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Na okładce: circa 1940: Ministry of Information dispatch riders on their motorbikes.

(Photo by Fox Photos/Getty Images)

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Editor's Preface

Following debates on the relations between the two sexes, we can be left with the impression that one of the most important contexts of such discussions is created by social mechanisms of regulating access to aspirations, formal education, and—above all—career and professional success of women. It seems that in the case of developed countries, the possibilities of social and professional success of women are, to a great extent, conditioned by economic and demographic factors (inflected by various ideologies). Therefore, in situations of increased demand for workforce, the market “opens up for women”—they can enjoy more possibilities of mobility, both intragenerational and intergenerational. If employers are faced with the need of reducing workplace (which entails less profits), the choice is simple: they employ women (for many of women taking up a job of any sort is a kind of upward mobility in the context of altering their social standing and gaining income). It needs to be added that if such an economy-driven practice becomes common in a given society, changes at the level of social awareness take place. The ideology of “classic essentialism”, which reduces the social role of women to that of a wife/mother/housewife/sexual object, is replaced with (at the level of common sense) with a different social construction—a “successful female professional” able to assume professional and social roles traditionally occupied only by men.

In turn, in countries with patriarchal fundamentalism, the ideology takes priority over the economic factor in the way that women do not have a chance for professional success as, even at times of increased demand for workforce, as social (traditionally reductionist) assumptions in this domain block any changes. Even at times of economic crisis, there are no chances of increasing availability of professional work and career to women, as this would strike at the foundations of the already existing social structures. Another example of ideological dominance comes from the USSR—female tractor drivers. Here, ideological convictions take precedence over economic imperatives.

However, in periods of increased unemployment (where many men seek work), there is usually a turn—at the level of social consciousness—towards essentialism. As C. Kramarae and P. A. Treichler put it, in case of economic depression, women's emancipation is questioned along with the increase in popularity of anti-feminist ideas; a turn towards old, traditional, softer ideas of femininity (cf. Kramarae & Treichler, 1992, p. 133). Then, the issue of "family and upbringing crisis", that of "motherhood crisis", "the decline of traditional values", and other social threats stemming from the fact that women give up their traditionally defined roles, appear on the media and in the "public opinion". Social constructions of femininity (emphasising the "return to femininity") begin to question the sex-gender symmetry. In these kinds of situations, women enjoy far less possibility of upward movement. At this point, an idea of "backlash" introduced to the theory of culture by Susan Faludi could be adduced, as the "anti-feminist counterattack" directed towards women's emancipation (Faludi, 1991; after: Code, ed., 2000, p. 37).

Naturally, due to significant changes in the legal system and in the awareness, the "return to the past" is rendered impossible (also because of the fact that women in Western countries are able to fight for their rights). The dynamics of change are played out at the level of "everyday pressures" or reconstructions of aspirations and aims carried out by women on a step-by-step basis (from the professional success onto the family and motherhood).

The cycle presented above can be repeated decade by decade depending on the economic situation and the demands of the labour market. All of these cases exemplify the primacy of ideology over economy. Needless to say the pattern under discussion is simplified; in the current social practice, changes in perceiving social roles and possibilities enjoyed by women are never abrupt or self-evident. These changes take forms of "ideological fluctuation", various (sometimes fine) "reconstructions" of everyday practices or "affective panics" related to the question of what it means to be a "real woman".

I would like to add that the contemporary culture, at least in Western countries, seems to be a mosaic of diverse, often contradictory, elements. This culture is like a mirror broken into thousands of pieces; it is impossible to put it together again, to find any "general regularity" of its development. The pieces of the broken mirrors (acting as a metaphor of modernist metanarratives) are scattered, sometimes blinding each other when reflecting the sun. A broken mirror confuses. Life in "complete

ambivalence" or constant contradictories triggers a sense of alienation, inadequacy. In today's world saturated with uncertainty and ambiguity, many people long for a clearly-defined life rhythm with stable rules of the game called life (cf. Melosik, 1996, p. 75). Despite these expectations, the reality is constantly changing, as the expectations regarding who we should be do.

This phenomenon is also directly related to the contemporary woman. She has, at her disposal, an unlimited number of "cultural sources", which can be used to construct her own identity. In the past, female socialisation was (cruelly) "disciplining". The woman was locked in a corset—literally and metaphorically. She was to fulfil social expectations which were very unambiguous. The corset was very tight—it defined who she can and cannot be, what she is to look like, how to move, and how to think. She had no choice.

Today "everything is possible"—the woman can construct and reconstruct herself almost in any way, and the broadly conceived popular culture provides her with an unlimited number of choices in this domain. It does not mean that the contemporary corset does not exist—paradoxically, however, it is present in the form of unrestricted spectrum of choices of constructing the self and the cultural pressure for constant "redecorating", i.e. following the trends regarding the requirements concerning body shape and identity. Discourses of femininity are spinning faster and faster. The woman enjoys an unprecedented, from the historical viewpoint, freedom of choice, however, again paradoxically, her enslavement consists in the need for making constant choices. For instance, in the domain of the body, fashion, advertisements, cosmetic industry and women's magazines communicate one powerful message—"keep up". The woman, thus, "jumps" from one image to the other. She reconstructs herself according to the annual, seasonal, monthly rhythm of change (cf. Gromkowska-Melosik, 2002).

The "tyranny of choices" concerns not only visual aspects of the female identity but also her personality. The woman—depending on the cultural setting—needs to be passive and unable to make decisions "hausfrau" or a dynamic, resourceful, and active businesswoman, "meticulous" or "synthetic", subordinate or dominating, inaccessible or flirtatious, open/close, modest/sexual, ready to make sacrifices/egocentric, fragile/strong, empathetic/assertive, etc. How, then, can a woman feel fulfilled in her desire to be a super-woman desired by men, abound in "female appeal and charm", and at the same time attain social and pro-

fessional success, a task which is undoubtedly not made easier if she wants to be and think in a charming and empathetic way? How can one be a mother, wife, perfectly manage a household, develop spiritually and her interests and at the same develop professionally and mentally?

Sometimes one is under the impression that the woman should be like a radio—"tuning up" at a given moment to be appropriate for a given situation seems to be a prerequisite; she should possess unlimited potential in the domain of "tuning up". She should—at the same time—be this, this, and that, and that other one. She should be everybody. However, she herself usually desires to be "a concrete" and well-rounded woman, not only a repository of the "named" and reconfigured" images.

In the "cultural chaos" at the turn of the century, the woman more and more often feels like an Aborigine in the New York City streets—she doesn't know how to find a place of her own in the labyrinth of self-contradictory images and desires, which society constructs in her. Give birth to a child or write a doctoral thesis? Accept a prominent position and travel the world or devote myself to the household chores and be happy when the husband likes my soup? Dress in an ethereal and feminine way and wear high heels or go for the male suit? Be empathetic, soft and good (and lose everything she can) or tough and determined (and become a lifelong single or a triple divorcee)? An increasing number of women seek clear answers to their dilemmas, clear answers to such questions as: who do I want to be? How do I want to be? How to think?

The consumer culture cannot be bothered to address these questions. To the contrary, discourses of femininity transform faster and faster. The logic (or interest) of consumer society requires insecurity regarding one's own identity, stability, and the quest for newer images. Elements of identity are there on the supermarket shelves, visualised on her favourite magazine pages, in the narratives of her favourite soap operas. No answers—merely choices (Melosik, 1996, pp. 107-108).

This kind of situation of simultaneous cultural chaos and the tyranny of freedom regarding the choices in shaping one's own identity, evokes panic reactions in many women, almost making them want to flee. They flee total ambivalence and unrestrained freedom. They are attempting to make their lives meaningful through assuming a certain rhythm, focusing on rituals which are to bring cultural and psychological "certainty", they are to erase ambiguity, assist in fleeing tormenting and self-contradictory questions, help to flee the tormenting freedom.

Who should I be? Who to become? How do I live? These questions stop irritating us with their banality. They, again, gain the existential ring. We search through reality so as to find an anchor which would our lives meaningful.

As a consequence of the issues sketched above, the problem of women's emancipation has not lost its meaning in contemporary times. I might even—in the female consciousness—have been compounded when compared to the times when emancipation could be symbolised by women on motorcycles, as on the cover of this issue. At present, in the context of Western societies, the woman faces a plethora of internally contradicting dilemmas concerning her identity.

Agnieszka Gromkowska-Melosik
Editor-in-Chief

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ARTICLES



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Jarema Drozdowicz

Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznan (Poland)

Those Bearded Men and Their Beautiful Machines. Remarks on Contemporary Cafe Racer Culture

ABSTRACT. The contemporary phenomenon of the cafe racer culture raises today many questions on the culturally defined identities and the nature of modern subcultures. This paper examines those issues by highlighting both, the most significant elements of the cafe racer subculture and by conceptualizing the cultural reality surrounding these groups of motorized people. As the place of the motorcycle in popular culture links this machine with masculinity a further inquiry is being made here in the construction of the male rider image.

KEYWORDS: cafe racer, scrambler, motorcycle, subculture, identity, popular culture, mods, rockers

It was supposed to be another quiet day on the morning of the Easter weekend in 1964 and nothing could prepare the inhabitants of Brighton on what was to come. Although they have heard rumors about groups of young people chasing each other on the streets of London, fighting and causing trouble and turmoil in Liverpool or clashing with the police in Manchester, they had never imagined that this would become a part of their own experience and in long term a part of the city's cultural landscape as well its collective memory in the coming decades. The 18th of May 1964 had become a symbolic date in Brighton's history.¹ This very morning the peaceful British coastal city witnessed the climax of a long lasting brawl between two iconic youth subcultures of the 1960's: the mods and the rockers.

Those two groups had a long history of fierce, sometimes very violent, conflict and couldn't differ more in the way they dressed, in their music taste and clothing, social background and last but not least the

¹ http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/may/18/newsid_2511000/2511245.stm [accessed: 01.03.2016].

vehicles they had used on every day basis. In that regard the mods vehicle of choice was of continental origin, mostly Italian made scooters with a Vespa or Lambretta label on their side. These scooters were equipped with additional head lamps, mascots, extra chromed rearview mirrors and clearly attracted public attention to their owners, especially when they rode together in groups of a dozen and more people. Rockers however sported usually British made motorcycles like Triumph, Royal Enfield or Norton, stripped of any extra elements which would only make an obstacle in achieving maximum speed during races organized spontaneously on public roads in England's main cities.

These machines were often to be found parked outside various cafe's (of which the "Ace Café" in London was the most notable) where their owners gathered, chatted and sipped their coffee or a pint—therefore the name "cafe racer" was quickly coined to describe this type of a sport motorcycle.² Cafe racers were not only proudly displayed but in the first place they had to serve a higher imperative i.e. speed. They were rebuilt and redesigned by the young people who purchased them in order to achieve maximum speed through minimum weight and manipulated engines, suspension and frame structure. Elements of no vital functionality to the motorbike were removed or refurbished in a more streamline shape to make the machine go faster. Each of these machines reflected also the character of their owner, his (in most cases) or hers (on some occasions) attitude towards life, their raw juvenile energy and certainly—rock and roll. The connection between certain music genres or artists and each of the subcultures defined them in the same way mods were distinguished by their green parka jackets covering fashionable slim fit suits, business shoes and small hats. Rockers pride and joy was the leather jacket with countless badges and pins accompanied by tall riding boots, open face helmets decorated often with a customized paintjob or a check board pattern, sometimes specific small leather hats with a clear military look (adopted later by gay culture in the United States). In music mods were usually fans of bands like "The Who", "The Yardbirds" or various ska music newcomer bands. Rockers preferred however Elvis Presley, Gene Vincent and Bo Diddley.

The mentioned subcultures shaped British public life and popular culture throughout the 1960's. They belong to the time period's entou-

² Another definition highlights the origins of the term as a mock description used by other bikers to ridicule the mostly teenage rockers who couldn't afford a "real bike".

rage just like the Beatles, Twiggy and Mini Cooper. They were as essential to the decade as the infamous “Swinging London”; in fact they were part of this phenomenon. The mods vs. rockers war had become a part of the contemporary British popular culture and is to be found through numerous references in movies, popular arts and literature. The 1979 movie “Quadrophenia” (starring among others Sting) had depicted this war in a romanticized view, with a large dose of cinematic fiction. Just like in the movie the differences between those two groups were settled through occasional fights or large scale battles, just like the Brighton riots in 1964.³ Nevertheless they both indeed varied deeply also in a more profound sense. As Christine Jacqueline Feldman states:

The mods dressed in a dapper attire and riding Vespas, believed they were truly *modern*—that they alone personified ‘the future’ and ‘change’. Originally they were mostly working-class youths who wanted out of their social ‘caste’. They also thought the Rockers—dressed in leather and riding motor-cycles—symbolized the past. Rockers embodied the uncouth ignorance and urban grit of working-class life that Mods wanted to escape (Feldman, 2009, p. 1).

The working class background of the mods is however not really true in a larger extent, as they had at their disposal more money than the rockers. Just the cost of a new Vespa scooter alone was out of reach of most British youths in that time, not to mention all the accessories that had to be bought to make the vehicle complete. Thus the class fundament of the described conflict might be regarded here as a significant part of not just this very historical example, but also it constitutes the definitions of many other modern subcultures, culturally defined peer groups, fandom or simply groups of people gathered around a particular contemporary cultural phenomenon.

Today’s subcultures had long been understood more through their distinctive features (form) rather than ideology and shared meanings (content). Fashion, music taste, art style’s and various semiotic codes shared by the members of a specific subculture are however making the shallow structure in this regard. What is important in understanding the place of such a group in a historical and local social context and tells us much more about the world view represented by the subculture’s mem-

³ Police estimated a number of around one thousand people involved in the events.

bers is placed in its deep structures and its entanglement in diverse dimensions of social life. These structures consist of ideas, linguistic metaphors, motivations, life goals, interests and symbolic acts of agency undertaken in order to communicate with each other within the group as well to say to the outside world: "we are here; acknowledge us because we are here to stay". Thus ideological fundamentals of subcultures should be considered through all the cultural relevance they are functioning as a social group on one hand, and on the other through meanings and signs created by that group and placed in a wider socio-cultural context. In effect, subcultures are constituted through their own dynamics of change, relations to other social groups and arts of communication. The discursive aspect of subcultures is highlighted in contemporary cultural studies as the very core of the phenomenon, as well it goes for culture in general.

We may recall here the existing research tradition and order of the study of subcultures and repeat after Ken Gelder, who states that this phenomenon is usually studied in at least 6 various approaches: as an antithesis to labor and work, as a social group defined in class terms, as located at one remove from property ownership (mostly in a territorial sense), as a group functioning outside the domestic sphere (as opposed to home and family), as equated to excess and exaggeration and as opposed to the banalities of mass cultural forms (Gelder, 2007, p. 3). These scientific optics of subcultures make the general theoretical framework for the study of most groups of that kind in the second half of the century. The distinctive features of each modern subculture are being put into a sphere of socio-cultural interactions with other groups, diverse social institutions, the law and the society in general. This causes often social conflict fueled by cultural decentralization against the mainstream. Subcultures are always a little bit off side the social norm and mass taste. The clash between worldviews, life styles and desires caused by such mechanism of cultural reversion and anti-structural contestation of main cultural currents and high culture seems to be inevitable. The approach towards culture based on the issue of conflict had been developed among the prominent representatives of cultural studies, like Stuart Hall for example.

Dick Hebdige says in that matter that "the meaning of subculture is always, then, in dispute, and style is the area in which opposing definitions clash with the most dramatic force" (Hebdige, 2002, p. 3). As we might see subcultures are being placed often in the field of conflict, con-

testation and protest. This is very true when we speak of 1960's and 1970's and the youth revolt linked with the hippie movement, punks or many other groups rejecting the social *status quo* of that time. It is not that accurate if we transfer the discussion into the context of up to date cultural movements. The ideological background of many of contemporary subcultures is highly discussable, and if we take ideology as a background for real and direct ideologically driven actions undertaken by their members, fore mostly in a political sense, the notion loses its momentum. In cases of some subcultures, like the today's hipsters for example, what is significant is the rejection of any ideology (especially related to politics) as a signifier of belonging. Of course in case of hipsters the term "subculture" also loses its former meaning as the movement is today a global phenomenon with no specific shape and boundaries. As everyone might become a hipster through ownership of a mustache, a pair of Ray Ban shades or skinny jeans the group's identity had undergone a massive transformation since the 1940's. It becomes more or less a media term and a stereotypical and simplified vision of a sentimentalized movement with no real objectives except a clearly distinguishable fashion statement. Thus in some aspect it emphasizes a distinctively modern and popular feature of many contemporary forms of youth identities: a *désintéressement* in and disillusion towards any ideology which requires real agency in challenging the existing socio-cultural *status quo*.

However an important question arises in the light of the above remarks—can we still connect today the phenomenon of subcultures with the idea of rebellion? The contestation by groups of youth of what is associated with the conservative order of their parent's world is to be translated as a protest of personal freedom against social constraints. This clash of young and old, dynamic and static, subjective and objectified identities is usually fading away when put into practice of subversive tactics within the consumer culture. In their book "The Rebel Sell. Why the Culture Can't Be Jammed" Joseph Heath and Andrew Potter make a clear statement in which they point out that even the most rebellious movements (like Adbusters in the area of new media for example) lose their teeth with passing time and fit into the consumer logic of the system they had previously fought against. As in 2003 Adbusters Media Foundation started to advertise and sell through their magazine a special line of "subversive" running shoes both authors say with a pessimistic tone to it: "After that day, it became obvious to everyone that cultural

rebellion [...] is not a threat to the system, *it is the system*" (Heat & Potter, 2006, p. 1).

The massive sell out of the juvenile rebellion and its marketing as an easily available consumer good becomes an object of interest shown by some authors who place their critique in a more broader cultural context and highlight more universal cultural mechanisms of unification. Stuart Hall for example, reflects upon subcultures as largely class defined groups and in the case of youth subcultures the term "directs us to the cultural aspect of youth" (Hall & Jefferson, 1977, p. 10). Hall's notion of culture is based upon the assumption that cultural reality is being produced through practices. The British scholar takes for granted that "culture, is the way, the forms, in which groups handle the raw material of their social and material existence" (Hall & Jefferson, 1977, p. 10). The entanglement of culture and social practice in the context of rebellion and protest shifts the discussion into the issue of cultural economy. This is not a surprise as Hall's theoretical background in cultural studies is mostly founded on the Marxist vision of a post-capitalist society. In his view the eroding value of work, social stratification and the social exclusion of certain groups is related to class based conflict, which in turn takes the shape of a culturally articulated contestation of the dominant (upper class for example) lifestyle by the youth subcultures. Being outside of the mainstream, an underdog among high society's posh everyday rituals, not fitting into the conservative norms is just a consequence of the discontent with the existing social conditions that emerged after the post-war change in the West.

Hall's view of subcultures links the phenomenon with the rise of the working class culture. The group's shift towards taking a central place in popular culture's structures is an effect of the historical fact that it "has constantly won space from the dominant culture" (Hall & Jefferson, 1977, p. 42). The growing field of cultural relevance to the issues of work and leisure, class differences, capital, underclass and many more let's us to assume that this process is a constant companion in the global cultural transformation we are all clearly part of today. This very transition from the striving for hegemony of an elitist, intellectual and also very socially limited (due education, economy, politics etc.) culture towards mass oriented, often more democratic, but also low level, simplistic and full of banality opposition of it, makes the basic framework of contemporary cultural dynamics. It is also worth noting at this point that the dichotomy of high vs. low culture looses nowadays its former meaning and

becomes more liquid and hard to define in sociological terms. What is significant however, is the process of legitimization of the working class taste in a global sense observed in the second half of the 20th century. Certainly contemporary pop-culture is not a simple translation of these working class aesthetics into modern middle class narratives, but still remains strongly bound with this social background in many ways. This kind of understanding of cultural transition into the hegemony of mass culture and its pop-cultural derivatives was prominent among most scholars dealing with the condition of the modern western cultural paradigm.

The erosion of the cultural ideology that stood behind the modern model of the late capitalist society had produced a wave of new social movements filling the identity gap with new content and by re-using and re-defining old values. New religious denominations and sects, far right and extreme left political organizations and parties or diverse groups of interest gathered around a particular socio-cultural issue sprung out and divided the field among themselves. New kind of subcultures, as an example of such movement, took therefore foothold in the Western society as an answer to many questions raised by the processes of deterioration of past socio-cultural structures. The decentralization of identity, the notion of an untamed individual self and its “natural” right to articulate that individuality influenced contemporary identity discourses in a similar extent as the issues of personality and unconsciousness were influenced by psychoanalysis at the beginning of the 20th century. Personal freedom, understood not just in a strictly political sense, became a desired good at the identity market and many subcultures in the West promised to deliver it in a much more direct way as the competition. The counterculture of the 1960’s, punk movement of the 1970’s or rave culture in the 1990’s highlighted the liberating aspect of belonging through the rejection of spatial and temporal determination of boundaries set mostly through the conservative social order surrounding those subcultures. Just like LSD for the hippies, heroin for the punks and ecstasy for the ravers they needed an escape vehicle to get out of the normative circle.

As we might see in the 1969 cult movie “Easy Rider” counterculture’s notion of escape, journey into the unknown and going dangerously fast is also linked to the motorcycle. This kind of transportation vehicle is per definition antibourgeois and rebellious. Pop-culture delivers us in that aspect a rich imaginarium of motorbike driven rebels; misfits fueled with gasoline and wind in their never ending striving for ultimate

freedom. Starting with the iconic character portrayed by Marlon Brando in "The Wild One", through James Dean, T. E. Lawrence up to Hunter S. Thompson (and recently even the Greek finance minister Yanis Varoufakis), pictures of men on motorbikes had stirred up collective imagination for a long time. Therefore the cultural construction of motorized men in modern terms brings us back to the issue of manifestations of masculinity in not just pop-cultural iconography but merely in the contemporary social reality. Social movements like subcultures present the motorcycle as a distinctive feature of social discontent or rejection of norms and values attributed to the dominant social habitus represented among others by car culture and its fetishization of four wheels.

The opposition between car and motorcycle is simultaneously a division between middle class lifestyle and living on the margin of the social order established by the class society. The phenomenon of motorcycle gangs like the Hells Angels in the United States, Bosozone riders in Japan or several organized groups in today's Germany and Scandinavia might serve here as an exaggerated example to support that claim. Their members come in most cases from a specific social background defined by social, economic and cultural marginalization, each specific for the country they function in. The division becomes even more profound if put into the gender discourse. Car owners are here perceived by motorcyclists as blue collar wealthy businessmen and attributed feminized and weak sexuality (whereas motorcyclists are "true men" working with their bare hands). On the other hand, bikers are perceived by car drivers as dangerous, unpredictable and suicidal as they do not obey to traffic rules, are commonly splitting lanes and discard the speed limit.

Nevertheless, the link established between the motorcycle and man is founded on the relation between the human component and the machine itself. This idea might be found in the Robert Pirsig's novel *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance* (1974). Pirsig characters build a close and intimate relation with their machines as they progress in self-knowledge and formulating philosophical questions on the nature of human condition. The motorcycle becomes thus a companion in this peregrinations of the human mind, as well in the more literary journey across America. What is striking at this point is the fact that a similar, but less philosophical in its nature, insight into the socio-cultural reality of the post-war American peripheries and country roads we might find in Jack Kerouac's "On the Road" published two decades earlier. Both titles found certainly their way into the American canon of modern literature.

Both also had a deep impact, with a handful of other books, on the identity of young generations that shaped the cultural dynamics in the 1950's and 1970's. The main difference between those two cult novels lies not just in the depth of philosophical inquiries, but more in the mode of transportation. Keruac's narration is tied to the car, an old Cadillac running down the Route 66. Pirsig's novel is an affirmation of the motorcycle as a technological tool used for assistance in the search for what is transcendent, elusive and natural. As he insists that a motorcycle remains a much more direct tool for experiencing life he writes: "You see things vacationing on a motorcycle in a way that is completely different from any other. In a car you're always in a compartment, and because you're used to it you don't realize that through that car window everything you see is just more TV. You're a passive observer and it is all moving by you boringly in a frame" (Pirsig, 1984, p. 4).

The book examines also the social transformation occurring in the American society through the changing of place and role of technology in human life. In opposition to the views of technological determinists, like Neil Postman for example, Pirsig embraces technology as an art of modern meditation through the application of technological skills (like the maintenance of your own motorcycle) in decisive moments of our existence. Just like being able to repair your own equipment it is also important to appreciate the skills enabling us to solve problems as they appear and less to romanticize technology and the social change based upon it. Pirsig's philosophy is in that regard based on several foundations made by particular traditions of philosophical thought. The most significant of them is certainly the combination of early Greek traditions and the German philosophy and psychology of Gestalt. Through that step he creates a common denominator for not just his own view on dealing with philosophical questions of modernity, but also shapes the contemporary discourse on dehumanization through technology. Pirsig's stand differs in that matter from those shared by most notable authors and emphasizes the need for linking what is romantic with what is pragmatic. Therefore a motorcycle becomes a metaphor of a long lost values and abilities to cope with difficulties and obstacles that might occur in our pursuit for truth. In fact this kind of machine makes this search much more easier and paradoxically more truthful.

This very unusual view on motorcycles brings us to the basic question of contemporary place of these machines in modern culture in the sense of a global pattern of meaning in which the motorcycle takes

a central place not solely as a mean of transportation, but as something way more culturally significant. Another question that is raised by the issue of technology is to be found in the area of new forms of human identities and their dynamics shaped by the proliferation of certain technological advancements. In the light of the above the cafe racer recalled at the beginning of this text serves here as an excellent example of such a signifier. Today's focus on newest high tech is encountered not by the motorcycle per se, but the cafe racer in particular. We may ask thus what makes the modern cafe racer culture so distinguishable in the context of other cultural offers to be found within the reach of a contemporary consumer? Furthermore, what makes this approach towards motorcycles special and is it anything special at all? To deliver an answer to these questions we must look at this phenomenon through the emerging of a distinctively different approach towards culture in general. Although we may admit that popular, mass and consumer culture are now an integral part of a dominant global cultural system, it also comes to our mind that people more and more often differentiate, translate and transform their forms and field of participation in those systems and sometimes also creatively transform these patterns accordingly to their own experience and interests. Thus it is worth noting that the notion of glocalization is taking place of former one dimensional understanding of globalization in many areas of human agency, especially in a cultural sense.

The contemporary cafe racer culture is not stuck in the past, however it recalls the rockers vs. mods conflict as its specific foundation myth. Therefore the roots of this new global movement are to be found in the 1950's and 1960's. This is being reflected mostly in the material sphere, fashion trends and general cafe racer aesthetics shared by the owners of those bikes and reflected in the machine's construction philosophy. In fact, history is being here taken as a value for itself; it is being mythologized and romanticized in many various ways of expression. In that context, if the cafe racer culture would be a sort of religion its main deity would be made by the iconic Steve McQueen as a daredevil role model for many contemporary riders affiliated with this movement. Slogans such as "vintage" and "retro", used extensively among cafe racer aficionados, are bringing to the mind past charm of analogue cameras, denim jeans, worn leather jackets and boots, lumberjack shirts and bearded middle aged men living a simple life, often in harmonious symbiosis with the surrounding nature. Although the cafe racer was born in the city, its

modern counterpart prefers the great outdoors. In those cases a slightly different kind of motorcycle is needed—called the scrambler—which is able to withstand tough terrain and ride also on country roads, through fields and forest paths.

Nevertheless, getting out of the urban hustle, polluted streets of great cities, not taking part in the every day race with career obsessed downtown yuppies or just making something physical with your own hands—all this creates a certain code which should be, but doesn't have to, followed. The motorcycle becomes here not a vehicle of escape, but confrontation with everything what is unnatural, a technologically over-kill and unnecessary. Cafe racers bring us back to the basics in both, their design and the culturally defined ideology standing behind them. The issue of manual labor is in this example a key factor in understanding the fascination with the modern cafe racer. It might be considered as a base idea for getting into this culture for outsiders. The "built not bought" slogan expresses this attitude towards manual labor and the creative process very well. Building a motorcycle from scratch, bringing a 40-year old machine back into working delivers joy and satisfaction for the owner and constructor on the daily basis. Not just riding the motorcycle is important but also constantly improving it through endless customization. Even more, many of the cafe racer machines have a very personal history attached as they were previously owned by a parent or someone close to the current owner. Their restoration is simultaneously a technological endeavor and a psychological process of reconstruction of long lost ties with family members or a journey into discovering one's own personal qualities. This cannot be achieved by simply buying a brand new motorcycle from a local dealer, however more and more manufactures are joining the "new retro" bandwagon releasing factory new machines that simulate in their design the machines from the golden era of motorcycle technology, i.e. the 1970's. The capitalization of sentiments is a strongly emphasized element of current technological and design trends not only in relation to motorcycles, but also other goods as well. On the other hand the lack of modern electronics, mechanical operation mode and the ability to customize your machine by yourself is being presented as much more reliable as the more advanced technology offered these days on the market.

What has to be stressed out at this point is the fact that there is no universal nor single ideological framework within which a cafe racer motorcyclist has to move or accept. There is also no institutional struc-

ture which would include more riders than usually are being gathered in a regular motorcycle club. If such structures emerge they are mostly local. Despite this statement we might recall certain exceptions that highlight the phenomenon of rising popularity of the cafe racer culture in a more global dimension. As it was already mentioned the cafe racer culture originated in United Kingdom around places such as the Ace Cafe in London. This cafe, restaurant and garage in one is today visited mostly for its heritage. It is also an important meeting point in the topography of the cafe racer world. Various motor sport oriented events are being organized there by the owners and attract just as many motorized attendees as bystanders curious to watch a spectacle made of gasoline smell, shiny leatherjackets, chromed wheels and old fashioned rock and roll or boogie. Trips are being undertaken from various parts of the globe to end up in Ace Cafe. The effort behind those trips and adventures during those journeys are as much a reward as the destination. Of course there are also other places a cafe racer motorcyclist should visit (like the Madras Cafe in India for example), but the most prominent remains the one in London and still is a Mecca for those, who want to get a real feeling of the old motorcycle charm.

An another platform of consolidation is being created not by a certain place but rather a series of globally interconnected local events taking place in world's largest cities. The "Distinguished Gentlemen's Ride" is one of the most notable of such initiatives. It started all in Sydney, Australia back in 2012, when a Mark Hawwa, the founder of the event, got inspired by a photo of Don Draper, a character from the TV series "Mad Men", on a motorcycle wearing a classic suit. Hawwa's idea is now a global initiative to raise prostate cancer awareness and attracted in 2015 around 30,000 people in 400 cities.⁴ Nowadays the largest public rides of hundred and more machines that make this event are being organized in cities like New York, London, Paris, Sao Paulo and Lisbon. The growing popularity of this event goes hand in hand with a interest in cafe racers that fit the aesthetics of "a celebration of the art of being dapper and the style of classic custom motorcycles"; not to mention to "bring your finest manners, jaunty trimmed mustaches, silk vests, crisp shirts and tailored suits".⁵ On that level it seems that the question of style might be overtaking the base idea of a charity event bringing to-

⁴ <https://www.gentlemansride.com/about> [accessed: 15.04.2016].

⁵ Ibidem.

gether people representing various social classes and income, life attitudes and life style, cultural and ethnic origin, or age and sex. We may agree that to a certain point the whole phenomenon of cafe racer culture could be regarded through the criteria of vintage fashion returning today in a new updated manner. On the other hand, this initiative takes us to the issue of community in a globalized world, where traditional social structures seem rather to erode than prosper and are being replaced with pop-cultural iconography and shared or declined consumer preferences.

The feeling of being part of a larger group of people who share the same enthusiasm for a specific kind of motorcycles is not to be underestimated not just in the case of Distinguished Gentlemen's Ride, but also the whole cafe racer milieu. Although there's little in common among the riders in the sense of a institutional level or even a interpersonal one, it is clear that a symbolic masculine *Kameradschaft* is present. Certainly there's also a strong presence of women among riders and cafe racer owners, but the sport itself is still attracting mostly the male audience. According to the data of the United States Department of Transportation 90% of motorcyclists in the United States of America in 2009 were male.⁶ What could be surprising is the fact that a strong shift in age can be observed in recent years towards a persona of a more mature rider. As for the period between 1985 and 2003 the average age had moved from 27.1 years to 41. People over 50 years old who own a motorcycle in the United States are being estimated as 25% of all riders. Similar tendencies might be observed in other parts of the world as well. Therefore nowadays the picture of older bearded men riding vintage motorcycles pushes out of the fame the image of a immature, reckless teenage motorcyclist who despises to obey any traffic rules in order to go faster and faster. This global male community tends to uplift the existing public image of motorcyclists and the contemporary cafe racer culture plays a large a part in that shift.

How does this new image perform in the context of prevailing patterns of consumer culture? First of all today's cafe racers might slip out of the narrowly understood definition of subcultures as described by Hall or Hebdige. The class defined subculture might have been accurate in the case of the 1960's cafe racer's, but today it looses its credibility along the processes of economic growth in developed countries, prolif-

⁶ http://www.rita.dot.gov/bts/sites/rita.dot.gov.bts/files/publications/special_reports_and_issue_briefs/special_report/2009_05_14/html/entire.html [accessed: 15.04.2016].

eration of middle class social ambitions and the vanishing of class differences reduced only to the income level, class consciousness or art of work. The motorcycle or a scooter stopped to be the only vehicle a young person could afford. What we see today is a distinctive move from the motorcycle brands like Triumph, Ducati or Royal Enfield towards car brands like BMW, Lexus or Subaru. Thus the cafe racer is no longer an attribute of working class teenagers, who emulate the motor sport world as seen in the grand motorcycles races just like the Tourist Trophy on the Isle of Man. Paradoxically, the first cafe racer's were actually an emulation themselves in that matter and the current ones are an another take on that practice of building motorbikes, being "a current emulation of a former emulation". As described before manual labor seems to be today a rare opportunity to express oneself through creating something of value and substance. Building an own motorcycle and giving it a personal touch fills that need in a world where things get more and more ephemeral and virtual.

If we would like to consider the cafe racer culture as a subculture it would require a redefinition of the subculture term itself and placing it in the context of a more global cultural system. Motorbikes in general are vehicles which expose the owner directly to the elements like rain and wind. Cafe racers expose the rider to a cultural environment usually hidden beyond the iron cage of a car where the landscape is to be watched through the glass surface of a window. Meeting people on the road, braking down of the motorcycle and applying your own technical skills to bring it back working is a part of the modern cafe racer myth. Jean Baudrillard's critique of car obsessed American culture describes well that distinction. The French author presents his view on contemporary cultural condition through the notion of speed by saying that: "Speed creates pure objects. It is itself a pure object, since it cancels out the ground and territorial reference-points, since it runs ahead of time to annul time itself, since it moves more quickly than its own cause and obliterates the cause by outstripping it" (Baudrillard, 1989, p. 6). American culture is in the light of the above a drivers culture, fore mostly dominated by the car. Baudrillard notes at another point that: "driving is a spectacular form of amnesia. Everything is to be discovered, everything is to be obliterated" (Baudrillard, 1989, p. 9). This kind of motorized and speed focused culture embraces the cafe racer as a form of a technological reminder of what it was like to drive without safety belts and air bags. The thrill of speed and the immanent and very real danger

of being killed are becoming more and more an extinct species in a perfectly organized reality. The dialectical character and nature of technology is in this example highlighted through a specific cultural movement, which might be considered as a new form of a counter cultural rebellion. However this time, the opponent is not a traditional and conservative social system, but exactly its opposite—a social realm where everything goes and is already marketed as liberating the self and releasing it from any restrictions. Thus the cafe racer culture delivers today a promise of a world in which certain things stay the same despite the fact they the move on a motorcycle.

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WEB RESOURCES

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Ngozi N. Iheanacho
University of Port Harcourt (Nigeria)

The Place of Women in *Laudato Si*: the Nigerian Reflection

ABSTRACT. For over five decades now humanity has remained in continuous search for realistic and sustainable solutions to the problem of environmental degradation. Environmental policies are either glossed over and, or they offer ephemeral solutions. The problem remains. From Pope Francis comes the first encyclical on the environment—*Laudato Si*, addressed to all people of the world, to retreat towards addressing the crisis against the backdrop of holistic understanding of the world, as a spiritually integrated order of creation, with humans responsible for its preservation, as stewards. In addition to the inclusive and ecumenical call of the Pontiff, the world is now gender sensitive, hence this contribution takes on the problem of examining and spotlighting the place of women in the pedagogical address. In the qualitative analysis with Nigeria, as major reference point, the reflection of women's ambivalent cultural conception is crystallized. Women are closer to nature, and are involved in cyclical exploitation and assault of the eco-system. They also bear the brunt and consequence of the unhealthy eco-system. Yet, they are identified as veritable instruments for heralding the exhortations and crusade of *Laudato Si*.

KEYWORDS: Nigeria, women, environmental degradation, *Laudato Si*, reflection

1. Introduction

Environmental degradation is a major problem facing the world today. Each culture and state, has its own share, proportionate to the trend of human assault on the given geographical location. Environmental crisis is contagious in its effect. Assault and crisis in one remote corner of the world reflects in other parts. The underlying concern is that the world of creatures, including humans are heading toward extinction, due largely to human failure in the stewardship responsibility, as lord of all creations.

The degenerating state of the world has therefore become an open wound, bleeding at live threatening intensity. The consequent apprehension is seemingly observed in the response of individuals, corporate and government institutions. Fore knowledge of the looming danger led to the Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment in 1972. The

outcome of which was the setting up of the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP). The Stockholm Conference gave impetus to the foundation and activities of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), and the World Wildlife Fund (WWF). By 1988 UNEP launched its blueprint—the World Conservation Strategy, toward promoting sustainable development. In 1987 came the Report of the World Commission on Environment—our common future (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1972). The document focus on strategies toward promoting sustainable development—“development that meets the need of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (United Nations, 1994, p. 2). A prominent issue in the strategy is tackling the hassles of poverty and the lots of the vulnerable in society. This is the part of the blueprint that concern women, especially rural dwellers in Nigeria, and elsewhere.

In 1992, at Rio, Brazil was yet another UN Conference on Environment and Development. A similar Conference was held in 2001—the Earth Summit, in South Africa. At the regional and governmental levels are also convocations with focus on articulating measures to tackling environmental problems. World religions, especially Christianity has emerged vociferous in the crusade to save the planet, earth. This is in spite of the purported blame of the faith as being responsible for the impetus humans have to flagrantly violate the created order through inordinate cravings (White, 1996). The outcome of all the assemblies, conferences and policy frame works have not produced commensurate solution to the crisis. Communiqué of Catholic, Protestant and, The Eastern Church Bishops’ conferences all over the world, as well as World Council of Churches (WCC), are embrace of reasoned accounts and treatise on environmental degradation. In each release, humanity is challenged to act fast based on the spiritual essence and the human responsibility content of being created, in God’s image. The height of the Church’s beckon for humanity to care for the environment is the theme of the 2015 encyclical of Pope Francis, entitled, *Laudato Si: On the Care for our Common Home*.

2. Overview and Ecumenical Content of *Laudato Si*

Laudato Si: On the care for our common home, is the title of Pope Francis’ encyclical, released in June, 2015. *Laudato Si* means ‘Praise be to you’—a clause adopted from the first line of the Pope’s patron Saint,

Francis of Assisi's canticle, that praises God with all of his creation, (see Wells 2008, p. 128). The sub-title—"On care for our common home", refers to protection of the planet, earth. The sacred letter is addressed to global audience, and Christendom in particular. The Pope is asking:

Have we not seen the long-term effects of these bleeding sores? The famine? The poverty? The chemical and nuclear accidents? The small wars and deaths in so many parts of the world? When we have seen all these calamities, have we done no more than ask: who is responsible? ...We are responsible, directly or indirectly. We are all of us straggling the earth (Maathai, cited in United Nations, 1994, p. 1).

The encyclical is a profound appeal for nascent dialogue and commitment, toward addressing the looming environmental challenges, against the backdrop of human activities. Of course, environmental degradation is a global issue and, concern rooted in religions' conviction of God's creation and command for human to take care. This is the background of eco-theology among religions.

The 246 article document, divided into six chapters is an animating exhortation and challenge to humanity, to reflect on the state of the environment as portraying apparent and phenomenal distress call, for emergency toward determining the type of environment we intend to bequeath to subsequent generation of humans. The encyclical reminds all people of the world that the earth is a common home, "like a sister with whom we share our life and a beautiful mother who opens her arms to embrace us" (Francis, 2015, Article 1, p. 3). The world of creation is bleeding and agonizing, hence *Laudato Si* calls for commitment towards preserving the eco-system. With recourse to the growing global sensitivity to the changing environment and the consequent precarious challenges, the Pope, yet affirms the ability of men and women to sober retreat, which will culminate into collective intervention to making new start, and initiating renewed friendship with our common home. After all, the wound on the environment is inflicted by humans, the healing substance are also human based.

Laudato Si is not skewed to any denomination or faith. It is ecumenical in content and character. The natural environment is presented as holistically good and, as a heritage of all humans, with God as our common progenitor. Doctrinal difference in religious practice do not operate outside the environment. Every Christian or religionist share relationship with God, with fellow humans and, with the environment. This is

the structure of interaction. The Genesis 2:15, didact for humans to exploit and care for the environment is a call to stewardship. The common fatherhood of humanity must reflect in profound care for other aspects of divine creation. This is the seeming sacred duty for all Christians to act accordingly, *ipso facto*, the ecumenical thrust of the encyclical.

The ecumenical fabric and drive of *Laudato Si* is further underscored by the Pope's subscription to the didactic address of the Eastern Orthodox Church Patriarch. Animated by his pedagogy on the environment, the Pope referred to him as beloved Ecumenical Patriarch, Bartholomew. The Patriarch has remained vociferous in the call for attitudinal change towards the environment. Like Francis, Bartholomew "has drawn attention to the ethical and spiritual roots of environmental problems, which require that we look for solutions not only in technology but in a change of humanity; otherwise we would be dealing, merely with symptoms" (Francis, 2015, Article 89, pp. 8-9). Underlying the holy fathers' eco-pedagogy is earnest call on Christians to reawaken their faith in this perspective of God's design. The two prayers which bring the encyclical to an end is also ecumenical—for all who believe in God the Creator, and the later is a refrain exclamation, for God's praise.

Environmental challenge is also one of the global issues which attract the attention of the World Council of Churches (WCC). The subject feature prominently in the Assembly and other meetings of the council. Other world religions and non religionists are also concerned about the environment. Giving the inclusiveness of *Laudato Si* in its definition of integrated creation, my contribution is narrowed down, to specifically situate women in the fulcrum of the encyclical, *ipso facto* the environmental challenge of humanity.

Gender sensitivity is topical today. The trend is so fundamental that there is a paradigm shift of what development is all about, to emphasis on sustainability and gender responsiveness. The renowned feminist scholar, Ursula King, affirms that gender content has become a significant part of all human issues, especially religious traditions (King, 2006, p. 411). Consequently, sustainability and status of women have become indices for measuring development (United Nations, 1995). Again, women are seemingly closer to nature—the environment. So, they deserve special attention on any project on the environment. Apart from being prominent in foraging and exploiting the environment, they bear the brunt of ecological degradation. Yet, they are instruments for inspiring

the desired change and delivery of eco-education at the grassroot level of society. This is part of the “differentiated responsibilities” (Francis, 2015, Article 38, p. 28), approach which the Pope advocates.

The study is presented in the method of indepth qualitative analysis with balance of data collected through phenomenology about Nigerian women in respect of their relation with the eco-system. The method is skewed in Geertz phenomenological hermeneutical approach to explaining meaning in peoples’ way of life (see McGee & Warms 2004, p. 596).

3. Eco-Feminism Theory and *Laudato Si*

The framework of this study is eco-feminism theology. Eco-feminism is the aspect of theology that aims at articulating and bringing feminism plot and, the lot of women into dialogue with the environment, against the backdrop of religion. The connectivity and point of departure is the association of theology with thinking and deliberation in relation to search for profound wisdom, rooted in religious tradition (Ford, 2005, p. 61). Feminists of this bias seek to project a world in which women’s status and experience in religion is in disfavourable content to men’s (Kun, 2003, p. 137; Jaggar & Rothenberg, 1984, pp. xi-xvi).

Feminist theologians argue that emerging issues concerning the status and experience of women in religion and secular society point to a gulf to be filled in religion. This is the deep structure of patriarchal cultural bias and discriminatory sex bifurcation. Faith is therefore juxtaposed with the experience of women. As alienating social structures continue, so does theologians discourse of holistic and wholesome human living require re-examination for intellectual analysis and favourable incorporation of women into human cultural patterns and social/action (Coll, 1994, pp. 5-9).

Eco-feminism is pro-deep ecology which thrust is studying the natural environment from a holistic frame of understanding the inter-connectivity and interdependence of all creatures and, the implication thereabout such web of existence, especially in situations of crisis and disorder, as is looming in the present time. Spotlight of the dynamics and structure of human cravings, especially of the domineering and monopolistic exploitation of natural resources by men, to the disadvantage of women, *ipso facto*, the seeming fundamental implications, underscored the strength of eco-feminists in deep ecology (Ruether, 1996, pp. 452-453).

Laudato Si, is somewhat, latently structured in the frame of eco-feminism. The encyclical seeks an integrated understanding of humanity as equal in God's creation. The profound consciousness of this understanding will reinforce the interdependence of all creatures and, especially the complementarity of male and female humans. Ofcourse, unjustified domination and patriarchal structures which sustain women subjugation are implicitly de-emphasized with the divine oneness conception of creation, which *Laudato Si* aim to promote. However, women are identified as co-culprits in the assault on the environment. They equally have their own share of the consequence. *Laudato Si's* message of liberation is a latent exhortation of hope, for improving the lot of women in the eco-system and the entire economic system of their communities. It is a clarion call for change, toward ecology of humans.

In tandem with feminists' encouragement of women to be active toward dismantling the fabrics of women subjugation, *Laudato Si*, equally advocates for the onerous project of preserving the planet, earth. Again, the prominent place of women come to limelight with the Pope's special reference to the family system and household, in which women are major drivers. In all, the gender inclusive approach would promote oneness and appreciation of humanity in quality and dignity—"love, justice and care for the earth" (Reuther, 1996, p. 459). These are the virtues which both feminists and, Pope Francis seek for humanity.

4. Nigeria's Cultural Conception of Womanhood and the Operationalization of *Laudato Si*

Complementarity of human sex as implied in the encyclical has its cultural replication and validity in the people's conception of the female as indispensable in God's creation. However, there is a paradoxical conception of women in Nigeria. The people's eulogy of the values of motherhood complement and crystallize this conception.

Among the Niger Delta people, "the divine power to bring life into being is understood in the light of the function of women to replenish the earth" (Alagoa, 2003, p. 35). Mother's role in child upbringing, and socialization is fundamental. Since the encyclical strongly see the preservation of the environment as fundamental for holistic development process, which takes root from the family, the prominency of women is also implicitly emphasized (Francis, 2015, Article 141, p. 106).

Millions of children and young people are under the care and influence of Nigerian women, in their household chores, in the farm, at the water fronts, in the market, at worship centres, public utilities, etc. So, with women as active associates in the project of protecting the environment humanity would be focused towards its target.

The ingenuity of Nigerian women in conflict resolution and peace building is a cultural fact in the traditional societies. They balance men's temperament and children's idiosyncrasies. Women, through their various associations provide effective platforms for alternative dispute resolution strategies. Nigerian women are challenged and worried when their kinsmen engage in live threatening conflicts. They come from their matrimonial families and communities to establish justice and restore peace. In tough situation and cases, they resort to persistent persuasion, crying and lobbying for forgiveness in the spirit of blood tie, to make sure they restore peace. In most cases the bone of contention revolve around mode of production and the endemic 'culture of consumerism' (especially farmland), devoid of the sense of concern, care, brotherhood and solidarity which are germane to African life. This void in modern craving is a substantial aspect of the lament in the encyclical. The Pope's subscription of Francis Assisi's hymn in which he personified aspects of creation and nature, in human kinship ties will find better understanding, and application through the ingenuity of women in keeping relationship and, caring.

Ambivalently, while Nigerian women are accorded esteemed attributes and symbolism which project them as veritable instruments in the crusade of *Laudato Si*, they are yet pictured in images that seemingly promote their denigration, contempt and discriminatory treatments. With this perception, Nigerian women are carriers of garbages of unsustainable human development indices which amplify the lament of Pope Francis.

Women are conceived to be susceptible to evil and highly vulnerable to sacrilege, danger, misfortune and hassles. In this frame of thought women are associated with negative stereotypes inimical to cohesion and stability of society. As unfounded this seemingly sound, when a man is in serious danger, the prime suspect for the cause is his wife or mother. In other words, the female is conceived as decoy personae in life. These labels paradoxically place women in a demeaning status, making them part of the problem to be addressed in the plot of *Laudato Si*. Correspondingly, such unsustainable fabrics of Nigerian women's life expe-

rience fits into the lament trumpet and foundation of what feminist scholars call “Pseudospecification and negative identification” (Ruether, 1974, p. 21).

The demeaning image of womanhood stretch beyond Nigeria and Africa. Among the Buganda people of Uganda, “Girls who have started their menstrual cycle do not stay in their parents’ house for fear of the parents suffering from ‘*Obuko*’ (an unclean disease which can result to madness)” (Nassaka, 1990, p. 164). Beyond Africa,

the denigration of women in European thought can, in part be traced to Aristotle who saw women’s souls and bodies as being inferior. Weaknesses such as these, it was thought, predisposed women to be witches. Close on the heels of this came the idea of ritual pollution of men by women female emissions being further evidence of women’s inferiority (Morris, 2006, p. 28).

Even in the Bible are several passages of stereotypical symbolism and denigrative image of womanhood (see Reuther, 1974).

Based on the defamed conceptions, females are not allowed to hold sensitive leadership positions. Since they cannot lead, they cannot also inherit, hence most inheritance values and jural rights are based on ancestral stake, skewed in patriarchal identity bond. The reflection is that women constitute social pathology to be addressed in the encyclical’s crusade for equality of humanity, and justice for all creation. The inheritance discrimination against women is more intense among widows. In addition to the bizarre and dehumanizing practices skewed in violence, the widow is dispossessed of her family property and means of livelihood, especially landed properties (see Iheanacho, 2015). The dispossession subject the widow to poor living conditions, *ipso facto*, of the unsustainable developments outlined in *Laudato Si*. The implication and consequence of the dispossession, and craving for survival is environmental degradation.

5. Women and Assault on the Environment

Nigerian women participate in the exploitation and assault on the environment. They collect domestic refuse on daily basis and dispose them indiscriminately. The rubbish emit offensive and hazardous substances which pollute the air and water resources. The polluted air is

inhaled while the water is thereafter collected for domestic use. In a typical example, the Permanent Secretary Federal Ministry of Water Resources, notes:

The sanitation situation in the Niger Delta is equally challenging. The human excreta management in particular, is faced with the challenge of affordable technology for waste disposal. In most cases, the human and industrial waste find its way into the water bodies poorly or completely untreated which contaminates the bodies and breed disease (Igali, 2013, p. 13).

Water resources in Nigeria are predominantly exploited by women. They fetch water for domestic use from the rivers, streams and forage the creek for food resources, etc. In recent time some women are involved in sand excavation for building.

Rural women forage the forest for fuel (wood) and food resources like mushroom, wild vegetables, hunt game, etc. They burn bushes to make such collections easier. This is in addition to the traditional agricultural method of farmland burning. The intensity of eco-system assault increases as women are dispossessed of their properties and relatively pauperized, as seemingly illustrated in the chart below.

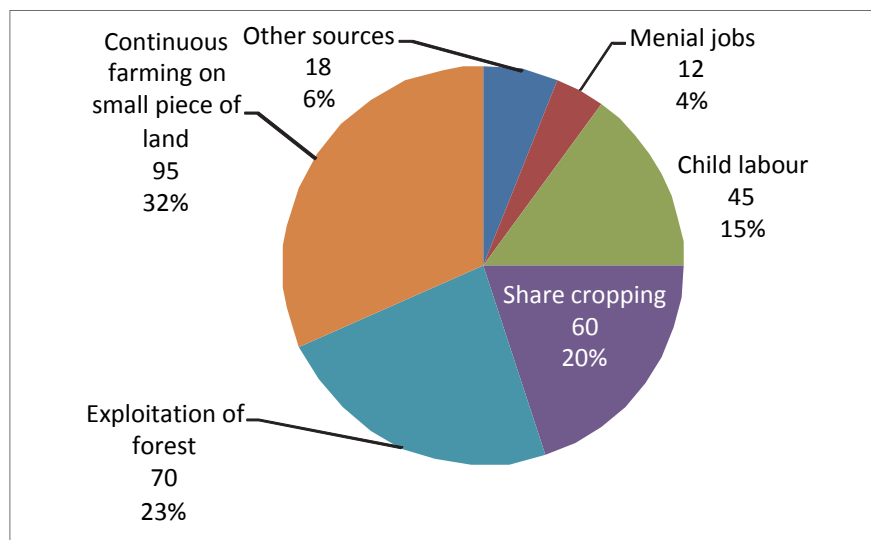


Figure 1 (%) of women's unsustainable means of livelihood

Source: The pie chart is adapted from my doctoral dissertation in Sociology, University of Port Harcourt. The dissertation is unpublished.

Ecological assault increases in poor communities as the rural poor depends upon their local environmental base (Olu & Adeyeye, 2001, p. 64).

In the agrarian societies, widows and peasant women resort to continuous farming on a parcel of land. The consequence of such practice is erosion, soil infertility and poor yield. The United Nations is forthright that: "In rural areas, lack of access to, and control over land is one of the main obstacles to the full participation of women in rural development" (United Nations, 2000, p. 13). Inadequacy of proceeds from the farm increase the insubsistency in the family, hence rural women take to sharecropping. Women over work themselves in the practice. Those who have children engage them in the intensive labour demand of this mode of production. Children withdrawn from school for such manual labour grow up ill equipped to fit into the society. The Pope laments that such is a culture of injustice, extending to other generations (Francis, 2015, Article 159-162, pp. 118-120).

Nowadays women cut down trees to produce biomass in commercial quantity. They no longer wait for the trees to die and dry. This is grave assault. Nigerian forests are 'bleeding' and depreciating rapidly. If the trend is not controlled, other generations may not see forest reserves, let alone having a complete roll call of the creatures that inhabit them.

Women are not alone in the assault. Many women activities on the eco-system are induced by other factors. Yet, they bear the brunt of the degradation. In juxtaposition with the encyclical outline, Nigerian women's place in the crisis, is made worse by the activities of oil exploration and other industrial operations. Oil pollution is a frequent occurrence in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria, which host oil companies. UNEP reports lament the level of industrial assault on the Niger Delta environment. The daily estimate is about 70 cm³ gas emission of green house gases from flames, with dangerous chemicals which spread into 'brother wind' and 'sister water' (Igali, 2013, pp. 4-5). The ecosystem is badly polluted, degraded and diminished. Mangrove resources that boosted the economy of the communities are on the fast lane of extinction. Pipeline ways and oil spill are also taking their toll on the environment, *ipso facto* on women who use them.

While industrial activities have disorganized the rural economy, with women bearing the brunt, they are yet excluded in sharing of the meager compensatory fees paid on some damages. While men share the funds, women are left to forage the eco-system with crude implements. Thus, they are competed out by the companies. In a similar way, women in

Papua New Guinea bear the brunt of commercial logging while, Indian women are receiving effects of mining activities, which are clearing the forests. Yet, the affected women are disfavoured in land allocation, based on purported Hindu customs (United Nations, 1994, p. 93). This is the cleavage of patriarchy which feminists cry foul. Giving the scenario, food resources becomes scarce and difficult to find. Saddled with the traditional responsibility of feeding their family, Nigerian women face difficulty in effort to carrying out the duty. In other words, as scarce and deteriorating the eco-system is becoming, women put in extraordinary time and energy to search for food resources. In the absence of quality household fuel materials, other less burning biomass are collected. Alternative biomass do not properly serve the purpose, with the desired result. Consequently, women put in more time and energy amidst hitches in food processing that require fire and heat. So, production of less food and, of low quality is the order of the day hence, malnutrition looms large.

Handicraft, another occupation of women is on the decline. Women make products like basket, bag, cane-chair, pottery etc. These crafts are badly affected due to the diminishing raw materials, mainly obtained from the eco-system. Many women in this occupation have either lost their means of livelihood or their earnings depreciated. Consequently, living is made more difficult for them. The challenges of household food needs of Nigerian women in the context of environmental degradation is underscored by the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) (see United Nations, 1994, p. 83). According to Natasha, "...in the deeply degraded areas of Northern India, women's suicide rates are higher than those of men, and this is possible related to the deterioration of the natural resource base" (Natasha, cited in United Nations, 1994, p. 84).

The Indian case underscore the frustrating experience of Nigerian women who struggle in anguish craving for food—some pregnant, and yet carrying another baby at the black, go about in search of means of livelihood in the impoverished eco-system.

Eco-system degradation have placed many Nigerian women in situation of single parent responsibility. Pope Francis is forthright in his report that environmental degradation is a crisis situation that push and pull the affected to migrate "to poverty-stricken urban areas" (Francis, 2015, Article, 134, p. 100). Men migrate most to the cities in search for greener pastures, leaving their wives at home. The migrants seldom find

well paid jobs in poor economic systems, as obtain in Nigeria. Yet, commitment to pay utility bills deplete the meager income, leaving little or nothing to take home. Thus, men are pushed into the status of “environmental refugees” (United Nations, 1994, p. 95), while women bear the brunt of the eco-degradation induced pauperization of the Nigerian family, at the traditional home front.

6. Nigerian Women and the Liberating Message of *Laudato Si*

This aspect of *Laudato Si* is also replete with pedagogical fabrics which are alignable to the revisioning, reclaiming and reconceiving character of feminist theology, (see Coll, 1994). In the lucid words of Pope Francis: “Human beings, while capable of the worst, are also capable of rising above themselves, choosing again what is good, and making new start, despite their mental and social conditioning.” In this perspective of *Laudato Si*, the plight of Nigerian women also reflect. The Pope makes it clear that legitimate human development must be founded on moral fabric, with concern for the dignity and care for all beings, reflecting the integrated plan in creation. This admonition, is a liberating message for the world’s vulnerable, like women. The inclusive reference offers women a renewed hope of esteemed membership of the created world, with full benefit in the order. Sequel to this underlying idea, women are reassured of being part of the community of God, meant to commune together—sharing in God’s banquet, in creation. The feminism latency of this pedagogy is underscored by the position of King (1995, pp. 1-38), that true and justified religion should aim at being “experiential and personal”, as a way of addressing the plight of both sexes.

Care for the vulnerable, which is a framework of the encyclical offer profound hope for the poor, and those disempowered by environmental degradation. Alleviating the plight of these groups, which are predominantly women in countries like Nigeria is “a grave social debt” (Francis, 2015, Article 30, p. 23), humanity owe, the Pope emphasize. The rationale for common fellowship approach of the pedagogy is that, attempt to tackle the complex problem of environmental degradation can only be realistic and sustainable, if “human social degradation” (Francis, 2015, Article 48, p. 33) is addressed. In this understanding, the Pontiff means attending to the ‘bleeding and cry’ of both the environment and the human groups. This is a vantage position for Nigerian women, in the plot of

Laudato Si. To further argue for the plausibility of this exhortation, to the crusade of feminism and women in general, Francis subscribes to the views of Benedict XVI, that in God's mind every person He created is loved and remains precious (Francis, 2015, Article 70, p. 52).

Humanity is reminded that the failure to care for the created environment and be our brothers' keeper is dangerous, and contrary to divine essence. "We see this in the story of Noah, where God threatens to do away with humanity because of its constant failure to fulfill the requirements of justice and peace" (Francis, 2015, Article 70, p. 52). Environmental justice must be skewed in profound love and responsibility to the society and the entire creation. Hence, the Pope calls for a transcendence of faith in form of practical extension of hands of fellowship. Those who oppress women and subject them to harsh effect of ecological degradation are sternly reprimanded against acts which run contrary to divine unity of humanity. According to Francis,

we human beings are united as brothers and sisters on a wonderful pilgrimage, moving together by the love God has for each of his creatures and which also unites us in fond affection with brother sun, sister moon, brother river and mother earth (Francis, 2015, Article, 92, p. 68).

Here lies the rationale for the Pope's idea of inclusive ecology—a synergy of the vulnerable and, all of creation shrouded in the eclipse of faith, both at the individual and group levels of existence.

Francis' idea of an "economic ecology" (Francis, 2015, Article, 141, p. 106) is another profound exhortation capable of promoting the sublime in human nature and the virtue of care. The liberating import is the emphasis on protection of the environment as premise for sustainable development. *Laudato Si*, advocates for a development which not only show concern for women but is targeted at protecting the environment. The direct appeal to the plight of Nigerian women is that their cravings and status are co-related with the state of the eco-system. The travails of Nigerian women, especially in the rural areas, and elsewhere in the world would have been reduced with adherence to a protected eco-system, as the Pope exhorts. Such liberation will also make women appreciate the cultural peculiarities, within which life makes profound meaning to them, against alien culture of globalization oriented consumerism. This is the thrust of Francis' idea of 'cultural ecology',—a promising hope of restoring dignified life for women who are at the forefront of the crisis.

The Pope's pedagogy will build up to an 'ecology of man' and 'ecology of daily life'—a radiation of the divine substance in creation, into human living and ecological care that eulogize the sublime in human sex polars and, individual disposition of freedom framework. Furthermore, the transformation will crystallize to all facets of human social formation. Here, the family must be substantially projected as the fundamental cell of the society, towards inculcating the virtues of common good. Apart from this particular pedagogy, the encyclical's emphasis on the family as a veritable instrument in the plot is a liberating message for women. The family and household activities are the stronghold of women. With the exhortations, Nigerian women in motherhood status would have been empowered to strive towards justice between generations of the born and the unborn. The Nigerian mother and elsewhere care for their children and descendants. This is the strategic place of women in the intergenerational solidarity, which Francis subscribes to, in Benedict XVI's message (Benedict XVI, cited in Francis, 2015, Article, 162, p. 120).

The Pontiff's call on the government of poor countries to eradicate poverty is a source of hope for women. At the individual level, the effort must be complemented with simple life, humble disposition, and de-emphasizing ostentatiousness and wasteful lifestyle. People must find alternatives to pleasure outside material consumption, Francis admonishes (Francis, 2015, Article, 223, p. 163) This is where the spiritual component of humans will be given chance to shape life cravings and passions of the flesh. Physically, the pedagogy will promote profound moments of rest for the over laboured women, whose culture of rest is very poor. Cultivation of such culture will give humans the opportunity of sharing in the pleasure and economy of the spiritual gaze of existence. Such synergy of the material and the spiritual will ensure sustainability of the liberation message of *Laudato Si*, in tandem with the plight of Nigerian women, and feminist crusade. This is the authentic character of the ecology of humans.

7. Nigerian Women and Preserving the Environment

In this perspective of *Laudato Si* Nigerian women's role is also seemingly reflective, in the form of reconstruction character of feminism. At the home front, disposal of household waste is the domain of women.

Attitudinal change from indiscriminate dumping of such waste is imperative. Indiscriminate disposal of domestic rubbish contribute to environmental pollution. The unwholesome practice put pressure on the already endangered eco-system. Nigerian women and elsewhere must play good role in planning safe strategies to gather and dispose household refuse, according to community standards, in tandem with government approved environmental policies on waste management.

Women must stop the culture of waste. This is common among Nigerian women in affluent families. They are indifferent over conservation of resources. Such culture of subjective consumerism go beyond bodily nourishment, to social class servicing. There is pleasure outside such ostentatious lifestyle, the Pope instructs. God did not authorize humanity to waste his creation. Recycling and reuse of resources, adequate measurements and preservation of excesses should be promoted by women, as part of their calling in this aspect of the Pope's exhortation. Even Jesus was involved in preserving excess resources in the feeding miracles (Jn. 6:3-14).

Enlightenment programmes should focus more on rural women. A greater number of them are indifferent or oblivious of the looming danger. The concern of this group is their plight in craving for daily feeding. Their ignorance call for pity than blame. So, environmental education scheme is imperative to update the knowledge of such women. To complement the enlightenment programme is orientation scheme on the acceptance and use of modern alternatives to local resources, such as alternative energy and modern technology for processing activities. Many of the women still shun modern and better alternatives, in preference for traditional methods which continue to deepen the wounds on the eco-system. While environmental education and modern alternative methods' orientation are immediate approaches, women in Nigeria require mass education. This is to ensure sustainability of the Pope's admonition.

Enforcement of international policies on the environment must be taken to the grassroot—the family and village settings. Women are indispensable instruments at this level. Once they are environmentally well educated and oriented they would carry on in their families. The family and village are their high frequency areas of operation and influence. Nigerian women form and belong to associations—social and religious. Such groups should be used as veritable channels for eco-communication. According to Francis, "New forms of co-operation and

community organization can be encouraged in order to defend the interest of small producers and preserve local eco-system from destruction", (Francis, 2015, Article 180, p. 133). This approach will place Nigerian women on the pedestal of "Thinking globally and acting locally" (United Nations, 1994, p. 105). This is the platform and success of Chipko Movement in India, and the Green Belt Movement in Kenya, etc. (United Nations, 1994, pp. 110-118).

The Mariology image and Queen of all creation which looms large in the treatise of *Laudato Si*, should be a source of inspiration for women to care for God's creation. This is a special calling on Christian mother's in particular. The son-mother relation of Jesus and Mary reflect Mary's attitude to the created order—she does not shy away from treasuring its grandeur and divine glory (Francis, 2015, Article 241-242, pp. 175-176). This should be replicated in the life of women, as they concern about the environment, as fundamental heritage necessary to sustain their descendants. The earth is divine accommodation for humans. They must hold the environment in trust for God and their descendants. Such calling is oriented in spiritual solidity and sanctifying disposition. The potency of Mariology image boost the projection of womanhood in Christian theology. Jansen (2005) underscored this credit with the vision and power of symbols of Mary in the Middle East. The enabling platform for all these is bringing the human efforts in synergy with the spiritual fervour of constant prayer, in acknowledgement of the providence of God and supplication for his wisdom, and sharing in the fullness of life, and respect for the entire creation.

Women must work in synergy with men—in association, as human species of God's creation, *ipso facto*, face environmental degradation as common problem. Therefore, Nigerian women and elsewhere should explore their cultural devices and mechanism of influence on men (Iheanacho, 2009, pp. 221-230), to prop up men in areas they lag behind, in the onerous project of preserving the environment.

While the enormity of Nigerian women's responsibility reflect in the plot of *Laudato Si*, men at the strata of society's leadership should reduce women's alienation in planning and decision taking process. Women are closer to nature and the resources therein. Planning and adopting environmental decisions of exploitation and management, at all levels require women's first-hand knowledge, experience, input and benefit. Their exclusion in such settings is vulnerable to failure.

8. Conclusion

Laudato Si is a landmark encyclical, which exhorts the entire humanity towards addressing the problem of environmental degradation, which has engulfed the world. The world is explained to be of an integrated existence unto the glory of God. Contrary to the divine purpose of created order is the regrettable failure of profound human awareness in the order, due largely to vested, subjective and selfish craving devoid of the underlying spiritual fabric, essence and human fellowship.

Women are integral part of the created order, which is being repudiated by humans, the last of created beings. Women share in all ramifications of the crisis. They are seemingly closer to nature. They forage the eco-system for household needs. In the process, women inflict grave wound on the environment. As this continues in rhythmic cycle women become more serious victims of the degraded eco-system, in addition to their denigrating image.

The encyclical, however, offers women a corpus of liberating message, premised on a synergy of solemn conception of divine order of an integrated world, wholesome spirituality and profound care for one another and other creatures. In a welcome garb *Laudato Si* underscores significant thrusts of feminism. To consummate this crusade, women must explore their natural ingenuity towards promoting environmental friendliness. It is a responsibility to God and humanity. By the same understanding men must provide women the enabling conditions and leeway for their optimal contribution to the onerous project.

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Tomáš Janků

Palacký University Olomouc (Czech Republic)

Pavel Kliment

Palacký University Olomouc (Czech Republic)

Review of the Power Asymmetry within a Muslim Family through the Example of Veiled Women in the Czech Republic¹

ABSTRACT. The previous quantitative research carried out within the research study "Islam in the Czech Republic: the introduction of Muslims into the public space" demonstrated that the majority population of the Czech Republic perceives the position of Muslim women as asymmetric in terms of power, to the detriment of Muslim women. The most visible sign of this power asymmetry is considered to be the veiling of Muslim women, with the assumption being that these women are forced to veil themselves. The aim of this paper is to present a variety of approaches to the veiling of Muslim women and point out the fact that being veiled, or the rejection of being veiled, is rather an expression of the free choice of a Muslim woman than a result of male pressure. The theme of veiling emerges in the background of the description of the reactions of the majority population to veiling. We come to our conclusions through a qualitative analysis of interviews carried out with men and women who are committed to Islam.

KEYWORDS: Islam, woman's veiling, public reaction

1. Introduction

The veiling of Muslim women is a topic that raises numerous controversies in the context of multicultural discourse. In the mainstream society (Topinka, 2015), a woman's being veiled is considered a sign or evidence of oppression, behaviour into which a Muslim woman is forced by her male environment. The Czech community does not suppose that wearing a veil could be an act of free choice for a Muslim woman.

In the mainstream society, wearing a veil (like the construction of Islamic prayer halls) is attracting considerable attention, as they in-

¹ The text was produced with support from the project "Islam in the Czech Republic: The establishment of Muslims in the public space" (VG20132015113) within the Security Research Programme in the Czech Republic in 2010–2015.

crease the visibility of religion in the public space and these phenomena may be perceived by the majority population as a realistic or symbolic danger according to the theory of intergroup threats. Stephan and Stephan (2000) developed a theory in which they operate with these kinds of threats. A realistic threat directly affects the existence of the group and includes a threat to economic or political power, as well as a threat to members of society. An important feature is its subjective nature. The second type of threat is a symbolic threat, which relates to the differences in values, morals, standards or attitudes between groups (Stephan et al., 1999). A group that embodies a symbolic threat aggravates the view of the world of the endangered group (Stephan & Stephan, 2000). In the first revision of the theory, the authors began to distinguish between individual and collective dimensions of the threat. According to this version (Stephan & Renfro, 2002), a person can perceive a threat to her own group as a whole, as well as to herself as an individual. *"The realistic group threats establish a threat to the authority of a group, its resources and the common good. The symbolic group threats bring a threat to religion, general values, belief, ideology, philosophy, morality or the overall view of the group"* (Stephan, Ybarra & Morrison, 2009, p. 44).

The present text is based on findings obtained within the project "Islam in the Czech Republic: the introduction of Muslims in the public space". This project dealt with the introduction of Islam (its settling and presentations) into the public space and its main objectives were to capture and describe these processes, which are part of a broader process of the deprivatisation of religion, and to monitor the ways in which Islam and Muslims are established and (self-) presented in the public space in the Czech society. The project brought information from three mutually interacting levels: institutional, civic and community, and focused on a topic that is considered to be very serious and socially sensitive, and not only in the Czech Republic. Our findings are based on the analysis of 67 semi-structured interviews that we conducted with Muslims. The respondents came from 24 countries; 39 of them were men, 28 women; 51 of them had been Muslims since birth and 16 were converts.

2. The Status of Muslim Women

The status of Muslim women can be observed in different contexts. The first is against the background of the interaction between these women and members of the mainstream society, where the conduct of

individuals from the majority indicates what attitudes are attributed to these women, or generally to Muslims and Islam in the host society. The status of Muslim women can also be specified on the basis of the forms of their interactions in the environment of a Muslim family and a Muslim community. The status of women in both of these settings is reflected both by Muslim women and Muslim men.

When the position of Muslim women in the above situations is examined, it is usually described at the level of a central theme, which is the veiling of Muslim women in public. It is important to know that the woman does not wear the veil at home. The woman being veiled in public is often associated with the theme of the rights of Muslim women and their position in Muslim society. It is obvious that the two issues are closely related. Non-veiling and the forms of veiling of Muslim women are often perceived by the general public as indicators of the rights granted to Muslim women within the family and the Muslim community. On the other hand, Muslims notice the attitudes toward women being veiled when assessing the overall responsiveness of the host country to Muslims and Islam as the unifying principle of Muslims.

2.1. The Obligation to Wear a Veil in Islam

It is often suggested that wearing a veil is a rule embedded in Islam and therefore it is a religious duty for all Muslim women to wear veils. However, no such rule can be found in the Quran. The Quran does not directly order women to veil their faces; it only requests both genders to lower their eyes chastely and appeals to both women and men to dress decently and modestly and not behave provocatively: "Let them put veils on their breasts" (Quran 24:31). Rather, it would be possible to say that the Quran recommends veiling, but does not specify its exact form: "O Prophet, tell your wives and your daughters and the believing women to draw close their veils! And this will be the best for them to be recognised and not annoyed" (Quran 33:59). The attitude to the extent of veiling is not consistent in the Islamic world. Miloš Mendel, the prominent Czech Arabist, perceives two contradictory tendencies in the perception of veiling: a woman's being veiled as a means of emancipation and as a symbol of oppression. The first attitude is based on classical Islamic thought and points to the prevention of sexual harassment: a woman has an opportunity not to be seen as a sex object, but to be perceived accord-

ing to her abilities. The other attitude connects veiling with exclusion from public life and the resulting curtailment of the personal freedom of women (Mendel, 2002).

2.2. Types of Veiling

If a Muslim woman decides to veil herself, she can choose from among four basic types of veils. In some Muslim countries, it is debatable whether this is indeed a free choice for women, because there are states where the woman's being veiled in public is a duty. In this context, some Arab states located in the Persian Gulf are often mentioned. The mildest form of veiling (in terms of how much of the body is veiled) is wearing a hijab, which covers a woman's head and neck. Another type of veiling is the chador, a long flowing garment that sometimes reaches down to the ground, and which does not veil the woman's face. The chador is mainly worn in Iran. Another form of veiling is the niqab, which covers the whole woman, with the exception of her eyes, while the burqa veils the whole body, including the eyes, and the woman can see out through a gauze panel over the eye area. In our research, wearing the niqab or burqa was mentioned only as an example which may be encountered in other countries around the world. The phenomenon of the veiling of Muslim women in a public space in the Czech Republic consists only of wearing or not wearing a hijab.

3. The Veiling of Muslim Women in the Czech Republic

If the veiling of women is embedded into the Czech environment, then it is naturally related to the responses of the majority society awakened by veiling. In our research, every female interviewee mentioned this response, no matter whether she was a Muslim since birth or a convert. In some rare cases, the Czech environment was evaluated positively for the personal liberty to walk unveiled.

I can put on what I want here. But there I still have to think of the other people looking at me. But even there I did not wear a hijab. Not at all ... You have to keep thinking about those people, how they think and how they behave so that they do not look at you in the wrong way. (018)

The female interviewees repeatedly reported that wearing a hijab in the Czech Republic is a matter of the free choice of a woman; according to their words, they are not forced to do it by their families or husbands. In one interview, we had a case where a husband wanted his wife to wear a hijab, but she refused. There are also cases where a husband did not want his wife to wear a veil, but the woman got her way.

She does not wear a hijab, but I'd like her to. But I cannot force her. (038)

3.1. Wearing a Veil in a Public Space

Wearing a veil is a way to express one's affiliation to Islam in a public space. A public space is understood very universally in this context. The definition we have chosen is embedded in the approach of social constructivism and in urban sociology attitudes. From the perspective of the social constructivism of Berger and Luckmann (1999) a public space is a social space where persons with a different perception of the world/reality meet each other. Consequently, certain rules arise that specify the ways of communication and acting in this space and give meanings to objectifications. It is essential which view of the world becomes dominant, as it determines the rules according to which participants will act in that area. When examining a particular space, it is necessary to identify the dominant perspective. This perspective expects (or often enforces) a specific type of behaviour and characteristics on the part of the participants and on the contrary, some behaviours and characteristics of the participants can be overshadowed, irrelevant, displaced or even inadmissible. "What is irrelevant or completely repressed from the perspective of the public space and its rules then becomes the private space" (Černín, 2010, p. 95).

Wearing a hijab in public attracts attention beyond the usual limits. Members of the majority population watching women goes beyond the normal exploration of the social environment. The perception of increased and unwanted attention to a subject in a public urban space is contrary to the very nature of a public space, which contains in itself, *inter alia*, the anonymity imperative and so-called polite inattention (see Lofland, 1972). People moving in a public urban space expect that they will not be addressed by other passers-by, or otherwise become the object of their interest. At the same time they assume that the other participants will act in accordance with these unspoken rules and will not

"march to a different tune" and therefore, that there will be no disruption of the so-called "urban order" or, in other words, "civility" (Pospěch, 2013).

Increased attention from the public was understandably identified by the female participants as harassment. It is obvious that the phenomenon of wearing a veil is construed differently by Muslims and by the majority society. For Muslims, it is an act of public affiliation to a religion, a basic democratic right, which is exercised by these women. The majority population often perceives veiling as evidence of the oncoming expansion of a foreign element in the traditional cultural space, which must be opposed, and the space must be defended. Some participants found the attacks against veiling paradoxical in a society that is declaratively committed to democratic principles, but the rights of certain groups are clearly denied here.

Besides mere watching, the response of the majority society to a woman's being veiled also manifests itself in questioning veiled women, which can be viewed both positively and negatively: positively in cases where the respondents made use of the opportunity to provide information about Islam to someone from the majority society.

We do not speak Czech very well; we try to explain that it is a religion, and sometimes they ask me why I let my wife dress like this. And I say, that's her decision; I did not tell her to do it like this or like that. It may look like my mistake, but it's her faith and we follow what Islam says. (007)

The responses from people in public, however, are mostly perceived as rather annoying. The faithful consider their faith to be a private matter and any queries regarding these issues are deemed tactless.

I think the Czechs are not used to it and I understand it completely. I am not stressed about it, but I feel that I do not have an obligation to explain to everyone over and over again why I wear it. And that I am not forced to do so neither by my dad nor my brothers ... So I feel that they do not have the right to ask me. (029)

An extreme form of interaction is ridicule or direct verbal attacks, such as calling a woman a terrorist, abusing her or asking her whether she is wearing explosives under the veil, or telling her to go back to her country of origin. The last example was provided by a Czech female convert, which is rather paradoxical.

Once, I was waiting for a tram with a friend and a man came to us and started screaming that I am an Arab whore, completely out of the blue. (034)

The most extreme form of reaction on the part of the public is an attempt to tear off a hijab or other aggressive attacks. According to the female interviewees, this can happen in the evening, especially if the woman is alone.

My friend experienced an attack at a bus stop in Prague. They began to spit on her. One woman screamed at her, pulling her hijab. A shocking experience. (040)

My friend in Olomouc came across a couple of drunk guys and they tried to pull off her hijab. (038)

A friend of mine was attacked in the tram in Olomouc. Some people came to her and began to pull her hijab and tried to snatch it off. I think she is still shocked and wounded – here on the neck (points at the Adam's apple), she has a big bruise. (048)

The men who were interviewed expressed their concern that their women should not walk alone in public.

A few people do watch when my wife wears a hijab, but not many of them. I'm not afraid for my wife when she is with me. I have no fear at all. But when she is alone... well... I call her often, every 5-10 minutes. There are people who would come and do something wrong. (058)

It was often mentioned that verbal or physical attacks do not occur at all if a woman is accompanied by her husband.

Well ... yeah, if I am with my husband, there is no aggression, everything is fine, nobody would dare to do anything (laughs), but when I am alone it happens right away. (027)

We do not know how many attacks the female interviewees really did suffer. It is possible that perhaps in fact there was only one attack that is spread and generalized within the selected part of the community.

Some women prefer not to wear a hijab to avoid an increased response in public or potential attacks. In this situation, wearing a veil has lost its original protective function and, on the contrary, become an easy identifying feature, a kind of stigma, which will certainly attract attention. Women thus stop wearing a hijab in order to regain invisibility in

the public space, which leads them to have to deal with a dilemma arising from the conflict between religious principles and real action in the public space. Veils are removed both by women who have been Muslim since birth and converts.

If I want to draw attention to myself in Saudi Arabia, I would go out without a hijab and, in my opinion it really works like this, and if I want to look natural here, I will go out in jeans and a T-shirt and nobody will look at me. But if I put a hijab on my head, I'm sure that at least half of the people on the trolleybus will keep staring at me until I get off. (006)

3.2. Wearing a Veil at Work and in School

Another area in which women have to withstand possible responses from their surroundings is their workplace or school. It was repeatedly mentioned that wearing a veil itself can cause troubles when one is looking for a job. The female interviewees stated that Muslim women are often discriminated against at work, which at least makes them think of not wearing a hijab or results in their not wearing one at all. Some women stated that it was only after they took off their hijab that they managed to find a suitable job without any problems.

You cannot get a job here with a hijab on your head. In 2011, I thought a lot about it. I was looking for information, studied Islam again, what it says about the hijab, all those religious texts. And I came to the conclusion that you can be dressed decently even without a hijab. So I chose this way about a year ago and I finally got a job in 2012. Since then I have lived a normal life. There is simply no need to show everybody what I believe in, even if it is just about a piece of cloth on your head. (017)

Other women stated that they were able to get a job with a hijab, or that they were not allowed to wear it at work while in other jobs it was not a problem. Therefore the employers' responses cannot be generalised.

When I tried to start wearing a hijab, I was working in a hotel and I was not allowed to do so, but I could go to pray at any time when I needed to. In another job, I could wear a hijab; it was settled when I joined them, I could pray at the right time, and thank goodness, nobody gave me dirty looks. (031)

In some situations, the participants had a chance to discuss with the company management whether it is possible to include the alien element of veiling into the work environment.

And it is interesting; when I spoke to my colleague after some time, she said that of course they were discussing it in the company, that it was not an easy decision for the managers. (045)

In the university environment, female students meet with a more forthcoming response. They appreciate the opportunity to wear a hijab in classes and the practice, with only minor exceptions. In the medical environment, in some places they have sterile scarves, depending on the approach of a particular faculty. Wearing a veil sometimes evokes positive interest from teachers. Only in rare cases did a woman have the impression that she was treated with contempt.

Only one female professor was a bit unpleasant; she asked if I had cancer. But that was the only such unpleasant moment in school. But mostly I felt that they are rather genuinely curious. (034)

The university environment is often described as a friendly one. But there are also exceptions.

And then when I decided to wear a hijab to school, it was a kind of final decision. Those classmates, well... I was disappointed in student life here even before the hijab. I had always thought that at university I would have a lot of friends and we would have fun together. (034)

3.3. The situation of Czech Female Converts Regarding Veiling

So far, we have described the situation and strategies of women who have been Muslim since birth, but now we will focus on the situation of female converts, who have a specific position in some respects. To characterise the community of Czech female converts, we could say that this is a very small but relatively active group (the number of converts is estimated to be between 200 and 300 and female converts outnumber the male ones), which comes together mainly through various social networks and discussion forums on the Internet. In larger cities, such as Prague and Brno, they meet in person. The main feature of the female converts is that they did not inherit their faith, but came to it consciously and very often despite various obstacles that Czech Muslims have to overcome continuously and repetitively. When they start to wear the veil, the female converts come into direct conflict with their social environment. They have to cope with these conflicts and defend their new identity in public after coming out.

When I look back, in 1993, I accepted and internally identified myself with Islam and started to wear a hijab after my younger son was born, in 1998 or so. But I must say that I got support at that time, when we lived in Kladno; we met a Muslim family there, and a Czech friend of mine wore a hijab at the time, so it was such strong psychological support, because obviously, in that environment, I was approached as an oddity. I think that it needs a sort of courage here. You must grow into it... (045)

Another clash is the reaction of the family, where the female converts often lack support. In extreme cases, a woman walks veiled in public without her family being aware. In other cases, after they are informed that a woman has converted to Islam and begins to wear a veil, the reaction of the family is negative.

The problems began when I started wearing a hijab. It was about two years after my conversion to Islam. When the faith is visible at first glance, obviously some problems begin. Daddy did not take to it well and I think to this day he does not understand why I wear a hijab. He is not happy about it, but thank goodness he was never angry with me and always respected what I did. In the family, in that inner circle, I do not have a problem. (031)

Another possible case is the family receiving this information without a clear comment, which leaves a woman uncertain as to whether her conversion to Islam is evaluated positively or negatively by her relatives.

She never wanted to talk to me about it. It was always just because of some situation that somehow resulted from that. They tolerate it and accept it in some way, because they are intelligent people. Of course, there is nothing else they can do about it. But they are not seriously interested in it; we cannot discuss any topics connected with deeper spiritual life or suchlike, not at all. (045)

The last possibility is positive acceptance of the conversion, which sometimes encourages the study of religious themes in the family.

Thank God, I'm lucky that my family here is very broad-minded in this. They know Muslims and knew them already before I came, so they are totally cool about it and are interested in Islam themselves, even though they are not Muslims. So I do not have any problems at home. (058)

The female converts were mostly evaluated positively by women who had been Muslim since birth, and for this reason, they do not try to avoid

wearing the veil and are able to face antipathy from certain parts of the general population.

In my opinion, the Czech girls who wear a hijab in the Czech Republic, I really admire them; I would probably not, but it is their business. (006)

In general, female converts are also appreciated because they practise the religion without the support of their family, including natural social support, which is generally highly emphasised and valued by Muslims. The supportive social network primarily consists of the family, and only then do public organisations or institutions become involved.

4. Conclusion

The status of Muslim women in the majority society and in their own family cannot be restricted to the issue of wearing a veil. Nevertheless, it is a central category that is perceived very sensitively by the majority society and the women themselves, as well as the Muslim community.

Negative reactions cannot be explained by a simple lack of the habit of women being veiled. The society must first learn to tolerate and accept otherness as such.

According to the female interviewees, the veil is their free choice; they are not forced into it by their partners. According to their words, Muslim women decide for themselves whether to be veiled or not, and they feel the need to emphasise this fact, because in most cases the general public perceives veiling as a form of oppression of women. These findings apply to Muslim women in the Czech Republic and because of the limited range of the research methodology we cannot generalise them, even for Czech conditions.

If Muslim women do not wear veils, it is for two reasons: first, there is no duty to be veiled in their home culture, for example female Muslims from the countries of the former Soviet Union. The second reason, which is conditioned by the environment in the Czech Republic, is making Muslim women invisible in the public space. Despite the fact that the veil should primarily protect women and make them invisible, in the Czech Republic, where Islam is still an alien religion, wearing a veil rather attracts attention to Muslim women, which is not desirable.

The research showed that female Muslims encounter negative reactions in the public space, and on means of transport, as well as in enclosed spaces such as banks, shops, medical facilities, etc.

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Kristen McMurray

California State University, Fullerton (USA)

Melinda R. Pierson

California State University, Fullerton (USA)

The Importance of Assistive Technology in the Classroom for Males and Females with Autism Spectrum Disorder

ABSTRACT. Advancements in technology has supported males and females with Autism Spectrum Disorder with academic and social gains in the school setting. Assistive technology maximizes the school environment by enhancing the functional performance of students with autism (especially males) by allowing them to participate and complete tasks they would have not otherwise been able to complete.

KEYWORDS: technology in the classroom, Autism Spectrum Disorder, gender

1. Introduction

The use of technology in educational settings is a topic that is at the peak of research. Technology has become a major component in the development and delivery of curriculum in all educational settings, especially in the area of special needs. In recent years, research has proven that assistive technology promotes greater independence by enabling students with disabilities (especially males) to perform tasks that they were formerly unable to accomplish, or had great difficulty accomplishing. Since the release of the Apple iPad in 2010, schools have been slow to recognize the full potential of integrating this state-of-the-art technology into the Individualized Education Program (IEP) and special education programs for students with mild to severe disabilities, specifically autism. However, in the last three years more than half of teachers in a recent study reported mobile technology as being adopted in at least 25% of their districts' schools (Interactive Educational Systems Design,

Inc., 2012), but this percentage is still extremely low to where it should be today.

With technology advancing at a steady pace, males and females need to be taught skills that will enable them to be successful in an ever-changing society. Integrating 21st Century technology in today's special needs classrooms is vitally important if we want to bypass the barriers of limitations and provide opportunities to potentially improve the educational experience and success of students with disabilities. The primary purpose of this manuscript is to explore the many potential benefits of integrating assistive technology, specifically iPads, into the ASD classroom to improve effective instruction and to enhance the learning opportunities and performance of males and females with autism.

2. iPad: The Preferred Choice of AT for Students, Teachers, and Parents

Engagement, efficiency, communication, access, and increasing motivation of males and females with disabilities (especially males) when using mobile technology, such as iPads, are critical components of assistive technology because they provide the missing link that will improve effective instruction and enhance the learning opportunities and performance of students in the school environment. Major benefits of mobile devices are their portability, large touch screen layout, ease in individualizing educational materials, a multitude of educational applications, and a lack of stigma due to their frequent use by neurotypical individuals, for the purpose of evidence-based practices widely used to teach skills to students with autism and developmental disabilities (Kagohara et al., 2013; Miller et al., 2013; Neely et al., 2013; van der Meer et al., 2014).

Ganz, Boles, Goodwyn, and Flores (2014) conducted an empirical study using an alternating treatment design to investigate the effects of visual scripts delivered with an iPad on the use of verbs or nouns with three males, ages eight to 14 years old, with a primary diagnosis of autism and a secondary diagnosis of speech impairment. The use of iPads for communication in their study indicated to be preferred by the teachers and students because they are easily transported and the development of pictures and scripts are more of a simplified way than constructing and laminating multiple cards (Ganz et al., 2014).

In a systematic review of the empirical evidence, Kagohara et al. (2013) evaluated the use of iPods, iPads, and related devices in intervention studies that focused on increasing academic, communication, social, and other adaptive behaviors in individuals with developmental disabilities across school settings. The findings had positive outcomes, suggesting that iPods, iPod Touch, iPads, and related devices are beneficial assistive technology for males and females with developmental disabilities and can be successfully utilized within educational programs (Kagohara et al., 2013).

Similar results were found by Cumming, Strnadova, and Singh (2014) who conducted an action research project focusing on the process and outcomes of the introduction of iPad technology to support males and females with developmental disabilities, including ASD. The results showed that the iPad benefited the students in the general areas of communication access, engagement, learning, and independence. According to Cumming et al. (2014), males preferred reading text on the iPad because the book reading application gave them instant access to the pronunciation and definitions of unfamiliar words, as well as allowed the students to hear the words as they read them. The findings also indicated that conversations with others became easier than when using traditional paper-based systems, such as the Picture Exchange System because all pictures were on the same page and easily accessible (Cumming et al., 2014). Lastly, the study noted that using the application, "Proloquo2Go" eased communication and lessened frustration. This is consistent with the findings of Campigotto, McEwen, and Demmans Epp (2013) who conducted an exploratory study to analyze teacher and student experience of using the application, "MyVoice" on iOS devices (e.g. iPads) in a special education classroom environment. The findings demonstrated that the integration of mobile technology was positive, appealing, and motivating to enhance classroom experiences.

Furthermore, Draper Rodriguez, Strnadova, and Cumming (2014) also found comparable findings when conducting a study focusing on teachers' and parents' perception of iPad integration and its effects on the education of males and females with disabilities in hopes that teachers can increase the effectiveness of their implementation by increasing the engagement and satisfaction in their classrooms. The results indicated that both teachers and parents appreciated the positive outcomes of using the iPad and preferred to use it as an educational tool across the curriculum, especially in the areas of acquiring knowledge and skills, in

assessment, and in students becoming more engaged. This finding is significant, as higher academic engagement among students is correlated with the academic achievement of the students (Klem & Connell, 2004).

3. Using the iPad to Reduce Challenging Behaviors

Learning can be quite challenging for students with disabilities. This challenge is heightened by legislative requirements (i.e., No Child Left Behind 2002), which established learning and achievement requirements for all students including those with disabilities, such as emotional/behavioral disorders (EBD) and autism spectrum disorder. Students with EBD and autism struggle academically and are significantly behind peers their age (Anderson, Kutash & Duchnowski, 2001; Reid, Gonzalez, Nordness, Trout & Epstein, 2004). Time on-task in the classroom is vital because it is linked to academic learning and achievement. When off-task behaviors arise, significant learning and instructional time may be lost (Flower, 2014). Males with disabilities and behavior disorders are more likely to make maximum educational growth when teachers carefully select practices to encourage active engagement and using positive reinforcement (Cooper, Heron & Heward; Reid et al., 2004). Teachers should make every attempt to use the most influential practices to facilitate learning. Two prevailing instructional practices include the use of praise and increased opportunities to respond using functional communication (Neely et al., 2013).

Studies in the past show that much of the problem behaviors arise when males and females with disabilities, specifically autism, are unable to communicate their needs and wants to others, leading to frustration and anger that may result in challenging behaviors, depending on their learned history (Flower, 2014; Manikam et al., 2014; Neely et al., 2013). Computer-assisted instruction (CAI) using an iPad offers the possibility to incorporate praise, opportunities to respond into independent practice activities, as well as using functional communication with AAC (Anderson et al., 2001; Flower, 2014). AAC users may communicate more efficiently, present with less behaviors, such as tantrums, aggression to others, self-injurious behaviors, and non-compliance, as well as experience more positive social interactions when integrating the iPad into the

classroom (Flores et al., 2012). In addition, iPads as an AAC system, may lead to increasing attention to tasks while reducing challenging behaviors, which may result in increased achievement in the classroom for students with disabilities, as well as help replace socially unacceptable behaviors with more conventional means of communication (Manikam et al., 2014). Furthermore, previous research has also shown that motivating operations can be manipulated to decrease challenging behavior and increase academic engagement in children with autism (Rispoli et al., 2011).

Flower (2014) conducted a study using an alternating treatment design to investigate the effect of an iPad on time on-task, with comparison made between male students' time on-task during independent work during a typical practice condition and an iPad condition, for three students with disabilities and emotional-behavioral disorders (EBD). The results suggested that iPad use led to increased time on-task compared to the typical independent practice condition for all three students, which replicates previous research (Flower, 2014). Considering the time on-task findings in the iPad condition, it appears that the students in this study were able to demonstrate on-task behavior similar to their typically performing peers, which translates to an increase in academic learning and achievement for males with disabilities and behavior disorders (Haydon et al., 2012). Additionally, the findings showed that teachers and students perceived the iPad to be both effective and acceptable, making it a positive addition to the classroom.

Neely, Rispoli, Camargo, Davis, and Boles (2013) conducted an empirical study using a reversal (e.g., A-B-A-B) design which was implemented to evaluate the effects of delivering academic instruction through an iPad versus traditional materials (pencil/paper and flashcards) on the occurrence of challenging and academic engagement behavior for children with ASD. The study used two males, ages three and seven years old, diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder and engaged in escape-maintained challenging behavior. Based on the results of the study, Neely et al. (2013) found that both participants demonstrated lower levels of challenging behavior and higher levels of academic engagement in the iPad condition and higher levels of challenging behavior with lower levels of academic engagement during the traditional materials condition. These results suggest that the use of an iPad, as a means of instructional delivery, may reduce escape-maintained behavior for some children with autism.

4. Using the iPad to Teach Academic Skills

Assistive technology has been used to increase communication and academic skills for students with a range of disabilities for over a decade (Draper Rodriguez et al., 2014; Edyburn, 2000). Recently, the media and research has promoted the idea that the use of the latest and greatest technology (e.g., iPads) has the potential to increase independence and the quality of life, as well as transform academic instruction for students with disabilities, specifically autism spectrum disorder (ASD) (Burton et al., 2013; Chai et al., 2015; Jowett, et al., 2012; Kagohara, Sigafos, Achmadi, O'Reilly & Lancioni, 2012; Knight et al., 2013; Miller et al., 2013; and van der Meer et al., 2015). Emerging technology can open pathways for how educators modify and accommodate students with disabilities and engage them in today's classrooms, by enabling these students to express their understanding in academic skills through mobile technology, such as the iPad.

As technology allows for more options, mobile devices, such as iPads, may hold valuable options for students with disabilities as a support in reading, writing, math, science, and history. Researchers have shown that technology can be used to teach academic functional skills in multiple subjects and can increase opportunities for students with disabilities to access the common core curriculum and achieve improved learning outcomes (Burton, et al., 2013; Chai et al., 2015; Miller et al., 2013). Current advances in the use of technology in special education and inclusive classrooms include teaching academic skills with applications or video modeling on the iPad.

5. Targeting Academic Skills with Applications on the iPad

Reading is a vital element for educational advancements and community engagement, deficits in literacy negatively impact the quality of life of people with disabilities (Chai et al., 2015). Phonological awareness (PA) skills are a component of early literacy instruction as essential in helping students become independent readers (Kagohara et al., 2012). If used appropriately, technology can assist students with disabilities in participating in the same activities as their typically developing peers (Edyburn, 2013). Chai, Vail, and Ayres (2015) conducted a multiple-

probe design across three sets of targets phonemes and replicated with three students to evaluate the effects of using constant time delay (CTD) procedures on the iPad application, "Touch Sound" to teach young students with disabilities to receptively identify initial phonemes. The results showed that all students mastered their target phonemes, as well as demonstrated an increase in level and accelerating trend after introduction of trend (Chai et al., 2015). This study enhances the knowledge on using touch screen iPad applications for early academic instruction of young students with disabilities.

Early language development and specifically vocabulary acquisition are of importance to both pre-literacy and literacy skills. One strategy used to enhance vocabulary acquisition involves picture matching naming activities (Kagohara et al., 2012; van der Meer et al., 2015). Van der Meer et al. (2015) conducted a multiple-probe across matching tasks design to investigate the use of iPads to improve academic skills to a student with ASD and severe impairment. The study evaluated the effects of graduated guidance prompting procedure and differential reinforcement on correct matching across four matching tasks (i.e., picture to picture, word to picture, picture to word, and word to word). The results indicated that with intervention, the student successfully learned picture and word matching, across all four combinations, with an iPad-based SGD using the application, "Proloquo2Go" (van der Meer et al., 2015).

This result was similar to the Cumming and Draper Rodríguez (2013) study which investigated the impact of the iPad application, "Language Builder" on the language skills and found that the iPad application was more successful than traditional teacher-led instruction at increasing the sentence formation skills of the participating students with disabilities. The research revealed that picture matching and word matching skills paired with the use of technology, such as iPads, have relevance to a range of academic literacy and language skills, which enable students with disabilities to participate in instruction that they might otherwise be excluded from (Cumming & Draper Rodríguez, 2013).

In a time of emerging advancement, American education is focusing on educating future generations in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics, often referred to as STEM (Interactive Educational Systems Design, Inc., 2012). With the passing of No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB, 2002) and the reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA, 2004), teachers are now required to

provide individuals with disabilities, “Access to the general curriculum to the maximum extent possible” including the area of science, as well as, “Mandates the use of assistive technology (AT) to support students with disabilities.” Effective implementation of AT can assist students with a disability in reaching their full potential by providing needed supports (Miller et al., 2013).

Miller, Krockover, and Doughty (2013) conducted a study comparing adapted electronic science notebooks (an iPad with dictation and drawing applications) to adapted traditional science notebooks, in supporting science inquiry for secondary students with a moderate intellectual disability. The results showed students successfully acquired science content through science inquiry instruction using both methods (Miller et al., 2013). However, each student demonstrated higher motivation, engagement, and independence in inquiry investigation with the use of iPad electronic notebooks, using the applications, “Inspire Pro” and “Dic-tamus.” Through the integration of iPads in the classroom, teachers will be able to identify the knowledge and scientific literacy their students with disabilities acquired, which may not have been known prior.

6. Targeting Academic Skills with Video Modeling on the iPad

Children with ASD often have social and learning impairments that can hinder their ability to cope with the demands of academic work (American Psychiatric Association, 2000). Research has shown that devices, such as the iPod and iPad, can be fitted with a wide range of educationally relevant applications that will enable students with ASD to independently perform the academic tasks required of them once they are taught and intervention is in place (Draper Rodriguez et al., 2014; Knight et al., 2013). A particularly useful feature of iPads is that the device can record and show videos. Current advances in the use of technology in the classrooms include new applications of video technology, specifically video modeling (VM) and video self-modeling (VSM) which can provide increased opportunities for students with disabilities to acquire important academic and functional skills (Burton et al., 2013; Knight et al., 2013), as part of the instructional strategy.

Kagohara et al. (2012) states that to successfully participate in academic activities, school-aged children need to gain competence in writ-

ten language (e.g., able to read and write homework and assignments) and need to be able to acquire the skill of correctly spelling words. Kagohara, Sigafos, Achmadi, O'Reilly, and Lancioni (2012) conducted a multiple-baseline across participants design aimed to teach two males with ASD to use the spell-check function on a word processor program by using video modeling that was presented on an iPad. The results showed that both males successfully learned the academic skill of how to find the correct spelling of words, using the spell-check function on a word processor by using the video modeling instructional strategy (Kagohara et al., 2012). This is an important outcome, as it suggests that students with ASD can be more independent in this aspect of spell checking, which is an important academic task.

Burton, Anderson, Prater, and Dyches (2013) conducted a multiple-baseline across participants design to examine the effects of VSM using an iPad, on the mathematics skill acquisition and the performance of adolescent students with autism in a special education classroom. The results of the study supported a functional relationship between video self-modeling via an iPad and performance of math skills for each participant (Burton et al., 2013). This study demonstrated the intervention's utility as a highly efficient aide to instruction of functional math skills, which is clearly linked to a core curriculum with students with autism and intellectual disabilities.

Basic numeracy skills are required on a daily basis in many settings in a child's life and they provide the foundations for more advanced numeracy skills. Jowett, Moore & Anderson (2012) conducted a single-subject, multiple baseline across tasks design, which presented similar results to the Burton et al. (2013) study using video modeling on an iPad to increase mathematic skills. Jowett et al. (2012) evaluated the effectiveness of an iPad-based VM package (consisting of gradual fading of video prompts, reinforcement, in "Vivo" prompting and forward chaining) to teach a five year old boy with ASD basic numeracy skills, by exploring the ability to identify, write, and comprehend the quantities of numbers 1-7. The percentage of non-overlapping data (PND) findings suggested that this was a very effective procedure (Jowett et al., 2012). The intervention package was successful and generalization and maintenance of the acquired skills were achieved showing that using iPad-based video modeling for teaching academic mathematic skills is promising.

7. Using the iPad as an Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) Device

All children have the right to express their feelings, thoughts and needs, but this is not always easy to do. Many students with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) present little or no functional speech. They rely on behaviors, such as pointing, reaching, eye gazing, and various facial expressions to present their needs (Mirenda, 2003). Early language delays and qualitative impairments in social interactions and communication can manifest as a lack of development of spoken language, such as an inability to initiate or sustain a conversation with others, idiosyncratic language, repetitive use of language, lack of age-appropriate social imitative play, or a lack of spontaneous make-believe play in individuals with autism (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). Deficits in expressive and receptive language in individuals with ASD may present serious challenges across all settings and require research-based interventions and accommodations for best outcomes. To help students with autism spectrum disorder learn communicative skills, augmentative and alternative communication approaches are suggested (Bondy, Tincani & Frost, 2004).

Augmentative and alternative communication (AAC), encompasses all methods of communication other than verbal language. In other words, AAC gives a voice to a child with autism who cannot speak. As the famous quote goes, "Not being able to speak, is not the same as not having anything to say" (Rosemary Crossley). AAC incorporates the communication methods used to supplement or replace speech or writing for individuals with deficiencies in the production or comprehension of spoken or written language. AAC can be a permanent addition to a person's communication or a temporary aid (Edyburn, 2013; Shane et al., 2012). Augmentative and alternative communication can increase vocalizations, verbalizations, articulation, comprehension, interpersonal interactions, creative use of language, attention span, and self-esteem (Mirenda, 2003). Research based interventions, including the use of visual scripts, have been shown to effectively assist individuals with ASD who present with significant communication deficits by gaining a greater understanding of language (Ganz et al., 2014). Replacing cue cards used with interventions, such as visual scripts and replacing them with technology, such as iPads, will continue to provide children with ASD the necessary AAC support while reducing or eliminating the potential for

socially isolating attention, many may experience when using visual script cue cards (Ganz et al., 2014; Mintz, 2013).

Portable technologies used for augmentative and alternative communication have changed considerably over the past few decades. The drastic improvement is visible when reviewing the system that was used by Ronski and Sevcik (1996) in their early research on the System for Augmented Language (SAL) that *utilized a cart that could be wheeled around*, as compared to the newest technological advances which are much smaller, lighter, and potentially easier to use devices, such as the iPad, iPhone, or iTouch, *that can go in the palm of a hand* (Kagohara et al., 2013; Cumming et al., 2014) and can be converted to SGDs through relatively inexpensive software, such as the application, "Proloquo2Go." "Proloquo2Go," an AAC application, which includes over 8,000 symbolstix symbols, has received a high degree of media attention because it was the next step into "high tech" technology, building upon PECS a "low tech" form of technology and AAC (M. King et al., 2014). Furthermore, there has been an increase in the use of mobile technology for teaching and learning, particularly in the area of special education and as AAC for individuals with ASD. With the current widespread availability of portable hardware, such as iPads, running specialized AAC applications, new opportunities now exist for AAC users with ASD. Applications such as, "First-Then," "MyChoiceBoard," and "PicCalendar," may also provide support for organization and enhance the efficiency of simple functions, such as choice making (Desai et al., 2014). Applications are often easily obtainable, affordable, customizable, and user-friendly.

Desai, Chow, Mumford, Hotze, and Chau (2014) conducted a study to evaluate the impact of implementing a high-tech AAC device, an iPad with the "GoTalk Now" communication application, in a classroom to a 13 year old student who is nonverbal and diagnosed with cerebral palsy and autism spectrum disorder. Integration of the technology focused on promoting key elements associated with long term AAC usage, targeted training of the student, teacher, educational assistant, and parents, over the course of the school year. The results showed increases in the student's communication skills and non-academic school functioning (Desai et al., 2014). This finding is consistent with that of another study comparing the utility between an iPad communication application, "Pick a Word" and a picture-based system, for five ASD students (Flores et al., 2012) in which communicative behaviors remained the same or increased with iPad use. These findings provide initial support for consid-

ering high-tech augmentative and alternative communication technology in combination with a complete delivery protocol (Mumford, Lam, Wright & Chau, 2014) for students with complex needs, in an education environment.

8. Requesting with the iPad

There is a need to understand that augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) provides many opportunities for children with developmental delays. Early studies have provided preliminary evidence that an iPad as an AAC device has the potential to improve communication and behavior for students with disabilities, especially autism spectrum disorder (Gordon et al., 2011; Kagohara et al., 2010). There is evidence in the literature that utilizing AAC can improve functional communication (Beigel, 2000; Kagohara et al., 2013; M. King et al., 2014; van der Meer et al., 2014) and give children the voice they never had before. Research and clinical practice has shown that AAC systems do not interfere with speech development. In fact, many children demonstrate an increase in language, speech and communication skills once an AAC system is introduced (Cumming et al., 2014; Hill & Flores, 2014; Flores et al., 2012). There have been many studies, such as Simpson, McBride, Spencer, Lowdermilk, and Lynch (2009) and Ganz et al. (2014), which have not only monitored the impact on communication skills but also evaluated the effects of AAC using an iPad in the acquisition of requesting skills, also known as manding (M. King et al., 2014) and interventions on speech production (Cumming et al., 2014; Desai et al., 2014; Kagohara et al., 2013). Even with the wealth of knowledge that most professionals and educators have regarding AAC, there are still many who are unaware of its worth and benefits. Increasing awareness and providing family education about assistive technology and using iPads as ACC will likely increase its use as a communication modality.

According to Flores et al. (2012), it was critical that new forms of AAC were explored and evaluated due to the applications that have become available for personal devices, such as cell phones, MP3 Players, and personal computer tablets. Flores et al. (2012) conducted an empirical study using an alternating treatment design to investigate the utility of the Apple iPad as a viable communication device by comparing the frequency of communication behaviors (requesting preferred snacks)

during conditions in which the iPad and a non-electronic picture-based system (PECS) were used. The study included five elementary school boy students, ages eight to 11 years old, with ASD and developmental disabilities, who attended a university-sponsored extended school year program in the southeastern United States. The descriptive study used event recording to provide additional information regarding the differences in frequency when it comes to requesting using an iPad or PECS with children with ASD and developmental disabilities (Flores et al., 2012). Based on the results of the study, Flores et al. (2012) found that it was mixed. Results showed higher levels of requesting in the iPad condition for three male participants and equal levels of requesting for iPad and PE for the other three male participants. The use of iPads for communication in this study was shown to be preferred by the teachers and students because of the ease of use, less time in preparation, fewer materials required for implementation, and students' increased speed in communication.

Achmadi et al. (2012) investigated the acquisition of a mand repertoire in two males (aged 13 and 17 years old) diagnosed with ASD, using the iPod Touch and the application, "Proloquo2Go" as a SGD. A multiprobe multiple-baseline across participants' design was used that included two intervention phases. The first intervention focused on teaching the students to navigate between two screen pages and complete a multi-step response sequence to request preferred stimuli. The second intervention had a significant aspect by teaching the participants to turn on the device, unlock the screen, and navigate to the appropriate application and screen page, prior to requesting for an item. The training package involved the use of least to-most prompting, differential reinforcement, and backwards chaining. The training procedures were effective at teaching the necessary behavioral chain required for both using the iPod-based speech-generating device to request as well as the device navigation.

Similar results were found in Lorah et al. (2013) study which compared the acquisition and preference of picture exchange with the iPad installed with the application, "Proloquo2Go" as a SGD, in five boys, ages three to five years old, with a diagnosis of ASD. An alternating treatment design and five-second time-delay physical prompting procedure were used to evaluate the communication method in terms of frequency of independent requesting with picture exchange and the iPad-based SGD and device preference. The findings indicated that the iPad produced higher rates of independent requesting compared to picture exchange

for four out of the five of the participants. Additionally, four participants demonstrated a clear preference for the iPad with one participant demonstrating a preference for picture exchange. Results are consistent with previous research showing that acquisition of alternative communication methods varies across children with autism and supports the use of assessment to determine modality preference (Lorah et al., 2013).

There is a need to understand that non-verbal children with autism are candidates for augmentative and alternative communication (AAC). The primary drawbacks of past AAC devices were their expense and portability; however, the newer iPod-based VOCAs alleviate these concerns (Strasberger & Ferreri, 2014). Strasberger and Ferreri (2014) investigated the acquisition of requesting by using an iPod-based SGD and a peer assisted communication application (PACA) training to teach children with autism more sophisticated communication skills. The participants were four boys, ages 5.8 to 12.11 years old, and had a diagnosis of ASD. The study used a multiple baseline across participants design, using the iPod Touch, installed with the application, "Proloquo2Go" as the SGD to evaluate the effectiveness of the training package. The results indicated that all four male participants were able to use the iPod based SGD for some communicative purposes, and three of the participants acquired the ability to independently request or respond in a complete sentence, using the device and a two-step sequence to respond to the questions, "What do you want?" and "What is your name?"

Van der Meer et al. (2014) conducted a study looking at a preference-enhanced communication intervention and development of functional communication (e.g., requesting), in addition to social communicative functions in a 10 year old boy with ASD. The case study emphasized that the appropriate use of intervention strategies were needed to allow for the development of a range of communicative functions beyond expressing basic wants and needs. The results indicated that the student's preferred AAC system was the iPad-based SGD and that the student had learned to use functional communication with an iPod and iPad-based speech-generating device, picture exchange, and manual signing to request preferred items with a structured behavioral intervention in place, but had difficulty in using these AAC systems for spontaneous and socially oriented functions of communication (van der Meer et al., 2014). The preference-enhanced communication intervention provided an efficient method for clinicians to access choice and indicate that giving students the opportunity to select their most preferred

AAC system positively influences progress in learning to communicate and maintain these newly acquired skills (van der Meer et al., 2014; Kagoghara et al., 2012).

Furthermore, Couper et al. (2014) compared manual signs and picture exchange with the iPod Touch or iPad installed with the application, "Proloquo2Go" as a SGD, in nine boys ages four to eight years old, with a diagnosis of ASD, in terms of acquisition rate and device preference. Intervention was evaluated in a non-concurrent multiple-baseline across participants and alternating treatments design that consisted of a 10 second prompt-delay, using a least-to-most prompting procedure, to evaluate the different types of augmentative and alternative communication. Results showed that five out of the nine male participants acquired the ability to request using all three methods of AAC, while two participants acquired the ability to request only using picture exchange and the iPod Touch or iPad. Two participants did not acquire a mand repertoire with any of the devices, however eight children demonstrated a preference for the SGD. The findings of this study support previous studies that demonstrate children with ASD can learn manual signs, picture exchange, and an iPad/iPod based SGD to request preferred stimuli. Couper et al. (2014) noted that the acquisition of requesting on an AAC device may be quicker when learning a preferred option with some children.

Achmadi et al. (2014) conducted a study replicating Couper et al. (2014) in terms of experimental design and procedures, but extends by providing intervention to four new children and by including longer-term maintenance checks. Their study investigated the acquisition of manual sign, picture exchange, and the iPod Touch installed with the application, "Proloquo2Go" as a speech-generating device, to request the continuation of toy play. The participants included four boys, ages four to five years old, diagnosed with a developmental disability, in which three had ASD. An alternating treatment design with graduated guidance was used in this study. Additionally, long-term follow-up data was collected at 12, 15, and 18 months post-intervention. The results showed that three participants acquired the ability to request for continued toy play using all three AAC systems, with picture exchange and the iPod Touch SGD occurring at a faster rate than manual signing, while one participant acquired only picture exchange. During follow-up the participants demonstrated greater maintenance for both picture change and the SGD; while demonstrating preference for the iPod Touch. The findings suggest there may be value in assessing a child's preference for

different AAC options as part of the post-intervention follow-up process (Achmadi et al., 2014).

Finally, King, Takeguchi, Barry, Rehfeldt, Boyer, and Matthews (2014) used a multiple probe design across participants to determine if children with ASD can acquire skills necessary to request preferred items on the iPad with the “Proloquo2Go” application with phases adapted from PECS. The study used three children, ages three to five years old, from the same Pre-K classroom in a school located in the Midwest of the United States. The children were diagnosed with an autism spectrum disorder by outside professionals using the ADOS, ADI-R, and direct observation. M. King et al. (2014) investigated two research questions: (1) When using a picture-based communication system adapted from the PECS framework and customized for the iPad using the “Proloquo2Go” application, will participants acquire requesting skills? And (2) Will participants increase the frequency of vocal requests following implementation of the iPad with the “Proloquo2Go” application in comparison to baseline?

Based on the results of the study, M. King et al. (2014) found that their hypothesis was supported and that children diagnosed with ASD can acquire skills needed to request preferred items using the iPad with the “Proloquo2Go” application with training of a picture-based communication system. In addition, vocal requesting increased for all the three participants during the training phases in comparison to baseline probes. According to M. King et al. (2014), this study provides preliminary empirical evidence for the use of the iPad with the “Proloquo2Go” application to establish a requesting repertoire for children with ASD in an area with limited empirical support but increasing use. The findings from this study are important because it shows that pre-existing teaching mechanisms (i.e., PECS) can be modified and adapted to new technology (e.g., iPad with the “Proloquo2Go” application) when using instructional procedures founded in the principles of applied behavior analysis (Cooper et al., 2007; M. King et al., 2014).

9. Summary

Advancements in technology in junction to the influence of learning is life changing. Assistive technology maximizes the school environment by enhancing the functional performance of students with autism (espe-

cially males) by allowing them to participate and complete tasks they would have not otherwise been able to complete (Gordon et al., 2011; Manikam et al., 2014). This manuscript found the following key aspects regarding the integration of the iPad into the ASD classroom, across the four domains of: (1) a preferred choice of AT for students, teachers, and parents, (2) reducing challenging behaviors, (3) teaching academic skills, including using applications or video modeling, and (4) use as augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) device, including requesting, which all showed positive results and increased success when assistive technology, specifically an iPad, was implemented with students with autism spectrum disorder into their school setting. While this review of literature revealed that iPads provide exciting and positive opportunities and benefits for technological support to males and females with ASD in the classroom, additional research is necessary to further support the effectiveness and guide the iPad implementation process.

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Harasankar Adhikari

Monihar Co-operative Housing Society (India)

Media Using Women's Body as a tool of Consumersim: A Study on Women in Event Management in India

ABSTRACT. This study explored how young women of different ages were using their body or image as sex object or sex commodity for an employment and role of media which were promoting the female body as erotic capital or as sex commodity, and its effect. Was there any relation of it with rampant violence against women in India? And would employment of women rightly promote gender equity and justice in the society when the women were reshaping or striping themselves as commodity? For this purpose, 100 girls/women between the ages of 16-25 years of Kolkata-India who were in event management were selected purposively. Data collected on their socio-economic and educational profile, causes of choosing this work, process of recruitment, description of their job profile, working hours, use of their earning and their own feeling to be associated with this work. Qualitative Data also collected about their amusement and hazard/obstacles they faced in this work. Structured interview schedule and individual as well as group interaction were also used. This study revealed that media as male gazing profession was exploiting women's body as commodity. Women/girls chose it to fulfill their needs and demands in consumerised society. The beauty and soft skill used to use for promoting businesses. It changed their life choices and life styles which was a competition with males. Their changing attitude and behavior did not support gender justice and equity. This profession did not facilitate their empowerment. But it was a new tactics of male dominance and gender deprivation. It might be an impediment of their equal rights.

KEYWORDS: media using, women's body, consumerism, India

1. Introduction

'Women are not born but made' (Rich, 1996) through traditionally construction of gender and gender practices. The men's and women's behavior is ingrained, reflecting innate and essential difference between the sexes. The anatomical and physiological characteristics signify sex as maleness and femaleness. Social construction of gender as masculine and feminine depends on cultural practices of a particular society at

a particular time (Bevoure, 1948). The 'gender system' underpins the particularly a system of male dominance, legitimized within family and society through rights, privileges, authority and power. The production and reproduction relations have been separated the activities as performed by both genders in a family as well as society (Bevoure, 1948). Historically, the property rights and the emergence of marriage institution had been transformed the women as men's property. The female lives were trapped within the realm of reproduction under patriarchal rule (Angels, 1948). The women's identity is till considered as 'the second sex' (Bevoure, 1948) and generally almost in every society women's body treats as sex commodity in patriarchal sexual lenses. Thus, it is prime hindrance of inequality and violence against women.

From this paradigm, various social and economic movements take places throughout the globe for women's equity and justice. But emancipation of women and their equality would be earned when they would take part in production on large social scale and domestic duties would be a minor (Angels, 1948). So, meaningful employment(paid) and female education are strategically significant to enhance the social standing of a woman in the household and the society (Sen, 1999.). It minimizes their role of housekeepers when they work outside. It permits their freedom in certain aspects which were not permissible to them earlier. The free mixing with man, self-decision making in selecting marital partner and participation in decision making process in family and work place, capability to handle finance according to their own will, and political empowerment, so forth are some significant changes. In spite of these radical/gradual changes in women's private and public lives, physical and sexual violence are rampant in Indian society. Tactically, they are trapped in new form within the realm of male domination due to their involvement in male gazing fields (Geetha, 2002). Might it be the prime cause of violence? So, it might be pointed out that there is a relationship between consumerism and women's body as sex commodity.

Undoubtedly, globalization is a driving force in making goods and services previously out of reach in developing countries like India much more. Global cultural bound syndrome influences particularly consumerism. A "consumer class" was born and it was about 1.7 billion people worldwide belong to this class, out of which 120 million in India. It changes the lifestyle and life choices of people irrespective of their age and gender (National Geographic News, 2013).

The advertisement and entertainment industries (print, electronic/tele-media in different forms) are in market sensitization as well as promotion of consumerism where brands of consumer goods play an important role in forming a consumer's self-identity (Smith, 1982). The problem with consumerism is that it makes the pursuit of happiness more difficult. The goal of consumerism is to keep the consumer wanting to purchase more goods. Nowadays, consumption is a way of life (Banles, 1992). Women's bodies are not being escaped from it. Images of female body are largely promoting consumption of fashion, appliances, food, travel or cosmetics. It also influences the women/girls to step in the glamour world because they would earn name, fame and money easily to meet their needs and demands in present consumers' world. Women's body is used either to promote consumerism or to be consumed. The female form is presented as a commodity. It is depersonalized and presented only to signify consumption or as consumable commodity. In essence, body is socially constructed as commodity. Its presentation is in such a way as to include desire. The commodification co-opts the female body from the social subjects to whom it belonged, strips it of any subjectivity, and presents it as an object, as the signifier of consumption (Clammer, 1995). The relationship between consumption and the commodified female body in India is derided. Commodities from cars to cokes, shoe polish to nail polish display with young women close by signaling availability and sexuality. The sexuality of women's bodies becomes split off and reattached to a whole host of commodities reflective of a consumer culture. Cars, cokes, etc become a form of sexuality, a means of access to one's own and/or another's body. Young women's bodies are exploited by the media as consumable signs of consumption; their sexuality becomes in separable bonded to consumers' items. The use value of the female body is subordinated to its exchange value. It is an important advertising tool. The system of business is based on commodification of human being on a mission to commodify "everything and everyone" (Clammer, 1995).

Cathrine Hakim (2010) refers women's body and images as erotic capital in her 'theory of erotic capital'. Sex appeal, beauty, and physical and social attractiveness that increase a man or woman's popularity to all members of his or her society, particularly to the opposite sex are the component of erotic capital. She lists the various elements that comprise erotic capital, including sexual attractiveness, social skills and liveliness. Some behaviour enabled by one's sexual attractiveness, for instance, may prove to be ownership-relevant insofar as they facilitate or secure

economic realization of labour power held by one, e.g. help to get a lucrative job, or a pay hike, etc. Thus, it is common to see in public spaces erotic pictures of the female body as a commodified product (Bordo, 1999; Dotson, 1999). Her aim is to sell herself successfully on the market... her body, his mind, and his soul are her capital (Erich, 1955).

Max Weber viewed "society based on knowledge", to wit, science, there may coexist simultaneously plethora of deeply irrational phenomena, such as a range of cults: beauty, body and youth. Of course, these are not spontaneous creations-the whole industry operates through a variety of media to impose a commodified image of the female body, which engenders an obsession of attaining that "ideal" female face (Geetha, 2002). The commodified female body is deemed incomplete unless she or rather her face is "painted" with makeup and the body donned with the "right" clothes, shoes, and accessories, such as bags. Beauty and fashion products are marketed to make a women believe that whatever they are selling will enhance her look and make her feel better about herself (Geetha, 2002).

However, women's employment status increases statistically. It might be a result of changing dynamics of women's movement and women's education. In employment sectors, women become a part of work culture because female sexualization is an integral part of work-based relations. We get a description of historical sex-typing of job in Bradley's (1989) study and Stanko (1988) argued that women's occupations are habitually sexualized, while Gherardi (1995) explains how conventional feminized jobs demand sexual skills and labour. We find that women's work on the hotel and leisure industry, where female attractiveness has mentioned as an indicator of eligibility in the job description and specific uniforms and appearance is an intrinsic part of job recruitment, selection and continued employment reported similar finding in a retail Company (Adkins, 1995; Cockburn 1991). Some other studies in various official labour markets noted similar process of the exploitation of female sexuality for profit. (Benet, 1972; Pringle, 1988). Their jobs as secretaries, waitresses (Crang, 1994; Fine, 1996; Hall, 1993; Spradley & Mann, 1975), beauty care professional (Sharma & Black, 2002; Oerton & Phoenix, 2001; O'Toole, 2003; Furman, 1997; Gimblin, 1996), air hostesses (Hochschild, 1983; Tyler & Abbott, 1998), newsreaders and booksellers (Woolf, 1990), nursing and other 'caring' professions (James, 1989; O'Brien, 1994; Treweek, 1996), and female professionals (McDowell, 1997; Rees, 1992). Above studies reflected how the commodification of the female body is reproduced a workplace relations, especially in the service and care economy. Wom-

en's body is used as integral part of various offer. In present global context, where personal relationships have been restructured in terms of emotional needs (Giddens, 1992), sexuality is defined as a cultural product and practice which determine the structure of economic relations in official modes of production.

Thus, the present paper explored how young women of different ages were using their body or image as sex object or sex commodity for an employment and role of media which were promoting the female body as erotic capital or as sex commodity, and its effect. Was there any relation of it with rampant violence against women in India? This paper also attempted to find out the answer of above question. Thirdly, would employment of women rightly promote gender equity and justice in the society when the women were reshaping or striping themselves as commodity?

2. Methods

In this global era, various avenues of employment (especially service sector industries which are originated and expended due to growing consumerism and explosion of middle class in Indian society extends its benevolent wings to absorb new specialized human resources. Media and advertisement are important sectors serving as weapon of market and marketing of products differently. It basically uses three aspects (i) Female body as sex object in this consumers' world, (ii) Limerence—an emotional state of being in love and it is a desire for more than sex and a desire in which the sexual act may represent the greatest happiness. It is a mental activity which interprets events. It calls love "a beautiful experience"—the support and companionship of a member of the opposite sex are very important aspect. Any product that promises the limerent man or woman a better likelihood of achieving limerent aims has an enormous market. The item and services that attract people beautify themselves have potential demand. The business of cosmetics, shampoos and hair colouring, diets, exercise programmes, clothing and other consumer items, including gifts to limerent objects—books, jewelry, flowers and so forth (Tannov, 1979), and (iii) Neuro-marketing—is a provocative aspect of business which is clearly in an embryonic state. It is an emerging interdisciplinary field that combines psychology, neuroscience and economics (Lee et. al., 2007). It uses the brain to determine all consumer behaviors. Thus, the style of publicity is innovative and it is the combination of female body, limerence and brain.

One such avenue is event management- a form of marketing and advertising (area of this study), is a glamorous and thrilling field. It is an exciting and growing industry, a unique career for people who have a passion for planning and organising events. A good social network and the zeal to do something unusual are key to this industry. Event management companies nowadays hire lots of young people, especially women at their tender age. The event management groups use to organize glamorous parties, weddings and celebrities. This is an attractive job to the young women/girls because it provides orientation as passage of entrance to the glamour world. It is an avenue for part time earning with an exposure of recreation and relaxation. Certainly, this is an attractive avenue to the females of younger age. Physique, beauty, sexual attractiveness and soft skills are main qualities of eligibility to this sector. These components are used for marketing promotion in different modes. The payment and hours of work are flexible and but it is according to the employers' need and demand.

For the purpose of this study, 100 female of 16-25 years of age were randomly selected and they were familiar as event management employees. These informants were both rural and urban residents. They were basically involved in market promotional activities of different products, corporate parties and etc. They were recruited through different event management groups of Kolkata Metropolis, West Bengal, India. Data collected on their socio-economic and educational profile, causes of choosing this work, process of recruitment, description of their job profile, working hours, use of their earning and their own feeling to be associated with this work. Qualitative Data also collected about their amusement and hazard/obstacles they faced in this work. Structured interview schedule and individual as well as group interaction were used to gather information regarding their job. Thereafter, it was processed and interpreted duly.

3. Result

3.1. Profile of Women Informants

The informants of this study were from various religious and educational backgrounds. At the same time, their parental economy and family size were also different. From the table 1, researcher found that 70% of them were from urban area and about one third of them were from rural inhabitants.

Table 1. Demographic profile of the female informants associated with event management groups

Parental occupational background according to their residential pattern	Educational background and family size												Total
	After high school education-dropped as a status of single child			After high school education-dropped as a status of only girl child (out of 2 or 3) (n, %)			Under graduate/post graduate/technical education as a status of single child (n, %)			Under graduate/post graduate/technical education as a status of only girl child (out of 2 or 3) (n, %)			
	Hindu (n, %)	Muslim (n, %)	Chris- tian (n, %)	Hindu (n, %)	Muslim (n, %)	Chris- tian (n, %)	Hindu (n, %)	Muslim (n, %)	Chris- tian (n, %)	Hindu (n, %)	Muslim (n, %)	Chris- tian (n, %)	
	<i>Urban</i>												
Public/private sectors job (single parent)	4(4)	-	2(2)	5(5)	1(1)	2(2)	8(8)	-	3(3)	3(3)	-	1(1)	29 (29)
Public/private sectors job (both parents)	2(2)	-	1(1)	2(2)	-	2(2)	5(5)	1(1)	2(2)	3(3)	1(1)	2(2)	21 (21)
Business (single parent)	2(2)	-	-	1(1)	-	1(1)	1(1)	-	2(2)	2(2)	-	1(1)	10 (10)
Business (both parents)	-	-	1(1)	-	-	1(1)	2(2)	1(1)	2(2)	1(1)	-	2(2)	10 (10)
<i>Rural</i>													
Public/private sectors job (single parent)	1(1)	-	1(1)	2(2)	-	1(1)	2(2)	-	2(2)	1(1)	-	2(2)	12 (12)
Public/private sectors job (both parents)	2(2)	-	1(1)	2(2)	-	-	2(2)	-	1(1)	2(2)	1(1)	-	11 (11)
Business/agriculture & allied (single parent)	-	-	-	2(2)	-	-	1(1)	-	-	1(1)	-	-	4 (4)
Business/agriculture & allied (both parents)	-	-	-	2(2)	-	-	-	-	-	1(1)	-	-	3 (3)
Total	11 (11)	-	6 (6)	16 (16)	1 (1)	7 (7)	21 (21)	2 (2)	12 (12)	14 (14)	2 (2)	8 (8)	100 (100)

Altogether 17% of them were single child and 24% of them were only girl in their family who were dropped out in their high school. On the other part, 35% and 34% of the informants were single child and only girl child respectively who were under graduate/post graduate or having their technical/professional education. Here, it was revealed that majority of them was schooled in English medium/convent education background. So, their soft skill and other aspects of personality were extra quality to join the event management groups. Out of 70% of the informants of urban inhabitants, 29% informants' one parent was in public/private sector jobs and 21% informants' both parents were in same categories jobs. It was found that 10% each of their single parent and both parents were business respectively. The finding also showed that their parental as well as family education was better off. So, their engagement in earning sector during their education period was not so essential to manage themselves. But their attitude towards self-dependent was prime influential factor for this part time job. We found that only 12% of the informants' single parent of rural inhabitants was public/private sectors' employees and 11% of their both parents were in same sectors. And 4% of their single parent were business/agriculture and allied services. The statistic showed that 3% of their both parents were in same trades. Overall observation showed that their parental economy was better off and it facilitated their education and self decision making in relation to career also. In this study, representation of Hindu was highest (62%). But only 5% of them were Muslim. So, there was social or gender barriers in the Muslim community still existed.

3.2. Relationship Between Preference of Selecting of this Profession and Process of Recruitment

The female informants of this study were not stricken with the burden of patriarchy because their families were progressive for girl's education and they were not deprived of gender discrimination in their family so far as their up-bringing was concerned. They were not victims of traditional social customs i.e. non-schooling and early marriage, etc. They were not the liability to their parents. Their parental investment for their grown up was not a burden or hindrance.

These girls/women were trying to be self-reliant financially and that's why, they chose job during their study. But the glamour world was more

influential and attractive to them. They tried to be associated with glamour world and their preparedness for career in glamour world was thus significant because it was an easy path of earning name, fame and money.

a) Event Management as Part Time Jobs with Amusement:

We found that girls did not prefer to stay long in education and they chose part time jobs because uncertain job markets. They preferred job training. Part time jobs provided dual scopes of orientation to current job markets and management of their daily expense by their own. According to them, it reduces their parental dependency.

Participation in event management was a part time job. It was mainly time bound assignment for few hours in a day. Again it did not offer regular assignment. Sometimes, the assignment was for two or more days either in their locality or outside.

From this study, we find that informants had chosen this job for part time earning and amusement purpose. Thereafter, they shared that it was a good platform for up-gradation of their soft skills and competencies to revitalize their interactional level in different situation. This interaction was targeted to connect with rich and glamorous segment of society with an expectation of better career in future.

Their earning was limited within Rs. 200-400/- per day event including some other facilities of food and transport from work place to residence.

b) Process of Recruitment:

They recruited in this profession through a network of their peer/friends and college seniors. Sometimes, the recruiters were hosting programme in their colleges or outside and they were usually selected through their performance in different events (cultural).

c) Nature of their Performed Job and Working Hours:

The job was basically sale/marketing promotion, hosting of cultural events in different Medias and corporate or personal parties. The informants usually performed the role of anchor, attendant, and service providers (i.e. serve drink, food, etc). The working hours were flexible and it was depending on nature of events. Sometimes, they had to perform till late night and many times, their schedule of work was outside Kolkata (residence) for 2-3 days more.

4. Discussion

4.1. Changing Dynamics of Their Life After Joining to Their Work

After joining into this work, the significant changes observed in their life style and life choices. These changes were prone to beauty care and maintenance of physique, wearing fashionable body revealing dresses and food habits. They also changed their behavioural pattern. According to them, it was due to the needs and demands of their job. They used to enjoy freedom and mobility without any parental restriction and monitoring. Advancement of their soft skills and fashion style were significant aspect of their changing personality/body language. They became talkative and catchy to others. Their addiction to alcohol and smoking were significantly new addition in their daily life. They expressed that it was a medium of mental relief and relaxation from work tension and work hazard. Further, it was a statement of their smartness required in their profession. The free-mixing or peer bonding with opposite sex was the cause of broken love relation and anxiety and threat. Their expectation in life and life style were reshaped matching with the glamour world. The meaning and application of women's freedom which was publicized as feminism were adhered against male's domination and restriction in women's life made by patriarchy. According to them, it was the right direction for achievement of their empowerment.

4.2. Psychology of Imitating Life

Attraction towards the glamour world was the cause of preference of selecting event management. Their imitating behavior reshaped their personal choice and styles. It was particularly according to the particular actress/heroine she was fond off. They followed style in wearing dresses and make up, etc. Gradually, this imitation increased daily and it separated one from other colleagues. Their needs and demands increased also falling of which they used to suffer from depression and anxiety. It influenced to search different paths of earning more through their more involvement and they were connected with more persons in this sector. Their rapport and relation with different persons exploited them otherwise. They lost their judgmental attitude for choice right persons.

Frustration and unhappiness was common syndrome in their life. Then the relationship with boy friend/paramour was another factor of mental tension because their romantic relationship was either instable or changeable which a hindrance of their marriage and marital relation was also.

Involvement into this profession pushed them into a broken relation with their parents and siblings because of their unwanted freedom and liberty. They did not prefer interferences of their senior as guide or their authority/dominance was a prejudice in their changing life style.

4.3. Is Event Management a Meaningful Employment?

A meaningful employment is meant to denote the employment which is based on one's education, skill and intelligence and it shows a significant impact for future progress of particular sector. Particularly, it is the use of intelligence by which both employer and employee have possibility to grow progressively.

In event management, one employee/person's soft skill and beauty are essential qualities and they use to perform their responsibility according to the exact guidance of their employer. There is little scope or chance of application of one's intelligence. It is a show off business based on impression where physique and beauty are prime assets. They expose their body and sex appeal to the audience or crowd with a particular purpose of publicity.

The study showed a relationship between dropped out and part time jobs. They part time jobs hampered their attendance and performance in schools. In this study, about 42% of these informants dropped out at their high school due to their irregularity in classes and poor performance in examination. About 59% completed degrees (graduate and post graduate). Association with event management attracted them to search or to be employed in marketing sectors as receptionist or as market promotional executive. In all cases, their soft skills and beauty were prime assets of politics cashed by their employers.

We observed that their academic interest as well as possession of knowledge in particular subject at higher level of their education did not get any place of application or for their further growth and development (knowledge based). Choosing of event management or related jobs where body and beauty got priority rather than intelligence and remind-

ed that aspiration and expectation of women were low and they cultivated low self-esteem. But their wants were high for aristocratic and lavish life; their wants created consumption and status and identity consumption revealed dissatisfaction. Consequently, it was a process of exploitation and abuse attached with their body and sexuality.

4.4. Media Oriented Life and Struggle

Media uses women's body and sexuality variously for market promotion. Many times, it is unnecessarily. It uses women's body as limerent object to the consumers who might be female also. To male consumers it sells and exhibits women's body and sexuality. The female attracts to the consumable products by which promote another female with particular purpose of being and becoming a sexual object. In case of women in event management were used for both above purposes. They enter into love relation easily which lasts for short while. Sexual exploitation and alteration of partners were common practice among them. Their nuptial relation did not stable due to several factors i.e. unfaithfulness, loose attraction, extra-marital relation.

Thus, they suffer from loneliness and psychosis. This situation is exploited variously. Consequently, their empowerment and independence become a day-dream. Ultimately, they have to keep within the realm of male domination.

4.5. Women's Wrong Perception of Patriarch and Competition with Male

In every society, woman has the being aspect predominating in her nature. Her domestic life is personal and human and this domestic world does not value in terms of market. It measures as the value to love. It is the gift of God to woman. That's why, woman is *pakriti* or object or matter in Indian thought. The difference between man and woman in terms of sex are like white and black balls which differ only in colour. So, man and woman are not copies of each other. But they are mutual supplements.

In this post global era or in the age of digital media, woman is being carried away by the intoxication of power and wrong competition with

male. Empowerment of woman and the movement of justice and equity teach her that her vocation does not lie at home. She is restless. She fears marriage and maturity. But she enjoys the attachment of male and pre-marital sexual activity, while her struggle is against man's monopoly of business. She is seeking employment in media, shops and offices where her body is being used as assets of sexuality. She is trying to imitate man in dress, foods and so forth. But her efforts are making her life artificial and unnatural. Consequently, she is facing physical and sexual violence and exploitation. She imitates to acquire man's character and position in public life.

Media which is managed by man is responsible for the unrest of women. Ultimately, this affair is making women's world thinner. Tactically, man puts obstacles and hindrances in the way of women's' empowerment. It has broken the balance between man and woman.

6. Conclusion

Now we live in a media gazing society. Further, media is mostly a male gazing profession. The global circumstances change the definition/parameter of happiness or satisfaction in daily lives. The media as well as advertisement guides our choices and style of life from good morning to good night. The world becomes a platform of competition among individuals, societies and countries. This situation promotes a wanted created and identity consumption (Smith, 1982). The name, fame and money /wealth are key tools of individuals' status and values. It might be a cause of greed and violence where values and moralities are less important qualities of human being.

The changing scenario creates needs and demands of specialists or experts in various fields of everyday life. Event management or media based promotion is such a growing field where women/girls are gazed by men because men are using women's body, beauty and soft skills for this trade.

In this study, it was revealed that women/girls of their tender age were entering into this profession for earning their name, fame and money. It was more lucrative profession to the urban girls/women (70%) than the rural girls/women because of its scope and availability in urban market. Their up-bring processes showed that they were not typically victims of patriarchal dominance. In addition to this, their pa-

rental attitude and economic background supported to break the gender disparity in their family. They rightly accepted that education and independent income would be key supportive factors of their empowerment and gender justice in the society. But they did not choose the meaningful employment (Sen, 1999) In the job of event management, they had to perform the duty of public care and so forth. They just followed to perform according to the advice of their employees. Even they had to dress according to the need and demand of the particular corporate/function who assigned the jobs. Working hours and payment and other aspects were also in same nature. The profession had not offered good packages. But it provoked to extend support for a better future in media. The nature and practices in this profession were influential to change their attitude and behavioural habits in their daily life. Thereafter, their life choices and style were reshaped which was ambitious pattern and it was obviously a general feature of media world. In this profession, they had to face various harassments i.e. psychological, physical and sexual. Their life style taught a wrong education about women's justice and right and it was a competition with male. But any competition never brings equality. In competition only one would be won the race. The event management as a male gazing profession used to use the women's body as commodity and it was the key assets of their business. Key actors of this profession use the women as erotic capital for their trade. Women's greed to enjoy name, fame and money are the cause of new type of exploitation and they are in new realm of male's dominance. The merit and judgmental power of women could only be successfully saved them from males' tactics. In feminist movement and movement for gender justice the above aspect should give proper importance to save women/girls.

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Marcin Gierczyk

University of Silesia in Katowice (Poland)

Gifted Education in the Light of Gender Issue

ABSTRACT. Today, three out of a million people are identified to be gifted (Montgomery, 2003, p. 1) and without any doubt discovering potential capabilities of individuals *does not happen overnight*. Therefore, globalization, technological advancement, urbanization contribute to the growth of interest in the problems of education of gifted individuals and of using their potential for the development of modern societies. It raises the question, whether gender affects perception and quality of the education of gifted ones. The answer, of course, is conditioned historically and culturally, but today we can say that not gender itself, but rather related stereotypes determine approaches of the teachers to gifted people. It is not always conscious or deliberate (Steele & Aronson, 1995; Mazurkiewicz, 2005; Turska, 2009; Nisbet, 2010). This article presents the general problems of gifted education referring to gender and is based on existing publications and research carried out in this field by many experts dealing with those issues.

KEYWORDS: gender, intelligence, education, giftedness

1. Gifted Education

Intensification of the changes that are taking place in modern societies—initiated in the 70', and linked to technological development, urbanization, globalization and modernization contribute to the systematic growth of interest in the field of education of gifted individuals and using their potential. Thus, almost every country, in response to the educational needs of children, create academic policies comprising of the appropriate programs to support social, emotional and physical development of the students. They are designed to equalize educational opportunities and to allow students to develop their full intellectual potential. These programs are created to enable young people to gain the skills necessary for social interaction in the modern world. Therefore, the priority is to create systems focused on educating and supporting talented students and providing systematic psychological provisions.

Educating includes wide variety of pedagogical phenomena such as teaching, which is managing the process of learning connected with ab-

sorbing information and skills as well as educating intellectually nd, what is the most important, developing cognitive skills (mainly the skill of thinking) and forming cognitive attitudes (Palka, 2006, p. 8). The educational system comprises of the activities of interconnected institutions dealing with spreading the education, direct and indirect educating, which enables individuals to gain general and professional education and create possibility for comprehensive personality development (Szczepański, 1989, p. 9). Gifted education also known as Gifted and Talented Education is a broad term for special practices, procedures and theories used in education of children who have been identified as gifted or talented. It can be understood in terms of specialised educational services, where quality is not dependent on the form of education. We can distinguish two systems of gifted education: *School system* of gifted education, which consists of legal and organisational solutions that might be implemented in working with gifted students like co-working with external entities (foundations, cultural institutions, etc.), creating conditions for the development of individual needs of gifted students (creating systems within schools, using innovative practical solutions, e.g. pedagogical experiments). The system also includes a number of aspects, which have to be taken into account. They are as follows: (a) potential barriers and problems in the functioning of the individual elements associated with gifted education working methods and tools used in working with gifted students, (b) methods of psychological and educational support of gifted students, (c) qualifications and professional experience of teachers (development and vocational training), (d) perception of gifted pupil by teachers (problems / sources of successes in working with gifted students), (e) perception of gifted pupil by peers in the classroom. And *outside school* system of gifted education which is being implemented in the selected school institutions. They determine the forms and systems of support for talented students themselves, regardless of school, although with a frequent cooperation.

2. Definitions and Concepts of Giftedness

For the three decades, governments of many countries have been employing the concepts such as gifted, highly gifted, highly capable, extremely capable and talented, wherein the term gifted is itself the most commonly used one. Barry Teare notified to the Special Commis-

sion of House of Commons in England' some of the 120 definitions and titles for use on a global scale' (Lambert, 2010, p. 1). Professor Joan Freeman also pointed that there are at least 100 definitions, emphasising that the reason for this diversity is the fact that "the way you define a very talented child depends on what you are looking for in him" (Freeman, 2005, p. 81). The National Association is currently postulating one of the most frequently quoted definitions of giftedness for Gifted Children:

Gifted individuals are those, who demonstrate outstanding levels of aptitude (defined as an exceptional ability to reason and learn) or competence (documented performance or achievement in top 10% or rarer) in one or more domains. Domains include any structured area of activity with its own symbol system (e.g. mathematics, music, language etc.) and/or set of sensorimotor skills (e.g. painting, dance, sports) (NAGC, 2010).

What should be taken into account is the fact that a number of different environmental, psychological and genetic factors influences the development of skills, abilities and talent. It is indicated by the number of abilities. Nowadays, there are many concepts of giftedness such as: The Tree-ring conception by Joseph Renzulli also referred to as Enrichment Triad Model; Gifted Model by Frank Monks; Theory of Multiple Intelligences by Howard Gardner; Wisdom Intelligence and Creative Synthesized by Robert J. Sternberg; The Pyramid of Talented Development by Joane Piirto; Differentiated Model of Giftedness and Talent by Francoys Gagne; etc. In the literature, one can encounter its extensive analysis and descriptions (Limont, 2010; Freeman, 2005; Kaufman & Sternberg, 2008; Giza, 2011; Dyrda, 2012; Moon & Dixon, 2015) thus, there is no need to describe them in this article. What seems to be worth mentioning, though, is the fact that each of the concepts is a vision of an author's beliefs (Sternberg, 2004). Most of the gifted theories are built on the already existing ones, as it is shown, for instance, in the Monks model. It was created and expanded with additional components based on the Renzulli concepts—which in a sense, were a reflection of the current state of research on talent (Kaufman & Sternberg, 2008, p. 79). Today, undoubtedly it is not only the intelligence affects the development of talent. It is widely known that environment and the inner motivation plays an important role as well. The concepts are an important part of understanding the functioning of individuals and are able to help in their identification. Additionally, choosing one of the giftedness concepts has a big influence on educational practice (Kaufman & Sternberg, 2008, p. 80).

3. Gender Intelligence

Intelligence and accompanying abilities to comprehend, to learn and to use that knowledge in everyday life are indispensable elements of human nature. They vastly determine our social affiliation (Gierczyk, & Dobosz, 2014). There are significant differences between a male and a female brain, the most important organ of the human body, which, among other things, is responsible for intellectual functions related to learning and memory. As a result, we have widely perceived different ways of behaving and held predispositions. Women typically have more empathy, higher ability to cooperate and better developed language skills, while men have better manual dexterity, have a better orientation in a field and cope easier with the problems of mathematical or geometric nature (Laino, 2015). Women are able to store more irrelevant and incidental information related to a given situation for a short periods of time. Men manage it only when the information has got a cohesive form or specific meaning (Moir & Jessel, 1993, p. 18). While man's brain gives him an advantage in dealing with objects and theoretical affirmations, the brain of a woman is organized in a way to be able to respond to all sensory stimulations. Women perform better in all tests of verbal skills. They are better adapted to receive a wider range of sensory information, to combine this information with each other and recognize the relationship between them, to place emphasis on the relationship between people and communication processes. Cultural influences may intensify these strengths of women, but their advantage in these areas is innate (Moir & Jessel, 1993, p. 17). On the other hand, Richard Nisbett (2010, p. 48) states that, although over the years the intelligence had been seen exclusively as the domain of men, in the nineteenth century, scientists began to wonder about the rightness of this thesis, seeking for answers in science and human physiology. Research conducted at the end of the century did not show definite conclusion drawn on this subject. It is likely that despite the many differences in brain structure, intelligence quotient in both genders is similar and various studies show only small differences that are subject to environmental and social circumstances, e.g. unequal access to education.

According to Richard Lynn (1994), intelligence is, apart from the power of motivation and effective learning, a key determinant of performance in academic exams. She notes that the differences in the results of these exams can be translated into expectations for the degree of

intelligence, according to which, men should have a greater degree of intelligence than women. R. Lynn argues, however, that the women's worse results may have resulted from a lower number of female students and the prejudices of male examiners to women, who take their exams. This, however, cannot be taken into consideration, if it is about the tests at the University of Cambridge and Oxford, where students do not sign their papers by name, but by the initials or specially assigned number that helps in their further identification. Lynn also notes that the mathematical, spatial and motor abilities can be translated into better exam results of the subjects in which these abilities are important, e.g. Mathematics, Physics, Engineering. However, a lack of tasks typical for those subjects in commonly available intelligence tests combined with a difference in the results of examinations in relation to the results of women may suggest that men have better-developed intelligence than women (Lynn, 1994, pp. 269-270).

Despite the number of research, we have not yet managed to establish clearly and unequivocally, whether men are more intelligent than women. One study carried out in 2007 suggested that women at the older age receive an average of 2-4 IQ points more than men (Keith, Patel, Reynolds & Ridley, 2011, p. 512), while the other study, conducted in 2011 by Flynn and Rossi-case showed that men and women receive approximately identical results in a IQ scale points (Flynn & Rossi-Casé, 2011, p. 799).

Richard Haier together with his assistants conducted the research, which proved that men and women apparently achieve similar results on IQ tests using different areas of the brain. It suggests that there is no single neuroanatomical structure responsible for intelligence and that different brain structures may have equivalent intellectual performance (Haier et al., 2005, p. 320), which may explain why male and female brains, although different in structure, can function similarly and in equally efficient manner. It is difficult to unequivocally determine the definition of intelligence and the ideal way to measure it—people differ on issues of cognitive and adaptive skills, and their level of intellect may vary depending on the environmental and social situation.

It is difficult to determine criteria that have an impact on assessment of intelligence. The question is how the amount of them should be measured. There are several dozen theories and scientific studies, which deal with the concept of intelligence in various ways and take into account its various issues, but they are often discrepant (Neisser et al., 1996, p. 77).

Experts are basically unanimous about the fact that intelligence includes the ability to abstract thinking, problem solving and learning. As it was stated by Nisbet (2010, p. 14), “the overwhelming majority of experts believe that the elements of intelligence are also memory and fast thinking, and just over half of them include in their definitions of the term—general knowledge and creativity”. According to that analysis, the differences in brain structure between men and women are not so significant, and different behaviours of both genders stems from environmental influences and stereotypes, according to which scientific activity was considered the domain of men (Stein, 1996, p. 255).

In the history, a woman's place was usually at home with her husband. The husband, who was often the sole breadwinner had most of the fiscal authority and made decisions about woman's rights. Due to the social circumstances and the impossibility to exert significant influence in a world dominated by men, many women adapted to the prevailing conditions by abandoning hope to change their life situation (Gierczyk & Dobosz, 2014).

It is difficult to give an unambiguous answer to the question of whether women's intelligence always equalled men's or perhaps strengthened in the process of evolution as a tool of defence against the world dominated by men. However, women around the world should have an equal right to obtain education and to have unfettered access to it. Although in many democratic countries, women are treated on an equal footing with men, in the third world regions they are still denied access to education and forbidden from participating in public life. The activities of organizations such as United Nations, Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, which fight against all forms of discrimination against women and girls, and the levelling out of the men's and women's rights (UN Women, 2015), show how important it is to fight stereotypes and eliminate social differences between the genders including women's equal access to higher education and qualifications, so that their participation in the area of social life could increase, and the women themselves could be conscious and assertive to deal with the problems of everyday life.

4. Gifted, Gender Issues and Stereotypes

Focusing on the issues of gifted students' education, we should look into the issues of gender, the way its perceived and interpreted. Equality as a goal of education is strongly emphasised phenomenon in the 21st

century. Of course concepts of gender equality and the equality of educational, intellectual or professional opportunities are strongly marked by historical and cultural context. Gifted education is a very complex and diverse issue. It has depended almost entirely on intelligence and achievements tests along with non-standardised rating points and checklists to identify all purpose gifted child (Richert, 1991).

Numerous studies are conducted on gender stereotypes issues and their implications on gifted education. Research carried out by Margarita Bianco, Bryn Harris, Dorothy Garrison-Wade and Nancy Leech shows that, "referral recommendations for gifted services were influenced by gender" (Bianco et al., 2011, p. 176). Before moving to further analysis it is worth to refer to the term "gender", which is defined as a "group of attributes, attitudes, social roles and behaviours assigned to a man or a woman by a widely perceived culture" (Pankowska, 2005). According to the abovementioned definition, gender can be associated with the issue of stereotypes.

Gender stereotypes are fixed conceptions or ideas about the abilities of individuals purely based on their gender. One of the stereotypes states that men are competent but not warm, whereas women are warm but not competent. Our awareness of these stereotypes begins as early as in preschool years (Best, 2009). Children at the age of three are likely to seek out their own gender playmates. The inclination only intensifies throughout elementary school. Kelly Lynn Mulvey and Melanie Killen on the basis of conducted research on Resistance and Exclusion Gender Stereotypes confirm that "very early in life, children begin conforming to gender stereotypes and interacting in gender separated social groups. Children's choice of toys and activities arises during the preschool years" (Mulvey & Killen, 2015, p. 681). Teachers and peers can have an influence on gender segregation in playing and other activities. There is also extensive documentation showing that although young children often view adherence to gender norms to be a matter of personal choice (Conry-Murray, 2013), gender stereotypes guide children's preferences for activities, career goals and occupations (Mulvey & Killen, 2015).

Challenging stereotypes can, however, sometimes lead to social isolation. For example, it is less desirable for boys to engage in female activities like playing with dolls, than for girls to challenge male-activities like playing with trucks. We can find exactly the same pattern in adults. Men will encounter more restrictions when choosing activities associated with females, or when given movement is downward. Women will find

that upward movement in status is more difficult than for their male peers. K. Mulvey and M. Killen study found that children desire more flexibility regarding gender group norms and expectations. They are however, concerned about exclusion for example. Although gender stereotypes are solid in our society, children are the ones who have the potential to change it, to challenge it. The research enabled the authors to come to conclusion that "children and adolescents expect that they will challenge stereotypic peer group norms, but that this expectation declines with age" (Mulvey & Killen, 2015, p. 269).

Chen-yao Kao researched on mathematically gifted adolescent females and their feelings about gender stereotypes. He confirms that gender stereotypes awareness starts in the preschool years. Children tend to choose their own gender playmates and this only intensifies the older they get. Gender stereotypes favour males over females in maths and science and thus, they tend to be underrepresented by women. That only discourages gifted girls to master math and pursue math-related professions. However, the study revealed mixed responses to gender stereotypes. They disapproved of the females' lower competence, whereas they agreed on negative stereotypic traits about females and identified with men's qualities like hobbies, sports interests etc. Their interests are more similar to those of gifted boys than to those of average girls (Chen, 2015). Gifted girls are more prone to play with boys in childhood years and to make friends with men without romantic relationships during adolescence and adulthood. What is interesting, most girls in the study liked to make non—romantic friendships with boys and showed hostility to all-girl environments. Kao concluded that these special students are often expected to pursue career equivalent to their abilities, but at the same time they are expected to behave in the manners directed by gender stereotypes. Therefore, mathematically gifted females have mixed feelings towards gender stereotypes. It is a sign of their vulnerability to social maladaptation (Chen, 2015).

There are many barriers girls face and one of them is the biased attitudes of teachers based on gender (Sadker & Sadker, 1994). The most known method of selecting students for gifted programs is teachers' nomination, thus it is crucial to look into their perception of students and their unintentional biases. The study by Margarita Bianco, Bryn Harris, Dorothy Garrison Wade and Nancy Leech (2011) examined which students were nominated for the gifted program and why they were chosen. Study found that teachers' recommendations for gifted services

were influenced by gender. Teachers assigned to read male's profile were more likely to refer him for the gifted program than teachers assigned to read female's profile even though both profiles had the same characteristics. Gender stereotypes and biases can restrict students from reaching their full potential. In order to maximise achievement of gifted girls, teachers and other school professionals need to be aware of their own biases as they consider which students they choose for the gifted programs. Teachers need more training in gender equity to understand how their biases inhibit students and hopefully this will result in equitable opportunities for students to participate in gifted programs (Bianco, Harris, Garrison-Wade & Leech, 2011).

In recent years there was an improvement in girls' scores and that has been related to schools which have a gender equity policy and whole staff support (Freeman, 2004). Researchers are drawn to sex differences in gifted education, even though gifted girls and gifted boys are more alike than different. It results from the fact that small differences in achievements, careers and interests can build up through gender educational practices. Postponing entrance to preschool for boys and denying early admission for girls can cause gifted children to be out of step throughout school. Children can lose the opportunity for challenge, friendship and being a part of a group, if not actively pushed to participate in talent searches, summer or after-school programs. When boys are not supported in choosing creative careers and girls are not supported in their interests in science, maths or engineering, they may choose occupation that will not give them the sense of purpose and meaning they might otherwise had (Kerr, Vuyk & Rea, 2012).

Janis E. Jacobs and Victoria Weisz took and attempt to address the question of "How can educators reduce the negative effects of gender stereotyping on gifted girls". Having conducted the research, they came to the conclusion that the influence of gender-stereotypes on parents' perceptions and children's self-appraisals and expectations for future success in Math may be critical factors for educators to consider (Jacobs, Weisz, 1994, p. 154).

On the other hand, Dorota Turska, basing on her research on the "feeling of self-efficiency in Maths of schoolboys and schoolgirls", emphasises that in Poland "gender of a student plays a significant role in the process of forming the feeling of mathematical competences" (Turska, 2013, p. 112). The research enabled the author to formulate a thesis assuming that the stereotype that Math is a domain reserved for

men constitutes an element of common knowledge in Poland. Such an attitude lowers motivation and limit further educational choices of stigmatised individuals thus constraining their career development. Both Turska's an Jacobs's and Victoria's research prove that stereotypes occurring in the family and school environment imply ways of educating male and female students.

It is worth to mention the characteristics of gifted individuals in relation to genders, which are referred to in the literature on the subject. Below there are some of them:

Gifted Girls: most of the girls who have been identified as gifted started reading in the early ages of their lives. Gifted girls achieve good results in the upper secondary school, however it is not translated into a success in their adult lives. Girls who are particularly gifted at the level of upper secondary school has many problems of emotional nature, which is connected with their romantic experiences (Kerr & Multon, 2015). John Smutny emphasises that the gifted girls are those, who "achieve well but remain blind to their accomplishments; perform poorly despite their high ability and attribute their poor performance to low intelligence; are disinterested in school or achievement and excel socially, sometimes assuming popular leadership in negative ways" (Smutny, 1999). At the same time the author indicates the academic features of gifted girls: reads voraciously and retains what she reads; communicates ideas well both verbally and in writing; possesses superior analytical and conceptual abilities; explores issues from multiple points of view (Smutny, 1999). Gifted girls also are more eager to doubt their abilities and because of that they often become less effective students. Furthermore, they believe that their abilities and skills are inborn and impossible to be changed (Halvorson, 2011).

These particular facts constitute a confirmation of the thesis formulated by Margarita Bianco and her colleagues, which have been already mentioned above, namely the necessity for educating teachers in the field of gender issues. Due to that, they will be able to be more confident in helping students with their problems related to gender stereotypes.

Gifted Boys: Underachievement is a troubling phenomenon when dealing with gifted boys (Kerr & Multon, 2015). It is a situation in which a student does not use their potential to the greatest possible extent (Dyrda, 2010). As Richard Olenchak (2006) states, "gifted boys can have low social self-concepts, are often self-critical and pessimistic, tend to internalize their own concerns, and learn to avoid assistance", which

mainly results from information they receive from their earliest childhood from their parents, peers and the media. Gifted boys need deadlines and active encouragement by counsellors to engage in career assessment and academic planning (Kerr & Multon, 2015).

In the literature on subject it is emphasised that gifted girls and gifted boys are more alike than they are different; small differences become magnified by gendered education. To sum up, as it is states by Jacobs and Weisz, people who support and educate gifted students play a significant roles in their lives, as it is them who form awareness of the influence that the stereotypes have on the way parents perceive their children:

Educators of gifted children can also play a critical role in the lives of the children by educating the parents of these children about the stereotypes people hold regarding gender differences in all ability, about the inaccuracies present in those stereotyped beliefs, and about the potency of those beliefs on parent's interpretation of their own children's abilities and the transmission of those beliefs to their children. Parents' views are swayed by what they perceive as credible sources (Jacobs & Weisz, 1994, p. 154).

They bear a huge responsibility of educating and constant developing themselves and by doing so, helping children. Barbara Kerr and Karen Multon conclude:

Gender and giftedness interact to create challenges for gifted girls and boys throughout the school years. Counselors can promote awareness of gendered educational practices; can provide same-sex groups for counseling about gender relations, academic planning, and career development; and can support gifted students, their parents, and teachers with consulting and counselling (Kerr & Multon, 2015, p. 198).

The abovementioned analysis show that the issue of gender and giftedness is widely discussed in the academic milieu, and the research in this field enables teachers and parents to understand differences in behaviour of boys and girls and their root causes. There is a picture of how stereotypes related to gender influence life and ways of educating gifted students as soon as in the early childhood.

The crucial thesis may be formulated as follows: not a gender itself, but stereotypes determine the education of highly able students. The changes in views concerning stereotypes might be really difficult, as tend to be extremely sticky, and they often make it easier for people to

function, having adopted specific pattern of thinking and acting. As a consequence, it leads to a diminishing cognitive effort and restrain people from experiencing and developing at the same time. Stereotypes are dangerous enough, as they often descend into prejudice, and subsequently into discrimination. Thus, it is worth to conduct research on this specific issue, in order to make people aware of the way the influence our lives.

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Marta Piksa

University of Silesia in Katowice (Poland)

Quality of Life of Homosexual Women in the Context of Their Functioning in Society— Chosen Aspects

ABSTRACT. The paper focuses on social functioning of homosexual women and applies collected data to the construct of life's quality. Aspects that were undertaken are: homosexuals' rights, stigmatization and acts of violence towards lesbians and stereotypes of them. Presented results were collected by the individual cases study that was conducted on eight women. The article also tries to explain factors that can influence the interlocutors' opinions about their social functioning.

KEYWORDS: quality of life, homosexuality, lesbians, society, social functioning

Every person's life consists of numerous contexts such as: family, neighbourhood, education, profession, health, politics and others (Sztompka, 2012, p. 43). Different actions and roles are taken in each of those levels. Scientists agree that the factor that conditions people's behaviour is culture (Sztompka, 2012, pp. 315-320). This multidimensional construct bases on i.a. axionormative system that sets social sanctions, meaning that some acts are rewarded by society and others are punished. Thus, actions that individuals take have influence on how efficient is their functioning in society. Despite people's free will, it is believed that most of them strive to obey compulsory rules of behaviour because of the socialization they had been submitted (Karkowska & Skalski, 2010, p. 187).

The question is: are they content of life they are leading? Research shows that life satisfaction is rather on high level among Poles, 78.3% of us are very pleased or pleased of our existence (Poland. Central Statistical Office of Poland, 2015). Although, that report does not indicate directly why the rest of the population (21.7%) is not satisfied with their lives, it is possible to draw conclusions from presented data. The paper

reveals dimensions of our functioning that influence analysed condition. Poles are the most satisfied with: their relationships with other people, family situation and their place of living. Those aspects determine life satisfaction to a great extent, so it is possible that the shortage of them can cause discontent.

Categories mentioned above are connected with socialization, norms and values, if we think of them from wider perspective. They condition our position and our relations among members of family and society. Depending on message that had been delivered through the whole life, people think of themselves and the others the specific way (Miczyńska-Kowalska, 2012). They have representations of how person of particular sex, social position, profession or age should behave. Thus, our life satisfaction or its lack can partially depends on how precisely we are able to adjust ourselves to requirements of society. If following them is difficult or impossible for individuals, they will undergo negative social sanctions.

The problem of life satisfaction is highly connected with term 'quality of life' (Daszykowska, 2007), which is the category around which I organised my research. Analysed concept has many definitions depending on discipline that investigates its aspects. Nevertheless, there are two main trends researchers base on (Ostasiewicz, 2004). Those are: quality of life as a descriptive and comparative term or quality of life as differences in systems of values and ethical attitudes. While the first one involves subjective opinions of the respondents and objective references to existing data applying to whole population, the second focuses on defining how systems of values influence individuals' life's quality.

Taking into consideration the foregoing guidelines I designed research that focus on a group that does not fit fully to social requirements. This incongruity appears in the area of i.a. gender purpose and undertaken social roles. Mentioned group consists of eight homosexual women. The fact that they are not heteronormative is contrary to sex model that is compulsory in our society, so I decided to diagnose their quality of life in order to find if this construct forms differently than among heterosexuals.

To realise the above statement, it was necessary to chose the first mentioned approach to life's quality, so at the beginning I focused on my respondents' opinions and then I referred them to data presented by: Central Statistical Office of Poland, Public Opinion Research Centre and to important scientific literature of subject of homosexuality.

The research (2014-2015) was conducted in qualitative trend; used methods were individual cases study and observation with techniques such as narrative interview (unstructured and unstandardized) and photographic observation. During analysing and interpreting collected data I undertaken following actions: firstly, the interviews were transcribed, their content was coded and then I compared cases finding some patterns and diversities.

Studied women came from two regions, Silesia and Podlasie, and they were aged from 18 to 40. The sampling was purposeful; another cases were pointed out by previous ones till satiation of each researched category.

Presented article focuses on a part of a wider project. The whole research included aspects of quality of life such as: physical condition, psychical condition, interpersonal relationships, social relations, financial conditions and environmental conditions. The text below responds partially only to one research problem which is: "How does the homosexual women's social life form?". Mentioned problem consists of four wide categories which are: satisfaction of attended school/university or occupation, satisfaction of free time, satisfaction of cultural offer and functioning in society as a homosexual woman. The aim of this article is to present the last aspect.

Issues I would like to discuss in presented paper are those which turned out the most important to homosexual women referring to analysed category. Interlocutors paid special attention to their legal rights, stigmatization combined with acts of violence and stereotype of lesbian functioning in society. The description will also be extended by statements about general satisfaction of their social life.

Polish governmental documents regulate legal situation of homosexuals. According to them, people of that sexual orientation:

- are covered by anti-discrimination act in matters of employment and occupation (Poland. Act from 26th June 1973);
- cannot enter the state of matrimony (Poland. The Constitution of the Republic of Poland from 2nd April 1997);
- after formal agreement they can be informed about his or hers partner's health issues and can decide about further medical proceedings (Poland. Act from 30th August 1991 & Poland. Act from 5th December 1996);
- with power of attorney they can receive their partner's correspondence, salary and they can have common bank account (Poland. Act from 23rd November 2012);

- can inherit only under a testament and are protected by insurance and compensatory laws (Poland. Act from 23rd April 1964);
- have right to shared purchase and to make donations (Poland. Appellate court decision from 8th October 1997);
- cannot adopt children together (Poland. Act from 25th February 1964).

Foregoing information draw one of the aspects of homosexual women's functioning in society. There is no doubt that legal regulations influence their everyday's life; each of my interlocutors noted that problem, but they do not perceive it the same.

The issue that came to the fore is having a right to enter the legal partnership. Almost all of researched women declared necessity of such solution. Nevertheless, among them appeared three opinions that although this right is needed, they do not believe it is possible in the nearest future because of the society attitude. On the other hand, one of women strongly insists on legal changes, claiming that existing solutions for homosexuals (described above) are insulting; she thinks that all the people, regardless their sexual orientation, should have just the same rights.

[...] this is just... you know, seemingly you can arrange all of these, go to the notary and write down everything, but this is so offensive to me because I have to go there and say: yes, this is my partner and please write that she can receive a letter for me. [A]

During interviews only one of interlocutors claimed that Polish law does not need to be changed. She believes regulations are satisfactory and the whole dispute is about naming relations between homosexuals, meaning that some kind of the partnerships is possible with existing law, but naming it matrimony is not.

All the time we quarrel about the name, we do not quarrel about legal aspects which are much more important... they touch cases as joint property and a possibility to visit this other person when she is in the hospital, but these can be done legally... civil law is not difficult, read the Code because we are still quarrelling about the name of matrimony. This is all about the name! This is very irritating and unnecessary! [PT]

These women who said that society is not ready yet to accept legal homosexual partnerships are right. The research conducted by CBOS (Public Opinion Research Centre) in 2013 shows that majority of Poles (77%

of respondents) do not want to change the law in favour of them (CBOS, 2013). Nevertheless, by comparing mentioned results to those gained in 2011 in similar research, it can be stated that the percentage of people who accept these partnerships has increased by 8%.

Another legal aspect important to homosexual women is a right to adopt children. Each of them had strong opinion if such a change is needed in Polish law. Three interlocutors think that sexual orientation should not be a factor to forbid adoption. They believe that children will be much more happy with any parents than set in orphanage. In the past, one of them was afraid of society opinion about that, but now she thinks it is important to introduce such a solution in order to change people's attitude.

In the past I didn't know cause I believed that this child would be badly treated because of lack of acceptance coming from other people. How come you have two moms, right? But now, I think that for sure, absolutely! People have to learn that something like this exists in society... as long as we don't have it, people would react bad way, when it's finally there they will change their minds! [SZ]

Not every researched woman is so sure of society opinion change. Another three interlocutors claim that they would like to have their own or adopted child, but they are too afraid of what heterosexuals might be thinking or doing about that. They expect that violence and stigmatization will be pointed at those children.

I'm with a woman, so I'd condemn this child to a poor fortune. Life would be so harsh on him [...] that child would be exposed to attacks coming from society... I really don't know if I could fight them [...] I already feel sorry for this unborn child. How would it feel? Am I so egoistic to bring forth that human? [EW]

What is more, remaining two women are convinced that homosexuals should not have offspring. They doubt that such a relationship is appropriate for children's proper growth; according to them, the figure of father is needed to correct development.

A report titled 'Law vs. morality—opinions on socially controversial behaviours' confirms fears of those interlocutors who are not sure if our society is ready to accept homosexual parents. Respondents were asked if lesbians running a household together have a right to bring up an offspring whose biological mother is one of them and if such a behaviour is proper (CBOS, 2014). More than a half of researched people (56%) declared

that homosexual women have a right to do that, but only 41% think that such a solution is appropriate. It is likely that presented opinions are connected to how society understands the term of family. Same-sex relation within which the child is raised is not perceived as such a group.

It is comprehensible why heterosexuals have different views on rights of homosexuals (i.a. socialization, norms and values they had been submitted); the question is why opinions on legal aspects differ between lesbians. By analyzing and interpreting the whole collected data, I can state that my interlocutors judgements on issues connected to their sexual orientation, might depend on two aspects. The first one is coming-out, meaning if they have already done it and what was the reaction of their closest environment. The second refers to the process of acceptance of homosexual identity.

All the women I researched came-out to somebody; some of them to their family and friends, some only to the second mentioned group. Among those who think that same-sex partnerships and adoption should be legally regulated in favour of homosexuals, are two women who were accepted by their relatives and friends as lesbians long time ago. Another one with just the same strong opinion is woman whose relation with family is limited, so she does not know what exactly they think of her homosexuality, but she came-out to her closest friends and work community and was approved by them. What is more, first two mentioned interlocutors achieved the last stage of gaining homosexual identity (Troiden, 1994); the stage of the third one is not defined because of shortage of necessary data.

Remaining researched women who were afraid of social sanctions because of having children and who did not believed in change of society attitude toward homosexuals, came-out only to friends (and mostly were accepted) or to friends and family, but weren't accepted by the second group. Those interlocutors are on the third stage or are just entering the last (the forth) stage of obtaining homosexual identity (it is not strengthen yet).

Summing up, it can be stated that acceptance of not being heteronormative, coming from family and friends, with emphasis on the first group, is the factor that influence homosexual women's needs and their sense of subjectivity; it also helps them to build their self-esteem regardless of opinions of others. What is more, the higher stage of gaining homosexual identity they achieved, the better their self-awareness is, what is also strictly connected to coming-out success.

Information contained above refer indirectly to stigmatization and acts of violence. The report (2010-2011) titled 'Social standing of LGBT people' applying to Polish LGBT population shows the scale of mentioned problems. According to its data, physical violence towards this group of individuals declined in comparison to 2006 (Makuchowska & Pawłęga, 2012, p. 29). Nevertheless, 9.4% of LGBT women were victims of violence of this type. The situation forms the same within psychical acts of violence—although this problem is smaller than it was in 2006, it still exists. As many as 41.8% lesbians were under such attacks (Makuchowska & Pawłęga, 2012, p. 37).

Women that I researched had never been victims of the first mentioned type of violence, but all of them had been called names at least once. As far as most of them claim that they do not worry about such behaviour coming from members of society, another two are very concerned. They feel overwhelmed by social control and incessant need to control language they use and actions they take, in order not to show their sexual orientation. Sometimes this need is a result of their own opinions, sometimes they try to hide their true selves for their partner's well-being.

This is so lame! There are so many situations that I would like to show my feelings and not care about anything, but I respect my partner and she is not ready for that. [...] I feel really bad. It happens often that we go somewhere and I try to hug her and I say I love you' but she just tells 'stop saying that! Someone may hear us! [...] this is so needed and so natural and I miss this. [EW]

Stigmatization is marked by the problem of discrimination which, whereas, has its source a.i. in stereotypes (Kupny, Dylus & Biedrzycki, 2007, pp. 31-32). Contemporary social stereotype of lesbian is based on three aspects (Mizielińska, 2007, p. 102). First one is connected to her image. Homosexual woman is unattractive and masculine, so no man had ever wanted to be with her. Secondly, it is believed that she probably had never met appropriate man for her or she has some bad experience with him. Finally, lesbianism is perceived as woman's caprice or her susceptibility to trends. It is worth to point out that in this stereotype the figure of man is highly underlined—his presence is strengthened there where it should not be.

Majority of my interlocutors paid attention to stereotype connected to their sexual orientation. Two of them pointed out an issue described

above—they deny that every lesbian resembles man; one of these women said that her coming-out was not taken seriously because of her feminine image. Another example of implementation of this functioning stereotype is that the family of one of researched women thinks that her homosexuality is a caprice, even though she is 40 and she is in relationship with a woman for a couple of years. Remaining interlocutors state other components of stereotype of homosexual woman that were not described above. One of them is that being a lesbian determines attitude towards religion and political views.

Sexual orientation gives us some kind of patch—you are a lesbian so you're not a believer, you are not a patriotic and you're leftist and so on and so on... to be honest, I'm somewhere here and somewhere there. [A]

Another researched woman claims that homosexuals are those who are guilty of this functioning stereotype. According to her, because of their public behaviour heterosexuals have negative thoughts about them.

The problem is that, instead of showing who we really are... that we are calm members of society, that we pay taxes and drive economy... it is not about walking on the streets wearing only panties, holding some flags and irritating people! [...] This is a common space. There is no need to organize a parade while which we show how queer we are, instead of showing how usual we are. No matter how strongly a man would like to be special, he is just usual. [PT]

There is no doubt that sexual orientation stereotypes can be harmful for lesbians and they influence their social functioning. The way homosexual women are perceived by members of society is conditioned by lack of knowledge of what homosexuality is and by basing on beliefs that have their source in fear of unknown. Because of that incomprehension and inability to move beyond stereotypes, it is a common practice to target homosexuals with psychical attacks.

Summarizing, I would like to present researched women's overall opinions about their functioning in society. Half of them claim that their existence is just the same as heteronormative people. These women do not worry about issues described in this paper in their everyday's life. It should be noted that they have already gained the last stage of homosexual identity, so they are able to lead the life in unity with themselves.

Another two interlocutors are very unsatisfied with their social functioning because of the place they live in. One of them is a habitant of a big city in Podlaskie, the other lives in a small town. Both women claim

that the social control is so high, they are afraid to show who they really are. Another researched woman agrees with them (she is also from this big city in Podlaskie), but she says that although her life as a lesbian is hampered, she is very pleased to finally function as homosexual, even though she has to hide it in public places (that woman was in a long-term relationship with a man). It must be pointed that place of living can also influence satisfaction of social functioning.

The last but not least of interlocutors, thinks that she is stigmatized not as a homosexual but as a lesbian. The woman accuses that the social debate is always devoted to gays, very rarely to lesbians.

The data above prove that the quality of life of homosexual women in dimension of social functioning is lower in some aspects in comparison to heterosexuals; these aspects are: the lack of possibility to enter legal partnerships and to adopt children (the second one applies only to some of women), significant exposure on psychical acts of violence and applicable stereotypes of lesbians. It is important to educate other members of our society in order to fight homophobia and discrimination—without these two problems it is possible that the quality of life of homosexual women will increase. The first step would be to present what homosexuality is from scientific point of view, and the second, how normal and usual people of this sexual orientation are.

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Ewa Jarosz

University of Silesia in Katowice (Poland)

Empowering Social Position of Children through Participation– Reading out Korczak’s Roots and Going Beyond

ABSTRACT. The paper presents the concept of children’s participation, which seems to be one of the fundamental trend in global thinking on social development. Janusz Korczak A pioneer of the concept of participation of children was Janusz Korczak. He is a protagonist of children’s participation and citizenship. In the paper there are highlighted some of Janusz Korczak’s ideas, with exemplifications of his utterances, that express the spirit of the concept, and should be read out and interpreted as the foundation of the modern idea of children’s participation. The Author invites to look at these ideas of Janusz Korczak pedagogy and social philosophy which are the most important in this matter but also are still present in contemporary understanding of children’s participation. It must be remembered that Korczak’s participatory ideology of a child and his view on equality between children and adults were a foundation for the Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989. Nevertheless, the step forward has been done and in a contemporary picture of the concept of children’s citizenship and social participation of children our todays thinking has gone far beyond Janusz Korczak’s roots and has reached even the political context, by seeing children us partners to adults in decision making processes on local, state, regional and even global level.

KEYWORDS: Janusz Korczak, citizenship of children, children’s participation

1. Introduction

Taking into account many trails that can be seen in the global discourse on inequality, the theme on children’s social discrimination seems to be the most neglected but at the same time the freshest one. Over one third of the global population has little or none influence on what is touching/affecting? them. The situation is slowly changing. Since the Convention on the Rights of the child (1989) the idea of children’s participation is developing dynamically, coming into reality on various social levels. Contemporary children’s participation, and citizenship of young people is the most effective and spectacular embodiment of the

idea of equalising children's social position and empowering children and their possibilities to get access to democracy. The conception of empowering children through the "right to be heard" which is expressed in the article 12 of the Convention, introduced into social thinking and into social practice a new picture of a child—as a social actor, as entitled to voicing, to decision-making, to social activities, to political contributing at last. Of course implementation of the concept is often encountering different barriers and limitations, mainly of mental nature, but without a doubt, at present it seems to be the mainstream idea in thinking of a/the child social placing, child-adult relationship and child rights promotion. Children's participation is also treated as the ground practice for discussing and finding solutions to many problems concerning children like violence, sexual abuse, child trafficking, poverty and others. It is also seen as the main way to renovate societies, the way of general social development.

The idea of children's participation and a /the child's equal to adult social position has Polish roots, because clearly and in the sense it is understood today the idea was understood and presented in the works but also in educational practice by Janusz Korczak. Although sometimes the beginnings of this way of perceiving a child are placed in some philosophers' views before (Milne, 2003, pp. 184-185). Janusz Korczak was the first who indicated, the value of a child as a human being and more, child's value as a citizen, as a full righted member of society. Janusz Korczak saw a child as a citizen not as potential, not in the future, but as present, as already citizen.

The paper presents Janusz Korczak as a pioneer and protagonist of children's participation and citizenship. Unfortunately there are a lot of works on children participation where his role and meaning in the process of development of the concept are not mentioned.⁸ In the paper there are highlighted some of Janusz Korczak's utterances as the expression of this part of Korczak's views and ideas that should be read out and interpreted as the foundation of the modern idea of children's participation. It is a proposal to look at these ideas of Janusz Korczak pedagogy

⁸ There are many examples of works which are fundamental for the concept of children's participation where Korczak's influence on the contemporary idea is not indicated, starting from the classical work of Roger Hart *Children's participation*. From tokenism to citizenship, UNICEF Florence 1992 through works of Gerison Lansdowne, and very meaningful papers of Jeremy Roche, Dymphna Devine or only in the context of rather small signification like in the work of T. Cockburn (2013) or B. Milne (2013).

and social philosophy which are the most important in the matter but also which are still present in contemporary understanding of children's participation. Nevertheless, at the same time he stepped forward that has been done in development of a contemporary picture (?) of the concept of children's participation is in the paper indicated because the comprehending how far the participation of children can go, is today far beyond Janusz Korczak's thinking.

2. Respect to the child's Opinion

"The child wants to be treated seriously, he demands confidence, instruction and an advice" (all the quotations of Janusz Korczak come from: Korczak, 1984). Listening to the child with attention and appreciating child's point of view and opinions are the central thoughts of Janusz Korczak's considerations on the relation between a child and an adult. His idea on respect for the child's voice and taking into account child's views and assessments, as crucial in this relation, was developed by him both theoretically in works and in educational practice as the reality of everyday interactions with children.

Korczak deeply believed in child's wisdom and child's ability to present reasonable opinions, to make constructive choices and responsible decisions. He indicated that "...the child... is able to consider the serious problem..." although "in childlike fashion". In consequence he demanded to acknowledge child's view and will in everyday living. But what is more, Korczak called children the best experts of their lives, experts in considering their own matters. Children are those—he tried to convince—who know better how their problems should be solved ... "If you grown-ups asked us, we could often advise well. We know better, what we suffer from, ...we do know ourselves better..."—he declared on behalf of children. Consequently, he exhorted for "talking with a child not to a child" for considering with a child different matters. He clearly talked on the collaboration and cooperation with a child and more... he did it in his educational practice. That was for him the base of the model of child-adult relationship.

That Korczak's confidence about child's ability to be knowledgeable about what is going on around, about child's ability to assess the reality, to give opinions and make responsible decisions, became a "leaven" of a contemporary idea of children's social participation and children's citizenship.

3. Child is Already a Citizen

Considering a child's social status, the social membership and social position, Korczak pointed "Not questionable is the right to voice his thoughts, to active participation in our consideration and verdicts concerning him". He promoted the idea of a child as an important and valuable social actor. He acknowledged child's participation in decision making processes... not only in child's own but also in social matters, in child's environment of living.. due to child's membership to a community. That was a very distinctive thought in his pedagogy which became a fundamental principle of a general attitude towards a child. Respecting child's will and choices in social matters and the acknowledgement of children's social activity including self-management and self-determination—these concepts we read out today as the foundation of the idea of children's citizenship.

Furthermore, Korczak indeed named a child "citizen". He did it in several passages, although in fact, the terms "citizen" and "citizenship" are indeed not the central ones in his narration on a child. Korczak is regarded to be the first who called a child—citizen; To remember his words: The child—already a resident, citizen, already a human being. Not will he be, but already is.... and another of his statement "Children account for a considerable portion of mankind, the population, the nation, residents, citizens.... ". What is important in this naming a child a citizen by Korczak is that he used the term not only to persuade the value of a child, but also in the context of a social status belonging to a child.

We explore today that for Korczak a child was a citizen, a member of a society from the early years of life; who not only had abilities to voice and to make responsible decisions, but also had the right to participate in social actions—in decisions, opinions, informing, creating, acting and etc. For Korczak a child as a citizen was able to develop on his own his social competencies and his citizenship skills and engagement.

Going to the present, it can be seen that the idea of acknowledgement of child's abilities to critical thinking on himself, his matters and his surroundings, ability to present responsible opinions, to participate in decision making processes, and to acquire social skills on his own, forms a basis, like pillars, of the modern concept of children's citizenship.

4. Equality between Children and Adults

This idea seems to be another crucial element of the model of the relation between a child and an adult promoted by Korczak. "Unintelligently we divide years into less or more mature ones. There is no such thing as present immaturity, no hierarchy of age...". These words empathically indicate that Korczak considered a child as equal to an adult, and exploring his thoughts it can be seen that not only in the meaning of general importance of a child and his or her value as human being, not only in the matter of feelings and affairs, but also as capable and competent member of a society and a participant of a social life. Korczak clearly located a child on a position to be an equal partner to an adult as not "less wise but as having less experience". The relationship between a child and an adult but also children and adults (as groups) was seen by Korczak as an exchange between partners. Exchange, where authority is not assigned to any of them in clear-cut manner. This belief lead Korczak to emphasize that a child has the same right as an adult to enjoy social entitlements due to his membership in a society. That was quite an opposite idea to a common situation/belief? and the social status of children that existed at Korczak's days, the status that was clearly recognized and named by him as the social exclusion.

Coming to present idea of the child-adult relationship, we can see that the same opposition against the social exclusion of children in contemporary societies supported the promotion of children's citizenship. After so many decades since Korczak's lifetime, we still interpret the position of children in societies as social discrimination. In the light of the idea of human rights and democracy, one of the main purposes of the common implementation of the participation of children is to raise their social status and to ensure them the egalitarian social and political position in societies, in local communities, schools and families.

5. Self-Governance of Children is Possible

The acknowledgement of children as having skills to responsible opinions and choices led Korczak to make efforts to create the social reality of his houses for orphans as places of not only the co-existence of children and adults, but also, as communities of a real social co-operation between all members of them. Indeed, Korczak managed to

develop and supported communities that were co-managed by children and adults. Korczak shaped opportunities and created tools for children to help them to exercise social participation in everyday activities. So “his” children could give opinions and their opinions were taken into account. What is more, Korczak’s children could decide on their own, and more... they were encouraged to self-determination, encouraged to take responsibility for solving everyday problems on their own. So it could be said that Janusz Korczak gave children opportunities for something more than participation.... just for self-determination, for self-governance. His children had the power, had a lot of space where they could decide and govern. And they really did it. Through making participation and self-governance possible for children, Korczak opened the new space for children, a space where they could make and create various activities without being censored by adults and where they could organize their living according to their own beliefs.

6. Participation in Community and Self-Governance of Children as the Best Way for Developing Citizen Competencies

For making social activities more familiar to children, Korczak created different tools to help them to practise social participation. The best known are children’s parliament, court of peers or the newspaper, but there were also other. Korczak developed conditions—a special environment where children could practise various social activities without management, control and directing of adults. There, in the atmosphere of real self-management children could learn discipline, self-control, cooperation, they could learn to calculate consequences of their decisions and could organize their own world according to their vision, but in a responsible way. It can be assumed, that the intention of Janusz Korczak was on the one hand to establish a special society of children based on the equality, brotherhood and justice; community where every child could feel as its important member, member participating in its decision-making processes. But on the other hand, the intention of Janusz Korczak was to create an educational environment where children could effectively educate themselves for the future citizenship and for their future living in the open civil society.

And it should be remembered that Janusz Korczak tried to rebuild the society through children, through preparing children to live in a bet-

ter way, in responsible way and through preparing them to be creators of a better social world. He thought of children as those who would rebuild the society and would renovate it: "The child is the tomorrow. He will be a worker, a citizen, an employer. However, we have to wait"—he said. He thought of children as those who would renovate the society, so he called children "future landholders of the world". Through practising social participation Korczak tried to educate children how to be constructive and valuable citizens but also how to organize a society, a society that should function as a civil society.

The same faith is seen today in the narration on children's participation. On the one hand we think about children participation as the right belonging to them as members of a society, and the right that must be enforced. But on the other hand, participation of children is considered as the best citizenship education (Cockburn, 2013, pp. 224-225), the best way of attaining competencies for the full and better social life in their adult future. The way to develop the best possible citizenship of them as grownups citizens. And indeed it is believed today, that quality of the social life can be improved through the way of children's participation and respecting children's rights in general (Milne, 2013, p. 218)⁹.

7. Child and Children Participation

Janusz Korczak understood citizenship both in the individual and collective sense. He used to write and think of an individual child as a citizen, emphasising the child's right to voice, to decisions, and the child's right to be respected in the sphere of thinking, acting and creating his or her individual world. But on the other hand, a lot of Korczak's utterances and his comments about adults-children relationship or life in general and all his educational practice express his understanding of the collective sense of children participation. He created a community of children as co-working with adults. That children's community was treated by Korczak as a social subject and the real partner to the community of grown-ups. That was the deep sense of Korczak's understanding/idea of participation of children.

⁹ The very meaningful in this light is a commentary done by Marta Santos Pais a Special Representative of the UN Secretary General during the High level conference on a new European strategy on the rights of the child: „if children are full holders of the right today they will be the guardians of human rights tomorrow”, Sofia 5.04.2016, info <http://www.coe.int/en/web/children/sofia2016> [accessed: 21.04.2016].

The same dimensions of participation, individual and collective, can be clearly seen in the contemporary idea of children citizenship. However, it must be noticed that the collective sense of children's participation is superior today. We can find it accented in various explanations in written in documents and also in the theoretical discourse on participation, where children are mainly seen as a social group that has the right to participate in social life, in social decisions and even in political decision making processes, on the same position as others. They are seen as society members who have civil rights and can do civil activities like other groups¹⁰.

8. Going beyond Korczak. Towards Community and Political Power of Children

When we compare the legacy of Janusz Korczak and the modern meaning of children participation, it can be seen that his idea has been developing through decades and today is going much further.

Firstly, Korczak limited children's participation to the social environment of the orphanage, as he was afraid of the devastating influence of the society outside. He shaped the social sphere for children for social participation... but closed within the community of the residential homes. He saw children as citizens but only within the limited direct environment of their living. As Lothar Krappmann explains this matter (Krappman, 2013, pp. 332-353), it was due to the fact that Korczak was under the influence of a group of Polish positivists who were active at that time, who generally tended to reform the Polish society that was destroyed after the long time occupation of three political powers, destroyed not only in economical sense but also in the organizational as well as cultural and moral dimensions. Korczak wanted to save children

¹⁰ The collective sense of children participation is clearly expressed in the General Comment no 12 "The right of the child to be heard" 2009; "European Charter on the participation of young people in local and regional life" 2003... and in several recommendations of Council of Europe eg. Rec.1864 (2009); "Promoting the participation by children in decisions affecting them" Rec. (2006) 14 "on citizenship and participation of young people in public life", Recommendation CM/Rec (2012) 2 of the Committee of Ministers to member States "on the participation of children and young people under the age of 18", and others). In theoretical discourse, collective meaning of participation is seen in works of many authors: eg. Roger Hart, Tom Cockburn, Jeremy Roche, Ruth Lister, Brian Milne and Gerison Lansdowne and others.

from the negative influence of the general(?) society and in a closed environment educate renovators of the society. That is why Korczak did not consider participation of children in a broader social context—in a local community or the state, as we understood it today, and he did not promote children participation in a public sense. Although, what Lothar Krappmann also noticed (Krappman, 2013), Korczak presumably would not have objected the public meaning at all, as himself he wrote in one of his papers, that in long run, children should form international associations to engage themselves for equal rights for children. This thought, as we can see, is close to some contemporary tendencies in youth associations.

Making comparisons between Korczak's original ideas and the contemporary picture of the child participation idea, it can also be seen that in the meaning of the space, the idea of the children's citizenship has gone far beyond Korczak's prototype. Nowadays the social participation of children is promoted on different social levels and the special accent is put to a public level (Thomas, 2009). Children citizenship is meant today as different processes of everyday co-operation and collaboration between children and adults in making decisions and acting in spaces of local communities and states and even on regional and global level (Lansdowne, 2011). And as such, it is promoted to be carried out through various institutional public forms of participation, as councils of youth, children parliaments, youth conferences and others but also through children's autonomous organisations (Johnson, 2009). These bodies are understood as co-existing and cooperating with adult ones in decision making processes and managing the reality. These forms are considered as necessary in a society, they are seen as civil bodies that should exist in the organizational space of a society. Such co-existence and co-operation between bodies representing children and adults is regarded as the embodiment of the idea of social inclusion of children and the final acknowledgement of them as social subjects, social actors and civil rights holders.

Secondly, going beyond Korczak's thinking of participation, the participation of children today has been assured in an official way, has been grounded in the set of children's rights. The formal guarantee for children's participation has been expressed in international treaty, in the Convention on the Rights of the Child and later in other documents (Lansdowne, 2011, pp. 31-40; Milne, 2013, pp. 177-180). By signing the Convention, states accepted the obligation to listen to a child and to lis-

ten to children as important members of a society and accepted to treat children as an important group of a society. In consequence, states accepted the obligation to give weight(?) to children's views in all decisions affecting them and affecting environments of their living. And—as it is emphasized today—by signing the Convention states accepted the obligation to recognize and treat children as citizens, as active actors on a public arena, and accepted to provide children with a range of citizen's rights: from freedom of expression and having own opinions, up to freedom to organizing themselves in associations and peaceful assemblies and also to acting for the common interest.

Thirdly, going beyond Korczak's thinking on the participation of children, today children are seen as those who can initiate various social activities or projects and carry them out on their own, with only some help from adults, even in the public meaning. Children are seen as capable of self-governing within and outside institutions and as those who should be empowered and encouraged to self-managing their reality—in various social contexts, wherever it is possible. Moreover, in the current discourse on child citizenship, children as active social actors are seen as subjects doing research on themselves, they are considered as valuable researchers of their own reality, as able and more—the best experts to describe and inform about their own needs and about barriers of the development they meet, about different threats they encounter. And in a consequence of this thinking children and young people are also seen as able to find and to propose reasonable solutions to their matters.

9. Conclusion

All these steps forward have been already made but mainly in a conceptual meaning. After over 25 years of the Convention, looking at the social reality of children—at the majority of them, it can be seen that participation of children and their rights to making decisions about themselves in everyday life—in family, schools, different institutions, local communities and states, are not still implemented enough. Full social participation is still not available to children in many regions, states, local realities as it should be, as it was declared. Participation of children appears to be the least understood and implemented idea of child rights. This conclusion is repeated during different conferences, presentations of research and scientific papers. The very common ex-

hortation is that more activities to spread the proper understanding of the idea in different social settings and levels are required. But the core matter seems to be also to analyse the barriers of the implementation of the idea, barriers which are mainly of the mental nature, which are in minds of parents, teachers, local authorities and politicians. What is needed and crucial is adults' willingness to implement children participation, adults' willingness to share the power and to hand over the social space to children. This is to be a great challenge!

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BOOK REVIEWS



Merril D. Smith (ed.). *Cultural Encyclopedia of the Breast*, Lanham Maryland 2014: Rowman & Littlefield, pp. 288.

"The breast has always been a subject of cultural fascination, if not obsession. Technically, breasts are two fatty protuberances on our chests by which female humans feed their young, yet in reality, they are so much more" (Smith, 2014, p. ix). From antiquity to the present day, breasts have been the object of desire, the attribute of the ideal of feminine beauty. Breasts inspire artists, are exhibited in media, mutilated and perfected by physicians, and finally they became the focus of scientists. The exemplification of this interest is the co-operation of many researchers, representing various scientific fields, initiated by Merrill D. Smith. *Cultural Encyclopedia of the Breast* edited by M. D. Smith was published as a result of this cooperation. The volume is the first of its kind which examines cultural significance of breast and cultural obsession of this body part.

The volume includes following parts: Preface, Acknowledgments, Introduction, Chronology of Selected Breast Events, 141 entries, Selected Bibliography, About the Editor and Contributors. The entries are arranged in alphabetical order. Each entry provides an explanation, a list of related topics and suggestions for further reading. Some studies are enriched with black-and-white photographs. Among the encyclopaedia entries, there are both: these that directly refer to breasts (i.e. breast anatomy, breastfeeding), but also these having a seemingly loose relationship with this part of body (i.e. literature, dance). The most of descriptions refer to American culture. However, there are some concepts of historical and global significance.

Reviewing such an extensive encyclopaedia, it is impossible to recall and describe all entries that it defines; therefore I have chosen the entries referring to the ideals¹ of beauty and femininity (and breasts are one attribute of both), as well as to breast cancer as a disease which, at least according to the general belief, interferes with femininity, attractiveness, and even identity of a woman. Further, I will review selected entries included in these two dichotomous categories.

¹ "An ideal is a standard of perfection, beauty, or excellence that reflects a particular culture and period of time. It has also been used more specifically to refer to a person or object that exemplifies an ideal and thus provides a model for imitation" (Parks, 2014, p. 28).

Breasts have long been an inspiration for artists, writers, poets, giving us an idea of their importance to people living in various epochs. Tonya Lambert considers the ideals of the beauty during the Renaissance (pp. 30-31). Between the fourteenth and the sixteenth century in Europe the object of desire was a big belly, wide thighs and small breasts, therefore in France and England women of the upper class took care to keep their breasts small and firm. Generous breasts were associated with old age, poverty and feeding large numbers of infants. Social preferences were reflected in the work of artists. The breasts of women from the upper social class were portrayed as small and delicate. Inversely, the attribute of older women or witches were substantial breasts with large nipples. Poets metaphorically referred to perfect breasts as strawberries or apples.

Lori L. Parks, the Author of the entry *Beauty Ideals, Nineteenth-Century America* (pp. 28-30), states that in the nineteenth century, women were perceived as „secondary sex“. Their domain was looking after their houses, taking care of their husbands and fulfilling their expectations, raising children to become good citizens, and being altruistic. These expectations towards women (called „cult of true womanhood“ [Parks, 2014, p. 28]) have been emphasized in the literature, guidebooks, and magazines for women, as well as in art. During this period two ideals of a beautiful woman were present in the United States: the „steel—engraving lady“ and the „voluptuous woman“. Both were wearing corsets obstructing their freedom of movement. The first one appeared in the early nineteenth century. The steel-engraving lady was pale, frail and slender. „By midcentury, this was being challenged by a heavier-legged, hippy, and bustier woman, typified by lower-class women, including actresses and prostitutes“ (Parks, 2014, p. 28). The growing popularity of many actresses made the voluptuous woman become the ideal of beauty for a period of time. At the end of the century however, this trend was over, and the voluptuous woman again became the ideal of women from the lower social class.

In the late nineteenth century, the first illustrations of Charles Dan Gibson were published, depicting a young representative of the upper-class. The Gibson Girl was tall and slender. Her figure was characterized by large breasts and narrow waist, formed by wearing a corset. She was portrayed as an active woman (i.e. doing sports, playing musical instruments). The Gibson Girl was still setting standards of the female beauty at the beginning of the twentieth century, but with time, due to historical events and socio-cultural transformations, she gave way to other, more “practical” canons of beauty. Dorothy Woodman, the Author of the entry *Beauty Ideals, Twentieth-And Twenty-First-Century America* (pp. 32-33), highlights that in 1908 the image of the Brinkley Girl—a representative of the working class; feminine woman with loose curls—emerged. The Brinkley Girl remained popular until

the 1940s. In the 1940s and 1950s the hourglass shape became fashionable again, popularized by Marilyn Monroe, the star of the colourful magazine covers. Long, exposed legs have also become desirable. Starting from the 1960s there has been a growing interest in women with a slim figure and large breasts. Media have contributed towards promoting this ideal of beauty and influenced women to take action to help them achieve it (i.e. in the 1980s Jane Fonda popularized the physical activities amongst women, also in the context of organized activities; women are also encouraged to seek plastic surgery to get their dream size breasts). In 1991, Naomi Wolf published her book titled *The Beauty Myth*, which showed the negative impact of aesthetic regimes. There have also been social movements that encourage women not to passively give in to trends and fashions and discipline their bodies instead.

Today, the Barbie doll became a symbol of femininity, according to the essay by Alina Łysak (pp. 25-27). The Barbie doll look was modelled based on the German Bild Lilli doll, designed specifically for adults, and only after marketed for children. Barbie, created by Mattel in 1959 based on a design by Ruth Handler, was the first doll in the United States that looked like a grown woman. Her perfect look is based on: long legs, a long neck, a small nose, large eyes, thick hair, a very narrow waist and bouncy breasts (without nipples). Her figure appears to be unattainable for a real woman. A real woman with the proportions of Barbie doll would suffer from chronic back pain, caused by too heavy breasts. However, many women in the pursuit of the Barbie look continue to try various diets, undergo numerous beauty treatments, as well as plastic surgeries.

Paradoxically, Barbie doll—considered as a cultural icon and symbol of femininity – was also used as a gadget in the Pink Ribbon Campaigns, to express, at least according to the declarations of its producers, solidarity with breast cancer patients. In 2006 Mattel launched its Breast Cancer Pink Ribbon Barbie Doll collection, designed by Robert Best. The doll had a pink dress and a pink scarf forming a shape of a ribbon around her arms. Additionally, a pink ribbon was pinned to the doll's dress on the left breast. Part of the incomes from the sales of the doll was to be donated to the Susan G. Komen Cure Foundation. This initiative has been criticized because the doll's looks had nothing to do with the looks of a woman who suffers from breast cancer. The relatives of the cancer patients did not find the doll helpful either. Only a small part of the income from the sales of the doll was donated to help the sick. In response, the members of the Young Survival Coalition designed an alternative doll and published its picture online. Their doll was bald; its chest was bandaged; and it came equipped with a set containing a drip, drugs, prescriptions, and a bowl necessary while vomiting. In 2012, Mattel announced its new bald Barbie doll, coming with wigs, scarves

and hats. However, it has never been introduced to the market, and only delivered to children's hospitals and foundations.

Barbie doll is the special exemplification of opposite approaches to breast presented in the reviewed encyclopaedia. Examples given by A. Łysak (Barbie as the embodiment of femininity *versus* Barbie as a sign of solidarity with breast cancer patients) confirm the presence of dichotomy in the cultural meanings of the breast. This problem highlights Marilyn Yalom (1997) in her famous examination of the breast. According to the Author the breast has been coded as both "good" and "bad", sacred and erotic, life-giving and life-destroying. In the context considered in this review breasts may be seen as a part of a beauty body or as a reason of disfigurement. However, the producer of Barbie doll uses only a vision of "good" breasts despite declarations that supports breast cancer patients with mutilated body.

The disfigurement of the body is connected with surgical treatment of breast cancer. The term *Breast Cancer* (pp. 47-50) was defined by Adriana Teodorescu. "The term 'cancer' originated from the Greek *Karkino*, and by the end of fifteenth century it had acquired the meaning of malignant tumor. The use of this term is explained by the similarity between the structure of a crab and the morphology of a tumor (a central mass from which ramifications start), and it refers to the tumor's adhesion as it clings to neighboring tissues, colonizing them later" (Teodorescu, 2014, p. 47). Cancer is a class of disease. There are about 200 types of cancer, which may be located in any part of the body. Additionally, modified cells can disseminate to distant organs. Nowadays, cancer is one of the most common diseases of Western. "The World Health Organization estimates that by the end of 2020, one in four people will die of cancer in developed countries" (Teodorescu, 2014, p. 47).

The most men get lung, stomach, prostate and liver cancers. "In women, the most common cancers are breast, lung, skin, and cervical cancer. Nevertheless, men do get breast cancer². Breast cancer is the second most common in women and the second type of cancer—causing death, after lung cancer" (Teodorescu, 2014, p. 47). There are four stages of the development of breast cancer: from stage 0 (carcinoma in situ) to stage 4 (the cancer cells disseminate to the bones, liver, brain, or other organs). There are few breast cancer risk factors: sex (female), age (over 55), genetic predisposition (mutations of the BRCA1 and BRCA2 genes), increased breast density, personal history of breast cancer, radiation to the chest or face before the age of 30, first pregnancy after the age of 30, overweight, the use of hormone therapy, lack of physical exercise, and smoking. Defining of the risk factors has started the development of prevention programs which the main purposes are to promote healthy lifestyle, educate women and encourage them to take part

² Less than 1 percent of men are afflicted with breast cancer.

in preventive health examinations (especially USG of the breasts and mammography). Treatment of breast cancer may include surgical procedures (lumpectomy or mastectomy³), the radiation therapy, chemotherapy, hormone therapy. Surgical procedures lead to mutilate the woman's body, thus affecting the sense of femininity and attractiveness. Patients after mastectomy tend to define themselves as incomplete, mutilated and unnatural. Some of them decide to undergo breast reconstructive surgery.

Breast cancer and its treatment affect the patients and their families. For this reason, there are many organizations and social movements which support ill women and their relatives. Their aim is to break the silence surrounding breast cancer. Moreover, they prompt public debates about breast cancer and its consequences, fundraise, promote prevention programs, fight against the stereotypical perception of cancer (i.e. cancer as a punishment, breast cancer as a shameful disease), and so on. This problem was presented by Gayle Sulik and Edyta Zierkiewicz, the Authors of the entry *Breast Cancer Support Groups* (pp. 50-52). The Authors begin their considerations with the following statement: "For over the century, women in the United States have worked to become empowered when dealing with breast cancer" (Sulik & Zierkiewicz, 2014, pp. 50). In 1920, Barbara Mueller wrote letters to William Halsted – the pioneer of the radical mastectomy – asking for information and advice. In 1952, Terese Lasser started the Reach to Recovery – the first support program for breast cancer patients. It was based on patient's volunteering, patients were giving emotional support and practical advice for other patients during oncological treatment. Afterwards the American Cancer Society adopted the Reach to Recovery idea. One of the main purposes of the support was to help women after surgical treatment to normalize their appearance. At that time many problems experienced by patients (such as authoritative doctor-patient relationship, problems in doctor-patient communication, invasive treatment, taboo of breast cancer and its consequences) were not solved.

The significant changes occurred in the 1970s owing to women's, patients' and consumers' rights movements activity. Their activity was focused on a patient-centered approach, advocating for social justice in health care and development of information and support networks. „Placing women experience at the center of advocacy helped to politicize the personal experience of breast cancer" (Sulik & Zierkiewicz, 2014, p. 51). In the 1980s, the

³ "Lumpectomy is the removal of a small portion of the breast in order to remove a tumor. Mastectomy can be performed in a variety of ways and involves removal of larger portions of breast tissue and possibly surrounding structures such as lymph nodes. Mastectomy may be performed because of a diagnosis of breast cancer, to prevent breast cancer in people with a strong family history, or in order to improve the appearance of the chest due to breast growth in men (male chest reconstruction)" (Berger, 2014, p. 158).

most important for survivor groups was to popularize idea of screening mammography. By the early 1990s, women's organizations focused on breast cancer in the United States were a successful social movement with many members and many grounded forms of activity (such as screening programs, funded research programs, awareness activities, cooperation with donors, support networks, and so on).

American experiences influenced on approach to breast cancer in other countries. G. Sulik and E. Zierkiewicz consider the American influences in Poland. In the 1980s, Polish specialists at the Centre of Oncology in Warsaw who took part in medical internships in the United States, started a small rehabilitation-focused support group. At the beginning patients met just to make exercises of arm after mastectomy. Then they started to transform to support group. Until the mid-1990s there was a proper development of breast support groups. Women associated in Amazons clubs which formed in big cities. They cooperated with physicians and hospitals. Patients' volunteering was (and still is) the important field of their activity. Additionally, Polish Amazons, imitating American friends, give awareness for activists for breast cancer and celebrate 17th October as the Day of the Fight Against Breast Cancer.

Support groups play a significant role in a better adaptation to a new situation of women afflicted with breast cancer. For many of them very important is also the possibility to undergo breast reconstructive surgery which have become increasingly popular in the contemporary Western world. According to the definition written by Dorothy Woodman breast reconstructive surgery „[...] cosmetically corrects defects incurred during breast surgery and recreates the appearance, if not the sensations, of the removed breast” (Woodman, 2014, p. 71). There are two options of this surgery: immediate or delayed. Surgeon may use autologous tissue or artificial tissue expanders or implants filled with saline or silicone. The Author sets out the factors which determinate the increasing number of patients undergoing breast reconstruction in the United States: improvements in surgical techniques and results, increasing health insurance coverage, information availability, awareness, support. Furthermore, social pressures regarding feminine norms and the ideals of beauty are also important. It „is seen as an important way for cancer survivors to regain sense of normalcy” (Woodman, 2014, p. 71) and to (re)construct their identities.

Sometimes breast reconstruction is presented as a final cancer surgery, the last part of the breast cancer treatment procedure. In fact, it is an alternative for using external prosthesis or going breastless. Some women refuse to undergo reconstructive surgery or use external prosthesis for political reasons. Audre Lorde (the Author of *The Cancer Journals*, 1980) and Deena Metzger (tattooed her postmastectomy scar, then showed it on the poster known as the Warrior) contributed to a movement of empowered women

after surgical treatment as a result of breast cancer. D. Woodman notes that there is little information (in literature, on websites or blogs) about women who forgo reconstructing their breasts and courageously go breastless in social sphere.

Summing up, human breast is not an ordinary body part. Breasts have been never ignored. On the contrary, they have been celebrated, admired, desirable. Their meanings depend on social, political, historical, and cultural phenomena. Women and men give value for this body part and use their own meanings. M. Yalom (1997), describing the changing meanings of the breast throughout the history, lists following categories: the sacred breast, the erotic breast, the domestic breast, the political breast, the psychological breast, the commercialized breast, the medical breast, and the liberated breast. In the reviewed encyclopaedia, M. D. Smith (2014) mentions the maternal breast, the sexual breast, the fashionable breast, the medical breast, and the creative breast. The Authors of the entries included in *Cultural Encyclopedia of the Breast* expose many opposite approaches to breast. One of them is the contrast between breast defined as an aesthetic part of female body, a beauty-builder and breast as a body image-destroyer, moreover as a self-identity-destroyer. Breasts have always been the attribute of the ideals of beauty and femininity. However, the desired appearance and size of them have been changed in various epochs and cultures. Lack of breast(s) or mutilated breast(s), as a result of breast cancer treatment, do not correspond to the body ideal. The disease brings emotional problems in addition to physical, social and health problems due to affecting a bodily symbol of femininity. Breast reconstructive surgery is presented as an opportunity for patients who may control their body image through medicine. On the other hand, it is another practice of aesthetic regimes proposed for women. It raises the question of its benefits and risk, as well as the psychological, social and political consequences.

The entries I have recalled, as well as others, fill the pages of the *Cultural Encyclopedia of the Breast* edited by M. D. Smith. The book is a valuable, comprehensive, interdisciplinary study that analyses the breast phenomenon from a medical, social and cultural perspective. The reflections of its Authors present the insight into the cultural significance of breast and their transformations throughout the history, while contributing towards better understanding of the genesis and the context of the contemporary obsession with breasts (especially female breasts). I recommend the encyclopaedia as original and important work and a source of knowledge for all: researchers, scientists and novices alike, who perceive breasts as something more than a mere body part.

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Wroclaw University of Technology (Poland)

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Academia and activism are not opposed to each other, actually, as Ann Snitow says, they are connected. Snitow is a university professor at New School of Social Research in New York, and a longtime feminist activist. She has been involved in both, teaching at the university and organizing social initiatives for women, since 1969.

So, academia and activism are connected. They both deal with a change. Snitow explains that as a professor she reads theories and discusses issues of social changes, and as a feminist activist she deals with changes in the real circumstances. She is not an alienated theoretician, on the contrary, she is interested in making changes in social and public life. And because she is deeply interested in improving the situation of women, she participates in many events and often initiates public actions that lead to the changes – she

has cofounded Gender Studies at Rutgers University in 1972, and some groups, such as No More Nice Girls (a feminist street action group) and New York Radical Feminists (launched by Shulamith Firestone and Anne Koedt).

It all started many years from now. During family dinners Snitow often heard her mother's words: *Something must be done*. The repeated remark by Virginia Snitow was not a cliché, it also was something more than a call to action—it was an obligation, some kind of imperative that could not be ignored, at least not to Snitow. So she involved in the women's liberation movement. Now, after forty years since then, Snitow has published a book, *The Feminism of Uncertainty*, a collection of her essays on feminism and activism, including the memories, as well as papers on teaching and being a professor, and many other topics, inter alia, motherhood and sexuality.

The Feminism of Uncertainty consists of essays written between 1978 and 2014. They are divided in five parts, each ordered according to the theme rather than the order of time. For instance, the part III: *The Feminist Picaresque* is mainly dedicated to the situation in post-communist countries in East and Central Europe. In one of the essay, written in 1993, Snitow notices that women in East and Central Europe, who were living almost forty years under communist regime, are in different situation than women in the West. Snitow points that considering a women's experiences always needs talking into account the contexts: political, social, historical and others. The Eastern women entered in 1989 "a world in which Western women's movements have been defining themselves for several decades" (p. 193), the author says. But for her, these differences among women from East and West Europe are not an obstacle; they are an occasion for feminist debates. It was Ann Snitow who has started this debate.

Snitow was one of few Western feminist who involved in women's situation in Eastern Europe after 1989. Her interests go beyond theoretical aspects of feminism. Being not only a researcher and a scholar but also an activist, she co-founded the Network of East-West Women (NEWW) in 1991 in Dubrovnik. The report of this event can be found in the essay from 1999, entitled *Feminism travels*.

Snitow's essays in the book *The Feminism of Uncertainty* are a very interesting reading for many reasons. First of all they disclose the history of feminist movement from the point of view of one of the most involved feminist activists in the 60s in the United States. Born in 1943 in New York, she did not only witnessed the events of the 60s and 70s but was in the midst of those events—Snitow comes from the generation that created feminist movement. She recalls:

I became a feminist activist in 1969. My first consciousness-raising meeting in the fall of that year—quite by chance and thanks to the urgings of my friend Cel-

lestine Ware—turned out to be the founding of New York Radical Feminists. There's no counting the number of meetings that followed. [...] Many have recorded what that time felt like: a love affair, a revelation, a little click of the lens that refocused everything. So now I was a feminist for life (p. 2).

The other reason to read *The Feminism of Uncertainty* is that these essays show the evolution and changes during the last forty years in the attitudes and the views of the author as well as other feminists. Snitow takes difficult, ambiguous topics and also the contradictions within feminism. She analyzes them one by one. For example, she discusses the feminist debates about categories of "woman", "motherhood" or "gender". Her explanations bring much clarity to very complicated arguments. Furthermore, when she explains different approaches to particular issues, she also gives extracts from her diary. So there is a combination of theory and self-reflexive accounts. For instance, in the essay *A Gender Diary* (1989) she writes:

In the early days of this wave of the women's movement, I sat in a weekly consciousness raising group with my friend A. We compared notes recently: What did you think was happening? How did you think our own lives were going to change? A. said she had felt, "Now I can be a woman; it's no longer so humiliating. I can stop fantasizing that secretly I am a man, as I used to, before I had children. Now I can value what was once my shame." Her answer amazed me. Sitting in the same meetings during those years, my thoughts were roughly the reverse: "Now I don't have to be a woman anymore. I never never become a mother" (p. 21).

These excerpts from the Snitow's diary allow to understand that sources of feminism lie in the everyday lives of women. And these lives differ among one another. Women have different experiences, that is why feminism cannot be a single-voiced point of view. Also, it is not owned by one group of women (white, heterosexual, from middle class). It is *inevitably a mixed form, requiring in its very nature such inconsistencies*. Snitow explains: "feminism is a portmanteau term, describing varied long-term collective enterprises in which the building blocks—subjectivity experience, nature, culture—are always being rethought and reengaged in daily living" (p. 13).

To show the different faces of understanding what feminism is, Snitow dedicated several essays to various women-authors, including Doris Lessing, Angela Carter and Dorothy Dinnerstein, who was the psychologist and author of *The Mermaid and the Minotaur*. Dorothy, a dear friend of Snitow, taught her not to fear the divided mind, or in other words, the feeling of ambivalence that she often had. This ambivalence is nothing else like feeling of uncertainty that can be found in the lives of many women who are taught to define themselves in a narrow gender categories: to look, talk or behave

in a certain way. This is a problem of identity, and Snitow writes: "This tension—between needing to act as women and needing an identity not overdetermined by our gender—is as old as Western feminism. It is the core of what feminism is" (p. 22).

Snitow is a talented writer so her essays are readable, and her style is very elegant. This is a book both for the supporters of feminism and those who would like to know more about the history of women's social movement. Reading *The Feminism of Uncertainty* can be a pleasure, intellectual and literary.

Aneta Ostaszewska
University of Warsaw (Poland)



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61-701 POZNAŃ, UL. ALEKSANDRA FREDRY 10
www.press.amu.edu.pl

Sekretariat: tel. 61 829 46 46, faks 61 829 46 47, e-mail: wyd nauk@amu.edu.pl

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