence of medicine's ability to "cure" breast cancer. Solidifying the authority of expert medical knowledge, Reach to Recovery even forbade volunteers from discussing medical information to avoid contradicting doctors (Batt, 1994). It was the American Cancer Society's Reach to Recovery mode of breast cancer advocacy that quickly made its way to Poland and many other countries (Mazurkiewicz, 2012, p. 103).

After the Second World War, the context for Polish women differed dramatically from their Western European and American counterparts as the communist state (est. 1945) promoted women's emancipation strictly in terms of family and work. Thus, Poland's political system itself was a likely barrier to the development of a politicized breast cancer movement (cf. Mazurkiewicz, 2012). Medical authority and professionalization further thwarted health-centered grass roots organizing. For the most part, only professionals had the social capital to organize laypersons into formalized patient-centered groups. As the breast cancer movement developed, it was primarily oncologists or oncological nurses who led the patients' groups.

The first breast cancer support group (1983) was led by rehabilitant Krystyna Mika and, in a sense, by oncologist Andrzej Kułakowski, who had recently completed his medical internships in the United States. Another important figure to offer strong support was president of the Polish Anti-Cancer Committee, oncologist Zbigniew Wronkowski. Unlike many U.S. groups that facilitated emotional support through the development of peer networks, the support group provided only rehabilita-

tion exercises as forms of medical aftercare. Rehabilitant Krystyna Mika opposed adding an emotional support component because she believed such friendship networks were nonessential to aftercare and may be potentially harmful to members who would inevitably grieve the deaths of support group friends who had negative prognoses. As a result of the exclusivity and hierarchical structure of the program, Mika remained a key figure in Poland's movement for at least a decade. In fact, she was the primary driver in the formation of a Polish breast cancer movement.

Some members of the Polish movement now view Mika's resistance to the establishment of peer-to-peer networks as a personal desire for power. Krystyna Wechmann, now president of the federation of Amazons' associations, explained that Mika preferred to maintain professional control of the patient groups and viewed one of the first patient-run clubs (in 1991) as a "coven of witches" because it did not have "trained" volunteers (Zierkiewicz, Wechmann, 2013, p. 54-5). Although the Amazons continued to cooperate closely with medical professionals and rehabilitants, they eventually resisted such opposition to patient self-organization and chose to operate independently. Unfortunately, the groups did not realize that beyond meeting friends and gaining access to professional physical therapy, an organized, patient-centered network could itself have advocacy potential.

Contrary to the norm, some patients' groups (similar to many breast cancer advocates in the United States) did believe that women needed emotional support to adjust to social life after a breast cancer diagnosis, not only physical rehabilitation. Several of the existing clubs (e.g. in Kielce, Poznań, and Wrocław) established a federation in 1993 based on the U.S. Reach to Recovery model that was led by patients themselves. Some groups developed cooperative relationships with local hospitals that enabled volunteers who completed a course in psychology to visit patients. Of the registered Amazonian associations, hundreds of members have since completed a course that enables them to provide volunteer patient support in Poland's hospitals.

There are several obvious American influences in Poland. Building from the Reach to Recovery model described above, voluntarism is a central feature of women's organizing. Breast cancer survivors (referred to as *Amazons*) started new support groups, and the first annual awareness march (reminiscent of the physical-based awareness events in the U.S.) was organized in 1996. Like October's Breast Cancer Awareness Month in the United States, October 17th was declared Poland's

“Day of the Breast Cancer Fight” in 1998. By 2010, there were over 200 Amazonian groups in Poland, with over 15 thousand members some of whom volunteer in hospital settings (Sulik & Zierkiewicz, 2014).

Poland has strong traditions of political demonstrations, but after the fall of communism in 1989 and the introduction of a capitalistic/neo-liberal system women’s rights from a feminist perspective were not on the forefront of an activist agenda. Although some young women organized with feminist intent, their efforts fell largely outside of breast cancer advocacy, which was the domain of diagnosed, older women (cf. Malinowska, 1999). Thus, the Amazons did not develop a capacity to participate in public debate or take an activist orientation with regard to research or medical practice as their American counterparts did. The marches, organized in many cities and towns, are the primary means of public engagement. Even these are aimed at transferring a value system rather than engaging in social change. Additionally, the Polish movement is not religious in origin, but the bulk of its membership is Catholic. On the first Saturday in October, the official Amazon march (i.e. a pilgrimage) takes place in Jasna Góra, known as the holiest place in Poland (Sulik & Zierkiewicz, 2014). Given women’s secondary roles in the Catholic Church, it is not surprising that Catholic Amazons may also view women’s civic roles as subsidiary.

To understand breast cancer advocacy in light of the similarities and differences in the American and Polish context, we first outline the feminist roots of the United States movement, the cultural shift toward the feminization of the disease (via the social cause), the role of survivorship within a broader (gendered) cancer ethos, and the ongoing resistance that stems from a continuing feminist bent within the movement itself. We then explain the evolution of Polish movement from a single group to nationwide network of organizations that was from the onset more conciliatory to medical authority than its American counterparts. Loosely adopting a community-oriented model of advocacy based on female essentialism and traditional women’s roles, the Polish movement never really found its own identity.

Feminist influences in the U.S. breast cancer movement

Arising from the women’s, Patients’, and consumer movements of the 1970s, breast cancer advocates helped to de-stigmatize the disease, promote solidarity among some groups of women, provide emotional

and practical support to the diagnosed, expose medical practices to public scrutiny, increase federal funding and consumer input for breast cancer research, and elevate the social status of the survivor. What transpired was a vibrant and successful health social movement made up of diverse constituencies and motivations. Yet the breast cancer movement is not, nor has it ever been, a consensual force represented by a single organization. There are indeed thousands of community-based organizations across the nation fueled by membership, volunteerism, grant funding, local fundraisers, and increasingly corporate sponsorship. For more than 30 years these advocates have focused on women's experiences as survivors, educators, and informed decision-makers to influence collective action, public policy, and awareness of breast cancer as a critical women's health issue (Sulik, 2012).

The *feminist* roots of the breast cancer movement in particular organized to push the medical profession, government regulators, and researchers to address shortfalls in progress against breast cancer (Casamayou, 2001; Lerner, 2001b; Ruzek, 1978; Stabiner, 1997). Drawing attention to rising incidence, high mortality, the limited efficacy and deleterious effects of cancer drugs and conventional treatments, controversies surrounding screening mammography, and other ineffective aspects of the cancer industry, feminist activists led the charge to question medical authority, demand treatment alternatives and second opinions, and insist that empowered patients who had accurate and accessible information could (and should) play a central role in their medical decisions (Spanier, 2010).

Despite the centrality of feminist perspectives within the burgeoning breast cancer movement and its role in changing women's status vis-à-vis the biomedical system, feminisms did not reflect the perspectives or activities of the entire movement. By the 1990s changes in public policy, heightened media exposure, and the increased visibility of breast cancer resources and support groups elevated the social status of breast cancer and "the survivor" in ways that gave the movement more clout even as it quelled feminist initiatives aimed at evidence-based medicine and health social justice. An overarching "culture of survivorship" oriented to optimism, personal empowerment, and the "survivor" as an identity category helped to dilute and homogenize breast cancer activism as the wealthiest and most visible advocacy groups institutionalized within a professionalized cancer establishment that largely rebuked feminist perspectives. The resultant pink ribbon culture, repackaged for mass

distribution, came to rely on publicity, fundraising, and corporate and political influence to maintain breast cancer's status as the most popular social cause in American culture.

The 'pink ribbon culture' that supplanted grass roots activism in the American mainstream was far afield from both the disease experience and the critical feminist stance that sought to change the course of the epidemic, promote equity, and fix flaws in the existing cancer system (see Baralt & Weitz, 2012; King, 2006; Klawiter, 2004; Leopold, 2014; Ley, 2009; McCormick, 2010; Sulik, 2012). In 2001, Barbara Ehrenreich critically argued in *Harper's Magazine* that breast cancer had become a "Cancerland" characterized by a cancer-industrial complex and breast cancer marketplace that was full of ultra-feminine, infantilizing pink kitsch and a battle cry of survivorship that denigrated death and dying while it demanded cheerfulness, sentimentality, and self-transformation in the face of the disease and its treatment. This clear and scathing commentary, still accurate today, raises a critical question: **How did the politicized feminist stance that galvanized much of the early breast cancer movement transform into a feminized consumption-based aesthetic?**

The feminization of breast cancer

The culture of breast cancer draws upon the institutional strength of the existing gender system for its symbols, messages, and stories. The use of the color pink easily conjures the imagery and discourse of traditional femininity – innocence, morality, nurturance, emotional sensitivity, selflessness, and the feminine half of heterosexuality. Inscribing breast cancer awareness with the color pink (i.e., the breast cancer ribbon and the entire landscape of 'pink ribbon culture') activates normative gender expectations. Images abound of a sisterhood of women draped in pink, enthusiastically supporting one another, selflessly organized, and optimistically calling attention to the need for awareness, research, and funding in the battle against breast cancer – a socially constructed, epic war that venerates the fight while neglecting the lived experience of the disease.

Pink also references a society that celebrates women's breasts as the principal symbol of womanhood, motherhood, and female sexuality. Since breast cancer places the integrity of a woman's body in jeopardy, restoring the feminine body or at least normalizing its appearance is

a sign of victory. Wigs, makeup, fashion, prosthetic breasts, and reconstruction help women to maintain a socially acceptable feminine appearance that urges women to choose between devaluing their bodies (I don't need my breasts anymore anyway), hyper-valuing their bodies (Without breasts I don't feel like a whole woman), or viewing their scars as a badge of honor. Such messages interlock gender expectations that value younger women's healthy bodies for their sexual primacy and devalue the perceived disorder of older, dis/abled, or diseased bodies.

The breast cancer marketplace thereby offers medicine, technology, "awareness," and other products and services to encourage women diagnosed with breast cancer to keep their femininity and sexual appeal intact, or at least as normalized as possible (Sulik, 2012, p. 35-49). The political economy of breast cancer likewise promotes a highly individualized approach to managing breast cancer both as a personal problem and as a public issue. In this way, contemporary pink ribbon culture colonizes both the "personal is political" sentiment of second-wave feminism (replacing it with the story of the triumphant survivor, as an ideal type) and also the potential of cultural resistance and conscientious consumption central to feminism's third wave (neutralizing critical analysis of systemic social and cultural factors with entertainment-based fundraising and symbolic action). Unlike early feminist breast cancer activism that pressed for informed decision-making and social justice, the multi-billion dollar breast cancer industry unites women's and patients' empowerment with a compatible consumption-based logic.

She-roic survivorship and the masculine/feminine ethoi of U.S. cancer culture

Breast cancer in the United States is embedded within the dramatic scientific and rhetorical struggle that is the national, 40-year war on cancer. Gender is at work here too as competing agents and social forces shape the language, beliefs, and experiences of cancer both as a disease (biological underpinnings) and as an illness (socially constructed). Rhetoric imbued with traditionally masculine or feminine characteristics encourages specific modes of cancer survivorship that reinforce and obscure the gender system. Specifically, the gendered illness identities of celebrity cancer survivors help to socially construct masculine/feminine ethoi in American cancer culture (Sulik, 2012, p. 78-100).

The masculine ethos represented by men such as champion cyclist Lance Armstrong (and now disseminated wholly through the **LIVESTRONG** charity he founded) aligns with imagery of victorious heroism, sporting competition, and war metaphor (Sontag, 2001; Seale, 2001). In sharing his cancer biography publicly, Armstrong painted a portrait of himself that acknowledged his cancer diagnosis and treatment while obscuring its reality beneath heroism and an almost inhuman capacity that resonated with socially dominant masculine ideals that encourage men to render their illnesses invisible, or heroically transform them into social capital (Lorber & Moore, 2002). Because masculinity is socially valued in a binary system (Douglas, 1984),¹ a man who follows the **LIVESTRONG** example will fight cancer heroically and admirably, with strength, perseverance, and victory, without compromising his masculinity; in fact, choosing the masculine ethos will increase his social capital. A woman who chooses the **LIVESTRONG** masculine ethos must transgress gender boundaries to do so successfully, as the masculine ethos demands individualism and emotional suppression while taking a competitive and aggressive stance. Because the masculine ethos is highly valued in American culture, even women cancer survivors will garner social capital in the attempt.

When Lance Armstrong – the man – fell from grace after a doping scandal in 2012, he was stripped of the seven Tour de France titles he won from 1999 to 2005. By October of that year, he resigned as chairperson of the Lance Armstrong Foundation and from the board of directors a month later. Attempting to separate the **LIVESTRONG** brand from the person who later admitted to doping in an interview with Oprah Winfrey, the foundation officially changed its name to the Livestrong Foundation in November 2012. Aside from the “Our Founder” section, Armstrong has been almost completely erased from the **LIVESTRONG** website. Yet the perseverance, strength, and courage that form the organization’s culture remains: “We are charting a *strong, independent* course *forward* that is focused on helping people *overcome* financial,

¹ Mary Douglas argues that ambiguity is a source of powerful symbolism within cultures because societies tend to view ambiguous phenomena as dangerous. To deal with ambiguity, first the phenomenon is socially assigned to one of two possible categories (i.e., normal/abnormal, good/bad, health/illness, masculine/feminine, pure/polluted, and so on). Then, it is avoided whenever possible. If an anomalous situation materializes that cannot be categorized or avoided, it is destroyed. In the gender order, the feminine side of the binary classification parallels the abnormal, bad, ill, polluted.

emotional and physical challenges related to cancer [Emphasis added]" (MacLaggan, 2013). Since the gender system also functions as a symbolic system, dichotomous pairs of characteristics (e.g., strong/weak, independent/dependent, forward/backward, overcome/submit) are quite obvious and correspond with the gender binary masculine/feminine. Whereas the term "helping" could be cast as a feminine attribute typical of women's normative nurturance, the sentence is weighted toward the masculine characteristics that permeate the masculine ethos.

A feminine ethos represented by women such as comedian Gilda Radner, best known for her work on NBC's *Saturday Night Live*, favors nurturance, empathy, and a relational orientation that resists war metaphor and conventional models of survivorship. After Radner died from ovarian cancer at age 42, a network of affiliate clubhouses for people of all ages living with any type of cancer was started in her name (i.e., Gilda's Club). Understanding that cancer does not occur in isolation but within families and social networks, the clubs were designed to promote emotional and social support through community-building, shared experience, and respect for the many personal approaches to living with cancer. The informality of the organizational setting (as suggested by the use of Gilda's first name in the title) lends itself to a feminized private sphere. When coupled with her career in comedy, the feminine illness identity Radner represents is trivialized even though she represents a class of superwomen who successfully manage roles such as marriage, motherhood, and career. Because femininity is socially devalued in the binary gender system, men who prefer the feminine survivorship ethos risk demasculinization whereas women who do so are able to adhere to traditionally feminine expectations.

In pink ribbon culture, the she-ro (an amalgamation of the masculine/feminine ethoi) is the protagonist of the epic breast cancer story (Sulik, 2012, p. 101-10). This *ideal type* – ubiquitous in magazines, memoirs, advertisements, news stories, and breast cancer awareness events – is a breast cancer superwoman who courageously, passionately, and aggressively "battles" disease. Although the she-ro faces tremendous emotional and physical challenges, she triumphantly fights breast cancer with style, optimism, and feminine accessories. What's more, the she-ro is transformed by her breast cancer experience and shares lessons learned. Instead of being presented as one possible way to deal with breast cancer, as the feminine ethos would suggest, the she-ro is cast as the universal breast cancer survivor.

Despite the feminist underpinnings of the breast cancer movement, these survivorship models clearly rely on a binary gender system while simultaneously neutralizing feminist strategies to promote women's agency. The "she-roism" of pink ribbon culture claims women's empowerment through a homogenized version of advocacy that fosters, and depends upon, highly personalized, mass-mediated consumption. The she-ro helps to construct a cancer-fighting aesthetic that diverts attention from feminist critiques within breast cancer and other women's health social movements that focus on the limits of biomedicine and the health care system and the lack of attention to cancer causation, primary prevention (avoiding cancer in the first place), recurrence (when cancer returns), and metastasis (when cancer spreads to distant organs). The she-ro encourages other survivors and their supporters to sanction a multi-billion dollar breast cancer industry that relies on mass media, professional advocacy, commercialization, and political networks for profit and self-perpetuation. The cultural representations of breast cancer advocacy overwhelmingly present an image of solidarity that grew out of different "cultures of action" within the movement itself (Klawiter, 2004), whereas the individual breast cancer survivor who does not fit the pink mold must seek out her own support systems outside of the mainstream.

Resisting the de-politicization of mainstream breast cancer campaigns

In early 2012 a scandal involving one of the "most trusted" breast cancer charities in the United States and the nation's leading provider of reproductive health care unleashed an international debate about breast cancer advocacy and industry. A decision by Susan G. Komen for the Cure ("Komen") to cut future funding for one of its grantees, the health network Planned Parenthood, set off a firestorm of intense backlash from journalists, social media sites, more than two dozen senators (Democrats), and other public figures. Komen reversed its stance in three days, yielding to the pressure. Against the background of commercialization and the professionalization of advocacy, what most shocked women's health advocates and the general public was the suggestion that this controversy seemed to represent a unique moment in breast cancer's history, as the first time politics had ever exerted influence. But as stated previously, breast cancer advocacy emerged from deeply politicized social movements that worked to uncover beliefs, values, and politics already embed-

ded in existing knowledge and practices, and to challenge medical authority and 'expert' control over scientific and medical information.

Such feminist perspectives on the sciences also aligned in part with the medical profession's movement toward evidence-based medicine (EBM) – a practice that involves integrating individual clinical expertise with patient choice and the best available external clinical evidence from systematic research (Spanier, 2010). From this perspective, empowered decision-making requires critical thinking to understand the strengths, limits, and uncertainties of biomedicine, and how these issues impact individual and collective approaches to breast cancer individually and as a social problem in need of complex, multi-faceted solutions. Along these lines, critical health literacy involves extracting information, comprehending its relevance, and analyzing it effectively so that it may be used for one's own benefit and for the benefit of one's community, or society more broadly (Netbeam, 2000; Sulik, Cameron & Chamberlain, 2012).

There remain groups in the contemporary breast cancer movement that maintain a critical stance (see Boehmer, 2000) and focus on empowerment at personal and community levels to improve the social, economic, and environmental determinants of health (e.g., National Breast Cancer Coalition, Breast Cancer Action, Breast Cancer Fund, and others). However, mainstream breast cancer campaigns have constructed a portrait of breast cancer as the apolitical "sweetheart of health-related causes" such that the depoliticization of mainstream breast cancer advocacy masks the already embedded political underpinnings and ideologies (Baralt & Weitz, 2012). An examination of the conflicts of interest within and between advocacy groups reveals how political (and corporate) interests influence the public policies, research trajectories, health communication strategies, and fundraising activities promoted. Consequently, mainstream public discourse about breast cancer (including risk, causation, screening, prevention, treatment, health disparities, and the epidemic at large) lacks the critical (and feminist) edge that was so vital to early breast cancer activism. Despite this, feminist and evidence-based analyses within the U.S. breast cancer movement are still growing from these early roots.

The Polish breast cancer movement

In a practical sense, it is men (in their prestigious roles in a 1980s socialist medical system) who set the tone for women's social engagement in Poland's breast cancer advocacy. A handful of male physicians

who returned from internships in American hospitals were the first to encourage women treated for breast cancer to provide emotional support for women awaiting mastectomy. The arrangement was beneficial to the medical system since the diagnosed were more likely to accept treatment if they could talk with other women who had already faced similar situations. At this point in Poland's history most women lived in traditional social settings and, in accord with socialist ideology, viewed critiques of gender relations and the production of knowledge inherent to feminisms to be "an invention of the rotten West."² Many of the contemporary Amazons³ were raised during this period and continue to hold conservative beliefs about the nature of social relations. Thus, there is an absence of feminism in the public discourse of Polish Amazons.

In addition, some Polish activists hold the conviction that it is not worthwhile to put effort into social movements because they are united under the banner of mutilated femininity (i.e., a colloquial phrase that equates the bodily harm stemming from cancer and its treatment with a distorted sense of self, social position, and moral value). Likewise, studies show that patients after breast cancer treatment join Amazon clubs not to advocate for a particular agenda but to obtain free rehabilitation. They openly admit that the history of the Amazons movement, its ideological underpinnings, and its dissemination of political or cultural views are not within their scope of interests.⁴ In fact, those who engage most in the Amazons clubs are retired elderly, Catholic women who are trying to stay socially active. They meet with friends, take excursions to rehabilitation centres, and participate in the annual pilgrimage to the Black Madonna sanctuary in Częstochowa (Jasna Góra), one of the most important events for the Amazons (cf. Samson, Jansen, Notermans, 2014). Few of the Amazons volunteer at oncology wards, which had been one of the primary goals of the clubs when they first began.

² The Polish anti-feminist sentiment is well developed by Ewa Malinowska (2001).

³ Unlike the term "survivor" taken by the U.S. breast cancer movement to abolish the victimization stigma associated with breast cancer, Polish breast cancer patients rejected the term due to its association with the Holocaust. As Zygmunt Bauman (2007) explains, the term survivor is too ambiguous in this region of the world. Polish women diagnosed with breast cancer euphemistically call themselves Amazons (a term also used by people without cancer), suggesting an affinity with ancient, legendary warriors.

⁴ See research report, *Kluby Amazonki – Twoją Szansą* (Fundacja Ekspert-Kujawy, kwiecień-maj 2012).

The Federation of Amazon clubs has been ongoing for over 20 years now, and the *status quo* of the movement seems to be secure largely due to the belief that traditional feminine unity is necessary for women's community-building and that the Polish feminist movement in general has been inadequate in gaining broad-based support.⁵

Lack of feminist discourse in Polish breast cancer culture

The lack of feminist reflection among Poland's breast cancer advocates as described above has had two notable positive consequences. First, the traditional understanding of femininity as an identity category that binds together women of different social backgrounds obscures social divisions, such as age, social class, educational background, etc. Femininity – regarded as a meta-level existential experience *sui generis* – makes it possible to establish a sense of equality and shared experience among the women in the patient groups. Unlike the formality in most social situations in Poland in which salutations and surnames are used, Amazons level the playing field, so to speak, by calling one another by their first names.

Second, dismissing considerations of gender as both socially constructed and rooted in equalities enables the formal consolidation of the Amazons movement and buttresses the sense of community within its ranks. Seemingly, Polish Amazons form a homogenous social grouping of shared beliefs, associations, and assumptions upon which they may implement corresponding programs. Differences that may arise between clubs (such as access to scientific professionals to provide public education or advice, businesses to give financial backing, or media attention) stem from zoning, the overall number of members, or the shifting age composition of the groups as greater numbers of younger women are diagnosed with breast cancer.

Despite the benefits of solidarity based on traditional femininity, the lack of feminism in Poland has had negative consequences. Most women are unaware of the medicalization of health and disease (including

⁵ In 2014, gender became the subject of many Polish scientific and journalistic debates - but not by feminists who educate the public on socio-cultural identity, but by right-wing circles diverting public attention from other matters. In a sense, gender became a media artifact before any cultural change could occur.

breast cancer) or the construction of patient's role⁶ as central processes within the socio-medical setting. In addition, the male dominated political system makes it difficult for women's health issues to gain ground. Whereas in the United State, key organizations in the breast cancer movement have had clear legislative agendas with regard to women's health issues such as federal allocations for breast cancer research, access to screening and treatment through federal programs, ensuring the participation of educated patient advocates in all levels of health care decision making, to name a few, norms of feminine politeness and moderation have limited the capacity of Polish Amazons to bring important women's health issues to the fore. The notion that women's roles are of lesser value than those of men remains strong in contemporary Polish society, and among most Amazons.

The role of medical authority especially among Polish doctors remains strong in Poland. Though the Amazons may complain about the quality and efficacy of their medical care privately to friends and family, some practice what might be dubbed a "surgeon cult" in which they place complete trust in their surgeons not only to carry out surgical procedures but also to make other/non-surgical medical decisions for them (Zierkiewicz, 2010). Women's gratitude to surgeons for having "saved their lives" paired with a lack of understanding about the social determinants of modern biomedicine facilitate an attitude among the Amazons which can be characterized as both passive/trustful and "wishful" (i.e., having an optimistic belief about the future that is not based in evidence or realities) (cf. Mazurek, 2013).

In 2006 – inspired by western activists – members of all the clubs, at the same time, sent protest letters to the Speaker of Parliament office to draw political attention to discrimination against women who lived too far from oncology centers. Local hospitals did not have oncology units and travel to oncology centers was too difficult for many women to obtain routine care, including diagnosis and treatment from oncology professionals. They argued that place of residence should not determine one's medical options. The action elicited no response from the politicians, and nothing was done to lessen the hardship of those who lived in remote areas, far from specialized clinics. Viewed as a devastating defeat, club members never took this sort of public action again. The veritable disre-

⁶ Such issues are taken more broadly only recently (cf. Domaradzki, 2010; Gromkowska-Melosik, 2013; Leżnicki, 2013).

gard of their efforts to impact public policy solidified a peculiar dissonance; that public action was at odds with the concept of natural, modest and conciliatory femininity. As mentioned previously, such sentiment is common among Polish women on the margins of political engagement.⁷ The absence of feminist reflection in the Polish discourse on breast cancer further precludes Amazons from acknowledging that, in reality, no one represents their interests or is concerned with satisfying their needs.

Without critical feminist reflection, the essentialist approach to sex that prevails within the Amazon movement ostensibly erases differences in age, class, wealth, education, sexual orientation, ethnicity, religion, and other social categories. Addressing such issues in public debates and discussion groups are considered either irrelevant or potentially hazardous. Thus, Amazons downplay inner tensions by supporting an interpretation that frames these as a direct result of “woman’s nature.” Compulsive adherence to the claim that “the ultimate thing uniting all women is being a women” (an expression authored by Betty Davies, often cited in one of the Polish commercial magazines) suggests that the contemporary woman should accept her womanly lot, thereby rendering women’s socio-political action improbable. There is no place in political life for emotionality, proneness to injury, and a tendency to exaggerate difficulties, the qualities cast as exclusive to woman’s domain. That said, there are other barriers to political activism among those experiencing health and age inequalities as well as the (self)isolation and physical difficulties that stem from cancer treatment. Many of the women of the Amazon community are marginalized elderly, barely able to manage their conditions. For them, politics seems low on the hierarchy of basic needs.

By organizing and financing breast cancer awareness campaigns and activities, the medical establishment, along with mass media, political agents involved in public health, and cosmetics/fashion/beauty companies – also foster the Amazon’s apolitical, non-feminist stance as well as individuality and obedience to the biomedical paradigm. Some examples include: the annual Marches of Life and Hope (coined the pink ribbon parades); health promotion campaigns that encourage women to partic-

⁷ The history of social movements, analyses of the dominant patterns of women’s roles, as well as statistics on the gender of persons occupying high public positions show the existence of several barriers to organizational, legislative and mental hamper or even discourage women to political activity (cf. Walczewska, 1999; Graff, 2001, 2008; Penn, 2003; Lisowska, 2008; Fuszara, 2011; Siemieńska, 2011; Zielińska, 2011; Krzyżanowska, 2012; Hryciuk & Korolczuk, 2012).

ipate in scientifically controversial mammography screening programs or the scientifically unsubstantiated practice of breast self-examination; calendars of nude, post-mastectomy women to encourage surgery⁸; and illness narratives that allow readers to learn something about what it means to experience cancer personally. The absence of a feminist bioethics debate to problematize such processes of secondary socialization contribute to the construction of a women-friendly acquiescence to (bio)medicalization. Without consciousness that a woman's body (and especially her breast) is a battlefield between political, cultural, medical factions (cf. Yalom, 2012), such social relations help to distract the Amazons from their needs and from ways to formulate viable options for change. This is why, paradoxically, many Polish women view institutional agents as advocates for women's health.

It is difficult to assess the cost/benefit balance of Polish Amazons' partially self-imposed entrenchment in traditional social roles and processes. However, unequal social arrangements tend to diminish the possibility that the Amazons will find their place among organized groups of patients that hold a non-normative stance (cf. Łysak, 2007), as such participants would lack the all-encompassing and accepted message that the essentialists claim. Likewise, supporting representatives of biomedicine and politicians responsible for public health have become the *raison d'être* of Amazonian organizations, thereby thwarting critical thinking about the strength, limits, and uncertainties of biomedicine and health care delivery systems. With the rise of Internet portals and social media, more patients have started to make demands of medical professionals. However, cancer patients still tend to be the most obedient to medical authority.

**The trouble with gender: half-woman, holy mary,
and the performance of womanhood as a group strategy
for inspiring solidarity and benevolence**

For Polish women diagnosed with breast cancer, sex is typically framed along in accord with essentialist narratives revealed in personal

⁸ None of the eleven calendars previously issued contest the biomedical paradigm or what Susan Love has described as „slash, burn, poison” approaches to treatment. Some of them essentially advertise for the medical system by including a „guide to diagnostic procedures and treatments” and addresses for oncology centers.

stories featured in mass media, in-depth interviews, illness narratives (e.g. journals, diaries, memories), and the way in which their naked breasts are portrayed in artistic photographs.⁹ Both the Amazons and the health and other professionals helping them to treat and manage their breast cancer emphasize the problem of losing one's womanhood through breast and hair loss (cf. Marcinkowska *et al.*, 2012). Even confronting the possibility of death may be less important to some diagnosed women than is the fear of hurtful reactions from others about their non-normalized appearance. A pseudo-clinical phrase that encapsulates this phenomenon is "the half woman complex" (cf. Mika, 2005). Women who are deprived of the "feminine attribute" (e.g. Chwałczyńska *et al.*, 2004) are perceived as inadequate, incomplete, or abnormal. Whereas Audre Lorde (1980) fiercely criticized camouflaging the "deficiency" with prosthetic breasts and/or wigs as a way of dealing with this stigma and concomitant social rejections, such insinuations fortify the mutilated femininity espoused by some Amazons.

Today the opposite strategy is in operation, a socially sanctioned, public de-stigmatization of breast cancer to encourage not only public acceptance of the diagnosed but also public admiration. Such de-shaming is carried out in multiple ways: a seemingly candid discussion about the disease and treatment; an overt display of scars in breast cancer photographs; the public sharing of private information, especially when it involves the blessings of medicalized recovery, such as breast reconstruction after mastectomy; the enthusiastic involvement in awareness campaigns and events (such as walking in the October marches, being a member of Amazon clubs, or wearing cancer emblems such as the Amazon Federation's badge, the pink ribbon). The de-stigmatization of breast cancer in these ways occurs seamlessly through mass media, proclamations from officials dealing with public health, doctors who assure their patients that medicine is capable of not only curing cancer but restoring Amazons femininity, and cosmetologists who offer a portfolio of services that promise to "look good" so they will then "feel better."¹⁰ Such destigmatization could be viewed as a progres-

⁹ The only article in which the identity of women with breast cancer is described from the perspective of constructivist is „Written from the body...” (Wiatr, 2006). Its author is a sociologist who uses queer theory to show how women after mastectomy make use of cultural meanings to cope with the stigma of proteus and reconstituted femininity.

¹⁰ There is considerable interest in workshops like „Look good, feel better” among Polish women – described by Ellyn Kaschak (1996, p. 194; see too Sharma & Black, 2001;

sive turn, but since the bulk of the messaging furthers adherence to biomedical authority and protocols may have the effect of decreasing women's choices and empowerment with regard to their own health.

Typically, Amazons affiliated with the clubs do undergo an image transformation following treatment for breast cancer.¹¹ They strive to look better (i.e., more womanly) by putting on make-up, dressing in frocks, fixing their hair. These actions ostensibly are to reduce the possibility that others might claim that the disease (or its treatment) may have left an indelible, corrupt mark on the body or gender identity. Moreover, this womanly appearance should also evoke strong associations with health and vitality to signify unalloyed optimism.¹² By conveying "healthy femininity" Amazons become "eligible" for public admiration. That said, the heightened attention that breast cancer has received in mass media during recent years has also elicited a sense of fatigue on the part of the public.

Likewise, even though members of the Amazon clubs try to duplicate the western "Amazonian optimism" that mass media and corporations find easier to advertise, they also recognize the role of the "everlasting sufferer." In Polish society, ideal womanhood is represented by Pieta, the Mother of God, viewed as courageous through experiencing excruciating pain after the death of her only son (albeit not the Virgin Mary;

Ucok, 2007). And not only among new patients, but also long-term Amazons who are offered leadership training and "classes in make-up."

¹¹ As a result of treatment and an almost immediate awareness of the pressures surrounding diagnosed women to uphold the norms of femininity, some Amazons develop a new sense of gender – as if, once "disembodied" (denatured), they bear the sole responsibility of (re)constructing gender and so begin to engage actively in gender performance. For some women, this may evoke strategies utilised by drag queens who enact or parody femininity (cf. Malinowska, 2012, p. 110-13). Clubs that encourage women to "look good" through these workshops may be viewed as forms of secondary socialization (i.e., retraining women into femininity). Like a person in drag, volunteers enact a somewhat exaggerated femininity so that soon after treatment they will be seen by others as healthy, beautiful and not having cancer. At some point during the „performance“ women might „expose themselves“ to talk about their experiences with cancer, perhaps even baring a mastectomy scar but the point is not to raise consciousness of gender constructions (Joan Riviere, via Szczuka, 2001, p. 187). The purpose of the performance is to have shock value in which the patient may yet believe that her altered state can still be feminine.

¹² This image is in contradiction with the „sick role“ and the popular expectations aimed at patients (see Parsons, 2010) and with former the representations of other diseases, which until recently dominated Western culture - especially tuberculosis (Sontag, 1999; see too Schubert, 2011).

Kościańska, 2012). Pieta's sorrow is framed in a way that corresponds to their experience of a mortal disease, and fear for their children and their future life (the bulk of Amazons are also mothers). The clubs do not arrange sessions of collective self-pity, but they also do not question the validity of expressing frailty, helplessness, or confusion (as Barbara Ehrenreich experienced when she tried to express such feelings in open forums; 2007). Amazons implicitly consent to the sharing of pain (physical, psychological, or existential) with other Amazons. In this way, the Amazons' Annual pilgrimage to the Black Madonna sanctuary to pray during a mass organized especially for them reinforces the predominant, deep-rooted belief that spiritual reconciliation is the right, and perhaps only choice they have as women to deal with their plight (Samson, 2010). Importantly, Amazons are expected to wear their own emblem during this ritualized practice (showing an archer); the pink ribbon is not appreciated.

Similar to their American counterparts, Polish Amazons do receive the social recognition that comes with an optimistic, feminine front. However, such recognition does not transform into political action, advocacy, or even comprehensive support. Social solidarity with the Amazon movement, wholly tied to traditional femininity and idealized womanhood, is fragile when it engages beyond these structures. Solidarity is no longer present for Amazons who decide to engage with what is still a masculine sphere of politics. Unfortunately, it is within the political sphere that citizens have the greatest chance of bringing about changes to the social system. It would be fruitful for Amazons to create political alliances that have the capacity to influence pharmaceutical and other companies, and to rethink their goals, strategies, and the barriers that prevent them from achieving them. To do so, they would need to access feminist and critical bioethics research, become involved in participatory research, establish patients' boards to evaluate government positions on public health, engage in grass roots political organizing and social media, and develop a broad based agenda that includes public policy recommendations.

Women's health, feminism, and epistemologies of ignorance

The American turn toward a feminized consumption-based aesthetic undermines the feminist ideals that led to considerable changes in breast cancer policy and practice as well as the status of women as agents in their

own right in relation to biomedicine. However, the feminist legacy within the breast cancer movement remains and is visible within an array of breast cancer (and other women's health focused) advocacy groups. There is a common saying in Poland – "The American says, 'I'm a feminist, but...' whereas the Polish woman says, 'I'm not a feminist, but...' – that speaks to the feminist underpinnings yet slippage of the United States breast cancer movement compared to the traditional gender binary that firmly grounds the Polish movement. Both scenarios view women's empowerment as central. However, there is still considerable silence, denial, and contradiction within both patient/ /advocacy contexts.

In our concluding analysis we discuss areas of epistemological influence (internal and external to the breast cancer movements themselves) in terms of Nancy Tuana's taxonomy of "epistemologies of ignorance," which highlights the ways resistance movements identify, critique, and transform ignorance to achieve their goals (Tuana, 2006). Tuana identifies these epistemologies as follows:

1. Knowing That We Do Not Know, But Not Caring To Know
2. We Do Not Even Know That We Do Not Know
3. They Do Not Want Us To Know
4. Willful Ignorance
5. Ignorance Produced By The Construction Of Epistemologically Disadvantaged Identities
6. Loving Ignorance

We discuss the role of such epistemologies within the American and Polish breast cancer movements.

1. Knowing That We Do Not Know, But Not Caring To Know

Breast cancer is fully institutionalized within both the U.S. and Polish medical systems, yet scientific information about prevention, causation, risk, detection, treatment, and aftercare remains in many ways controversial, abstract, and incomplete. Breast cancer has many misunderstood causes, and known risk factors (such as age, reproductive factors, inherited genetic mutations, postmenopausal obesity, hormone replacement therapy, alcohol consumption, and previous history of cancer of the endometrium, ovary, or colon) account for less than 30 percent of breast cancer cases (Hulka & Stark, 1995; Love, 2005). Few interventions reduce risk, and none of them prevent breast cancer.

In the U.S. context, the proliferation of medical information and personal illness narratives through the Internet, advice books, and self-help groups have advanced lay knowledge about preventive medicine and

medical treatment while simultaneously introducing new fears and anxiety about the multitude of options and outcomes. The origins of consumerism in the U.S. breast cancer movement, and health care more generally, are closely tied to the social movements of the 1960s and 1970s in which individuals and lay interest groups began to challenge the authority of experts and the dominance of the medical system. As consumers, individuals who used health services would be empowered to play an active role in making informed choices about their health. The social transformation from patient to medical consumer occurred both as trust in the American medical system eroded (Mechanic, 1996) and as the term “consumer” became the label of choice within health and social services and the medical system became increasingly more complex (Kapp, 1999; Hardey, 2001). The medical consumer is characterized as optimistic, proactive, rational, responsible, and informed.

Thus, there is pressure to “want to know” and the U.S. breast cancer survivor is socially and culturally predisposed to be an informed and self-determined woman capable of making empowered decisions. In many cases, breast cancer survivors/medical consumers do seek and critically evaluate information and then uses it to influence their medical experience. *Being an informed medical consumer is not always something people want to do or feel capable of doing. But the social obligation to be informed pressures even these people to find a way to get enough information to feel that they have made the best choices for themselves.*

In the Polish context, medical consumerism and the development of more cooperative doctor-patient relationships has not taken hold in the same way. Women patients have little to no knowledge about the biology of breast cancer and believe this knowledge lies (appropriately) with the doctor rather than the patient. Likewise, physicians evaluate patients and dictate which medical issues to take seriously and discuss with them. Perceptions and treatment of lymphedema provides a case in point. Lymphedema is an abnormal accumulation of lymph (fluid) in the arm, hand, fingers, wrist, elbow, shoulder, neck, breast, chest, or any combination of these areas, on the same side of the body that was treated with surgery or radiation. The excess fluid leads to persistent swelling and other symptoms, including pain, heaviness, firmness, tightness, and numbness. Although the condition is now taken more seriously in the United States (largely as the result of breast cancer advocates pushing doctors to address it) the condition still is frequently misdiagnosed, ignored, and routinely goes untreated. In Poland, the situation is even

worse and those who develop lymphedema after treatment often do not get help. Doctors assume that women brought the condition on themselves (i.e., carrying heavy bags or doing chores without resting) and do not feel obligated to treat it. Instead, it is assumed that post-treatment rehabilitation will remedy the problem. Unequal power relations between women and their doctors serves as a mechanism of preserving a medical hierarchy in which doctors' interests take priority over those of patients (Zierkiewicz, 2010).

2. We Do Not Even Know That We Do Not Know

There is growing evidence that people want to play a more active role in medical decision making, and that they experience better health outcomes when they do (Veroff, Marr & Vennberg, 2013). In this regard, patients may seek professional/expert knowledge to better understand their diagnoses, treatment options, and susceptibility to diseases and medical conditions. However, there are major gaps and limitations in a person's capacity to understand abstract scientific and medical information or know what applies to a particular diagnosis. A wider conception of health and illness in relation to society (i.e., lay knowledge) comes into play when patients/medical consumers engage with the medical system and interpret lay and professional information in the evaluation of their medical options.

In the United States medical consumers tend to want to be informed *enough* to believe they are responsibly and proactively making the right choices, but amid complicated or inconclusive information, this still requires people to place confidence in professional knowledge (Sulik & Eich-Kroh, 2008). As informed patients, political activists, and active participants in their health and medical care, the women's health movement and the feminist ilk of the breast cancer movement succeeded in expanding women's support networks and access to biomedical information in order to enhance their ability to engage with professional knowledge and increase their control in medical decision-making. The National Breast Cancer Coalition's Project LEAD, for example, teaches laypersons to understand technoscience in order to increase their understanding of the complexities of breast cancer and to use that information to influence public policy and research agendas. Likewise, the environmental breast cancer movement has used scientific research and biomedical knowledge to understand the relationship between breast cancer and the environment and work toward alleviation (Ley, 2009). By

encouraging women to be proactive, informed, and rational, the goal is to help women to judge the quality of their health care, understand medical evidence, and get the highest quality of care possible.

Despite this, new treatments are continually being developed, studied, and marketed as the ever-increasing abundance of specialized medical information enables the medical system to retain a level of authority such that they patients may not even know that there is information outside of their purview (Sulik & Eich-Krohm, 2008; Moynihan & Cassels, 2005). This situation is especially applicable in Poland, where women patients are only beginning in recent years to establish peer-to-peer networks through social media and message boards that enable them to share information and experiences that might impact their decision-making. At the same time, traditional gender norms remain strong thereby limiting women's critical questioning of existing social institutions, including medicine. Polish psychologists further essentialist ideology by exerting the "half woman complex" on women treated for breast cancer, suggesting that they ought only be concerned with femininity and appearances. Since Polish women tend to view themselves as strong, brave, reasonable and innately powerful (especially vis-à-vis their feminine identity) they tend to see feminism as marginal, dangerous, or unnecessary.

3. They Do Not Want Us To Know

The systematic cultivation of ignorance is an ongoing issue in biomedicine. The information provided by pharmaceutical companies and medical technology manufacturers, professional associations, governmental organizations, advocacy groups, and others may omit negative research findings or unanticipated side effects, or they may otherwise misinform the public or demonstrate bias in favor of their preferred interventions and treatment modalities (Dwan *et al.*, 2008; Krzyzanowska, Pintilie & Tannock, 2003; Lewin, 2013). Mammography, either conventional film or newer digitalized versions, is the best known and most widely promoted imaging technology for breast cancer detection today. Between 1987 and 2000, the percentage of women in the United States over age 40 who reported that they had a mammogram in the previous 2 years increased from 39 to 70 percent. However, mammography emerged as the predominant technology to screen for breast cancer (taking top billing over Clinical Breast Exams) not because evidence showed it to be the best at the time, but because corporations and influ-

ential professional groups invested in the technology (Spanier, 2010; Sulik, 2012). In recent years, the minimal-to-no benefit of screening programs when it comes to reducing breast cancer deaths has become more obvious to some, as have the harms of overdiagnosis (i.e., finding breast cancers or conditions that are not life threatening and would not produce symptoms in a person's lifetime) and overtreatment (i.e., treating those conditions unnecessarily) (Bleyer & Welch 2005).

Physicians too may feel uncomfortable discussing the risks, harms, or potentially limited effectiveness of a particular medical intervention or treatment with patients and may err on presenting the "bright side" of an intervention (e.g., prettier breasts, after reconstruction; a slimmer body and nicer hair, after chemotherapy; or even a healthier social and personal life, after psychotherapy) (Ehrenreich, 2007; Carter, 2003; Kaschak, 1996). In handling the medical side of the doctor-patient equation, some physicians may even withhold information from patients in the belief that disclosure is "medically contraindicated" (i.e., therapeutic privilege) (Ellingson, Buzzanell, 1999). The American Medical Association advises physicians to assess a patient's capacity to receive information at any given time and tailor disclosure accordingly (Bostick *et al.*, 2006). In Poland, Amazons who try to discuss their health problems with oncologists are treated as "difficult cases" or persons who don't want to be healed. Knowing that asking questions or revealing lay expertise in medical environment is not well tolerated, women with breast cancer tend to hide their opinions (Mazurek, 2013).

4. Willful Ignorance

People also make medical decisions based on fear, convenience, or the desire to be given a limited set of choices rather than learning about the complexities and ambiguities inherent to biomedicine or the health care system in general. A patient may prefer not to be given the results of a test or the details about a diagnosis or treatment, learn whether a family member has a genetic abnormality, or obtain any medical information that lacks the certainty of a specific treatment protocol. Such knowledge can be distressing, futile, or even harmful. Likewise, physicians have major gaps in their understanding of biomedical uncertainties. Therefore, they may not know how to talk to patients about them, or they may follow off-the-shelf protocols rather than investigating evidence-based alternatives (Zwolsman *et al.*, 2013).

One of the leading public and international health institutes in Europe, the Swiss Medical Board, is a nongovernmental, independent health technology assessment initiative in Switzerland that functions under the auspices of the Swiss Medical Association, the Swiss Academy of Medical Sciences, and the Conference of Health Ministers of the Swiss Cantons. The Board is mandated “to contribute to the improvement of the health of populations internationally, nationally and locally through excellence in research, services and teaching and training.” After the board was called to prepare a review of mammography screening (Jan. 2013), it released a report of its findings, which were made public on February 2, 2014. Based on the board’s review of available evidence, it concluded that (1) no new systematic screening mammography programs should be introduced, (2) all forms of mammography screening must be evaluated for quality, (3) women must be given clear and balanced information on the benefits and harms of screening, and (4) systematic mammography screening programs in Switzerland—due to the tool’s limited utility for reducing mortality and the increased likelihood of harm from overdiagnosis and overtreatment – should be phased out (Biller-Andorno & Jüni, 2014).

The board’s strong recommendation differs dramatically from the “early detection is the best protection” slogans that pervade many breast cancer awareness campaigns and public health promotion programs internationally. Weighed against the slight benefit of repeated screening were the harms of increased biopsies and the overdiagnosis of breast cancers that would never have produced symptoms in a person’s lifetime or become clinically relevant. Overdiagnosis can increase the impact of cancer on quality of life and longevity because it leads to overtreatment, exposing patients to potential harms without offering any benefits. The Swiss Medical Board argued that beliefs in screening, rather than evidence, were at issue.

It is easy to promote mammography screening if the majority of women believe that it prevents or reduces the risk of getting breast cancer and saves many lives through early detection of aggressive tumors. We would be in favor of mammography screening if these beliefs were valid. Unfortunately, they are not, and we believe that women need to be told so.

The question is do the women want to know? In the United States, the answer is mixed.

5. Ignorance Produced By The Construction Of Epistemically Disadvantaged Identities

If cognitive authority is determined by the character of the speaker and perceptions of her or her reasonableness and intellectual capacity then the credibility of entire groups of people to engage with expert/professional knowledge may be called into question. The Women's Health Movement played a vital role in transforming how women would interact with the traditional medical system, influencing how they would understand medical care for themselves, their families, and their communities (Ehrenreich & English, 1989; Zimmerman & Hill, 2000; Morgen, 2002). As informed patients, political activists, and active participants in their health and medical care, the movement sought to expand women's support networks and increase women's sense of control. Envisioning women as informed and self-determined, capable of making empowered decisions, the notable *Our Bodies, Our Selves* (1973), placed women's health in a new socio-political context, helping to launch the national and international Women's Health Movement. Identifying and collaborating with individuals and organizations that provide services, generate research and policy analysis, and organize for social change, the book urged women to inform themselves about health issues (Sulik & Eich-Krohm, 2008).

Feminist efforts to expand women's roles as experts of their own bodies and medical decisions was been the center of social organizing as the U.S. breast cancer movement grew in the 1980s (Sulik, 2012). The term *survivor* was used strategically to de-stigmatize breast cancer and empower diagnosed women to take personal and collective action. Just as the survivors' movements against sexual violence used the survivor role to replace the role of victim, the breast cancer movement used survivor discourse to promote women's empowerment and personal transformation, and to give voice to previously hidden personal experiences. The words and perspectives of breast cancer survivors emerged in support settings, public demonstrations, and personal accounts.

In Poland, no such transformation occurred. The privatization and depoliticization of women's illness experiences of breast cancer occurred almost from the start of educational campaigns as they started to integrate into popular culture around 1995, especially in women's magazines. The magazine *Twój Styl* now devotes nearly an entire issue to breast cancer education every October, and this particular magazine played important role in establishing of Poland's "Day of the Breast Cancer

Fight” on October 17th. Whereas the magazine’s first issue re-published the compelling self-portrait photograph of artist Matuschka baring her mastectomy scar to reveal the devastation of breast cancer treatment on women’s bodies, subsequent issues changed in orientation. Breast cancer was not a feminist issue, but a medical and personal one. This is classic binary privileged professional medical authority and downplayed women’s experiences as emotionally laden. When other media and public institutions (e.g., the NHI) followed the magazine’s approach to reporting on the topic – namely the intimate personal story coupled with women’s innate vulnerability plus the added strength, courage and determination to face the breast cancer threat – paralleled the commercialized version of the breast cancer survivor in the United States (i.e., the she-ro). Since there was no critical activism to counter such portrayals, this transformation of the public sphere and health discourse surrounding breast cancer consistently avoided or omitted issue of gender and women’s self-determined empowerment. Ironically, recent years have witnessed a backlash to the public focus on breast cancer in Poland.

6. Loving Ignorance

While Tuana’s taxonomy of willful ignorance focused on difference, it opens a discussion of engaging with what escapes representations. Similarly, conflicting medical claims about risk, prevention, detection, diagnosis, treatment, follow-up – even the definition of what counts as life-threatening – appear almost weekly in news headlines. In sharing scientific controversies with the public, the stories often promote anxiety and confusion rather than confidence and clarity about how to make sense of the current state of knowledge. Ironically, a common “the more we learn the less we know” sentiment rivals competing headlines about “great new treatments” and “cures close at hand.” Are these headlines selling news by instilling fear, hope, and ultimately, confusion? Sometimes. Yet debates, doubt, and uncertainty are also essential to scientific processes. Biomedicine progresses through trial and error, hypothesis testing, and the systematic collection of evidence that both confirms and disconfirms developing theories. Over time, if it works as it should, this iterative process develops into a *body of evidence* to inform both clinical practice and the future of research. As researchers chip away at medical problems and develop more nuanced understanding of the conditions that affect them, they publish articles in medical journals to share legitimate uncertainty about what works, to which degree, what doesn’t, and why.

Proponents of feminist science add significant value to evidence based medicine in that it appreciates scientific knowledge as incomplete, uncertain, and relative. Feminist science views science as an intellectual activity conditioned by historical circumstances, societal beliefs, and accepted norms (Spanier, 2010). Feminist science scholars question how scientists set priorities, determine research questions and theoretical frameworks, engage in particular types of research methods, interpret data and validate knowledge, draw conclusions and make recommendations (Longino, 1990). Many of the key figures in the U.S. breast cancer movement used these kinds of questions to develop new support systems for the diagnosed and advance breast cancer research. Bonnie Spanier argues that the more radical (and feminist) elements of the breast cancer advocacy movement joined with the medical profession's evidence-based medicine efforts to make western and complementary medical systems more reliable and more consumer-based as well (Spanier, 2010, p. 99). In accepting what we cannot know and challenging what we do know, health social movements have the potential to improve the accuracy and reliability of science and medicine while promoting individual empowerment and health social justice.

Conclusion

This comparison of the breast cancer movement in the U.S. and Poland, a first of its kind, opens discussion of the role of gender, feminism, and social context in creating health social movements, particularly when they involve a health issue that primarily affects women. By viewing these social movements in light of their feminist (or nonfeminist) underpinnings we see how women's status in the broader culture impacts collective action in addition to women's individual roles in relation to the medical system. Interestingly, the lack of feminist progress in Poland parallels the diminished role of feminism in the U.S. breast cancer movement as the illness/cause gained increased social status, visibility, and resources. The commercialization of breast cancer coupled with its embeddedness in an increasingly corporatized biomedical system is at odds with the empowerment potential of informed patients/medical consumers who are able to integrate lay and professional knowledge and thereby improve aspects of not only their individual health outcomes but of women more generally. It remains to be seen how either of

these nations will respond to increased medicalization and the technological imperatives that are now driving health and illness. Certainly, the women on the front lines of advocacy now face crucial decisions about which road(s) they will take to ensure adequate support for those diagnosed with breast cancer while attending to the epidemic at large.

Acknowledgments

This article, in part, draws on the authors' books on the breast cancer movements in their respective countries: Gayle Sulik's book, *Pink Ribbon Blues: How Breast Cancer Culture Undermines Women's Health*, published by Oxford University Press (2011) and updated for the paperback edition (2012); and, Edyta Zierkiewicz's book *Rozmowy o raku piersi. Trzy poziomy konstruowania znaczeń choroby* published by Atut (2010).

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Vol. 1, No. 1, 2014

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The gender of cyborgs: Discussion on the margin of changes in genetics¹

ABSTRACT. The aim of this paper is to show that gender, both as a biological and social category, ceases to exist in the vision of man constructed by contemporary genetics. In the paper, I present the elementary concepts of genetic engineering and liberal genetics, and show how these two currents in genetics change gender into a feature deprived of any designata. I advance a thesis that the man of the future, a cyborg, is a man without gender.

KEYWORDS: cyborgs, gender, genetic engineering, liberalism

Introduction

The technological revolution experienced since 1950s has overshadowed the entire history of human influence on the shape of the world. What is more, this expansion is now achieving a speed significantly higher than what human biology can resist. Lagging behind, the man starts to realise that his inventions, which have speeded the world up so considerably, now have to allow for the speeding up of the man himself (Powell & Buchanan, 2011, p. 24). Thus, applying industrial methods, the man tries to control his own biological processes. He begins to use genetic engineering: modifies his genes and builds strategies that soon are to make it possible to design better humans (Narli & Sinan, 2011, p. 721). Modified and designer in this way, however, the man will stop being the man we know. He will become a hybrid of nature and science, a cyborg (Palese, 2012, p. 196; Klichowski & Przybyła, 2013, p. 144).

Still – as is underlined by Barbara M. Stafford (2007, p. 105) – perceiving a cyborg as a better man is a giggle of humanism. The cyborg will

¹ Fragments of this article on genetic engineering and liberal genetics – in a slightly different form but of the same logics – were published in Polish in the author's book: *Narodziny cyborgizacji. Nowa eugenika, transhumanizm i zmierzch edukacji* (2014).

be an individual designed in accordance with a standard, which will not be formed by the idea of humanistic evolution of man but by the laws of consumerism. Thus, the cyborg will not be an individual formed towards excellence, but an individual designed within the rationality of consumerist genetics, called liberal genetics.

In this paper, I will attempt to present the elementary concepts of genetic engineering and liberal genetics, as well as – in the summary – I will try to give some thought on what gender is in the era of these currents in genetics, in other words: in the world of cyborgs. It is possible that genetic engineering and liberal genetics has lead to its new interpretation. This article is not, however, a thorough analysis of the issue. It is only a sort of reflection on the vision of the man of the future that emerges in the literature on genetics. It is an attempt at showing how gender becomes a feature deprived of any designata in this vision. The aim is to realise that the cyborg is a man actually deprived of gender.

Genetic engineering

For genetic engineers, genetic modification and genetic design are a sort of promises of improved human condition (Holub, 2010, p. 724). This is why genetic engineering is not only a tool for improving the man, but also society – a gene pool of a population (Gyngell, 2012, p. 495). Genetic engineers believe that it is necessary to improve the human race to the highest level possible, using genetic manipulation: eliminate any flaws and stimulate the increase in maximized positive features, such as perfect character, absolute kindness, immaculately beautiful image or gigantically high intelligence (intelligence that is on the permanent increase thanks to genetic engineering shall grow dramatically higher and higher generation by generation – Hayward, 2012, p. 6) (Maher, 2012, p. 88).

In genetic engineers' statements, the concepts of improving the man are shown as programmes of therapeutic character – a genetic modification on the level of a child project is presented to parents as an action aimed at improving the fate of their offspring (Holub, 2010, p. 730-2). By refraining from this therapeutic treatment, parents condemn their child to future suffering, just like refraining from medical treatment. In this context, Maciej Zaremba Bielawski (2011, p. 398-405) reports that in many countries the disabled and their parents sue hospitals (sometimes

even specific doctors) where the dysfunction was not diagnosed in the prenatal period, which would result in the termination of pregnancy (or, alternatively, a suitable genetic treatment). Within such rationality, the concept of *wrongful life* is created – life that is so hopeless that it does not deserve life. The *wrongful life* perspective is based on the statement: What a pity they were born, I am so sorry for them that they have to live. *Wrongful life* is a rationality: Live healthy, or do not live at all. It is an idea of – either I am perfect (genetically selected and/or modified in accordance with a standard), or it is better that I do not exist.

According to Jeffrey S. Coker (2012, p. 26-7), due to genetic engineering the generations to come will be slimmer (research in the genetics of obesity is already conducted and the so-called fat genes are manipulated with – Das, Pal & Ghosh, 2013), more muscular, stronger and tougher (up to the point that each Olympic Games will bring new records in each discipline), more resistant to illnesses (it is related to the manipulation with genes that condition certain illnesses or correlate with their acute course – Kasahara *et al.*, 2011), radically cleverer, and more efficient in energy production, as well as have a keener eyesight (maybe they will even be able to see the lengths of light waves). As a result, anyone who will not be subjected to genetic modification treatment will become socially unadjusted, a genetic outsider (i.e. they will experience *wrongful life*).

This permanent beating of records of human resilience and strength, and also the continuous growth of intelligence and other positive traits, is possible due to eliminating individual's limits that were previously imposed by humanity (Holub, 2010, p. 728). These limits are to be get rid of with technology – according to genetic engineering, technology makes it possible to go beyond nature, and gives the man an opportunity (or even obliges him) to be transnatural (Holub, 2010, p. 727). However, genetic engineering does not assume that genetic modifications and transgressing the natural boundaries is something unnatural. Quite the contrary! Humankind that will finally be able to change its physical, psychological and emotional abilities consciously, by modifying its genes, will at last take control over its development and evolution. And, according to genetic engineers, the core of evolution is evolution management. Thus, the genetic engineering activity is not against nature, but in line with nature – the nature of human progress (Powell & Buchanan, 2011, p. 7). Within such reasoning, genetic engineering is as natural as any other process on Earth (Coker, 2012, p. 23).

Timothy Maher (2012, p. 88) notices that genetic engineering is one of the contemporary forms of power; power over humankind, over the directions of its development. Genetic engineers choose a certain standard of man, define which people can live, and which have to be eliminated and – most importantly – they design the people that appear in societies (their features, abilities, characters, etc.). Thus, as Bill Leonard (2010, p. 407) notices, genetic engineering is like playing God.

Obviously, it has to be underlined that genetic engineering seems to have an excellent potential when it comes to the struggle to improve human health. Thanks to genetic engineering, many important, life-saving drugs have been produced (the first ever drug produced thanks to genetic engineering was insulin, introduced to use in 1982) and many genetic mutations are counteracted (Coker, 2012, p. 25-6). However, genetic engineering corresponds with the eugenic concept of creating a better race of humans (Cziszczek, 2005, p. 109). The strategy for the completion of this idea is to be a „child made to order,” i.e. using genetic knowledge to design a human (his intelligence, height, hair colour, level of self-assessment, aggression etc.) (Fukuyama, 2005, p. 109), to – which is worth underlining – eugenic, by means of genetic modifications, designing of a human (Cziszczek, 2005, p. 225). The concept of a genetic design is an idea of freeing the man from the enslavement to genes and offering him the power over genes (Fukuyama, 2005, p. 202).

Genetic engineers distinguish two strategies of genetic modification: the modification of another (one) generation and modification of the next (each and every one) generations, i.e. a modification carried out within somatic cells (only a person that is subject to modification undergoes a change) or within gametes (germline) (the descendants of the modified person also undergo the change) (Cziszczek, 2005, p. 220, 222; Fukuyama, 2005, p. 110). Thus, the result of errors in case of the first strategy is a disorder or death of the individual that was undergoing the genetic proceedings, and in case of the other – a permanent change of the genome and a generational transfer of the defect.

Genetic engineering into the germline sparks most debates, controversies and social objections (Dresser, 2004, p. 1). Also, it is a source of most hope and positive emotions in the minds of genetic engineers. It is the modification of gametes that enables a better simulation for the growth of certain features, and a permanent change of humanity and the world (Holub, 2010, p. 730). Genetic engineers claim that in order for each new generation to be better, so that only enhanced people are born

(enhanced with technology, i.e. so that only cyborgs are born), it is necessary to modify the germline; such modifications are indispensable for our good and for the good of the generations to come (for the world of cyborgs) (Lawton, 2012, p. 37-9).

Genetic engineers transform people into cyborgs through an elaborate selection of embryos and – including selected embryos – a genetic modification consisting in introducing exogenous genetic material by using a suitable vector (which can be e.g. a virus) (Hockemeyer *et al.*, 2011; Jin *et al.*, 2011; Asuri *et al.*, 2012) or by a mechanical (surgical) action that consists in e.g. removing a DNA fragment and/or inserting another (Dulal, Silver & Hua, 2012, p. 2, 7). Interestingly, the above-mentioned exogenous genetic material to be introduced to the material of a given individual does not have to come from their parents, strangers, or be a cloned or synthetic material (identical with the natural one but produced at a laboratory), but it can be transgenic, i.e. come from a different (than human) species (Mahdi & Abolfazl, 2011, p. 2018) – from animals (so that the man can e.g. become as quick as a cheetah or recognize smells like a dog). Thus, genetic engineering allows the creation of human and animal hybrids with the use of technology (Coker, 2012, p. 27). The modified man, a hybrid of nature and technology (a cyborg), will become a hybrid of a man, animal and technology – a type of a postcyborg or transcyborg, as it would seem.

Genetic engineering is widely criticised due to its narration full of concepts of laboratory application, syntheticity or even artificiality. It is culturally accepted that artificially produced elements are evil, or at least inferior to those created „naturally“ (even if this synthetic product does better in all tests than the natural one) (Powell & Buchanan, 2011, p. 8). Also, it is commonly acknowledged that the natural dynamics of events is the Master of Engineering; therefore each organism, including the man, should be considered a naturally excellent product that does not require any improvement. In reply to this criticism, genetic engineers demonstrate that each organism, including a human one, is eternally unfinished, undergoes constant modifications. Besides, the organism is not a Great and Finished Creation of the Great Creationist, but a changing matter capable of assuming completely new features under the influence of completely new conditions (Powell & Buchanan, 2011, p. 9). Like it or not, this debate either finishes with presenting ideological arguments, or resembles a constant passing the buck (maybe it is simply „eternally unfinished“).

Liberal genetic

In 1974 thinkers such as Joseph Fletcher, John Harris, Philip Kitcher, Glenn McGee, Ramez Naam, Gregory Pence, John Robertson, Gregory Stock, Peter Sloterdijk and Lee M. Silver came up with an idea that it is morally acceptable for parents to manipulate the genetic factors that influence the development of certain features in their offspring. This orientation was called liberal genetics (or eugenics) (Fox, 2007, p. 2-3). It assumes that as genetic engineering gave geneticists the opportunity to play God, those geneticists have to offer humanity a divine gift – free will of a genetic project (Agar, 2004, p. 88). The beneficiaries are to be parents who will become capable of directing the genetic makeup of their children, or even designing them completely (Prusak, 2005, p. 32). According to *Regulating Eugenics* (2008, p. 1585), parents are to win the main prize at a genetic lottery – a child with the genetics of their dreams.

It is in the texts such as *Regulating Eugenics* (2008, p. 1584) by liberal geneticists that the concept of hyper-parents is born. Having received the divine grace of genetics, parents are to fully control the genetics of their child. They are to be able to design, plan, define, build and format it whichever way they like. Consequently, they will achieve mastery in intentional, deliberate, planned and programmed procreation.

In the vision of liberal genetics, the opportunity of designing people that results from the development of genetic engineering, has to be transferred to parents, with a complete dissociation from the influence of the government and state. Thus, this vision is to introduce a fully free-market genetic programme (Fox, 2007, p. 2). Decisions on the directions of genetic modifications are to be given to the consumer – a parent, and it will be them who will have to take care of the competitiveness of their offspring in the free genetic market by choosing a rational design (Raz, 2009, p. 606).

Parents planning their child will thus go to a genetic supermarket where they will choose a set of features that suits their preferences: from one shelf, they will select the hair colour, from another – the eye colour, in the cognitive department they will put suitable capabilities into their basket, in the emotional department they will go for the most delicious passions and interests, and finally they will decide on the gender (Raz, 2009, p. 607-8). As Dov Fox (2007, p. 4-5) points out, the genetic supermarket will have one, very important advantage: thank to it, we will not design only one, culturally defined type of man, cultural

clones, but diversified people that will be the result of constant mixing of millions of features in the gene catalogue, constant experiments with genetic mixtures.

Gender in the era of genetic engineering and liberal genetics

The concepts of genetic engineering and liberal genetics are a stark representation of, or even a symbol, of the common contemporary faith in genetic determinism, in the genetic, and only genetic, foundation of the human make-up (Daniels & Heidt-Forsyth, 2012, p. 719). In the ways of thinking about human it is even possible to notice a peculiar genetic panic and obligatory status of geno-centrism, because genes start to be the fundamental category for analysing everyone and everything, from dietetics to social movements (Agar, 2004, p. 68).

The geno-centrism of genetic engineering and liberal genetics also changes the way we perceive gender nowadays. In the vision of the world of cyborgs, genetically modified and/or designed individuals will not have any biological or social gender. No biological features so far related to sex, such as the level of fatty and muscular tissue, pubescence, procreation functions (children will be produced at laboratories) etc., will be correlated with gender. No social roles, tasks, functions in the public and political life etc. will be correlated with it, either (about gender stereotypes read: Gromkowska-Melosik, 2011, p. 39-75; Jaskulska, 2010, p. 394-6).

The gender of cyborgs will be defined on the level of their design, but gender will not affect anything. Gender will be a feature in the genetic supermarket catalogue, a feature that correlates with no other feature and is not affected by any influences but for the designer's. The gender of a cyborg will be a feature such as the colour of their eyes – selected by their parents, influencing no other feature and not affected by any other feature. In the genetic supermarket, parents will be able to choose any features, and then decide if the individual of these features should be a man or a woman (unless they decide to make a design based on the gender stereotypes that we know today, although in the context of the vision of cyborgs' lives it seems rather unlikely). What is more, they will be able to design two twin cyborgs of all identical features, but for one – gender!

In the geno-centric awareness, there is one substantial paradox – on the one hand, genes determine everything, and on the other, they deter-

mine nothing. The genetic definability of gender is not related to the definability of anything else. Thus, in the genetic vision of future, the man-cyborg in fact does not have any gender. They only have a gender feature which does not mean anything, it seems to be a biological and social anachronism, and is only defined because of the tradition of the human species.

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Vol. 1, No. 1, 2014

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Prevalence of bullying in fourth, fifth, and sixth grades for children with and without mild disabilities: A comparison study

ABSTRACT. This investigation examined perceptions of bullying for students with ($n = 15$) and without ($n = 60$) mild disabilities in grades 4th, 5th, and 6th in a school district in the state of California in the United States of America. Specifically, the following questions were investigated: 1) Do students with disabilities perceive a higher prevalence of being bullied than students without disabilities? 2) When different disability groups are compared, how do they rate the amount of bullying experienced? 3) How do students who have been bullied rate school enjoyment when compared to students who have not been bullied? and 4) Do significant differences emerge between students who have and have not been bullied on their ratings of the amount of friends? Notably, no significant differences emerged between the groups. These findings are striking in light of past research. The discussion will explore implications related to the study findings, including potential protective mechanisms that reduced the participants' exposure to bullying.

KEYWORDS: bullying, disability, mild disabilities

Prevalence of Bullying

The topic of bullying is gaining widespread attention in the field of education and in American culture at large (Good, Macintosh & Gietz, 2011). Parents are increasingly concerned about the effects of bullying on their children and the school climate (Dyer & Teggart, 2007). The increased focus on bullying and its effects provide school administrators with further incentive to create school cultures free from bullying including the idea that districts offering open enrollment will be more attractive if a positive school environment is present (Holzbauer, 2008). Furthermore, research has documented connections between bullying and academic achievement, namely that poorer academic performance

is linked to higher rates of bullying, indicating that districts would be well served to actively reduce bullying in the schools (Mishna, 2003). In response to the concerns from American culture at large, educational professionals, and parental concerns, many schools are indeed starting programs to reduce the amount of bullying on their campuses (Flynt & Morton, 2001).

Prior research investigating bullying found that characteristics common to children with learning disability (LD) put them at increased risk of being a victim of a bully (Mishna, 2003). Children and youth with LD reported more symptoms of depression, anxiety and greater loneliness (Heath, 1992; San Miguel *et al.*, 1996; Svetaz, Ireland, & Blum, 2000). When the prevalence of bullying for adolescents was examined, Whitney, Nabuzoka, and Smith (1992) found that students with disabilities have a greater likelihood of being bullied than their peers without disabilities. These findings are troubling as students who experience bullying have been shown to evoke a number of emotional states including anger, frustration, sadness, anxiety and guilt (Menesini, Codecasa, Benelli, & Cowie, 2003). It is important to understand the frequency and type of bullying students with disabilities encounter in comparison to their peers without disability. Gaining knowledge on student perceptions of the prevalence and type of bullying will help inform interventions that aim to reduce bullying in the schools.

Investigating student perceptions of bullying is important due to the amount of stress a student is under when in a "bullying situation." Cognitive Load Theory is the idea that our working memory is limited with respect to the amount of information it can hold, and the number of operations it can perform on that information (Van Gerven, Paas, Van Merriënboer, & Schmidt, 2002). This theory would then suggest that students who are under cognitive stress have difficulty performing well in school. Students with disabilities such as LD or ADHD may experience stressors related to having a disability that are compounded by experiencing bullying.

Defining the Victim and the Bully

Several criteria must be met in order to identify an interaction as bullying. Flynt and Morton (2001) found that an interaction is defined as bullying if it (1) occurs over time, (2) has an intent to harass and cause

harm, and (3) displays an imbalance between the individuals involved. Definitions of the term "victim" are not as developed. One definition describes victimization as encompassing any person or group of people being harassed (Flynt & Morton, 2001).

Research defining a victim of bullying typically focused on the characteristics of the bully and the victim (Olweus, 2001; Reiter & Lapidot-Lefler, 2007). Generally, victim characteristics were defined as low self-esteem, lack of social awareness, shyness, and help-seeking behaviors. Typical characteristics of being a bully were hyperactivity, aggressiveness, and behavior problems (Nabuzoka, 2003). Flynt and Morton (2001) suggested that children with Intellectual Disability (ID) were candidates of bullying because they tended to have low self-esteem, a lack of social awareness, and looked to others for guidance. These authors also stated that children with Emotional Disorder (ED) were most likely to be bullies because of aggressive behavior. However, the students with ED who were anxious, withdrawn, depressed, or had low self-esteem could also be victims of harassment (Flynt & Morton, 2001). Reiter and Lapidot-Lefler (2007) found correlations between certain characteristics that seem to define a bully and a victim. Bullies exhibited violent behavior and hyperactivity. Victims displayed emotional and interpersonal problems. In addition, higher levels of challenging behaviors such as tantrums, lying, and stealing were displayed in both the victim and the bully (Reiter & Lapidot-Lefler, 2007). According to Mishna (2003), children with LD are at risk for victimization due to poor social/relationship skills, low self-esteem, and the stigma associated with the disability. Also, children with LD typically report more symptoms of depression and loneliness. Consequently, rejection by their peers leaves students with LD unprotected and susceptible to further victimization (Mishna, 2003). Nabuzoka (2003) reported that peers significantly associated being a victim of bullying with shy and help-seeking behaviors as well as associated bullies with disruptions or starting fights (Nabuzoka, 2003). In a study centered in 5th grade classrooms, Estelle, Farmer, Irvin, Crowther, Akos, and Boudah (2009) found that students with mild disabilities who had aggressive and perceived-popular associates had more peer nominations for bullying than all others and social isolates were more likely to be labeled as being bullied.

Students who Act as Bullies and Experience Victimization

When thinking about who is usually a bully and who is usually victimized, there are certain preconceived notions and stereotypes that come up. One may think that the “stronger” personality would bully and the “weaker” personality may be a victim. However, some research indicates that may not necessarily be the case. For example, Reiter and Lapidot-Leffler (2007) suggest that nearly all special education students are victims and even those considered bullies are victims outside of school. Children with learning disabilities can be both bully and bullied due to having lower self-esteem and experiencing more behavior problems than non-disabled peers (Flynt & Morton, 2001). In fact, Mishna (2003) found that all special education students reported being victims of some form of bullying either at school or at home, and being bullies themselves. According to Estelle et al. (2009), students with disabilities were more likely to be perceived as being bullies by both teachers and peers. Teachers also rated students with mild disabilities as encountering significantly higher instances of bullying when compared to typical peers (Estelle *et. al.*, 2009).

Another study examined teacher and student perceptions in relation to student characteristics associated with bullying. Nabuzoka (2003), using a sample of both children with LD and typical peers, found that teachers associated the same type of characteristics (uncooperative, disruptive, starts fights) with victims and bullies. Interestingly enough, peers did not have that same association. The peers associated being a victim of bullying with only shy and help-seeking behaviors. The researcher concluded that teachers may be more inclined to consider victims as perpetrators as well (Nabuzoka, 2003). Some research also suggests that children and youth with exceptionalities are more vulnerable to victimization by peers and may also be more likely to bully others (Cummings, Pepler, Mishna, & Craig, 2006). Recent studies have also examined the need for bystander training and intervention. A 2012 meta-analysis of school-based bullying prevention programs indicated that increased bystander intervention had a significant affect on the success of the anti-bullying program (Polanin, Espelage, & Pigott, 2012). Based these findings, one can conclude that both the victim and the bully may need social behavior strategies and interventions, as well as the bystanders. Social skills may be an effective tool to include in intervention programs aimed at decreasing bullying and victimization (Raskaus-

kas & Modell, 2011). The research also implies that teachers and staff need training in the characteristics of bullying and social interventions as well.

Interventions to Decrease Bullying

Interventions to reduce bullying were very similar as they all exhibited a focus on social skills and assertiveness, adequate training and implementation, and overall awareness (Dyer & Teggart, 2007; Flynt & Morton, 2001; Reiter & Lapidot-Lefler, 2007). The most common suggestion for decreasing bullying is school programs such as character education, social skills, and peer established rules (Flynt & Morton, 2001). Dyer and Teggart (2007) suggest interventions imbed topics such as social skills and assertiveness training, coping strategies, and teacher support. Furthermore, special attention should be paid to empowering students with disabilities, encouraging them to open up about bullying, and giving them awareness of what it is to be victimized by bullies (Reiter & Lapidot-Lefler, 2007). Finally, the attitudes of school staff in regard to behavior problems impacts the rates of bullying. Specifically, schools with staff that are willing to manage behavior problems experienced lower incidences of bullying (Lee, Buckthorpe, Craighead, & McCormack, 2008). In all, interventions need to be preventative with strategies for students with disabilities and typical students to be able to build healthy social skills and creative positive relationships that can generalize from school to home environment.

Conclusions from the literature

The research tends to have consensus on needed content in bullying intervention programs, definitions related to a bully and a victim, and that children with disabilities can be both the bully and/or the victim (Dyer & Teggart, 2007; Flynt & Morton, 2001; Holzbauer, 2008; Mishna, 2003; Nabuzoka, 2003; Reiter & Lapidot-Lefler, 2007). Furthermore, the lack of training for educators on reducing bullying was widely found (Lee, Buckthorpe, Craighead, & McCormack, 2008). From the limited research in comparisons on bullying between students with disabilities

and typically developing peers, one might conclude that students with disabilities are more likely to bully and be bullied (Mishna, 2003). However, it is wise to consider what factors related to this trend. Cummings (2006) suggested that without supportive relationships with peers and adults, children and youth who have physical, learning, intellectual or emotional disabilities may be less able to achieve important developmental tasks and a full quality of life. In addition, Estelle *et.al.* (2009) suggested that the late elementary school years are a time when social dynamics may be particularly important to bullying and victimization. In a study investigating the effectiveness of an anti-bullying program on peers in grades 4-6, Williford et al. (2012) found that the program curriculum, which included all students (victims, bullies and bystanders), reduced student' internalizing problems, such as anxiety and depression, and improved peer perceptions. Therefore it is imperative that special educators think about the social aspects of development when writing individual education plans as well as academics. Rauskauskas and Modell (2011) indicated that a "whole school" approach to bullying intervention was required for successful implementation, yet students with disabilities had not been included in many programs or studies to this point. The interventions mentioned in the research done by Dyer and Teggart (2007), Flynt and Morton (2001), and Reiter and Lapidot-Lefler (2007) are systematic, preventative, school-wide, and filled with coping and social skills strategies. Holzbauer (2008) puts it into perspective when stating that the awareness of disability harassment needs to reach the same level of validation, prevention and intervention that has taken place for other legally protected classes such as groups concerned with racial and sexual harassment. The inclusion of students with disabilities in bullying programs is critical to address the "whole school" approach recommended for implementation (Raskauskas & Modell, 2011).

Gaps in the Literature

While the issue of bullying is addressed in various research articles for children without disabilities (Olweus, 2001), there is only a small amount of research documenting bullying for students with disabilities (Dyer & Teggart, 2007; Flynt & Morton, 2001; Holzbauer, 2008; Mishna, 2003; Nabuzoka, 2003; Reiter & Lapidot-Lefler, 2007). Several

issues underlie current research as it relates to bullying and disability. First, disability type is not specified. Some research has specifically investigated mental retardation (now referred to as intellectual disability), ED (Dyer & Teggart, 2007), or LD (Mishna, 2003), but most investigators use the generic term “disability” and decline to describe their participants’ disabilities in specific terms. Second, many investigations that have focused on disability did not include a comparison group of peers without disability. Third, the samples were skewed toward children with special needs only. For example, Reiter and Lefler’s (2007) sample was taken only from two special education schools and Dyer and Teggart (2007) only used a small sample of CAMHS (mental health) service-users. Holzbauer (2008) only interviewed special education teachers. More research is needed within the comparison of bullying between children with disabilities and typical-developing students.

Purpose of Study

This study aimed to provide a specific lens on the actual bullying practices that are occurring in 4th, 5th, and 6th grade students in an elementary school setting. Prior research indicates that students with disabilities are at a greater risk of being bullied than students without disabilities (Mishna, 2003), however, little is known about the prevalence of bullying for children diagnosed specifically with learning disabilities. The current investigation is unique in that it involves students with mild disabilities categorized as Learning Disability, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, Sensory Integration Disorder, and Emotional Disturbance (with Oppositional Defiance and Obsessive/Compulsive Disorder) and compares the experiences of bullying with same-aged peers without disabilities. The following questions were addressed: 1) Do students with disabilities perceive a higher prevalence of being bullied than students without disabilities? 2) When different disability groups are compared, how do they rate the amount of bullying experienced? 3) How do students who have been bullied rate school enjoyment when compared to students who have not been bullied? and 4) Do significant differences emerge between students who have and have not been bullied on their ratings of the amount of friends?

Method

Participants

This study examined the perceptions of 4th, 5th, and 6th grade students between the ages of 9-12 years old from an elementary school in the Fullerton School District. This school is located in a middle class socioeconomic area in Southern California. There were approximately 85 total participants, 15 with a disability and 60 without a disability. Of the total sample, 56 students were in 4th grade, 25 were in 5th grade and 5 were in 6th grade. The disabilities represented were ADHD (n = 5), LD (n = 5), ED (with ODD and OCD) (n = 3), and Sensory Integration (n = 2). Participants were 4th, 5th or 6th grade students from seven upper grade classrooms at one school. All students with disabilities were fully included in a general education classroom for all or part of the school day.

When asked about their gender, 36 students reported "male" and 49 students reported "female." When asked which race best describes them, the students rated themselves as follows: 40% Caucasian, 30% Hispanic, 12% Asian, 2% Native American, .05% African American, and 12.95% marked "Other." As shown in Table 1, participants were split into two groups composed of students with and without disabilities. Of the 15 students with disabilities, the majority were in 4th grade (80%), were males (73%) and had Caucasian descent (46.5%). The students without disabilities (n = 60), were mainly in the 4th grade and of Caucasian descent (34%), however the majority of these participants were female (66%).

Table 1

Participant Demographics

Demographics	Students with Disabilities (n = 15)		Students without Disabilities (n = 60)	
	n	%	n	%
Grade				
4th	12	80	34	63
5th	2	13	22	31
6th	1	7	4	6
Gender: boys	11	73	35	34
Race: white, non-Hispanic	7	46.5	19	34.3

Setting

Participants completed a paper-based survey in the school library or their general education classroom setting, depending on teacher preference, participant comfort ability, and size of the group. The setting was quite, comfortable and safe. Students took the surveys in groups of 7-10 and were spread throughout the room to avoid any uncomfortable situations and provide privacy.

Instruments

The participants were given a 16-question survey containing Likert-scale ratings, multiple choice and open-ended short answer questions. Participants were asked about demographics (age, gender, race), how many friends they had, how they felt about school, the frequency of different types of bullying, whether they told anyone about the bullying, whether they bullied others, and what teachers should do about bullying. The survey included a short definition of bullying and a description of the types of bullying the student would be asked to respond to. The definition read, "Bullying is defined as 'doing something to hurt someone else, repeatedly, over a period of time.' For the purpose of this survey, we will define 'hurting someone else' as: 1) saying mean and hurtful things, being made fun of, or teased in a hurtful way; 2) completely ignoring or excluding someone from a group or leaving someone out on purpose; 3) hitting, kicking, pushing or shoving someone around; and 4) telling lies, spreading false rumors, or sending mean notes about someone." The examiner stayed in the room with the participants to answer any questions while completing the survey. Each survey was labeled with an SID number to ensure anonymity when completing the surveys. When completed, the surveys were locked in a cabinet in the examiner's office to ensure privacy.

Data Collection Procedures

Recruitment of participants was done at a single elementary school in Fullerton, California by convenience sampling. All participants were minors, so consent was needed. Consent letters, as shown in Appendix B, were sent home to parents of potential participants in student back-

packs and those who were interested in participating sent the signed form back in their child's backpack or contacted the researcher via email or phone. During this initial contact, the researcher answered any questions about the study. Once the parent consent letters were returned and all questions were answered, all students with parent consent were given an assent form. The assent form was explained to the student by the researcher to assure understanding and any questions about the study were answered at that time. If the student agreed to participate, the student signed the assent form. The school principal also signed a consent letter and approved the survey.

During administration, the facilitator, a credentialed resource specialist, briefly explained the purpose of the study and reiterated the definition of bullying as it appeared on the survey. It was explained that any participant could withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. The facilitator checked for understanding, answered any questions, and distributed the survey. The facilitator was available to privately answer questions as the survey was completed. Approximately 10-15 minutes was given to complete the survey. Participants were allowed to finish if they choose to after the time allotted. Upon completion, the facilitator collected the survey and secured all materials in a locked cabinet to insure privacy.

The participants were told not to include their name anywhere on the survey. Each participant was assigned a subject identification number (SID) to ensure anonymity and confidentiality. All surveys were labeled using the SID and the facilitator distributed the surveys accordingly during the data collection.

After the surveys were completed and collected, the data was compiled by hand and entered into a statistics computer program (SPSS). Data survey statistics were tallied and scores between students with disability and students without disability were compared. T-tests were run on mean comparisons between the two independent variables and the prevalence of bullying. Open-ended questions were compared and tallied by hand to include in the discussion section.

Results

Four types of analyses were conducted. Mean comparisons using T-tests were computed in order to examine the relationship between students with disability and students without a disability concerning

their perceptions of bullying using these research questions; 1) Is there a difference between typical students and students with disability on the perceptions of bullying incidences? 2) How did different disability groups rate the incidence of bullying they experienced? 3) Do significant differences emerge between students who have and have not been bullied on their ratings of school enjoyment? and 4) Do significant differences emerge between students who have and have not been bullied on their ratings of the amount of friends?

Student Perceptions on the Incidences of Bullying

A paired samples *t* test was calculated to compare independent variables (students with and without disability, $n = 85$) regarding bullying. The bullied variable measured the number of bullying experiences within the last month. As shown in Table 2, the mean for students with disability was 1.4 ($SD = .632$) and the mean for students without disability was 1.3 ($SD = .557$). No significant difference between the two groups was found $t(2) = .440, p > .05$. Students with and without disabilities rated the amount of bullying they encountered on a monthly basis as similar.

Table 2

Student Perceptions on the Incidences of Bullying

Question	Students With Disabilities	Students Without Disabilities	<i>t</i>
Perceptions on the incidences of bullying in one month	1.4 (0.63)	1.3 (0.56)	$t = 0.44$

Amount of Bullying Between Different Types of Disability

Percentages between the students with different types of disability were compared. Students with Learning Disabilities composed 33% of the participants ($n = 5$), Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder composed another 33% ($n = 5$), Sensory Integration Disorder was 13% ($n = 2$), and Emotional Disturbance (with Oppositional Defiance and Obsessive/Compulsive Disorder) was 20% of the sample ($n = 3$), were computed to examine the disability groups and the amount of bullying they

had experienced in the past month. Due to the small sample sizes of the disability groups, percentages of the incidences of bullying were reported rather than comparing mean results. Overall, 67% of the students with disability reported they had been bullied in the past month. As seen in Table 3, of those students with disabilities that reported being bullied, 80% had LD, 60% had ADHD, 67% had E.D., and 50% had Sensory Integration. Although the students with Learning Disability had the highest percentage of bullying incidences, there were more students with this type of disability in the sample.

Table 3

Amount of Bullying Between Different Types of Disability

Disability Type (n)	Bullied (%)	Not Bullied (%)
ED (n = 3)	67	33
LD (n = 5)	80	20
ADHD (n = 5)	60	40
Sensory Integration (n = 2)	50	50

Ratings of School Enjoyment Between Students who were and were not Bullied

The third question of this investigation examined whether significant differences emerged between ratings of school enjoyment for students with and without disabilities in public school settings. Of the students who were not bullied, 0% marked that they disliked school and 8% marked that they neither liked nor disliked school. Of the students who were bullied, 6% marked that they disliked school and 15% marked that they neither liked nor disliked school. 92% of the students who were not bullied stated that they liked school. Of the students that were bullied in the last month, 78% stated that they liked school. As shown in Table 4,

Table 4

Ratings of School Enjoyment Between Student who were and were not Bullied

Question	Students who were bullied	Students who were not bullied	<i>t</i>
Ratings of school enjoyment	4.05 (0.93)	4.23 (0.58)	<i>t</i> = 0.82

the mean score on school enjoyment for students who experienced bullying was 4.05 (SD = .93) and the mean score for students who were not bullied was 4.23 (SD = .58). An independent samples t-test was conducted and found that no significant differences existed between the two groups on their ratings of school enjoyment, $t(2) = .819, p > .05$.

Ratings of the Amount of Friends Between Student who were and were not Bullied

The final question addressed student ratings on the amount of friends for students who experienced and did not experience bullying. 20% of the students who were bullied marked that they had only 0-3 friends, compared to the 12% of the students who were not bullied. Of the students who were not bullied, 88% marked that they had 4 or more friends. Specifically, the questions asked if significant differences emerged between ratings on the amount of friends for students who were and were not bullied. An independent samples t-test was conducted and the results (as shown in Table 5) indicate that no significant differences emerged on number of friend ratings for students who were bullied ($M = 3.4, SD = 0.98$) and students who were not bullied ($M = 3.5, SD = 0.98$), $t(2) = .16, p > .05$.

Table 5

Ratings of the Amount of Friends Between Student who were and were not Bullied

Question	Students who were bullied	Students who were not bullied	<i>t</i>
Ratings of the amount of friends	3.4 (0.98)	3.5 (0.98)	$t = 0.16$

Discussion

Overall, the results of this study indicated no significant differences were found between the perceptions of bullying incidences that occurred during a month time frame for students with and without disability. In addition, the results indicated that there were no significant differences in the amount of bullying between the different disabilities represented in this sample population. This research differs from other studies examined in the literature in several ways (Dyer & Teggart, 2007, Flynt

& Morton, 2001, Holzbauer, 2008, Mishna 2003, Nabuzoka, 2003, Reiter & Lapidot-Lefler, 2007). First, the disabilities represented in this study were in the mild-moderate category. This sample contained no Physical Impairment, Intellectual Development or Down Syndrome diagnoses. Some research shows that students with mild-moderate disabilities may not be targeted for bullying as much as students with a categorization of "moderate" (Flynt & Morton, 2001; Norwich & Kelly, 2004). Another reason this study differs from previous research may be that this study focused only on only one public, general education school. Reiter and Lefler (2007) used two special education schools in their sample and the results indicated that students in special education were bullied significantly more than students in the general education schools. This school is in a middle-class socioeconomic area with ample parent involvement, which may provide a protective layer to on-campus bullying. In addition, the participants in this investigation were different from other literature examining bullying in that all students with disabilities were included in the general education environment for all or part of their school day. No one participated in a special day classroom, thus, were not viewed as being in "special education" to the extent a child segregated into a special day class would be. The following discussion examines study results and explores implications this research has for student perceptions and self-concept, inclusion, and anti-bullying intervention.

Perceptions and self-concept

When comparing the group of students who had been bullied to the group of students who had not been bullied in the past month (both of which included students with disability), these results indicated that students with and without disability rated the amount of bullying they encountered similarly in addition to the amount of friends and how much they enjoyed school. Two potential explanations for these findings could be the small sample size and characteristics associated with the school location of the participants.

While studying self-concept and victimization, Kaukiainen (2002) found that adolescents who were bullied scored especially low on social self-concept. In this study, the students who reported being bullied within the past month reported that they disliked school and didn't have many friends. While one may rightly assume that feelings toward school

and prevalence of bullying were negatively correlated, perhaps students who are engaged in a positive school environment feel more happy about school and are, thus, less likely to enact bullying behaviors, including to students with disability. Since the sample mostly indicated they enjoyed school, it is possible the participants at this school site were less likely to encounter bullying overall based on the school characteristics. This finding has implications for an intervention approach to bullying. Teachers and administrators who create positive school environments may encounter more students who enjoy attending schools, thus, reducing the amount of bullying that occurs.

Inclusion

Students with and without disabilities rated themselves similarly on the prevalence of bullying they encountered. Out of the 85 total participants in this sample (including students with disabilities), 71% said that they had been bullied at least one time during the past month. Fifty eight percent of the students without disabilities said they had been bullied in the past month. When only the perceptions of students with disability were examined, 67% reported being bullied in the past month. In comparison, 33% of students with disability and 29% of students without disability reported not being bullied.

One may surmise that the inclusive educational setting contributed to the similar rates of bullying in students with and without disabilities. Students with disabilities were educated in general education classrooms versus segregated classrooms where it is easier to be labeled as a student with a disability. In addition, all students were educated together and received the same whole school behavior expectations and systems. When researching students with disabilities and their involvement in anti-bullying programs, Rauskas and Modell (2011) found that 55% of students with mild learning disabilities and 78% of students with moderate learning disabilities experienced bullying. They also found that students in special day classes were bullied more often than those students in inclusive settings. When reported bullying and specific disability groups were examined, percentage ratings between groups showed similar ratings on the perceived prevalence of bullying. An explanation for these results could be that the students with disabilities included in this sample have mild-moderate types of disabilities and are included in general education for either part or all of their school day.

Intervention

The large percentage (71%) of all the students in the sample who indicated experiencing bullying at least one time in the past month would imply that any bullying intervention program implemented at this school should be geared toward all students, including students with disabilities. Given the negative outcomes for all students, especially those with exceptionalities, reducing the prevalence of bullying should be an important goal for schools (Good, Macintosh, & Gietz, 2011). According to Rauskauskas and Modell (2011), many existing anti-bullying programs have largely ignored students with disabilities as being important participants in the whole-school approach. This problem can be rectified by modifying existing programs to include students with disabilities in assessment and delivery of program content. Just as educators modify grade level curriculum, these anti-bullying programs can be easily modified as well. The inclusion of students with disabilities in bullying programs is critical in order to truly address the whole-school approach recommended to address the issue of bullying (Rauskauskas & Modell, 2011). Other researchers also agree in the same approach to intervention. Dyer and Teggart (2007), Flynt and Morton (2001), and Reiter and Lapidot-Leffler (2007) report that intervention should be systematic, preventative, school-wide, and filled with coping and social skills strategies.

One intervention approach mentioned in the research by Good, Macintosh and Gietz, 2011, is connecting an anti-bullying program with the School-Wide Positive Behavior Support program (SWPBS: Sugai, Horner, & McIntosh, 2008). The goal of SWPBIS is to develop a safe, positive, and consistent school culture. Although this program supports all students and staff, students receiving special education services may benefit the most, especially when inclusion is a school goal (Good et al. 2011). The focus on a consistent set of behavior expectations for all students would seem to allow for a more inclusive environment. In this research, Good et al. (2011) found that students in special education who were included in the implementation of SWPBS received a more consistent and predictable environment across all settings, making it easier for students to feel safe and receive behavior supports in the general education environment. In this study, a school-wide intervention program resulted in fewer incidents of both bullying and victimization for students in special education (Good et al., 2011).

Recommendations for future research could include schools with more diversity, including greater variability in socioeconomic status. Furthermore, additional data collection in multiple educational placements, such as general education, mild/moderate, and moderate/severe would be beneficial. Researchers should investigate specific school factors that contribute to a positive school climate with low student reported rates of bullying.

Students with disabilities have the right to learn in a safe environment (Rauskauskas & Modell, 2011). Although prior investigations indicated that students with disabilities are at a greater risk of being bullied than students without disabilities (Mishna 2003), this study found no significant differences between the perceptions of bullying incidences between students with and without mild disabilities. Although the explanation for these findings could be due to the types of disabilities investigated or the size and type of demographics of the sample population, the findings point to the need for a whole school approach when implementing any type of anti-bullying program. Students with disabilities are part of our schools and need to be included in the planning and implementation of any programs that make schools a better place to grow and learn. Every student deserves to learn in a safe and positive environment.

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BOOK REVIEWS



Agnieszka Gromkowska-Melosik, *Kobieta epoki wiktoriańskiej. Tożsamość, ciało i medykalizacja* [Victorian-era woman: identity, body, and medicalization], Kraków: Oficyna Wydawnicza Impuls, 2013, pp. 192

The development of historiography can be described as a process of searching for new research areas. Feminism has become such a field, triggering further development of historiography. Women's history is a relatively recent research domain, present in western historiography since 1970s. Interest in it was significantly aroused by the French methodological school – Annales.

Polish historiography, as compared to the western one, did not delve into this domain, considering it secondary for many years. Although the interest of historians in the question of women on the Polish territory in the 19th and 20th centuries has been on the increase, especially during the last two decades, investigations in this strand of research have not been published in a form of a book. The lack of “women's historiography” studies concerning general history, even as contributory material, was clearly visible. The book under review, without a doubt, will become a contribution, which the Polish historiography will benefit from.

The author, as the first Polish researcher of modern times, working with English language sources, dared to face a challenging and barely researched issue in the Polish historiography. Right at the outset of the review, I can state that A. Gromkowska-Melosik has performed outstandingly well.

The work under review, in accordance with historiographical research rules, constitutes both a description and explanation, and above all an independent and original interpretation of the issue of female identity and corporality in the Victorian England.

In the outstanding Introduction, the author clearly, competently and – most importantly – in a methodologically-aware fashion formulates the subject of her study, i.e. the subordination of Victorian-era female identity, body and lifestyle to both men and the then ideology of femininity, which is superbly “deciphered” in her work. The underlying theme, visible in the narration, is the asymmetrical and uneven cultural relationship between women and men as regards identity and body in the context of a variety of forms and domains of repressing the former group, especially by medicalization. At the same time, the author, in her Introduction, consciously re-

stricts her research and narration to higher social-class women, and leaves out the issue of rising emancipation and related new social practices. Moreover, the author rightly and in accordance with D. W. Howe's conviction that "Victorianism was a transatlantic culture" takes her research beyond Victorian-era England by including America and France, but also gives relevant examples from the ways of thinking and cultural practices in Poland. Therefore, I am of the opinion that the title of the work is adequate, well formulated, and thoroughly justified. Additionally, I am of the opinion that all the concepts mentioned in the title were meticulously defined.

The author of the research under review, out of a range of possible narrations, decided to write her work as an essay – a literary-cum-scientific genre. A genre, which might be considered the most difficult one, yet allows most freedom for the author's perspective and leaves space for one's own reflexivity. These possibilities have been aptly utilized in the author's narrations conducted from the Foucauldian perspective. At this point it is important to state that A. Gromkowska-Melosik is entirely independent and original in her interpretations by not "clinging" on to Michael Foucault's ideas slavishly. This reflects well on the maturity of her research. It is worth mentioning here that M. Foucault's views regarding the so-called truth and constructing historical knowledge have been present in the Polish methodology of history as well. In particular, similar views regarding, *inter alia*, the so-called objectivism in history and constructing history through narration have been present in the works of the most eminent Polish methodologist of history – Jerzy Topolski.

Having said that, I would like to give the author the confidence in view of her modesty voiced in her statement that her work is "not a typical history book," but rather a book from "the sociology of culture" (p. 3). With regard to contemporary trends, also present in the Polish methodology of history, and – above all – the interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary shifts in research, her dilemma is not fundamental, not to say insignificant.

The empirical data used by the author is both rich in factual content and diverse. The sources referred to are English written texts encompassing belles-lettres, philosophical and moralising literature, medical, hygiene and *savoir-vivre* handbooks, journals as well as iconography. The number of collected and utilised sources might have been overwhelming for the researcher, resulting in meticulous adherence to the facts. However, this is not the case here; quite conversely, the author manages to handle them at ease, going beyond mere descriptions and providing explanations and interpretations. This ability also testifies to the research skills of the author. Superb exemplifications of the conducted narration are visible in the analyses of English paintings, which depict the status of women in the male world of science and culture, the female lifestyle, and the ideals of feminine fashion

and beauty as set out by the male world. The paintings included in the introduction, presenting the world of medicine, clearly situate and limit the role of women in the male world. These paintings, as the author points out, have been the inspiration for her narration.

I appreciate numerous references, mostly English, to the work of contemporary researchers devoted to the main subject of the book. In general, the work under review is rooted in English sources, which in the case of Polish historiography – concentrated on native history – is not a frequent practice. This, among other things, makes A. Gromkowska-Melosik's book unique and inspirational in the context of our historiography.

The narration present in the essays revolves around M. Foucault's theories of knowledge and power, here represented by the androcentric, male element. All discourses surrounding femininity, i.e. concerning women's corporality, sexuality, and intellect portray women as maximally subordinate and obedient to the male world (better, more intelligent, stronger, composed, powerful, etc.). All deviations from the male vision of the world were pathologised and considered for treatment and medicalization. The conducted analysis of the subject literature – written sources and iconographic materials – points to a clear division into a male world symbolising culture and science, and the opposing female world symbolising nature and sexuality.

The author puts forward a thesis that the development of biology and medicine in the Victorian era, contributed to the subordination of women to the male world in the domains of female identity, corporality, and sexuality. Medicine was a male preserve which appropriated nearly all aspects of a woman's life – their birth, pregnancy, labour, child-rearing, disease treatment, attire, nutrition, conduct, and dependence. Medicalisation of women's life was rooted in the conviction that a woman is diseased by the very nature of things, and a disease was inscribed in the upper-class woman's body and psyche. Hence the special interest in hysteria, as a nervous disorder rooted in sexual drive, as well as depression and green sickness.

Peculiarities of the Victorian-England femininity are analogous to the conception of female (life) roles or the identity of women from a broader cultural background, be it European or Anglo-Saxon, including women from the 19th century Polish territories (naturally from the upper-class). The author expresses this by reaching for Polish press sources or handbooks, which thematically or in terms of outlook are convergent with those from England. It is yet another comparative value of the work in question.

The presented picture of the Victorian-era English woman was created – as argued by the author – by men and also depended on them. It closely resembles the image of women and their obligations constructed in the Polish-language press, literature or handbooks – especially conservative traditional and opposing the emancipation movement. Also here, societal

and medical norms of femininity were intrinsically connected with motherhood and marriage. Any indication of female activity in domains of social life so far reserved only for men was criticised as threatening the traditional model of family. Women's objective – both in Victorian England and in the entire 19th century world, irrespective of the geographical context – was to carry out the naturally determined task producing healthy offspring. Motherhood was meant to ensure the reproduction of upper-class dominance. Reproductive functions and childbearing determined a women's social status, hence consigning them to family life and motivating their denial to public and scientific life and to serving in capacities and social roles other than familial ones. Therefore, apart from being a mother, a woman in order to be recognised as worthy, healthy and normal, should be a wife. Single women were deprived of the essence of femininity, i.e. having a man at their side and in consequence producing offspring.

In the undertaken discussion on life space and the roles of women and men, the author clearly points to two separate spheres of life, i.e. private and public. The former was definitely a female preserve, while the latter a male one (although the second group had the right to move between the two spheres seamlessly).

Adducing biological ideas of physiological differences between the sexes, the author accounts for the then conviction of women's social status as subordinated to men as a natural consequence of biological factors. Female body – smaller and more fragile, weaker than a male body – was also more sensitive and susceptible to neurosis. Views adopted in societies influenced the socialisation of women and men, which was determined by the output of research in the then popular biology. All deviations from the assumed norm were pathologised. It is no surprise, then, that women were assigned to familial life and motherhood, and not to pursuing professional careers, education and active participation in social life. Therefore, all premises on which the 19th century women's emancipation movement was founded stood in contrast with the male-centred assumptions on what was natural and consistent with women's biology and duties. The mere drive for knowledge and education for women meant the loss of reproductive function in women – according to the then people. Biological and medical trends, then, corroborated and reproduced the societal dominance of well-educated men over “mentally disabled” women (i.e. constructed as such).

A Victorian English woman, subordinated to his man in all spheres of her life, had to be attractive. The essence of the female gender, according to the conception and theories originated by men, was in her fragility, beauty, and elegance. Fashion ideals detailed women's appearance, figure, attire or hairstyle, emphasising – at the same time – their social status. A well-groomed and beautiful woman was an ornament to her man and it was the corset that sym-

bolised her constraining and serfdom to the male world. This piece of clothing was the cause of numerous deformations and diseases; it also pointed to the social status through severely hindering women's chances of undertaking physical labour. At the same time, the corset modelled a woman's body in a shape of an hourglass, i.e. in such a way as to emphasise her reproductive potential – her breasts and hips. It fulfilled yet another function: should a woman be overweight, it made her body look more aesthetic.

The female body was supposed to serve the needs of her man – to provide him with pleasure and offspring. Female sexuality was marginalised and it was very often treated as a cause of mental illnesses. Girls were supposed to be reared to be chaste, adhere to moral conduct, and be faithful and committed to their husbands. All measures were taken in order to suppress the dangerous and sinful fulfilment sexual needs in women. Innocence and chastity was expected of women; moreover, they had to be shielded from potential depravity. This ambiguity of female nature becomes the discursive axis on the female sexuality. Women who had the awareness of their sexual needs, were considered to be nymphomaniacs, while nymphomania was yet another aspect of medicalization of the female body and identity (along with sexual surgery – women had their ovaries, uteri, and clitorises removed in order to prevent promiscuity).

The issue that demonstrates the Victorian medical intervention into a person's body and identity is that of masturbation. The means of prevention and treatment invented by doctors and moralists were unusually rich and often drastic – this concerned not only women but also men. These themes have been summarised by the author, which renders the then outlook and the state of social awareness well. Thanks to exploring discourses, this seems to be the author's achievement.

It is vital to notice that when analysing handbooks on medicine, health, and hygiene published on Polish territories in 19th century, prescriptions similar to those present in the Victorian England can be found. These regarded health concerns with reference to upper-class women, deviation, sexual disorders and neuroses (e.g. green sickness or hysteria), care for proper nutrition and maintaining appropriate figure by women. Some of the handbooks used by the author were reprinted in Polish, and the biological theories that she adduces were not foreign to the Polish scientific milieu – the dissertations and handbooks published by them testify to this fact. This observation goes hand in hand with A. Gromkowska-Melosik's statement that the Polish culture "was not detached from the Anglo-Saxon culture (and the French one)" (p. 6).

In the sixth, concluding chapter, which seems to be provocatively entitled "The historical truth" ("Prawda historyczna"), we are presented not only with closing remarks, but – above all – with in-depth explanations and interpretations.

Once again, I would like to underline the factual and cognitive uniqueness and the ability of the author to fill in the niche in the Polish “women’s historiography.” The work under review draws on often-unknown English language sources and freely engages in a discussion with the English-language researchers. What merits attention is also the originality, not only narration-wise, with regard to contemporary history as well as the interdisciplinary approach to the subject of study.

Taking everything into account, I am pleased and honoured to recommend the work under review. The additional value of the book is the beautiful typesetting and meticulous layout. I am of the opinion that A. Gromkowska-Melosik’s is one of the most beautiful publications, both form- and content-wise. It is also a most interesting showcase for the publisher – Impuls – that has made invaluable contributions to Polish culture, science and education. Therefore, I would like to congratulate the author on this valuable and original publishing endeavour, which will serve well to all those with interest in women’s history and the study of women. I am sure it will also constitute an inspiration for further research and be conducive to deepening our knowledge in the area of historical and pedagogical, cultural studies as well as comparative research into the history of women.

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Lucie Jarkovská, *Gender před tabulí. Etnografický výzkum genderové reprodukce v každodennosti školní třídy* [Gender at the Blackboard. An Ethnographic Study of Gender Reproduction in Everyday School Life], Praha-Brno: MUNI Press, Sociologické nakladatelství, 2013, pp. 196

The book of the Czech sociologist Lucie Jarkovská deserves attention primarily because it is the first Czech publication that deals with studying the classroom environment from the gender perspective. For that reason, not only the study results are important. Apart from the results, the author presents her own conceptualization of gender and grounds for its application in studying a school class with the use of a very sophisticated, original methodology. She also reports the manner in which the results have been obtained and the ethical and methodological dilemmas she has encountered in the study (e.g. whether the informed consent of the pupils is necessary, how to deal with the mistrust of managing staff if it is known that a) the researcher’s presence interferes with the teaching process and b) the results almost always contain criticism directed at the school). The author is a sharp observer of the school reality and a thoughtful researcher, ever con-

fronting her theoretical and methodological knowledge with the data derived from observation, i.e. from the often unpredictable situations and interactions taking place in the classroom. What is more, she also engages her moral sense, empathy and involvement to promote the so-called *gender sensitive education*.

The structure of the work appears, at the first glance, a classical one. The study consists of an introduction, followed by the theoretical part with justification of the choice of methodology. Further on, the work presents research results, conclusions and the closing part. Research results are structured by topic only, not by research procedure, which produces an original effect of actual participation in the author's research effort, very attractive for the reader. In order to deepen the interpretation but also in line with the selected paradigm of qualitative sociology and the main theoretical assumption, i.e. approaching the gender category not as a static individual feature or a feature ascribed to certain sex category but as a distinction of a social structure, the author refers to extra-class and extra-school context that offers insight in the more general manner of functioning of the gender order in the Czech Republic.

The main subject of the study is the "reproduction of gender in everyday classroom environment", but due to the socially varied personal composition of the observed class the author in her interpretations takes into account also other social categories, primarily age and ethnicity, and sporadically also social class. The overlapping categories of gender and age and gender and ethnicity are discussed in two separate sub-chapters. The work contains a colourful appendix with the drawings of male and female pupils which the author analyses in the last subchapter.

The author's narration is very smooth and fluent and the language she uses is also accessible for non-professional readers. The very nature of the study assumes reference to personal experience, which makes the narration resemble reportage, particularly in Chapter Two. And although the author does not try to conceal her personal involvement and the critical potential of her research, she meticulously observes the scientific rigors separating the research material from her own analyses, putting her own interpretations in the context of similar research conducted by other male and female researchers and in the context of wider structural determinants of functioning of the school system in the Czech Republic.

Why gender studies at school? (personal motivations)

Explaining her personal motivations behind the research, the author refers to her own involvement in gender-sensitive education, asking herself the questions: what does that term actually mean? What would such an

education actually look like? In what manner could it function in a “society that is not sensitive to gender at all” (p. 12) and therefore offers no support to gender-involved educators? In this context she recalls the practice of the so-called “non-sexist education” in other countries, based on the elimination of gender stereotypes, which fails to produce the desired effects. She formulates her own definition of gender-sensitive approach at school as “a reflective attitude of striving to understand the mechanisms of gender reproduction in everyday life, continuous evaluation of one’s own impact and realizing the multi-dimensional and ambivalent nature of those issues” (p. 12). Gender-sensitive education is not only “a presentation of models of non-stereotypical behaviour” and does not have one fixed definition; instead, it appears to be a “demanding and probably never-ending path of search and reflection” (p. 13).

Many scientific studies have demonstrated that neither male nor female Czech teachers care about or deal with equality of girls and boys in the process of their education.¹ The desire to see and diagnose what is really going on “with gender” in the classroom was the main motivation behind the decision to undertake the research.

Theoretical grounds, methodology research inspirations

In the first part of her work, entitled “How to conduct gender studies at school?” the author presents her theoretical and methodological standpoint, defines the notions of “gender,” “childhood” and “gender socialization” and cites gender research at school which she finds most inspiring. She roots her study in the paradigm of interpretative sociology that stresses the construction of meanings in the course of everyday interactions of social actors. She refers mainly to the concept of G. Simmel and ethnomethodology of E. Goffman. She identifies herself with the ethnomethodological approach to gender (West & Zimmerman, 1987) that treats both gender and sex as social constructs. Ethnomethodology “emphasizes the significance of individuals’ interactions as results of the operation of the social structure, yet leaves the individuals their agency, i.e. does not define them a priori as totally determined by social structures” (p. 19). The author directs the attention of researchers to “interactions, practices within the framework of which it is

¹ “The subject of gender equality in the Czech school system is relatively new. One may observe a distinct evolution in the standpoints of main political parties on the subject over the last twenty years – from the initial ignoring attitude, through underestimation to the final acceptance. However, that acceptance was imposed on the Czech political class by the EU and partly also by academic circles and NGOs, and for some politicians gender still remains the ‘necessary evil’” (Smetáčková, 2009, p. 17).

settled what is to be considered feminine or masculine and what meanings are ascribed to those categories" (p. 19).

Another theoretical perspective important for the author is the post-structural analysis of power relation, with the obvious reference to Foucault's concept of discourse and the theory of reproduction by P. Bourdieu. "From the point of view of gender reproduction the subject that I find inspiring is the positioning of a subject through discourse in which disciplinary power techniques are involved" (p. 15). The post-structural perspective allows one to see in what way the behaviour of an individual is connected with social structures and power.

The author describes her own research method as ethnographic case study focused on (re)production of gender within one school class. The constitutive feature of that method is combining data analysis (observed behaviour, interactions, utterances) with interpretation (ascribing meanings with taking the context into account).

The author decisively rejects the notion of childhood as a biological fact (growing, physical and mental development) or childhood presented in the categories of socialization understood as passive absorption of social roles (including gender roles). According to Jarkovská, childhood is a historical and social construct and the child is an individual endowed with agency and taking a considerable part in his or her own socialization.

Jarkovská also critically views the functional concepts that perceive gender as a social role. "The theory of roles is very attractive for researchers. Social representations of gender roles are easy to identify, e.g. in fairytales, handbooks, advertisements, etc." (p. 28), yet it cannot be used to explain the variability of individual behaviour within a single gender category or gender relations of power existing both in the classroom and in the society. It is only when one finds out how gender "is done" (i.e. how it is constructed) in everyday interactions, what it means to each of the participants, how it relates to holding power in various situations and contexts, what discourse takes part in fixing the gender standards and in which way they are related to inequalities, one has reached a starting point for reflection on new, more equality-oriented ways of organizing the lives of children and teachers in a school classroom.

As her two major sources of inspiration Jarkovská considers the works of Barrie Thorne (2004) and Bronwyn Davies (2003). She stresses that both those researchers "reject the understanding of socialization as a process during which individuals (adults) impose the society-approved forms on other individuals (children), but analyse the processes of gender reproduction in interactions (Thorne) or in discourse (Davies)" (p. 34).

The author conducted her research in the sixth grade of a primary school in one of the districts of Brno (the second largest city in the Czech

Republic). The class consisted of 10 boys and 12 girls aged 11 to 13. During one school year (2005/2006) the author witnessed, as an observer sitting in the back desk, almost 60 hours of school lessons and also participated in some school events and outings. The collected research material comprises field notes, audio recordings of lessons, artefacts created by children (drawings, short texts), interviews with children and with the teacher conducting the classes and also the material that the author herself has remembered.

Findings

In the chapter entitled "Gender ethnography in the classroom" the author presents the results of her research. In qualitative research of that kind the results presentation assumes the form of a description and analysis at the same time. The author describes what she has observed or what is included in the text material collected by her and interprets it at the same time. However, the selection of events and utterances to be described is strictly subordinated to the main aim of the study, i.e. finding an answer to the question in what way the behaviour, statements and interactions of the education process participants create or violate the gender order in the classroom. So, interpretation also reveals "cracks" in the monolith of dichotomous, hierarchized gender relations that may be an onset of their change.

Analysing the behaviour of particular boys and girls from the gender point of view Jarkovská observes that although the existing normative division into "masculine" and "feminine" organizes children's behaviour in the classroom, "gender is not stable and does not determine the identity of children as 'girls' or 'boys' (...) Boys and girls produce an abstract continuum of traits, although even that continuum is not stable or unchanging. Gender is something that children actively work with and stress it differently in various situations" (p. 88).

Among the most interesting analyses are those which show gender as a distinction of the social structure. The author demonstrates it using the example of overlapping categories of gender and age. In the school environment, power is related to age; at the same time the age category is presented, similarly to gender, as one of the natural sources of social divisions. Adults rule (teachers, older pupils), children are bound to obey their elders. However, as the author sharply observes, "....that division may also be described as a result of gender divisions, despite the fact that we do not necessarily have to witness the relations between men (with masculine gender) and women (with feminine gender). Masculine gender in the teacher-pupil interaction is represented by teachers (although paradoxically most teachers are women) who personify rules, culture, power and authority, while feminine gender is represented by children (both boys and girls). Children

are associated with nature, and nature should be cultured by teachers (i.e. by women, in this situation with masculine gender). (...) This is the example of the way in which gender structures the power relations without a specific connection to particular individuals assigned to a given gender category but in connection with a specific situation. This means that gender appears here as a feature of the social structure, as a quality associated with individuals who hold particular positions in the social structure and not as characteristics common to [all] persons from one sex category" (p. 81).

It is probably the pressure of gendered power structure that determines much stricter judgement of misbehaving girls than misbehaving boys. In the eyes of the teacher with whom the author co-operated, improper behaviour of the boys was "something unacceptable, yet positive at the same time. The teacher associated it with fair-play, directness and being active. The fact that the girls misbehave in a different way did not make them any better. (...) She [the teacher] preferred the class to be controlled by misbehaving boys rather than by "scheming" girls, whose practices are "repellent" and "absurdly devious" (p. 168). Associating boys' active participation in lessons with their unruly behaviour and expecting the girls to be first of all polite contributes to the naturalisation of gender divisions which in the long run proves detrimental to both sexes, as it supports the passivity and invisibility of girls and leads to stigmatization and social exclusion of boys.

Analysing sexual education lessons the author points out at the surprising fact that the discourse dominant in the curriculum and handbooks and the manner of conducting the lessons by the teacher absolutely exclude girls from active, subjective participation in those lessons. Although the sexuological discourse in the Czech society is free from religious restrictions (Czechs are the most secularised society in Europe), by the fact of being anchored in biological and evolutionist explanations it offers a very conservative and discriminating message. Sexual education is concentrated mainly on preventive health care and subordinated to reproductive goals (the author exemplifies it by pointing out at the all too frequent use of the euphemism "the miracle of birth" by the teacher). Girls as young as 11 and their bodies are perceived only through the perspective of their future maternity (grotesque admonitions addressed to girls, telling them not to run around without their slippers on, as this may cause "uterus cold"). Sexual autonomy and sexual activity is ascribed only to the male sex. No female desire or female sexual fulfilment is mentioned anywhere in handbook texts or in the teacher's talk.

In the part of the book devoted to analysis of children's verbal statements (what it means to be a boy/girl, what my life will be like when I am 30 years old) and drawings made after the children were read a feminist fairy-tale, one can hardly be surprised by the children's statements in which, following the existing gender stereotypes, children place men and women in

distinctly separate categories (different looks, characteristics and activities). Still, it was surprising to see that the division into masculine and feminine was not perceived by children as “natural” but as socially construed by expectations and social norms. According to the author, this is evidenced by the use of the verb “must” by children (*girls/boys must...*), not the verb “be” constitutive to one’s identity (*girls/boys are...*). What is more, children often perceive that division as unfair.

The research employed in an original manner the feminist fairy-tale (Munsch, 1980). Feminist fairy-tales have been devised as a cure-all for gender stereotypes omnipresent in classical fairy-tales. They are supposed to provide different, more equal behaviour patterns for boys and girls (Dryjańska, 2012). However, numerous studies (Kuykendal & Sturm, 2007) prove that simple reversal of roles on which those tales normally rely (it is not the prince that kills the dragon and frees the princess but the other way round) inspire “mistrust” in children and lower the effectiveness of promoting non-stereotypical behaviour. “For feminist fairy tales to meet the needs of a society of children in want of fully realized, complicated characters (regardless of gender), feminist writers need to move beyond straight role reversal. Children see through these fractured fairy tales and do not identify with their one-dimensional protagonists. Feminist fairy tales must be stories in which the main character is empowered regardless of gender” (Kuykendal & Sturm, 2007, p. 41).

Being aware of those limitations, the author did not want to impose her own interpretation of the fairy-tale on children, but she wanted to see in what way children themselves would interpret it. In many cases children’s interpretations confirmed the “category-maintenance work” (Davies, 2003), i.e. an attempt to preserve the rigorous division into “masculine” and “feminine,” although there were also interpretations which connected masculine and feminine elements in surprising combinations which the author considers to be a potential that could be used, with appropriate approach, for gender-sensitive education.

Conclusions

Summarizing the major findings of her research, in the conclusion the author returns to the basic practical question: what should actually teachers do if they do not want to discriminate against any of the sexes? Lucie Jarkovská, well aware of the dangers of simple role reversal, but also of the ineffectiveness of the persuasive methods of traditional pedagogy, calls for deeper and more subtle reflection on the functioning of gender at school and allowing the children themselves to practice the gender versatility in a reflective manner. This should be facilitated by treating gender, similarly

to other categories dividing people such as age or ethnicity, not as „individual traits of particular male or female pupils, but as characteristics of a social structure” (p. 170). Only then would a discussion on the social origin of norms be possible, opening the way to change.

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