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BOOK AND JOURNAL REVIEWS

Editor's Preface

In the preface to this issue of the *Journal of Gender and Power*, I would like to adduce two important theoretical approaches which form the basis for the analyses presented here. The first one is called the gender hierarchy theory and is based around the belief of male dominance in the society and the discrimination of women. The basic categories which are associated with this theory are those of gender (in)equality. It is assumed that male domination and the resulting forms of inequality are of structural nature. Inherent for this approach is the conviction that women and men constitute "competing groups with different chances in the market" (and, I should add, in the overall social life). Within this tradition, categories of masculinity and femininity are of static character, which is internally integrated (at times, differing natures of men and women are adduced, as if referencing biological determinism) (Gullvåg Holter, 2005, p. 17).

In turn, from the perspective of the theory of structural inequality, one traces "overall discrimination or inequality in society and their causes, rather than direct gender hierarchy as such". Within this paradigm, issues of gender inequality in the context of broader social stratification are pursued (very often drawing on class theory). Critics of this approach, however, point out the fact that, as Øystein Gullvåg contends, "structures of structural inequality are often comparatively hidden and difficult to recognise, especially as they often appear to be gender neutral". Also, it seems that within this approach "action-related figure [...] disappear[s]" (Gullvåg Holter, 2005, p. 18–19).

I believe there is rationale for both of these approaches and that their applicability depends on the problem under analysis. In some contexts, as will be shown in this issue, there is a visible opposition between the two social groups that we call women and men. Divisions related to accessibility to various forms of socialisations and identities, as well as education and market are correlated with gender. In turn, at other times

it seems that it is the social background that determines this accessibility. These approaches, then, should not be seen as contradictory but rather as complementary.

Agnieszka Gromkowska-Melosik
Editor-in-Chief

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ARTICLES

Luca Salmieri
Università di Roma (Italy)

Education and the utopia of gender equality: treacheries in the labour market

ABSTRACT. The rapid growth of women's educational attainment is one of the most striking trends in statistics on education. After the Second World War in many industrialized countries, women's educational attainments have been increasing and are now higher than men's educational attainment. Nowadays women represent the majority among graduates in secondary and tertiary in most of EU countries almost. Judging by recent trends in international data, it seems likely that female dominance in educational attainment will become stronger in the decades ahead. Women extraordinary advancements in education comes out as the realization of what in the past was considered a utopia, i.e. equality of access and treatment of girls and boys in all track and field of education. I raise questions about the reasons why the utopia of equality between women and men has not yet been reached in the labour market too and on the mechanism preventing the conversion of female educational attainments in occupational and professional outcomes.

KEYWORDS: education, gender, women

Introduction

The relationship between education and the labour market is a particularly fertile area for analysing whether and how the expectations and hopes of 20th century utopias have been successful: in fact, one of the fundamental theses on the social mission of education is that it must prepare individuals to fulfil the needs of the labour market. It is no coincidence that the theory of human capital assumes that the most important benefits for the individual in education are the direct returns to the labour market. Education should increase the productivity of individuals and lead to higher gains and strengthen the competitiveness of nations on a global scale in the knowledge society. But this vision is more like an empty rhetoric than a genuine aspiration for equality of opportunities among social classes and between the sexes.

On the utopia of gender equality

The *Utopia* of Thomas Moore was certainly a project that reflected the historical conditions of the time in England, plagued by religious intolerance (on the threshold of the Protestant Reformation), but well before the misery of the poorer classes and the opulence of an oligarchy accustomed to the privilege of robbery. However, *Utopia* does not draw a dream of escape to the land of plenty. It rather tells a society in harmony with that forthcoming ethics which would have inspired, but not entirely structured, modern societies. An exercise of imagination that denounces the disorder of the society then existing and shows the principles for correcting it: a criminal justice mild but effective and truly equal for all; mutual religious tolerance between the different religious confessions; the harmony between the hard work and the free recreational activities and, finally, with great anticipation, equality between men and women before the law, in the work activities as well as in the arts. None of these things has been fully accomplished. Except the last one and only in the century we just left behind. Indeed, in terms of social inequalities, the biggest change we've seen in the twentieth century, at least in Western societies, is the advancement of women in education, labour market and political positions. If women represented a class (but they do not), it would certainly be the only one—in half a century—to show a massive process of upward social mobility. Nevertheless, this advancement has been entirely completed in the field of education, while it is just in opaquely in progress in labour market, careers and professions.

The achievement of gender equality in education

If it is true that «most great utopias do not come from educational institutions» (Petitat, 2016), it is also true that the utopia of gender equality has become reality only in education. To understand how this was possible, the historical evolution of the attributes of public education systems must be analysed, since they have been designed and developed all long the XX and XXI centuries, an era in which States strengthened their universalist interventions throughout the widening of citizenry, civil rights and access to welfare and education until the coming of a new governmentality which reduced provisions by standards, numbers and competitiveness (Landri, 2014).

Access to secondary and tertiary education for girls has had very different routes throughout Europe. However, long-term similarities emerge, since traditional and conservative models that excluded women's access to valuable education or relegate it to the ritual dimension of home life, religious ethics and labels have stood well beyond, the legitimate aspirations of families and their daughters, and have been eroded only by the ruptures of feminist and / or reformist and pedagogical movements. Throughout Europe, secondary education was oriented towards the training of 'public' men. This vision left little room for middle-class women whose main mission was that of the 'good woman' the wife and the mother (Albisetti et al., 2016).

Since the 1860s and 1870s, most European countries have witnessed a debate on the content of women's education (whether it should be identical to that of boys), its location (co-educational schools or segregated by sex?) and its objectives (training mothers, citizens or professionals?). The American democratic high-school had fascinated European observers but had no equivalent in Europe until the second half of the twentieth century and European girls were virtually excluded from enrolment. School systems were often very differentiated by class and even deeper by gender, so that in each country, contemporaries sent their children to establishments corresponding to a specific social and educational ethic. In general, the most prestigious and elitist of these institutions—the German *Gymnasium* and the French *Lycée*—were not available to girls until the end of the 19th century and as was largely the case of the British *public schools* (Goodman & Martin, 2004).

In England, until the First World War, girls whose families wanted them to marry were still faced with an education at home or in day schools of varying quality. But more importantly, girls' secondary education had a single sex predominant until comprehensive schools became widespread in the 1970s. The Post-1944 *Education Act* provided all children with up to the age of fifteen, the right to free secondary education. However, the girls' modern secondary education program was based on the humanities and heavily domesticated, with little access to science and technology. The *Board of Education* continued to oppose co-education for a long time, being certain of that would have a detrimental effect on boys (Spencer, 2005).

In France, although in 1673 François Poulain de la Barre published a treaty in which he maintained that «the mind had no sex» and that women should have access to the same studies as boys, enter the university

and acquire professional diplomas, a serious education for girls did not emerge until the end of the 19th century (Mavrinrac, 1997; Rogers, 2010).

In Italy, after unification in the 1860s, girls, excluded from knowledge and power, were considered as citizens only in an ideal way. They were prevented from practicing and occupying regulated professions, and were trapped—in the middle class—at home. The State had no concern for their education. The various 'educational institutes for girls', almost all of them religious, had rarely moved away from the holy triad of prayer, catechism and the domestic tasks of women. An attempt by municipalities to promote girls' colleges—the 3-year-old schools called *scuole femminili superiori*—took off in a few cities in north-central Italy (Soldani, 2010; Dei, 1987).

As elsewhere in Europe, the 1870s and 1880s marked the first major turning point in the development of girls' education. In France, Victor Duruy, Liberal minister of public education for Napoleon III (1863–1869), developed the network of girls' primary schools and urged the creation of secondary courses for girls in 1867. His 1864 inquiry into residential schools for girls had highlighted the growing weight of the religious order that had run 2,338 out of 3,480 schools (Rogers, 2005). In 1914, about 35,000 French girls received some form of public secondary education compared to 100,000 boys. However, the social groups involved in this education were strongly middle-class with a high percentage of Protestant students, although there were, of course, regional variations. In Italy, during the 1880s, the *scuola normale* became more and more feminine: enrolments rose from about 9,000 girls in 1885 to as many as 22,000 ten years later, assisted by numerous institutions established by the provinces, municipalities and foundations. In Germany, in the same period, the women's movement was beginning to campaign for the right of middle-class women to education (and work outside the home). In Prussia and other German states, some women's associations favoured a six-year curriculum that began earlier, at age 13 or 14, after seven years of schooling (Albisetti, 1988).

During the interwar period, feminists, catholics and educators debated the virtues or dangers of co-education, positioning themselves against to the hostility of Pius XI to the "coeducation of sexes" expressed in his encyclical of *Divini illius magistri* of 1929 (Offen, 2000). In 1924, the Law Bérard extended the secondary public program for French girls aged 5 to 6 and introduced an optional program that allowed girls to prepare for the *baccalauréat* (Offen, 1983). In 1930, the educational

program specifically targeted for girls had virtually disappeared, even though separate girls' institutions flourished, while the concept of separate but equal schooling satisfied many French educators and especially school administrators who defended the traditional learning environment. In Germany, where transformation went on from 1910 to 1938, the tracks of secondary education acquired their tripartite structure. After a compulsory 4-year public primary school (*grundschule*), regulated in 1919, pupils were sent to one among three types of secondary education: *volksschule* did not grant a career opportunity, while *gymnasium* and the *oberschule* would give access to higher learning levels. After 1935, the need for full employment and the demand for more university graduates led German women to enrol in university (Jarausch, 1984). But ideological discrimination against women who wanted to attend studies programs for the *Abitur* and universities had not disappeared. Since the After the Nazis took the power, the *gymnasium* was no longer offered to girls, and the *oberschule* remained the only secondary school preparing girls for the *Abitur.* In Italy, co-education, never established by principle, but practised as exceptional or tolerated as transitory, had no explicit legal authority. Fascism changed the school system with a detrimental effect on girls' secondary education rights. The 'Gentile Reform' (1923) of the Italian school system, with the creation of obstacles to educate the lower classes and those who lived furthest from the big cities, not only increased considerably the costs, including tuition fee, but placed a legal barrier to girl's enrolment in various types of school, with the sole exception of complementary schools (an endless course, designed merely to ensure minimum literacy). Girls who used to continue post-primary school generally came from higher social classes than boys. As Giovanni Gentile, had previously insisted in 1918, women did not and will never «have the originality of thought derived from the spirit, nor the real inner vigour which is the superior intellectual and moral forces of men and on which the school will form the body of the nation» (Gentile, 1918, p. 8).

While the first quarter of the nineteenth century represented a moment of intense educational ferment for middle-class girls, the third moment of widespread change occurred after the Second World War, when demands for secondary education were spreading. The presence of women in secondary education were beginning to grow. This movement was largely eclipsed by a global democratization of education involving the middle and even the lower classes. In France, most secondary girls' schools disappeared in favour of coeducation (Lelièvre &

Lelièvre, 1991). More dramatic changes occurred at the secondary level: a massive restructuring created a system that was no longer divided so strongly according to the terms of the class (Baudelot & Establet, 1992).

Many reforms in Europe had anticipated the wave of feminism of the seventies (Offen, 2000). Already in 1950, the German Democratic Republic adopted the Law for the Promotion of Youth, declaring that all children, regardless of gender, should receive the same school training, vocational training, higher education learning, access to sport, and transformed its general schools into the polytechnic secondary schools of 10 years' compulsory education (*Polytechnische Oberschule*) in 1959. In Portugal, compulsory schooling was increased to 4 years, first for boys in 1956 and then for girls in 1960 (Araújo, 2000). In France, while democratization was the proclaimed and much more reluctant rationale of these realignments, coeducation accompanied the emergence of a common secondary school for pupils aged 6 to 15 years, with the single college after primary school. The decision that first announced this change to coeducation had no feminist connotations, but argued that the growth of collateral secondary education was intended to «serve families in their immediate neighbourhood or in the best conditions of pedagogical approaches». In 1963, the new secondary schools were co-educational at the outset and the decrees implementing the Haby Law of 11 July 1975 were also extended to coeducation in secondary schools. In 1971, more girls than boys had the *baccalauréat*. The existence of a feminist voice was decisive in noting that for women to have an impact in civil society, they needed education that equalled, if not surpassed, that of men (Rogers, 2010).

In Eastern Europe socialist countries, reforms were implemented in accordance with what utopian communist States were developing to promote women's emancipation (Ewing, 2010). The early 1970s were of great interest for pre-school education in Western Europe, but most reforms concerned the creation of child care centres organized by municipalities for very young children to meet the needs of working parents (in Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Sweden), like those already established in the 1950s and 1960s in the Eastern bloc to enable full employment of women.

In West Germany, the Dahrendorf pamphlet of 1965 *Bildger ist Bürgerrechts* emphasized that girls accounted for only 41% of those accepted in secondary schools preparing for the *Abitur*. Only 36% of girls had completed high school and only 26% of university students were women. At the same time, the new debate on general secondary education influenced the development of the gymnasium, as more and more pupils fre-

quented and were trained at this type of school. The silent incursion of girls into the gymnasium was accompanied by a rapid shift in secondary schools, from sexual segregation to coeducation, which took place in almost all German schools in the early 1970s (Kleinau & Opitz, 1996).

It was only with the active efforts of women themselves that things changed in the United Kingdom, where the women's liberation movement of the 1960s and 1970s called for equal educational opportunities for both sexes. The Sex Discrimination Act in 1975 has put an end to discrimination in entry into mixed schools and direct discrimination in the type of courses offered to students, although schools went on addressing teaching programs and contents according gender in the program studies. In addition, the women 's liberation movement of the 1960s and 1970s did much more to address the expectations of working-class girls in cultural terms than the many but small reforms did in the past aimed removing barriers to access to schools and workplaces (Wiborg, 2009)

In Italy in 1963, three-year school courses with Latin and vocational training courses were merged into the unified secondary school (*scuola media unica*), which eventually raised compulsory schooling to eight years (the only major legislative reform of public education in the republican Italy). In the following years, public schools absorbed the enormous increase in enrolment in secondary education, from 840.000 in 1961 to over 2.500.000 in the early 1980s with girls approaching half of all enrolments (Soldani, 2010).

Yet women's silent revolution in education pushed ahead by the feminist movement and cultural turn in the 1970s, oriented girls' attitudes toward educational attainments, professional achievements and economic independence in many generational waves after, finally endorsing the centrality of gender policies as a crucial key, even in non-Western developing countries (Spencer, 2003). This is the most important reaching for the initial concrete utopia of ensuring a concrete principle based on equal access and equal opportunities.

Education and educational outcomes

Although the transnational historical comparison presents many difficulties—the name and meaning of different types of schools have varied according to time and nation, and similar names have often

masked institutional differences—almost the entire twentieth century tells of a democratization foregoing a gradual increase to education for the masses of Western and Eastern Europe, partly because of extensive school participation in the United States. It is also proven that teenage girls scored higher in tests that measured non-cognitive skills such as attention, organizational skills and self-discipline which in turn contributed to clean away residual traditional stereotypes. In most Western countries, women, as aggregate student population, experience less drop-outs, higher average grades, pursue higher education and enrol in university at higher rates than their male peers (Buchmann et al., 2008).

Using international databases (Barro & Lee, 2010) it is possible to examine international trends in the gender gap in educational attainment: globally, among individuals born between 1975 and 1979, women had more years of schooling than men in 74 of 144 countries. In the United States, Sweden, Denmark, Norway and Finland, men had higher levels of education in cohorts born between the 1920s and 1940s, but from the cohorts born after 1950, the average level of education has widened in favour of women. Whereas in 1950 women had more years of education than men in only 11 countries (Canada, the United Kingdom and the United States among them) out of 146, by 2010 this figure was already 43. These 43 countries include all European Nordic countries as well as Australia, the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom.

Overall, in 9 of the 24 advanced economies, the overall female population is on average more educated than the male population. Except for China, Korea and Ireland, women account for most upper secondary graduates in general programs, on average 55% of graduates from OECD countries. The proportion of young people leaving education and training in 2015 in the EU-28 was 2.9 percentage points higher for young men (12.4%) than for young women (9.5%). More significantly, young men are less likely than young women to complete high school in all OECD countries where data are available (OECD 2015). The higher the gap in secondary schools for women, the higher the sex ratio of university enrolment in their favour. This positive correlation suggests that in countries where women play relatively better in secondary education, women also participate in higher education in greater numbers. The pool of university graduates has therefore become increasingly feminine in many countries. Already in 2010, there were more women than men among university graduates in 13 out of 24 OECD countries (OECD, 2012).

Tertiary education

The first country where the number of female tertiary students surpassed the number of male students was in the United States where this occurred in 1980. The countries of Northern Europe followed the United States about five years later. In many EU countries, more young women than men have received tertiary education in 2005, while the share of lower secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary education is generally the same for young men and women (OECD 2016b). More than one-third (37%) of the European population aged 30–34 had completed tertiary education in 2013: 41% of women and 31% of men. The proportion of women with a university degree was already higher than that of men in all EU Member States.

The widening gap in favor of women reflects the fact that in most industrialized countries, the growth of men's educational attainment has slowed down as the level of education of women continues to grow. In the United States, for example, male academic achievement began to fall after cohorts born in the 1950s. At the same time, female performances in tertiary education continued to increase. It seems that female dominance in educational attainment is becoming a global phenomenon.

Even though among university students, women are now a majority, they still choose different fields of studies than men. According to the OECD (2016c), girls remain underrepresented in some areas, such as science and engineering, and overrepresented in others, such as education and health. In 2014 there were, on average, three times as many men as women with engineering degrees and four times as many women as men with education degrees in the OECD dataset. Here, it is difficult to draw conclusions about long-term international trends, as there are no long and internationally comparable time series. However, some studies on individual countries suggest that gender differences in the choice of field of study at the tertiary level may decrease. In most OECD countries, the dissimilarity index declined in 2000, with Denmark, Iceland, Japan and Switzerland showing declines of more than 5 percentage points.

A metaphor frequently used to describe the fact that women are underrepresented in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) is the "pipeline with leaks" occurring from Secondary education to university and STEM jobs. This pipeline avoids several students at different stages: students who show an interest in scientific careers sometimes change their minds when applying to high schools and universities and

choose other fields of study. Others start their post-secondary studies in a STEM program, but switch to other non-STEM fields of study before graduation (Xu, 2008). Finally, some students leave the pipeline after graduating in STEM when they choose another field as a professional career. Women escape more than men. The effect of differential leakage is to create a gender-based filter that removes a single sex from the stream and removes the other to arrive at the end of the pipeline. No one in a position of power consciously decided to filter women out of the stream, but the cumulative effect of many separate but related factors causes the sexual imbalance in the STEM fields observed today (Penner, 2015). However, if we look closely at the different fields within the STEM sector, we note that in many countries the only area that remains highly dominated by men is the engineering group, while the other disciplines undergo a continuous process of feminization (Kutlis et al., 2002; De Vita & Giancola, 2017).

When the dramatic increase in girls' education is considered, as soon as secondary education and higher education have been opened up, we find faced with the paradox with which we opened the debate. If one considers that dominant groups use education to reproduce their advantage, as can be seen about social inequalities, how to account for the fact that in secondary education and universities, women rank before the dominant sex? (Duru-Bellat, 2008). It could then be seductive, in the end, to innocent the school and the university of any inegalitarian behavior, since the difficulties of the girls are manifested at the time of entry into the labor markets. In fact, «it is enough for the school to function as a 'normal' environment [...] so that gendered (as well as social) inequalities are continuously produced» (Duru-Bellat, 2008, p. 142) since relations of domination that are prevalent in society will pass through education at the same ease that they inhabit other social fields. But can education being a 'normal' environment be a satisfying policy? Among the different instances of youth socialization, namely family, school, media, peer groups, school should be one with an explicit project of emancipating individuals and fostering substantial equality.

Transition to labor market

The gap between education and women's employment, although different from one country to another, is a cornerstone of inequality in all western labor markets. Gender inequalities in the labor market persist

everywhere, in terms of wage differentials, in terms of horizontal and vertical segregation, in terms of career opportunities. Growing female employment rates have narrowed the gender gap in the occupational rates, but have not dissolved other basic gender disparities. Even more decisive are the inequalities linked to the type of contracts, career opportunities and duration of unemployment: in all European countries women, especially those of the new generations, work with fixed-term contracts and part-time working more than they did to their male peers. They receive lower wages. If they lose a job, they take much longer than men to find another job (Scheele, 2002; Hakim, 2004)

Women have access to lower-paying occupations than men, work much more often on a part-time basis and are responsible for almost all domestic tasks that are not remunerated (housework, welfare and education of children). Girls are much less likely than boys to get a job content matching their field of qualification or to pursue a career that allows them to gain access to high-level positions in the professional hierarchy. Women tend to aspire to high-qualified professions rather than boys, but still have greater difficulty than men in achieving their aspirations. In all OECD countries, mothers' employment rates are lower than the 90% or higher rates reported for fathers. When mothers are employed they have fewer hours of paid work than fathers and are more likely to take career breaks to care for children or other family members. Due largely to interruptions for the care of children, employed mothers are less likely than their male counterparts to work in higher-level occupations with consequent lower earnings (OECD, 2016a).

We should divert attention from the thesis of the rational and automatic return of education on labor market, careers and earnings and rather look at gaps between female expectations and labor market dynamics. It is true that, between 1980 and 2007, the male workforce decreased in all OECD countries (except Iceland) while women participation rates increased in all these countries, but this has been accompanied by rapid growth in female unemployment and precarious employment, which appear to be feminized in all OECD countries. For graduates, employment rates in all Euro-European countries confirm the gender gap, with women continuing to be at a disadvantage in employment rates with overeducation hitting more female that male workers. It should also be emphasized that it is mostly women with Phd degrees who are able to achieve more impressive performances in the labor market, confirming that women need additional training to reach positions that men can achieve with an undergraduate degree.

The 'non-amendabilty' of the labor market and other explanations

The disappearance of gender inequality has occurred only in education and not in the labor market (neither in the political world). This would lead us to reason that the utopia which has informed education systems in the recent past has been completely defeated and betrayed by the neoliberal ideology applied to both the economy and politics. In fact, the power of this ideology lies in the fact that it makes us believe that a set of axioms and political rigidities come from undeniable economic proofs, while being exactly the reverse.

Labor markets, by definition, are systems producing and reproducing inequalities per se. They are not modifiable. They cannot be regulated—if not partially. Principles and norms of equality, especially in private enterprises, cannot transform the rationale and the methods by which a semi-skilled man is preferred to a highly-qualified woman. Here, norms can alter marked discriminations, but cannot function against subtle discriminatory mechanisms. If post-compulsory education systems are open to all and they generally treat men and women in an almost equal way, leaving individuals and their families the chance to choose, on the other hand, the expectations of candidates to job positions collide with those of employers and must be channeled according to limited options, defined and controlled by companies.

It is true that the difference between the two worlds—education and labor market—exists today as (less than) in previous decades, when workplace was a male kingdom, but the transition from education to work is much less motivated by academic achievement today than in the age of social Fordism. At the time of the «social compromise» of the Glorious Thirties of Fordism (1945–1975) described by the sociologist Colin Crouch (1999), the utopia of equality in education ran with the utopia of scientific meritocracy and with the idea that jobs and occupations should be allocated according to levels and titles of education. Scientific management had been applied to the consistency between educational performances and work requirements. Not only would modernization, scientific progress and technical advancement have reduced deprivation, but meritocracy, both at school and at work, would have put each one in the right position: the scientific-rational link between the level and the type of education, on the one hand, and the job, the position, the wage and the pres-

tige of the other would have severed the role of family background and class origins in reproducing inequalities.

Even if in reality they are inextricably linked together, it is possible analytically to isolate at least six mechanisms of inequalities in professional success between men and women: 1) the direct transmission of a professional activity between the family; 2) social networks; 3) the feminization of certain fields of study, and certain areas of work; 4) risk aversion; (5) gender asymmetry in the work-life balance system; (6) the existence of genuine discrimination between men and women by employers.

1) The most obvious explanation concerns the inheritance of a professional activity directly from the family. The direct transmission of the family business goes more often to the benefit of sons. When it concerns entrepreneurs and self-employed workers, craftsmen and traders, independent professionals, holders or associates of professional firms, success still requires the acquisition of educational qualifications, but nevertheless it is relevant for gender inequalities, as several studies showed the persistence of choices by fathers rewarding boys rather than girls in the transmission of professional networks (Pellizzari, 2013).

2) The first mechanism reveals the second. A basic thesis is that decision-making networks made up of people with higher positions in the labor market are able to create in many ways a valuable reputation that protects more men than women, regardless of the skills in their possession and beyond the value of academic qualifications. These professional networks are largely inhabited by men in top ranked positions. The relevance of social networks is decisive for entry and progress in the labor market and, above all, is not uniform in terms of social capital or in terms of those who are part of these networks. Social networks can provide first-hand information on employment opportunities (also and especially for wage laborers) and the know-how to exploit it. Even more directly, social networks can act through recommendations and other practices of nepotism. Being that men more than women occupy strategic positions in professional networks thanks to *le monde des hommes*— sociality, amusements, camaraderie—men and not women can better benefit from those networks. There are also more sophisticated forms of direct influence, linked to cultural and social skills, as well as attitudes and preferences developed in socialization processes and which are relevant for the professional destiny (Bourdieu, 1979). Furthermore, to distinguish technical and professional skills from cultural and social

ones is getting more and more difficult and thus savoir fare and social *habitus* may crucial in the transition to labor market. For example, since the early years of life, a male lawyer, son of a lawyer, has become familiar with the language and cultural codes, dispositions and attitudes typical of this occupational group, developing an attitude of polite rhetoric, standing and self-confidence: all aspects that can be appreciated by professional circles, and favor the success among the counterparts and the clienteles. The daughter of a lawyer could also share the same parental disposition toward a societal circle, but in her socialization to feminine identity she will miss many masculine *habitus* that accompany the social formation of the attitudes and styles typical of the profession.

3) Women are more likely to be employed in occupational sectors characterized by a high value of employability of educational titles (*credentialism*): skilled occupations in welfare, health and education have regulated recruitment systems that States has codified to evaluate the level and type of educational outcomes. On the other hand, access to top qualified occupations or more simply technical occupations in the private sector, more often male, is less oriented to decoding the level and type of educational attainments and is open to interference from personalist sources of recruitment (internal markets, recruitment via informal networks, soft and relational skills, personal portfolio, etc). In addition, the sociological literature on glass ceiling shows that women are over-represented in administrative jobs or in medium-ranked jobs, and encounter many difficulties in accessing senior positions (Davidson & Copper, 1992; Jalalzai, 2013). As a result, the feminization of some fields of study directly linked to formal and codified skills of recruitment confirms that the increasing female investment in education should theoretically be a successful strategy for employment and self-career advancement, except that in many other areas of the labor market, *credentialism* and meritocracy do not apply or functions to a minimum degree (Brown, 2001). It is not by chance that the more girls invest in certain areas of tertiary or non-tertiary post-secondary education, the more these areas get feminized and the more the related values lose social prestige and therefore pay-off in the labor market.

4) The fourth mechanism producing a direct influence on differentiating educational pay-offs on labor markets by gender is conceptualized by the theories of *Interest-Bearing Asset* (Erickson & Jonsson, 1996; Goldthorpe, 2007). According to these theories, even with the same economic, social and cultural backgrounds, and with the same level of edu-

cation, male students aspire in global terms to greater ambitions. In short, women look at women and men at men. Thus, means that individuals with the same social backgrounds and levels of education, when comparing themselves to others, they do it within rather than across gender.

5) From the beginning of the 1970s, the gender division of work has been occupying a central place in feminist literature, encouraging the emergence of a strong political interest in domestic, caring and cognitive unpaid activities usually performed by women (Dauphin & Marc, 2008). Almost a decade later, at the beginning of the 1990s, the problem of work-life balance, alongside the individualization of social rights, was one of the means of implementing the right of equality of treatment between women and men (Lanquetin & Letablier, 2004). The European Union advocates for the promotion of dual-breadwinner models (Lewis, 1992), the most cited arguments being linked to the need to increase employment rates, the need to redefine public welfare systems of the Member States, and finally, to foster the principle of gender equality. However, it is just in this vision that one can grasp the non-changeability of the labor market; Because, although the growing institutional pressures at European level and regulatory reforms by the institutions in each country or the obligations to facilitate work-life balance, employed women continue to face household burdensome and family responsibilities, education and care of children and old persons more than men do. Therefore, the argument based on the notion of «institutional pressure still insufficient» explains only partially the persistent disparity between men and women in the labor market. Overall, work-life balance arrangements among partners remains traditional even among dual-earner couples. Women spend more time on domestic and parental activities and less time on work and career than men. While stressing the role of the employer in favorizing gendered family-friendly policies, accounts should be taken of the fact that employers could transfer the actual costs of these measures to employees in the form of lower wages or reduced careers opportunities. But above all, employers anticipate this transfer by preferring the recruitment of men rather than women, because daily practices of combining work and family duties still follow the male dominant culture and assign women the task of caring for the home, children. Formal childcare appears to be particularly inadequate, although solutions often take the form of parental leave or informal arrangements. However, parental leave does not always favor gender

equality and the use of such leave is still a typically female practice with very negative collateral effects in terms of return to work, career opportunities, wage levels.

6) At workplaces and in the labor market, the conversion from formal to de facto gender equality polices is far from being achieved. Recruitment, careers, training, remuneration or the articulation of working times are still influenced by gender stereotypes. A strict application of the principle of non-discrimination, the monitoring of gender-based indicators, the introduction of a principle of proportionality and, even positive actions are all commitments that fail in being imposed on companies. The reason is that it would be easy to circumvent them (as a matter of fact when they are effective companies usually circumvent them). Only a cultural and political transformation based on long-term perspective and integrated into a general remodeling of public policies in the field of labor market, a serious set of efforts for labor market decommodification, could lead to substantial gender equality. For the moment, it is a utopia.

Having gradually put into practice what seemed like a utopia only 60 years ago, educational policies have made additional efforts in the field of gendered socialization—from the very first years of schooling—when the context seems suitable to prevent and contrast gender stereotypes and traditional choices of boys and girls. From this point of view, a cultural policy is certainly a valid translation and a plausible update of social criticism elaborated by feminisms, humanist movements and postmodern thought. But there is still an open space in sociological criticism. This concerns the role that education systems should and could play in preventing the reproduction of other social inequalities: certainly, the debate continues, increasingly dense and fully enriched by sociological contributions.

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Lekan Balogun
Victoria University of Wellington (New Zealand)

"Òtún we òsì, òsì we òtún": gender, feminist mirroring, and the yoruba concept of power and balance

ABSTRACT. Chandra Talpade Mohanty suggests the need to re-examine the representation of the third world "Woman" and "Women" by Western feminist discourse against the background of the cultural and political imperative of such representation. This reappraisal is imperative in light of the issues regarding these women's inclusion in, and exclusion from, the mainstream of affairs that regulate living and existence in their societies through the mechanism of religion and culture, especially against the background of contemporary global socio-political experience. Mohanty's argument is not however entirely new—it is at best a reminder. The Yoruba culture, as well as its system of knowing, also acknowledges this "difference" and provides socio-cultural realities that could serve as guiding principles to its understanding. While it is true that in some societies, women grapple with some of the issues such as patriarchy raised by Western feminist scholarship, the Yoruba are also aware of these constraints and have thus put in place systems that regulate behaviour; hence, while Western feminism regard third world women as an oppressed lot, the Yoruba concede power to their own women. In this essay therefore, I utilize knowledge from the Yoruba culture to explore Mohanty's suggestion for the review of analytical tools being used in Western feminist scholarship.

KEYWORDS: culture, feminism, Gender, Sex, Yoruba

Preamble

In this essay I reinterpret Chandra Mohanty's call for a review of Western feminism's representation of Third World women from the Yoruba perspective of gender and power. Mohanty decries the image of these women whom Western feminist scholarship presents as the "Other" suffering from a "common oppression" that cuts across race or class boundaries. She insists that the so-called "third world woman" that is constructed is not only an arbitrary image but also a problematic one. She observes the representation of these women as monolithic and powerless victims of a certain system of oppression overseen by men.

The image also implicates the idea of being a girl, woman and women as categories of the female gender that suffer oppression in the hands of its male counterpart. Hence, she stresses the exigency of re-examining the analytical strategies employed in Western feminist scholarship to identify these women, and their categorization as "woman" an ideological construct as opposed to "women" the real, concrete, cultural and historical subjects, in light of the political implications of such categorization, and especially with emphasis on cultural realities that underpin them. In this essay thus, I present the Yoruba cultural practice and concept of gender and power as the analytical tools that are useful for such alternative perception.

Like several aspects of European life whose impetus could be traced to the past, the Yoruba precepts' are still relevant in contemporary society, including the discourse of gender and power, even as events continue to underline the significance of the issues which Mohanty raised many years ago. According to Ashcroft et al (1986), "In much of European thinking, history, ancestry, and the past form a powerful reference point for epistemology" (p. 34), and, as Ayi Kwei Armah also reminds us "there is no need to forget the past. But of each piece of the past that we find in our present, it may be necessary to ask: will it bear me like a stepping stone, or will I have to bear it, a weight around my neck?" (qtd in Osundare, 2002, p. 1). More so, the examples of the Yoruba precepts that I will refer to in this essay are parts of a canon that is still being religiously observed today, forming ongoing, living links between the people and their ancestry. I will draw examples from these precepts, Yoruba ritual/spiritual conception of gender and power as well as their sociopolitical and mundane dimensions including contemporary practices that they have engendered and/or influenced, to illustrate my points.

1. Reflections on feminism

The field of feminist discourse is suffused with various terminologies and movements which differ in their approach but are united in their purpose. It is a "field of forces" and/or "field of struggles" to use Pierre Bourdieu's terms. According to Bourdieu (1993), "every new position in assessing itself as such, determines a displacement of the whole structure and that, by the logic of action and reaction…leads to all sorts of changes in the position-takings of the occupants of the other positions"

(p. 58). To wit: Material feminism concerns itself with conditions affecting women in the home in regard to domestic chores; Amazon feminism addresses physical equality of men and women; Separatist feminism (often erroneously depicted as lesbians) clamour for either partial or total separation of men from women to enable the latter see themselves in new light and context; and Ecofeminism advocates the dismantling of patriarchy which they link to the maltreatment of the environment[1].

Bourdieu's argument hence underpins the political/cultural fields in which great effort is made to dislodge male dominance. Bourdieu writes that this cultural field is "a veritable social universe…with its relations of power and its struggles for the preservation or the transformation of the established order…for their specific interests" (p. 163, 181). In short, everything here boils down to power struggles between the sexes. Michel Foucault (1978) has also remarked that the struggle for power is both systemic and hidden, and that, "power acts by laying down rules neither sex can escape" from (p. 84). Foucault's explanation speaks directly to the heart of the universalist animosity to marriage from a western lens that preoccupies much of Mohanty's argument against the misrepresentation of the place of women in marriage in the so-called "Third World" in Western feminist scholarship.

Mohanty (1991) argues that western feminist scholars are concerned with the relations of power that they counter, resist and/or even implicitly support. She argues that Western feminist discourse represents Western women as sophisticated and "being in control" of their bodies and sexuality in relation to "othered" "Third World" women who lead truncated lives denied material essentials due to conservative and archaic cultural and religious practices surrounding marriage. She criticizes the ethnocentric universality of using Western feminism as the normative against which the legal, economic, religious, and familial structures peculiar in non-western societies must be measured. Accordingly, through "'Women' as category of Analysis" or what she also terms "We Are All Sisters in Struggle," Mohanty criticises western feminist paternalistic, essentialist, and stereotypical assumption about non-Western women that establishes hierarchies of the "We" vs "Them" paradigm, which transfers Western women's experience of oppression onto an exoticized "oppressed third world woman" of their fantasy.

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[1] I do recognise that feminists/feminisms differ in many ways as I have shown in this introduction and cannot treat all of them, hence I will only focus on radical feminism which concerns me in this essay.

Mohanty calls for a positive, self-conscious, cross-cultural analyses that put into consideration the sociocultural and political differences that Western feminists overlook as a way of developing "a new concept of humanity" in feminist representation of third world women. Mohanty draws from Marnia Lazreg's suggestion that the point of redefining Western feminist analytical tools "is neither to subsume other women under one's own experience nor to uphold a separate truth for them. Rather, it is to allow them to *be* while recognizing that what they are is just as meaningful, valid, and comprehensible as what we are…" (Lazreg, 1988, p. 99; emphasis in the original). Lazreg maintains that "Indeed, Western feminists essentially deny other women the humanity they claim for themselves, they dispense with any ethical constraint. They engage in the act of splitting the social universe into us and them, subject and objects" (p. 100). In challenging the stereotypical assumptions about "Third World" women, Mohanty's argument inadvertently resonates with cultural values peculiar to the Yoruba. Essentially, the notion that marriage creates the enabling environment for female oppression as proposed and championed by Western feminist scholarship the example of which I cited above, differs entirely from Yoruba beliefs that see society as strengthened by the institution of marriage.

2. The Yoruba: an overview of "the concept"

Since time immemorial, the Yoruba have occupied the physical region known as the south-western part of Nigeria commonly called *Yorùbá land*, even though the cultural and linguistic space stretches beyond to parts of French-speaking West African countries of the Republic of Benin and Togo, as well as to the diaspora and New World due to the trans-Atlantic Slave Trade. Wherever they are found, the Yoruba are bound by a common language and mythology (Falola & Genova, 2006, p. 1). The Yoruba attach great importance to several cultural practices: marriage, parenthood, naming, and burial, among many others. In all these, and most especially in marriage, women's role is just as important as men's role.

For the Yoruba, the importance of marriage is stressed by at least two proverbs: "*Fòròfóró imú ìyàwó sàn ju yàrá òfifo lo*" (a wife with a warped nose is better than an empty room); and "*Àìníìyàwó kò séé dáké sí lásán, bí a bá dáké enu níí yoni*" (a mature man without a wife cannot

just keep quiet, if he folds his arms, it results in a problem) (Ajibade, 2005, p. 103). Although the man/father may have several responsibilities in the home the essential unit is the mother and the child which supports the Yoruba saying that the mother is the mainstay of the family. Thus, among the Yoruba, the mother is the mainstay of the family, making the family structure matrilocal. Despite some significant changes to the institution of marriage in contemporary Yoruba society due to colonialism and Western influences, these have not negatively affected or undermined traditional Yoruba values regarding marriage.

The Yoruba cultural understanding and value of marriage emphasizes the paramountcy of family, lineage, and social cohesion in the relationship, in terms of a commitment that both the man and woman and their extended families invest in the marriage. The Yoruba family, on the one hand, functions as a generating unit; a system of production and reproduction within both the narrow structure of a nuclear family and the extended type that also embraces the larger society. On the other hand, the basis of the production and reproduction system that marriage facilitates among the Yoruba is anchored on a metaphysical and symbolic levels: "a view of human life [that it generates] from a total, rather than a dichotomous and exclusive, perspective" (Steady, 1996, p. 7), privileged by radical western feminists.

Considered from a metaphysical realm therefore, marriage for the Yoruba emphasizes life and community as the basis for cosmological balance (p. 8). The cultural consciousness of marriage from this perspective also comes with the knowledge that in Yoruba philosophy everything, animate and inanimate, has a soul (Ajuwon, qtd in Opefeyitimi, 2009, p. 139). This type of relationship creates spaces for the *ako à t'abo* (male/female) principles operating in a balance harmony that fosters a clear understanding of the role of gender/sex. As Oyeronke Olajubu (2003) contends, "the existence of gender construct among the Yoruba does not translate to notions of oppression and the domination of women by men, because it is mediated by the philosophy of complementary gender relations, which is rooted in the people's cosmic experience" (p. 9). Subsequently, male/female relationship is a sociocultural engagement which is devoid of the privileging of either gender: neutral complementarity is at the centre of this Yoruba system of belief and social practice. Built on such a cultural awareness, with its deep normative value, is a consciousness that refers neither to equality or parity, but cooperation that delineates the areas of control for either of the gender

(Terborg-Penn & Rushing, 1997). The proverb "*B'ókùnrin bá r'éjò b'óbìnrin bá pa a, k'éjò sâ ti mâ lo ni*" (if a man sees a snake and a woman kills it, it must be accepted that what matters is that the snake does not escape) underscores the binary complementarities between the Yoruba men and women in their relationship.

As it must have become clear, Yoruba cosmology constitutes the reference point and major influence of Yoruba concept of gender and power relations. Theirs is an excellent example of how mythology can effectively be used to understand socio-political relationships and to address issues that otherwise would have remained elusive. One of these issues is the way men and women are categorized in the society, a classification that recognizes the uniqueness of the male and female gender within the framework of a stable and mutually-beneficial relationship. Simon de Beauvoir (1973) in her famous statement "we are born female but we become women," implies that women and men are born as female and male biologically but are constructed into gender by their society. She also implies that "woman" and by extension, "womanhood," are both culturally determined. Similarly, Maggie Humm (1990) writes that gender is the stated roles that are ascribed to men and women based on what society perceives to be their sex—a culturally shaped group of attributes and behaviours identified with the female or male. But, although the Yoruba also recognize biological differences, sex does not carry the same social implications that categorize the female gender into "girl," "woman" and "women." As argued by Oyeronke Oyewunmi (1997), "woman" as a gender categorization did not exist in Yoruba land prior to colonialism, "unlike the West, physical bodies were not social bodies...and the presence or absence of certain organs did not determine social position or social hierarchy... In fact, there were no women—defined strictly in gender terms" (p. ix–xii). Thus, the definition of female gender, woman and womanhood among the Yoruba is not always a biological or based on sexual reference.

Moreover, there are socio-economic points among the Yoruba where women cease to be regarded as female and are ritually and officially designated as men. While these women retain their biologically female bodies, such as menstruation, motherhood, they function socially as "men" (Ogundipe-Leslie, 2007, p. 54). As Kaplan (1997) also writes, although men held political offices and authority in principle in traditional Yoruba society, women controlled the ritual base upon which such roles are placed, since it is believed that political structures are anchored on

mystical principles that are within the domain of women (p. 319). Fluidity of gender constructs also finds its place in political and socio-economic spheres such as in the institutions of female kings: Lóbùn, also known as *oba'bìnrin* (woman king) among Ondo people (a sub-group of the Yoruba); the female ruler of Oyo empire, Alaafin Orompoto, and regency in which the daughter of a deceased king is installed as a transitional ruler prior to the enthronement of another king, are historically-significant examples. Similarly, there are roles such as *Ìyá Oba* (The King's mother); *Ìyálójà* (President of the market); *Ìyálóde* (Woman Prime Minister) and *Ayaba/Olorì* (The Queen), all rooted in traditional Yoruba practice, and are still practiced today and continue to influence some African churches, with positions such as *Ìyá Egbé* (mother of Association) and *Ìyá-Ìjo* (mother of the faith community), a role that requires nurturing, sustenance, and guidance and akin to the position of *Ìyálóde*. In fact, in the discharge of her duties, the *Ìyá-Ìjo* is supported by lieutenants: *Òtún Ìyá-Ìjo* and *Òsì-Ìyá-Ìjo* (right-hand and left-hand assistants) all derived from Yoruba philosophical concept of diffused power that negates despotism (Olajubu, 2003, p. 133) to mention a few.

Oyewunmi's suggestion that rank, status, and hierarchy were determined by age and seniority and not necessarily sex is supported by the non-gendered specific nature of the Yoruba language. Because there is no gender pronoun in the Yoruba language, words like he/she/him/her neither have any direct translations nor are there such words like brother/sister/uncle/aunt that indicate gendered familial relationship. The same non-gendered specification applies to Yoruba words like *okọ* (husband) and *aya/ìyàwó* (wife) which could be applied outside of familial relations; while words like *ègbón* and *àbúrò* that show relationship between elder and younger siblings or their relatives are based on seniority rather than sex (Yusuf, 2016, p. 15–16). The non-gendered specific nature of the Yoruba language is also shared by their Igbo neighbours in the south-eastern parts of Nigeria where the Igbo word *nwoko* (male child) and *nwanyi* (female child) share *nwa* (child) as a common base that suggests a difference from *nwoko* (man) in the way the English language constructs wo/man for both gender (Okafor, 2015), so that it expresses the equality of the gender devoid of genital type.

Perhaps due to the same Western orientation that Mohanty challenges, several scholars hold a different view to Oyewunmi's. Citing the payment of bride wealth and the practice of polygamy and the non-recognition of dowry and polyandry, Lorand Matory argues that there had been social

construction based on sex in 19th century Yoruba society (Matory, 1994, p. xxvi). Similarly, J. Peel contends that the Yoruba culture recognizes that a new bride, irrespective of age, was younger than any child she met in the compound (Peel, 2002, p. 139). These opinions fail to consider the hermeneutical difference between precolonial and colonial/postcolonial Yoruba cultural practices. What is supported by scholarship is the fact that traditional Yoruba culture gives pride of place to women under at least two designations: 1) their status as daughters in their father's lineage and as wives in their husband's lineage (Denzer, 1994, p. 3); and 2) the respect as mothers based on the logic that all men are born of women. Hence, violence against women is frowned upon and forbidden, while divorce is considered only when both families have exhausted all means of arbitration, and/or in cases of extreme cruelty, infertility, insanity, extreme promiscuity on the part of the woman, irresponsibility on the part of the man or financial insolvency (Johnson, 1923), among others. However, Oyewunmi contends that prior to colonialism, there were no "women" or "men" because Yoruba language's categories of "*okùnrin*" (anamales), or "*obìnrin*" (anafemales) were never "neither binarily opposed nor hierarchical" (p. ix) Instead, they were persons whose anatomy "did not privilege them to any social positions and similarly did not jeopardize their access" (p. xii). She insists that "Yoruba social identity was, and is, fundamentally relational, changing, and situational, with seniority the most crucial determinant of ranking" (p. xiii). From the foregoing, whereas perception of gender classification is different in Western culture, this is problematic among the Yoruba, in the setting where such classification often crosses physical/biological boundaries.

As *aya/ìyàwó* and *ìyá* (wives & mothers) and *omobìnrin* (daughters), Yoruba women are important members of the family and are identified with specific (*agbo*) *ilé* or *ìdílé*, known from around the 19th century as lineage, which included agnate children and their spouses. Thus, while family and lineage are not so much distinct concepts among the Yoruba, we may view *ilé* as house and determined by consanguinity, *ìdílé* encompasses the extended family (or lineage) that could span four generations or even more. In this set up, these categories of women (daughters) have the same rights as sons/boys/men—rights which they retain even after marriage and relocation to their husbands' family houses. In fact, the older women outranked younger men; while as daughters, they could also inherit properties from their consanguineal homes as their brothers; some of these women can also return to this natal home (a prac-

tice called *ilémosú/dálémosú* although this is frowned at by the society in general) in case of failed marriage, and/or they can also return to occupy an exalted political position as the representative of that particular *ìdílé*, which suggests that the functional meaning of identity based on gender among the Yoruba is one of continuum that does not recognize demarcation (Olajubu, 2003, p. 30–31), or is it disrupted when a woman marries and leaves her parent's compound for her husband's.

Furthermore, although the kind of occupation that the people engage in are often determined by the kind of occupation that is specific to each *agbo ilé*, women, as mothers/wives, play very significant roles in socializing their daughters into such occupation. While boys in the compound were expected to work with their fathers on the farm, the task of their early childhood upbringing and socialization often rests on their mothers who teach both the boys and girls mutual respect, loyalty, honesty and other desirable social values. This is why, when a child misbehaves in the society the Yoruba say "*Ìyá è ló jo*" (s/he has taken after the mother), which does not translate as a denunciation/disregard of the mother in the house, but emphasizes her important role in raising the children and ensuring the development of individuals whose conducts will bring honour to the lineage. This is another platform where women's role in the family and society as a whole is duly acknowledged.

Simultaneously, the daughters also learn from their mothers' various religious duties which included propitiating their own personal *òrìṣà* that they take with them from their parents' house and those already located in their husbands' family compounds. This role significantly reflects their strategic positions in their natal and marital compounds (Olajubu, 2003, p. 32). The socialization into religious practices also included being trained in the art of oral literature such as *oríkì* and *èṣà egúngún* depending on the kind of cultic practice in their parents' compound or husbands'. Aside from the religious importance of these verbal arts, they are also useful "textual" materials that the women utilize to teach their daughters history and social cohesion. The functions and structures of these oral tradition, Olajubu maintains, are "not rigid but situational, as mediated by the society's prescriptions which vary by occasions" (p. 35), and women constitute a large percentage of the practitioners and custodians of these essences, and historical documents that form parts of the Yoruba identity.

In addition to the above religious functions performed by the young girls as wives in their matrimonial homes, they also play a very crucial role

in ancestorhood after the demise of their parents. Morton-Williams (1960) has argued that among the Yoruba death is linked to social hierarchy, informed by the people's reaction to uncertainties and the need to ensure the continuity of their genealogy. While this might have informed the attention the Yoruba pay to male children in terms of the sustenance of the family name, the absence of female children in a Yoruba family will adversely affect the transition to ancestorhood (Opefeyitimi, 2009). The female children play significant roles in the funerary rites that place the deceased on the pedestal for ancestorhood—a role which draws attention to their position as mothers (entry point into the world) and passage to transition at the same time. Although the rites vary from one Yoruba sub-tribe to another, the social relevance is the same. Among the Ijesha people for example, *kíké erín wó* (singing "the elephant has fallen") and *orin omó-layòlé* ("don't jubilate-over-children-until-they-succeed-you") are ritual songs exclusively performed by women, led by the eldest daughter of the deceased person, as part of the funerary rites, where the women in this case assume the role of ritual anchor between the living, the dead and ancestorhood. This particular rite is important "to balance the inequality between the male who is socialised into the wealth [left by the deceased parent] by law and convention and the daughter who performs the most important rite of transition as a recognition of both her role as the agent of regeneration through childbirth" (Opefeyitimi, 2009, p. 8–11), and to stress the idea of gender complementarity that governs the Yoruba universe.

3. More specifics, clearer insights

Having said that, let us now examine some of the specific points that Mohanty raised with regard to western feminist conception of third world women and their place in marriage and their societies in general, in relation to Yoruba practices that reflect alternative perception.

3.1. Women as victims of male violence and as universal dependents

Mohanty identifies feminist scholarship which stresses "shared dependencies" (p. 58) of women in a common context of struggle without any boundaries. In Beverly Lindsay (1983)'s opinion for example, "dependency relationships, based upon race, sex and class, are being perpetuated through social, educational, and economic institutions. These

are linkages among Third World Women," especially Vietnamese and African-American women who are "victims of race, sex, and class" (p. 298, 306), irrespective of linguistic and cultural differences that exist between them. If Lindsay's argument is nothing short of patronizing, Maria Rosa Cutrufelli (1983)'s is rather appalling: "My analysis will start by stating that all African women are politically and economically dependent" (p. 13); and "…nevertheless, either overtly or covertly, prostitution is still the main if not the only source of work for African women" (p. 33). The two views illustrate the tendency of "liberated women" to view other women as inferior.

In contrast to these patronising declarations by women who themselves may be suffering, or have suffered, from Eurocentric feminist othering of their societies, the Yoruba conception of womanhood is iconized in Òsun, a female deity that crosses both male/patriarchal and female archetypal boundaries at will (Ogundipe-Leslie, 2007, p. 65). In Yoruba mythology, Òsun transitions between being a gentle obedient daughter of Olódùmarè (Yoruba idea of God), to a woman/wife of Òrúnmìlà and possessor of ancient secrets and ancient mysteries, as well as being both mother and Supreme *Ìyá Àgbà* and leader of the *Àjé*, the powerful cult of people who, as Washington (2005) writes, are "bestowed with spiritual vision, divine authority, power of the word, and *àse*, the power to bring desires and ideas into being" (p. 14). The liturgy about Òsun reveals that instead of being dependent on the male, the female serves as the rallying point for the male. It therefore negates the Western perception of women as "universal dependents."

Òsun's embodiment of Yoruba concept of gender and womanhood is represented by the *Ìyá Mòòpó*, a symbolic and ancient trinity, an imagery of a female figure that protects women's interest. The symbolism represents Yoruba understanding of the three basic stages of a woman's life: as a daughter, wife and mother, each with its distinctive place and roles in the home and society. Yoruba culture shows women to be species held with respect, awe and reverence as depicted through the symbolism of the *Ìyá Mòòpó* (Olajubu, 2003, p. 69–72; Balogun, 2015, p. 121–152), a direct contrast to western representation of all women as a monolithic lump of powerless victims. Indubitably, Òsun's non-specificity as a female gender is underscored by visual manifestations and representations of kinship among the Yoruba and in places where Yoruba religion and culture have penetrated and influenced. The Yoruba term "Oba" (king) is genderless, while the feathers on the *oba's* crown, is a represen-

tation of women's power of transmigration (recall the *Àjé* here), and identified with Òsun, whose connection to *Ifá*, the Yoruba divination system, body of epistemological knowledge and aesthetic principles, makes her synonymous with mystery and esoteric knowledge that drives from Yoruba metaphysics.

Similarly, the Yoruba believe in the sacred position and function of women in the society, underlined by the practice of divination associated with *Ifá*. While male practitioners called *Babaláwo* use *ikin* (sacred nuts) and *òpèlè* (string objects of divination), *isà* and/or *Èèríndínlógún* (cowries) are "exclusively" reserved as the domain of women-diviners called *Iyanifa*, hence the saying "*Òle okùnrin ló ń da 'sà*" that is, only a lazy man divines with *isà* (Oluwole, 1996, p. 3).The description of men who divine with *isà* as lazy is not to underplay the sacred value of women's form of divination but to stress the specificity of their area of control in that metaphysical and cultural practice. Whereas women are in fact engaged in all other forms of divination, men are restricted in one. For example, *Obìdídà*, a system of divination with four lobes of kolanut is practiced by both men and women. The four lobes are divided into two halves each representing the male and female duality, and the qualifying principle in this form of divination is in terms of seniority in age rather than gender (Awolalu, 1979; Olajubu, 2003, p. 128); whoever uses *Èèríndínlógún* or any other form of divination for that matter, and whether male/female, is regarded as the wife of Òsun, whose gender transcends physical features of femininity and sexual barrier.

In their well-researched work, *Osun Across the Waters: A Yoruba Goddess in Africa and the Americas*, editors Joseph M. Murphy and Mei-Mei Sanford (1997) maintain that Òsun transforms through water and the mystery of birth. Seen in relationship to Ògún who transforms through technology and heals with herbal expertise, Òsun, as Murphy and Sanford argue, "(re)presents dynamic example of the resilience and renewed importance of traditional Yoruba...spiritual experience, social identity, and political power in contemporary Africa and the African diaspora" (p. 2), even as she occupies a special place in the Yoruba

psyche when it comes to the discourse of gender and sex.

Several contemporary Yoruba women have demonstrated Òsun's enduring example in the way Murphy and Sanford explain, by transforming the political structure and spiritual perspectives of the Eurocentric and male-dominated Christian churches introduced into Yorubaland during colonialism, to reflect the role of women alongside that of men. Influenced

by Yoruba traditional practice, these Yoruba women directly transformed the subordinate role prescribed for women in Christianity by founding churches, and indirectly by creating alternative settings of empowerment by taking up leadership roles in the same churches (Olajubu, 2003, p. 126). Despite the enormity of the tasks prescribed by their new roles, these women did not fail to discharge their domestic duties as mothers, by raising children (especially daughters) who continued their pioneering roles in Church activities. Some of the daughters of these founders also established their own churches while maintaining their roles as wives/mothers in their matrimonial homes. There are many examples in Nigeria of today of such church founders: Christiana Abiodun Emmanuel (nee Akinsowon) founded one of the most popular Christian movements in Nigeria, the Cherubim and Seraphim Church, in partnership with Moses Orimolade Tunolase in 1925. Upon Moses Orimolade's death, Abiodun Emmanuel became the leader of the church; Mother-in-Israel V. John, founded Ona Iwa mimo C&S church, Ilorin; Prophetess F.E. Alabi, established the God's Grace Church, Ilorin, and Her Grace E.B. Kolawole, founded the Saint's spiritual church, Ilorin. At the CAC2 churches: CAC, God's Power Never Fails (*Agbara Olorun Ki Ba Ti*), led by Bishop Bola Odeleke, and CAC Daniel's Yard (*Agbala Daniel*), both in Ibadan, were established as breakaway factions of the Christ Apostolic Church (CAC), established in 1931; and the Last Days Miracle Revival Church, Ilesa, founded by Bola Adedeji Taiwo, are examples of female Christian leaders whose parents were also Church leaders to name a few. By introducing a leadership structure in their churches that recognizes both male and female contribution to both the churches' development and their social functions in the society (the churches were led by the women and their husbands), these women-founders aimed to show "the models for Christian homes where the guiding principle is mutual respect as opposed to domination and oppression" (Olajubu, 2003, p. 59), a fact which underlined their awareness of Yoruba concept of gender complementarity.

3.2. Married women as the victims of the colonial process in the light of familial system

Laurette Ngcobo (2007), writing from the perspective of weakness rather than the strength of marriage and women in African society, asserts that "the basis of marriage among Africans implies the transfer of

a woman's fertility to [the] husband's family group" (p. 533). Not done, she argues further that "the major weakness in this formidable role of motherhood is that women can only exercise it from the outside, for they remain marginalized in their… husbands' home" (p. 534). Interestingly, in the same article, she contradicts herself when she argues that "the position of motherhood is socially and cosmologically very central" (p. 534) in the same African society. Ngcobo's contradictory positions are tellingly supportive of Mohanty's position that critiques Western feminist scholarship in its construct of Arab and Muslim women. Mohanty argues that intellectuals side-stepping the historical, material, and ideological power structures that determine the status of women in nonwestern societies serve only to justify the claim that the tribal kinship structure long established, in place and around which the family system is built, serves nothing other than patriarchal purposes. She also argues that such a view justifies the claim that the women in these societies are merely sexual-political subjects, even prior to entering marriage, thus presupposing that motherhood is no more than a euphemism for a system of oppression.

Seen from another perspective however, Mohanty contends that the familial structure bestows a certain autonomy on the institution of marriage, as an alternative space of agency that is not rendered onto women by men as a compensatory act for sex, but as a conscious will and intent to empower women. Consequently, Michelle Rosaldo (1980)'s argument that "woman's place in human social life is not in any direct sense a product of the things she does…but the meaning her activities acquire through concrete social interactions" (p. 400) is tenable in relation to the Yoruba society. Concomitantly, Olajubu also maintains that in Yoruba society, motherhood gives women agency and becomes both an avenue of female power and a potent force for social action (p. 29–31). Thus, when the Yoruba in their *oríkì* say: "*A kìí nílé Bàbá, ká má nílé e Ìyá*" (one cannot have a father's lineage without having her/his mother's), this acknowledges the position of women as mothers "at the centre of power and gender relations in the social space" (p. 31) and in the "primacy of the family structure through marriage including the role of women in ensuring its perpetuation" (p. 37), as a practice with continued relevance in modern society.

Similarly, as an example of Olajubu's notion of women at the centre of power and in the social space, Yoruba women engaged in commercial sales of food (hawking) in order to cushion the effect of the growing

urbanization and Nigeria's social, political and economic transformation caused by the colonial system. Thus, these women reduced the effect of the changing conditions that made it difficult for many men to marry at that time (which earned the women the sobriquet "ìyá-àpón" that is, mothers of bachelors). Alongside their domestic responsibilities, the women engaged in the business due to changing social orientation in postcolonial Nigeria and as dictated by social necessity. They also trained their daughters to acquire such desirable skill that was useful outside of the domestic front in order to support their family. In the process, they developed a unique form of "work song," or what Ayo Opefeyitimi describes as the "lore of Yoruba women cooked food advertisement" or "advertisement poetry" marked by "song-like, sonorous, penetrating sounds…often romantic and appeal[ing] to human sense of taste" (Opefeyitimi, 2009, p. 15). Aside from the economic gains derived from the business and the development of such a "powerful but neglected women's culture" (Showalter, 1986, p. 25) and a unique art form which "naturally encourage[s] a sophistic eloquence in practice" (Frances 11), the women showed exemplary example that was in contrast to both Cutrufelli's derogatory remark that African women were only good as prostitutes and Western feminist's idea of women as the victims of the colonial process in the light of familial system.

3.3. Women suppressed under religious ideologies

As it must have become clear by now, religion permeates Yoruba worldview and life in general: here also is where the women's role is powerfully established. The Yoruba consider women to be sacred because of the special powers that they are presumed to possess and which they share with the Creator and Supreme Being. The Yoruba demonstrate this attitude in their religious observances. This presumed power emanates from the woman's biological ability to create through childbirth. This point underscores Yoruba primal religious interpretation that giving life and giving meaning are not antagonistic positions. They acknowledge that there can't be life without meaning as there can be no meaning without life (Ogundipe-Leslie, 2007, p. 28). For example, this is demonstrated during the *àkosè wáyé/ìmòrí* rite by which the identity of a child is revealed through the mother's. The *àkosè wáyé* "Stepping into the World" and *ìmòrí* "Knowing the Head" rites include the

summoning of the child's *orí* (head) which is believed to be her/his link to the otherworld through a corresponding recourse to the mother's. The entire ritual process, supervised by a diviner (*Babaláwo*), identifies where the child has descended from: the father's or mother's lineage or from an *òrìṣà*/deity (Drewal et al., p. 32–33; Drewal, p. 52–62). Whatever the result, the mother plays a very significant role in the ritual processes of this ritual of knowing and becoming. This refutes Western feminist claim that women in non-Christian religions are oppressed. Here, on the contrary, the mother/female sacred element in the rites supports my claim that motherhood and the mother are crucial to a child's identity and well-being.

Moreover, while men dominate and legislate in the areas of political administration and social engineering in the broader socio-political sphere, women assert control in ceremonies and rituals as well as their perpetuation in the Yoruba consciousness. The *Orò*, *Egúngún* (ancestral) and *Gèlèdé* masking cults and ritual performances are exemplary religious practices that underline the Yoruba's keen sense of gender balance: while male dominance is established through the first two, the last dismantles such supremacy by its deployment to assert female will which touches on the numinous.

In this regard, the Ketu-Yoruba ritual practices of the above rites are useful for us to understand the Yoruba religious explication of gender consciousness. According to Benedict Ibitokun, during the *Ológuòdògbò* (*Orò*) festivals, women are kept indoors, while men dance and sing around town in a quasi-Bacchic impulse, daring the women to show their faces: "*Baba ń s'òde lo, b'ór'ólojò gbe, baba kò kò o*" that is, "The elders are going a hunting; should a stranger [meaning women] cross his path, he wouldn't mind the kill"; the same applies to the *Egúngún* cult where having been confined to the fringes and secondary roles, women only feature in theatrical (mundane) performances associated with the rites while men are fully involved in the secret rituals observed in the grove (Ibitokun, 1987, p. 117).There is a common expression (or song) among the Yoruba: "*Awo Egúngún l'obìnrín lè se, awo Gèlèdé l'obìnrín lè mò; b'óbìnrin fojú k'Orò, Orò á gbe*!" (It is only the mysteries of *Egúngún* and *Gèlèdé* that women can be privy to, they are consumed by that of the *Orò*).

However, mythological/historical evidences show that contrary to male dominance and oppression that the song underscores and which Ibitokun provides an example of from the Ketu experience, women are

not confined to the fringes and tasked with only mundane/theatrical aspects of the *Egúngún* rites. In fact, a woman, *Ìyá*mode, was the first priest (ess) of the *Egúngún* mystery and cultic practice in Yoruba land. As the story goes, Aláàfin Şàngó, the third monarch of Oyo/Yoruba Empire wanted to bury the remains of his father, Òrányàn. But, he was told that he could not because the latter didn't die; he transformed into a stone obelisk (a staff still standing in Ile Ife today). Thereafter, Şàngó devised another means of paying obeisance to Òrányàn, so, he ordered that a *bàrà* (royal mausoleum) be constructed and Òrányàn's corpse, in the form of the *Egúngún*, be brought out through it with the impression that Òrányàn was making a temporary reappearance in the human world. He placed *Ìyá*mode, the old woman of the palace in charge of the mystery. Periodically, Şàngó went to the *bàrà* and prostrated himself before *Ìyá*mode who personified the spirit of Òrányàn (Johnson, 1923, p. 43–65). Şàngó's obeisance to Iyamode affirmed the ritual significance of the rites.

To demonstrate the recognition of the gender binary in the *Egúngún* cult in present-day Yoruba communities however, while there is *Aláàgbáà* the male head of the cult, there is also *Ìyá Àgan* who occupies the same position from a female perspective; the roles of each overlapping in most cases. Moreover, the Ògbóni cult provides an excellent example of where the female power is much more powerful, influential and perverse. Here, the Great Mother is at the centre of worship and devotion. *Edan*, the symbol of worship in the cult, is a brass figure of male and female joined by an iron chain at the top, and considered to be a symbolism for procreation and old age that tilts towards the female principles (Lawal, 1995).

In the *Gèlèdé* performance cult especially, women subvert male supremacy. In dismantling male dominance, they also use men at the same time to assert feminine will. Ibitokun has argued that, this performance is the exclusive reserve of elderly women who have passed menopausal age and who, commonly erroneously referred to as "Àjé," or more accurately as "our mothers," exercise their mystic abilities which force men to concede to them the male-female balance (Ibitokun 1981, p. 55–63). It follows then to quote Teresa Washington who expatiates on this aspect of Yoruba consciousness about gender balance that the *Gèlèdé* performance establishes. She describes "our mothers" as the "*Agbalagba Obinrin*" (elderly women) who personify the secretive, sacred and the mystical within the Yoruba religious and socio-political spheres that are

not unconnected to domestic and public well-being. Accordingly, Teresa Washington writes:

> [A]mong the Yoruba, the postmenopausal era does not signify obsolescence; instead, when life bearing ends, spiritual magnification begins. An elderly woman is heralded as the one with the vagina that turns upside down without pouring blood. With the acquisition of the beard of old age, an *Agbalaagba Obirin* acquires not masculine aspects but dual spiritual material mobility. She is *abaara meji,* one with two bodies, and *olojumeji,* one with two faces: Her spirit becomes a force equal to or greater than her physical being (p. 16).

In their research into the interface of Yoruba ritual and performance of the *Gèlèdé*, the anthropologists Henry Drewal and Margaret Thompson Drewal (1983) also stress the mystical endowment of "our mother" that elaborate on female agency beyond sexual properties. The research highlights the concept of gender balance which elaborates on both Ibitokun and Washington's observations. According to Drewal and Drewal:

> These women are commonly known as "our mothers" (*awon iya wa*), an endearment that recognizes that we all came out of a woman's body… We call them mother. If they did not exist, we could not come into this world… These statements imply something much more fundamental than female fertility and fecundity. They claim that women possess the secret of life itself, the knowledge and special power to bring human beings into the world and to remove them. This knowledge applies not only to gestation and childbirth but also to longevity. It is a sign of women's that they live to be very old, often out-living men. Their knowledge of life and death demands that Yoruba herbalists in preparing medicines seek their support (p. 8).

Usually a male, the *Gèlèdé* mask-dancer utilises his masculinity to placate "our mothers" who assert their supernatural pre-eminence, subvert both male sexual arrogance and the myth of women as mere wombs as exemplified in one of their praise names "*Ìyá an'óbò akòjédó*" that is, the woman whose vagina no penis dare penetrate (Ibitokun, 1987, p. 11–13). At the same time, although the Yoruba society may appear to be "governed" by a phallic sensibility whereby "man poses and woman endures," the *Gèlèdé* underscores the fact that the socio-sexual reversion that is established with the ritual performance draws from the Yoruba philosophy that what is seen is a representation of the unseen, a cultural sensibility which underscores the gender dynamics that rests on the

definition and use of power (Olajubu, 2003, p. 85). Hence, when Alahira (2014) argues that "at no point was the African woman restricted to purely her biological sex roles" (p. 72), she must have had in mind the Yoruba who demonstrate a profound understanding of the physical differentiation of both the male and female gender and accorded each its socio-cultural roles as their gender cultural practice shows.

Afterwords

In this essay I have re-examined Mohanty's views about the representation of Third World women in Western feminist discourse by applying the knowledge of Yoruba conception of gender and sex which emphasizes gender complementarity. Mohanty argues that the analytical tools being used in Western feminist discourse to analyse the conditions of women in the Third World should consider socio-cultural and religious factors which inform the political aspects of lives in those societies, instead of imposing Western ideal and experience that do not recognize such differences. I drew examples from Yoruba religious/social practice to argue that women are strategically placed at the centre of power and gender relations in the social space. I concluded by stressing that gender and sex are two different concepts among the Yoruba and that, at no point in time were these determined merely by the biological composition of the body.

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Renata Michalak
Adam Mickiewicz University (Poland)

Individualization as the fundamental principle of educational proceedings. The neurocognitive perspective

ABSTRACT. Individualization of learning is not a new phenomenon in the field of educational discourse. However, it takes a different gist and meaning in the context of the extremely dynamic development of neurosciences. The latest brain research reveals the structural and functional uniqueness of this organ which makes each learner a unique person. Thereby, the research results provide justification for educational practice based on creating a diversified educational environment, in terms of its content and form. The article is an attempt to show the principle of individualization of teaching in the perspective of views of selected neuroscientists and results of brain research. At the same time, it contains the reflections over the model of education respecting this fundamental principle of teaching.

KEYWORDS: individualization, model of teaching, brain, style of teaching, REAL, differentiation

Introduction

Searching for tools to optimize the learning process is a challenge for both theoreticians and practitioners of education. It results from the complexity of the learning process itself and specifically from the uniqueness of human nature. Over the past few decades, we can notice an extremely dynamic development of concepts concerning the nature and conditions of learning, as well as the sciences explaining human functioning. Therefore it is not surprising, that neurosciences have been naturally integrated into the issues of the debate on the effectiveness of education. In the quest for the basics of influences supporting human cognitive functions, you must not, therefore, ignore the brain research. This article is an attempt to show not the new, but the fundamental principle of teaching, presented in the context of selected views of neuroscientists and results of brain research. In its design, the author assumed the perspective of searching for the causes and not eliminating the con-

sequences of failures in the learning process. The formulated conclusions constitute the answer to the needs of learners and the specificity of their development, aiming not so much to counteract the emerging difficulties, but above all, at preventing their formation. At the same time, they are general in nature and in the conviction of the author, their use may aid the building process of a high-quality universal educational work of the contemporary school.

Individualized teaching—the essence and scope of the term

In the definitions of individualized teaching, the authors usually indicate the need to adapt the education process to the diverse needs of learners. Important criteria for the assessment of didactic strategies in the context of individualization understood in such a way, become notions like variety, diversity or multiplicity.

In this context, the individualization is perceived as a fundamental principle of teaching, which stems from personalist philosophy focused on the development of each individual. It is therefore, in opposition to the rules of uniformity—everything is the same, in the same way and at the same time. Its essence lies in the efforts to maximize the potential of each student. Viewed in such a way, educational activity is focused on the needs of individual students, without failing to notice the needs of the entire group.

The individualization is a necessary principle to achieve the objectives of education by taking into account the differences between learners, particularly in terms of: (1) the resources of knowledge, skills, experiences; (2) the dynamics of cognitive and socio-emotional processes; (3) passions and interests; (4) cognitive curiosity and motivation to learn; (5) sensory preferences and learning strategies; (6) socio-emotional functioning; (7) environmental and socio-cultural conditions of their development.

In the reflections over the essence and scope of personalized teaching, we should pay attention to two aspects of this phenomenon. Firstly, individualized teaching is an individual right of a learner having special educational needs. Secondly, individualized teaching is the right of every student to participate in the educational process, which will enable them to develop their potential. The conjunction of these two perspectives creates an individualized learning concept understood as a fundamental

human right for learning process which is optimal for the individual resources and preferences. It is manifested in the creation of an enriched educational environment, which has a place for each student.

In the search for meaning and scope of the very concept of the individualization of learning we should also resort to the knowledge and experience of teachers. Therefore, a group of 456 teachers were asked a question about how they understand the individualization of teaching and what, in their opinion, is the essence of it[1]. The respondents could choose three positions from the answer suggestions, or they could specify their own. The obtained empirical data show that only slightly less than 46% of the teachers associates the individualization of teaching with a variety of developmental needs of learners and the necessity to use multiplicity and wealth of methodological solutions which differ in content and form. In addition, 87% of respondents claimed that the implementation of the rules of individualization in everyday school practice is impossible. The vast majority of respondents thought that it only works when dealing face to face, in direct contact with the student, beyond the mandatory teaching time. Many of them claimed not to have proper vocational training and that higher education institutions do not equip them with adequate competences; that they have too many students and finally, that classrooms are inadequately equipped with school supplies. Others pointed to parents expectations and the need to comply with certain formal rules. A statistically significant group of respondents (76%) felt that the essence of individualized teaching lies in the individual method of work of a single student who solves the same task at the same time and with the same method as other students. Individualization in this case, according to the respondents is based on differentiation of the criteria for assessing students' achievements. In the sample which was researched we could notice replies, which show that individualized teaching is mainly based on the organization of additional classes for gifted students or the less talented ones, struggling with various types of school related difficulties. It is also worth noting that the majority of respondents (79%) associated the rule of individualization of teaching with the cognitive functioning of students. Only a small number of teacher associated it with different needs in terms of social, emotional

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[1] The research results originate from the wider scope of a research project, which was performed by the author of this article in 2015 and which concerned with teaching strategies preferred by the teachers.

or motor functioning. The image of views held by the surveyed teachers concerning the phenomena discussed here, is complemented by the results, which indicate that 17% of them restricted the individualization of teaching to the clinically determined way of organization of individual teaching determined by a psycho-pedagogical institution.

Individualized teaching can be performed in quantitative and qualitative terms. In the former case, teachers themselves take action to optimize the conditions of education. In practice, it takes the dimension of changes in terms of forms and methods of work, content, quantity, and level of difficulty of the tasks, the monitoring and assessing students' progress. The qualitative individualized teaching is a process of a wider range and much more difficult because it requires cooperation between teachers, parents, and especially students themselves. The teacher acts here only as an advisor and an assistant—the student basically takes control of his or her own learning process. A qualitative approach to individualization is thus expressed in the organization of the support system, in which each student has an individual study plan based on individual needs, interests, and competencies. Providing this level of customization is a major challenge for teachers. The second, slightly softer approach, is an organization of enriched development environment, so something which R. Grabinger (1996) describes as rich environment for active learning. This involves the need to provide many options and alternatives for students in a classroom environment, so they could be able to choose from a variety of tasks with different levels of difficulty, as well as from the content and form. In addition, they should also be able to choose the place, time and strategy of learning, as well as the time and strategy of their evaluation. This approach will enable the learner to take over the supervision of their own education process.

The specificity of the organization of cognitive system and the activity of the cerebral cortex as the basis for individualization of teaching

The principle of individualization of the educational process stems from, which has already been emphasized, the conviction of the individual needs of learners, the course and the conditions of their development, and hence the need to seek individual, methodical solutions.

Resorting to the theory of dynamical systems (Thelen, Smith, 1995), both the learner and the teacher as well as the conditions of mutual relations, they are the elements of a single system. Planning the educational support of a student requires analysis and assessment of all the elements of the system. In the process, teachers use mainly their own knowledge and pedagogical experience, which may hinder the proper understanding of the student's situation and taking the appropriate and, above all, effective actions. It must be remembered that the brain develops subjective and schematic representation of the reality which constitutes the filter for registration and understanding the environmental stimuli. Just a single student reaction, a gesture or a word can be enough for the teacher to immediately "label" them as a part of specific category. Meanwhile, we should realize that the meaning assigned to a particular situation is of subjective character, often devoid of a number of objective characteristics. Each situation requires an individual approach based on the knowledge of functioning of their mind and the mind of the learner. Planning an individual educational support is improved by the knowledge of the organization of cognitive system and the activity of the cerebral cortex as well as the strong and weak elements inherent to the individual parts of the system.

The process of assimilation of information occurs in a particular neuronal cycle and runs from experience through perceptions and finally to action. Each step of it is distinguished by defined specificity and is related to the activity of a specific area the cortex. It is their knowledge that allows you to schedule the appropriate individual system of educational support.

At the first stage, during which the student receives sensations from the world, and thus comes into contact with new stimuli, facts or data, occipital lobe of the brain is active, which in turn is dominated by the basic and most primary sensory areas (Ramachandran, 2013). Subsequently, the brain tries to integrate the sensory information by creating perceptions. The integration involves memorizing basic facts and events, activating loose associations and analyzing experiences. At this stage, the activity is manifested by rear associative cortex, located in the temporal lobes of the brain. The integration is followed by an abstraction phase, namely the creation of concepts, during which the front associative cortex is involved, which in turn is located in frontal lobe. At that point the mind of the student manipulates the images and language to create categories and make hypotheses. This phase is dominated by

comparing and selecting the decision-making options, by making plans for the future, the assessment of operational modes as well as delegating tasks for the entire mind. At the last cognitive stage the mind actively tests hypotheses, thus transforming them into physical actions and at the same time it involves the motor cortex of parietal lobe (Błaszak, Przybylski, 2010, p. 22–23).

The process of conscious absorption and processing information is determined to a large extent, by attention, which is associated with the activity of the prefrontal cortex of the brain. The primary function of the attention is its selectivity, especially with regard to sensory experiences and the meaning for the further processing and the choice of the reaction. The selectivity can be arbitrary or involuntary. The involuntary attention is the basic form of attention and manifests itself in the form of indicative reflex to new and strong stimuli. Moreover, in the case of successive activation of a stimulus, the indicative reaction expires. Reducing the response to monotonous and repetitive stimuli which do not require reaction is called habituation (Borkowska, Domańska, 2011). This discovery is of great importance for the organization of the education process. The very process of conscious learning in turn is dependent on arbitrary attention which shapes gradually, and by which the body makes a deliberate choice of certain stimuli and behavior on the basis of existing knowledge.

Individualization of educational support requires knowledge of the specifics of the organization of cognitive system and the activity of the cerebral cortex, which determines strategies preferred by students for processing information. In an attempt to classify them, we can distinguish four such strategies: (1) the observer; (2) the narrator; (3) the intellectual; (4) the expert. The observer learns mostly by trial and error, and uses only the sensory and motor brain. Then they proceed from the stage of impressions to action, skipping the stages of integrating experiences, creating concepts and hypotheses of action. The narrator on the other hand leans by memorizing large amounts of information, which, unfortunately, are poorly integrated and understood. Doing so, they engage only long-term memory. They remember stories easily and evoke emotional experiences. In turn, they only use sensory, motor and rear associative brain.

The intellectual puts hypotheses extremely boldly, predominantly on the basis of meager information and data. Intellectuals create ideas, fruitlessly speculate and operate mainly through trial and error. They

activates mainly the sensory, motor and associative front brain. The expert on the other hand, involves all areas of the brain and harmonizes the functions of its front and rear parts. This allows them to run the intuitive information processing. This is the most efficient and holistic information processing, and thus learning process (Błaszak, Przybylski, 2010).

Students who are the process of learning to use the expert strategy efficiently, perform cognitive tasks. According to scientists, they interpret stimuli better; they have a better developed sense of exploration; they cope with emotions better; they are characterized by courage, strength and pugnacity; they subject their own actions to reflection and treat problems as challenges.

Individualization of learning is therefore justified by the context of the results of the latest research on the brain. They show that the human brain is more personal than universal. Neuronal activity varies between people, even when performing the same task. In other words, people are different in terms of functional brain profiles (Finn et al., 2015). Researchers have found that the majority of unique connections is located in the prefrontal and parietal cortex. Slight differences in connections exist primarily in the visual cortex, parietal cortex and cerebellum. Moreover, they proved that people differ not only in brain activity, but also in mental abilities. In this context the theory of multiple intelligence by H. Gardner is worth mentioning (1993, 2001); Gardner assumed that each type of intelligence is formed in a separate cerebral module. He singled out seven kinds of intelligence (mental abilities), each of which is associated with a particular set of abilities / skills: (1) linguistic intelligence; (2) logical-mathematical intelligence; (3) spatial intelligence; (4) musical intelligence; (5) kinesthetic intelligence; (6) interpersonal intelligence; (7) intrapersonal intelligence.

It is worth noting that in 1999 he proposed three additional types of intelligence—scientific, spiritual and existential one. It means that the essential forms of information should be presented in several different ways. The psychologist additionally detailed seven factors (areas) that affect changes in the mind and he described them as levers of mental changes. All of them are enumerated below:

- reason—changes in the mind can be made through a logical argumentation
- research—data analysis, formulating hypotheses and their verification, observation of cases, exploration, can change the mind of an individual

- resonance—it is the mind which is subject to change and it "resonates" with the presented content or the presenter
- redescription—changes in the mind occur when ideas are presented in the form of various symbols and media forms
- rewards and resources—the mind changes under the influence of rewards and punishments
- real world events—the mind can be modified under the influence of new, global trends or significant events
- resistances overcome—changes in the mind can occur when one's own resistance to change will be neutralized (Gardner, 1991).

The theory of H. Gardner shed new light on the intelligence, as a personal construct and showed individual differences of learners in the field of cognitive functioning as well as emotional and social development.

The human brain works, therefore, in an individual manner and individually selects and responds to stimuli and as a result, learners require different conditions of educational support.

Individualized learning model

Stages of educational process and the activity of the brain

The model of education that respects the principle of individualization of learning is tuned to the students' abilities set by the functioning of the brain. In the process of teaching generally, there are three basic steps that can be referred to the process of activation of the brain: the initial stage, which increases the chances of success of the process of teaching-learning; the crucial stage, which focuses on the assimilation of new experiences and the final stage, whose essence lies in facilitating the storage of new knowledge in the student's memory.

The initial stage includes two main activities of a teacher: (1) preparing students to new experiences and (2) the organization of educational space. This is the stage which in the constructivist teaching model corresponds to the phase of orientation. It involves mainly the awakening of cognitive curiosity of the student and their motivation to learn. Curiosity is the driving force of human knowledge and the best way to store information (Michalak, 2013).

The initial stage is the part of the teaching process, in which the teacher strives to retain cognitive balance of the student by providing them

with appropriate and attractive stimuli which will focus their attention on teaching contents. It, therefore, involves the enrichment of the general CNS activity, which is responsible for the readiness of an individual to process sensory information. Creating the vigilance of the body depends on the structures of the upper part of the brainstem and the midbrain. This system has a complex relationships with various surrounding areas of the cerebral cortex, among others, the frontal ones, which play an important role in the process of learning and feeling positive emotions. It is important, therefore, to pay attention to students' atmosphere of psychological security, and their well-being, limiting excessive stress in the face of the new and the unknown. It must be remembered, that strong stress affects the "hippocampus most intensely, which is very sensitive to cortisol. Over time, cortisol can weaken the local memory of the brain and indexing system, which can worsen the sensory perception" (Petlak, Zajcowa, 2010, p. 55). A positive effect, namely good mood is positively correlated with the level of activity in the amygdala, the emotion processing center of the brain regarded as crucial in the processes of learning and transfer of information to the long-term memory (Boleyn-Fitzgerald, 2010). In addition, positive attitude of students is the core of the initiated process of teaching, as it is associated with the secretion of endorphins and the hormone of dopamine, which stimulate neurotransmitters important in memory processes; they also have positive impact on further learning and enhance the motivation to learn and improve concentration. A human holds in his memory only those facts that have some significance for them. Memory is a record of experiences important in the development of the identity of an induvial. Memory is also a catalogue of experiences that shape their personality. Emotions and experiences, therefore constitute the identity of a human and at the same time they have a huge impact on the functioning of the brain. Positive emotions stimulate the brain to secrete hormones that act positively on the memory and conversely, the negative ones block the processes in the brain and reduce the efficiency of learning. Little stress, however, has mobilizing effect and can motivate the learner to complete the task, to achieve more and help them to become successful (Boleyn-Fitzgerald, 2010, p. 50–51).

Well-being of learners, namely their curiosity and motivation, are also dependent largely on the arrangement of the material space in school. The atmosphere which stimulates learning, comes in a large percentage from care for the proper organization and selection of teaching aids. On the one hand, it should be rich in content and form stimuli, on

the other, frugal in those elements which excessively engage attention and make concentration difficult.

The next stage of teaching process is basically at the heart of the initiated teaching process. This is the stage of exploration, discovery and the collision of a student with a new experience, which he or she is trying to incorporate into their existing mental structures. This process is not easy and immediate. A student tries to understand the information in question, to assign meaning to it and to process it in such a way so it would be relatively easily assimilated. This stage is therefore not error free. It is important that the teacher remains attentive and in no more than an hour from the start of this stage, he or she must control the process of assimilating new information by the students. Errors are in fact easier to fix in the process, rather than after it is over, when synaptic connections have already been strengthen. In addition, the time when students use short-term or working memory is limited and, therefore, the cognition process may proceed inaccurately. Therefore the mental models constructed by students may contain a number of inaccuracies and errors (Michalak, 2013).

At this stage, the teacher should take care of diversity and attractiveness of new forms of organization of new experiences. These can include simulations, experiments, exploration activities, group discussions, work with different sources, interviews, projects, drama techniques, etc. It is important that there is diversity, and the time of teamwork constitutes at least half of the overall learning time. It is also important and that the teacher, organizing new experiences for the students, estimates their existing knowledge in such a way that the new experiences are not too difficult or too easy for them. In both cases, the process of their familiarization and connecting with existing knowledge structures will not occur.

At this stage, one should also take care to support the process of remembering new information by recalling it. The learners assimilate new experiences much more effectively during the first hour, than for over a longer period of time. Memorizing information is significantly enhanced by methods based on mental and emotional involvement, such as: repeating in pairs, peer checking, competitions, rhymes, mnemonics, acronyms, rhymes or the use of multimodal teaching aids. At the same time, both the process of finding information and its memorizing should be organized in a diverse context, but one close to the student, and should not be subject to evaluation.

After the period of assimilation of new information, one needs to create opportunities for the learners to preserve it. Contrary to appearances, situations which activate the process of consolidation include breaks for rest and relaxation as well as repetition and consolidation. Both these factors are the essence of the third stage of the teaching process, compatible to the possibilities of the brain. At this stage, synaptic connections have already been created, yet they are still subject to changes and modifications. Some of the changes are caused by the presentation of new material or other contents, while others by defragmentation of existing connections (Jensen, 2008). The connections, therefore, are not yet of a character permanent enough so as to determine that the very first contact of the learner with the new material will allow them to remember, understand and apply it. It takes time, training and the consolidation of different neuronal roads constructed by various areas of the brain. Consolidating is enhanced by multiple revisiting the former content and its application in solving various tasks and problem situations.

Individualized teaching and learner assessment styles

In the process of individual educational support of students, it is important to associate not only cognitive strategies with the information processing ones, but also with styles of learning. M. Błaszak and Ł. Przybylski (2010), resorting to the views of J. Zulla, distinguish three main styles of teaching: didactic, discovery and balanced ones. The traditional teaching style (the didactic one) focuses on the transmission of meaning and distribution of information, and not on its understanding. By doing so, it engages only the rear part of the brain and forms "information processing strategies of the observer and the narrator. The discovery approach or learning through play, engages the front part of the brain more strongly. It shapes the strategy of intellectual who poorly collects the information about the world. The optimal approach is the balanced one, which is to stimulate all areas of the cerebral cortex of the student, as it allows to shape the strategy of information processing inherent to the expert" (Błaszak, Przybylski, 2010, p. 27).

The process of granting individual support to students requires the teacher to deliver the tools that will allow them to fully benefit from cognitive strategy of the expert. It ensures that students gain the experiences essential to adapt to the changes taking place in school life.

Table 1. Teaching styles generating cognitive styles of a learner

Teaching styles	Cognitiv styles of the learner	Learning styles	The active part of the brain
The traditional one	The observer	The interaction with the physical world and the imitation of the social world	Rear part of the brain
	The narrator	Imagination, fantasy, visualization, storytelling, exploration of possible worlds	
The discovery one	The intellectual	Language and reasoning: analysis, categorization and communication of experience	Frontal part of the barin
The balanced one	The expert	Creating ideas radical innovations	The entire brain

Source: Błaszak, Przybylski, 2010, p. 27.

At this point we should also focus our attention on the erroneous interpretations of cognitive and learning styles in the context of the latest knowledge in the field of cognitive neuroscience and their matching to specific teaching strategies. According to A. Grabowski (2011, p. 358), the tendencies to look for individual differences in the hemispheric dominance concepts and basing therapeutic and educational actions on them, have no justifications and scientific basis. The assumption that "individual cognitive styles are connected with the dominance of one of the hemispheres: the verbal style, the analytical style, the rational style characterizes those who rely on their left hemisphere, and the nonverbal style, the holistic style, the intuitive style,—are characteristic for those who use their the right hemisphere more predominantly" is incorrect in the light of data which clearly show that even the simplest tasks require the involvement of both hemispheres of the brain.

Individualization of teaching requires not only defining the cognitive styles of each learner, but also a move away from standardized testing and evaluation strategies. Each student requires a different approach in this area, which is associated with the brain reactivity to certain stimuli, their content and strength. Each student has a different sensitivity to external stimuli and sometimes needs some stimulation in order to take on the task and achieve high standards. At a different occasion, this stimulation must be strong enough to become competitive to other stimuli, which might absorb student interest and passion. Individualization of assessment requires the individualization of assessment tools,

which, depending on the needs and preferences of the student are to create natural opportunities for learning and evaluating student's work and their involvement in solving problems, creating works and projects which genuinely absorb them. Individualization of assessment requires the teacher to be oriented to the achievement of developmental goals by the student, not the program assumptions. This approach allows the teacher to be authentically involved in teaching, and therefore it gives the possibility of interference in the course of development of the child. Educational activity which is deprived of the element of orientation on the individual development of each student can be the cause of missing the targets set in the education programs with the objectives of individual students and the class as a whole. Consequently, the development of the student may be much slower than their personal resources would indicate, and in the worst case it can even be inhibited. Lack of awareness of authentic goals in everyday teaching strategies causes the lack of understanding of the effects which are to be reached by the teacher together with the student. Therefore, the student can experience understated or overstated requirements, and thus they may not achieve satisfactory results. The teacher in turn will not be able to provide the student with adequate support, including the dimension of assessment. As noted by A. Brzezińska and E. Misiorna (1999, p. 51), lack of orientation to individual developmental goals of students in the activities of the teacher can bring harm not only the students, but also to teacher themselves. One cannot meaningfully and effectively plan activities or realize them, because reflection accompanies neither the course of events nor what the actions are concerned with, the dependencies existing between the here and now, with what happened somewhere and at some point and with what can happen there and then. The approach of the teacher who ignores the developmental goals, as a category defining content, direction and course of the learning process can also lead to discrepancies between what the teacher teaches, and what he or she checks and evaluates. A child may therefore experience confusion, insecurity and lack of agency, as well as responsibility for personal knowledge.

Lack of orientation of the teacher to development goals usually leads to inadequate selection of methods, techniques and tools for diagnosing and monitoring the child's development. Teachers, using the diagnostic tools which ignore the specificity of competence acquisition by the child and which do not correspond to their developmental goals and finally which do not recognize their development in the horizontal and vertical

perspective, receive material which is of little use or even completely useless for designing educational support. In such operational strategy, they usually reach for universal, readymade tools which are standardized and examine typical school and declaratory knowledge whose character is reconstructive and disconnected from the natural context of its acquisition. At the same time, they do not record the developmental dynamics of competences dictated by the specificity of the student development, but only by external standards (Misiorna, Michalak, 2011).

Conclusion

The principle of individualization of teaching, despite its fairly long history in thought and scientific literature, is rarely respected in educational practice. It requires a radical break with the model of school based on directive, transmission and permissive mechanism of functioning, which more often than not refers to the principles of engineering of teaching rather than to humanistic and progressive approach to the concept of student and their development. Classroom reality shows that the process of designing and organizing the educational lives of students is dominated by the behavioral paradigm, while the commonly recommended cognitive-social one, remains only in the realm of inactive mental categories of teachers—the main creators of student experiences. Implementation of the principle of individualized teaching requires respecting a new perspective of the educational development of the learner by releasing their joy and optimism, strengthening the tendency to self-control and self-motivation and finally by supporting personal satisfaction. It is therefore crucially important, that the learner in everyday school life situations, would have the ability to perceive, disclose, use their own capabilities, their potential; and would not experience shortages, incompetence or restrictions. In such a model of education the teacher focuses on the strengths of the learner and positive changes in all aspects of their development; not only on the shortcomings and deficiencies. Its essence is expressed in the perception of the development of the learner in the context of individual biography, determined by their capabilities and needs, as well as by socio-cultural factors. It, therefore determines how far children are against the requirements being set to them and what potential they have in order to achieve them. It outlines the perspective of student development in the context of its past course and potential.

At the same time the model of education that respects the principle of individualization of education perceives the student as an active entity engaged in personal development. Therefore, it requires the creation of environment which is favorable for active learning (rich environment for active learning REAL). Such an environment is, as described by R. Grabinger, a comprehensive system of specific strategies and teaching techniques. The main objective of REAL is to engage students in dynamic, authentic and generative activities of learning. These activities allow students to take control and responsibility over the whole process of learning, which leads not only to acquisition of rich and multi episodic contents, but also to develop lifelong competences, such as problem-solving skills, critical thinking and cooperation. REAL resorts to constructivist learning theory in which knowledge is defined as a structure erected in the process of experimentation, exploration and discovery of meaning. The author believes that this is possible only if the student is the center of the educational process and has the possibility of free dialogue, negotiation, checking their own ideas and at the same time being constantly encouraged and motivated to do so (Grabinger, 1996, pp. 669–671). The main advantages of REAL include, among others, the fact that:

- it contributes to the development and improvement of student responsibility, initiative and decisiveness, as well as conscious learning
- it provokes to take dynamic, interdisciplinary and generative actions of learning, which support complex mental processes, such as analysis, synthesis, problem solving, experimentation, creativity and multi-faceted investigation of various phenomena
- it develops cognitive and metacognitive skills important in the process of conscious learning
- it helps children to integrate newly acquired knowledge with the existing structures and thus build rich and complex cognitive structures which facilitate understanding and creating connections between ideas, views and judgements
- it increases children's ability to organize concepts into larger categories
- it promotes learning and investigating in an authentic, natural, realistic and rich context
- it nurtures the atmosphere to build knowledge in a broad and interactive social environment, created jointly by students and teachers

- it helps students to reach higher levels of thinking and reasoning, at the same time facilitating the transition from concrete to formal operations (Michalak, 2013).

Individualization of teaching implies the possibility to select one out of many proposals, depending on what students want to deal with as well as where and how they want to do it. Therefore, it requires the need to change the model of education, where the contents are not homogeneous, the process dominates over outcome, cognitive procedures over factual material and the concept of teaching and learning implies diversity of achievements and profound individualization. It is based on the active participation of students, learning by doing, discovering, creative expression, asking questions and questioning the rules of functioning of the world. Everyday school reality is thus determined by a flexible program of education, tailored to the wishes, preferences and needs of children as well as to the dynamics of their development and the changing socio-cultural conditions. This model of education is in opposition to program-centeredness and imposing content, values and their unambiguous interpretation. It allows students to understand themselves, their own experiences and social events. At the same time it arouses cognitive curiosity and develops cognitive enthusiasm and motivation for self-learning. Its fundamental attribute is the creation of conditions for freedom and liberty, because only then can you get to know the individual characteristics of the student and help to develop them. In this context, fostering the autonomy of students to ascribe subjective meanings to reality, respect for private knowledge of the student, the right to individual freedom and growth by shifting from what is subjective to what is objective, becomes the main task of the teacher. Only active relationship entered in by each learner with the socio and object related environment, giving it a personal meaning, allows the formation of individual identity. Implementation of the principle of individualized learning requires constructing new curricula that foster the formation of adaptive capital of learners by reference to the culture which shapes the mind and provides tools to create not only their world but also themselves, personal meaning and empowerement (Bruner, 2006). At the same time the basic features of such programs are: their universatility, since it is adapted to the diverse needs of students and attractiveness, both in content and form.

A particularly good example of constructing such programs is the concept developed by D. Lawton. According to the psychologist, while

creating a universal (public) curricula (common curriculum) on should bear in mind, the fact that they need to contain a content which is possible to be acquired by all learners regardless of their resources and to allow for the development of student interests at the highest possible level. The point is not that the program evens up the development level of all learners, but is an instrument of comprehensive development, based on individual resources. It should therefore be culture oriented (common culture curriculum), which allows for individualization and not standardization of student development (Lawton, 2012).

Individualized education model, however, needs teachers with the right attitudes and skills.

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Michael C. Uzorka
Ignatius Ajuru University of Education (Nigeria)

Values and women empowerment among the Delta Igbo-speaking communities of Rivers State

ABSTRACT. This study examines cultural values and its impediments on women empowerment among the Delta Igbo speaking people of Rivers State. The essence of this is to essentially understand what could be the hurdle inhibiting women from making progress in life and again to know why the clamour for gender equity/corporation. Against this backdrop some research questions were raised and eventually tested using the triangulation method of analysis. To triangulate is to examine data in details from three or more angles or perspectives. On account of this, some findings are made and on this basis we made some recommendations.

KEYWORDS: values, changing cultural values, women empowerment, Delta Igbo speaking people

Introduction

The empowerment of women at this age and moment is essential for the realization of the dream of diversifying the country's economy in order to achieve a sustainable development. Emem (1988), observed that empowerment enables women to identify their needs and to allocate and use family and public resources justly. When a woman is able to identify her area of need, she is able to reduce excessive work-burdens and become more focused in life. Perhaps, this explains the subject matter of this paper to ensure a more inclusive atmosphere for women in our different communities. In-view of the forgoing, all of those cultural practices in most African societies and which is discriminatory against women and have kept more women in the labour market today should be changed. According to Ifeanacho and Accra (1998), in some African societies women are not allowed to own cattle or own land. This discriminatory cultural practice often make the role of women and what women can do in the society meaningless (Uzorka, Odoemalam & Okemini, 2013) if and when the contribution of any human being is less

appreciated comparatively to another individual's; the former may not stand an effective competitor against the later. And after all in the Eastern Nigeria, home gardens managed by women constitute about 60 percent of the total food requirement per home annually (Vandana, 2000).

It is for this understanding that this study is asking for the empowerment of women through changing some of the cultural values and practices to create an enabling environment for women to excel in whatever area a woman may choose to make her contribution to the society. Values provide standards used to judge behavior and to choose between various goals and lines of action. Such cultural values as honesty, family's name, respect for elders, good housekeeping, politeness, self reliance, material wealth, democracy, and other values are very dear and relevant to most cultures.

According to Anikpo and Atemie (2006), on the basis of these values activities of most societies are carried out. And the premium placed on these values demonstrates their level of reliance or importance in those societies. For instance, in most Nigerian culture family names are valued so much that no one is ready to drag his/her family name in mud. And as Uzorka, Odoemalam and Okemini (2013) observed, people for this singular reason will avoid any act of dishonesty in all situations at all times. According to Tueker (1992), values are deeply held criteria for judging what is good or bad.

In most societies, individuals attempt to treat themselves with some degree of decorum. The Japanese values beauty and treat it with lots and lots of reverence. The understanding is that based on the value inclination of a people, the activities of such societies may be understood. They are the underlying, general, often unconscious and unexpressed standards by which we evaluate specific acts, objects, or events. The values that people hold often overwhelm their overall ways of life, transcending any one particular situation.

However, there are some cultural values and practices which inhibit the potentialities of women and therefore mitigates against the empowerment of women in Nigeria as a whole and the Delta Igbo speaking people of Rivers-state in particular. Such cultural values are the tenural practice, restriction from higher educational attainment, restriction from politics, restriction to the home environment and a must marriage concept.

All of the above values and practices have so far militated against the empowerment of women among the Delta Igbo speaking people of Rivers State.

According to Craig (2000), one enduring American value is competitive success. The Americans strive to win not only in sports, but also in politics and in their social lives. Thus, values changes and such changes may affect the people's traditional ways of doing things and other times may not. It does depend on the strength and the acceptance of such cultural patterns.

Cultural patterns are of two types; an ideal patterns and behavourial patterns. Ideal patterns (Ekpenyung, 2006), defines what the people of a society would do or say in particular situations if they conformed completely to the standards set up by their culture. This means that the desire to change from a particular attitude if everything is equal maybe very remote as people's interest are usually coherent with the societal values and ideology.

However, the behavourial pattern explains that people are likely to behave differently in certain situation with little or no regard for an ideal way of doing things in that society. This is more pronounced in situation where numerous alternative procedures which may not be equally acceptable are provided.

The argument here will be clearer when we attempt to understand the difficulties of mechanical society like the study area. Many may naturally reject the ideal pattern to actualize their aims and aspiration in life but how that leads to development in the entire community does not make sense. Against this backdrop it will be pertinent to two research problems:

- Does the inverse relationship between cultural values and the empowerment of women among the Delta Igbo speaking people of affect the women?
- Is it correct to say that the more the people's cultural values change, the greater opportunities of women among the Delta Igbo speaking people of Rivers-State?

Objective of the study

The study examines the impact of changing cultural values on women empowerment among the Delta Igbo speaking people of Rivers-State. This is being done to understand how the cultural values of the study area (Delta Igbo speaking people of Rivers State) have assisted in empowering their women to ensure sustainable development in their different communities.

Cultural values

Values are deeply held criteria for judging what is good or bad, desirable or undesirable, beautiful or ugly. The underlying goal of any social activity is to maintain good relations and save face. According to Light (2003), the Americans join groups and organizations but prefer to do so as free agents; reserving the right to withdraw when the groups no longer serve their personal needs. Similarly, if a job is not rewarding or a marriage is unfulfilling, we move on, or at least know that we have the option to say no or yes (Uzorka & Ebisi, 2015).

In some other cultures, people tend to remain in the community where they grew up, to consider relationships as more fixed and to put less emphasis on the value of individual choice and more value on stable, dependable commitments. For instance, the Arab people treat friendship as a lifelong, all-or-nothing commitment (Stewart & Bennet, 1991). In such culture, they make a clear distinction between acquaintances and real friends. Individuals are expected to be there for their friends, to spend any amount of money or travel any distance to help a friend in need.

This cultural type typifies third world as friendship in Nigeria and among the Delta Igbo speaking people of Rivers State share similar features (Uzorka & Ebisi, 2015). In America and Europe, friendships may be close, but they are not binding (Brinkely, 1993). Thus, values indicate what people in a given culture prefer as well as what they find important and relevant. Values therefore may be specific, such as honouring an individual, and owning a home or they may be more general, such as health, love and democracy (Orisa, 2010). However, values influence people's behavior and serve as criteria for evaluating the action of others.

Nigerians appear to give more premium to materialism than most countries of the world does but do not take cognizant of avenues from their cultural patterns and traits through which they could make surplus wealth. This attitude, no doubt is responsible for the different ways of life style as represented by the cultural practices, the drug-users, and born-again Christians (Ekpenyung, 2008). In all known societies, beliefs and values of the people which manifest themselves in norms and goals constitute important guide to behavior. The complexity of these beliefs and values which are prevalent in a society and forms the basis for rationalizing the people's actions are termed ideology. Ideology is an im-

portant mechanism for the sustenance of society and may induce necessary changes as well; under certain conditions.

This ideology provides people with new motivation to focus their attention on such values as transparency, hard work and frugality necessary for a major restructuring of their economic life. Thus, Max Weber's exposition concerning the causal connection between Calvinist Protestantism and modern capitalism is an instance of one of the crucial efforts to establish a relationship between ideology and socio-cultural changes in a society. Weber's argument is a show of how people's belief and values could motivate men to consciously seek for success in order to achieve greater height in life.

Changing cultural values

In every epoch, in human history change is often used as a synonym for development, progress or evolution. All of these terms used above merely denote a difference that occurred over time. Cultural change thus, is an emergence of new traits and trait complexes that is, changes in culture's content or structure. Change, we must know, comes in so many forms and rates. This is why Ekpenyoung (2008, p. 302), refers to it as a pervasive phenomenon in social life.

In a social system, changes occurring in one component a system is likely to be felt in other components. As Defleur, et al. (1977), observed changes in informal norms have often been accompanied by related changes in society's structure and its systems of sanctioning and social ranking.

On the whole, just like social organizations, cultures undergo changes. Ekpenyoung (2003), new traits may be acquired while old ones may become obsolete. Change is an inevitable phenomenon that affects all aspects of human life. Society like nature is in a state of ceaseless flux. Changes in materials and technological culture are perhaps the most obvious example of cultural change. New technology and gadgets which facilitate work for people are changes added to the stock of existing ones. In Nigeria cultural values have undergone continual modification (Anikpo & Ateme, 2006). So much of the changes we make today and our priorities are radically different from what they were in the past but until now no one thinks of the woman's status and position in society. When women who are the prime movers of the family are excluded or

incapacitated, the whole society also loses at the long run (Obiohaet al., 2004, p. 207).

According to Kalu (1998, p. 118), the number of households headed by women has been increasing in recent times. To be able to take care of the needs of their households; most women especially in the South Eastern states of the country are engaged in the informal sector of the economy. The argument here is that there is need for the cultural values to undergo changes to meet the challenges of modern societies. Given this scenario, (Uzorka, Okemini & Odoemalam, 2013), provides that allowing women to own land is the magic wand that would bring an equitable income redistribution in the society.

A tenurial system that would empower the woman economically shall be relevant in making the woman a power broker in our society and by extension reduce the level of discrimination against the woman. This is undoubtedly the obvious today, for as the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa put it, women in Africa do up to three-quarters of all agricultural work in addition to their domestic responsibilities. Unfortunately, the emergence of sub-culture is probably one of the most significant kinds of change that has occurred in Nigeria. The 1990s for example, have witnessed widespread dissatisfaction with the Nigerian value system. Thus, this gave rise to variety of different ways of life as represented by the born-again Christians, the drug-users, the political activities and the violent demonstrators.

Youth today no longer have respect or regards for their elders and parents. The deteriorating nature of our value system has affected the cultural institutions of the society so badly that they are no longer effective. Institutions like the family, age grades, religious institution, the school etc are now mere toothless bulldog that cannot bite.

The point is that the change is not holistic. It is expected that such change should produce a corresponding change in other aspects of human endeavors. If the stereotypes and discrimination against women are dropped as we have done away with other cultural traits like female circumcision, Osu caste system in some cultures, killing of twins to mention just a few; most societies by now would have moved in terms of development beyond where they are as a people. Paying work has an empowering impact on women's status and ultimately on women's health (Ebong, 1998). Through their potential, women can have some financial autonomy and personal confidence to reject sexual favours given in exchange for economic support and all other favours that decreases their self worth.

Women empowerment

The number of women unemployed in Nigeria, today stressed the need for a critical study of what may be responsible for this pandamic situation. Although, today both men and women; unfortunately struggle in their numbers in the labour market but a culsory examination of the labour market, reveals that, women are by far more in this reserve army of labour. Why is this so?

Women however, play very important roles in traditional African societies but in-spite of that their positions have remained inferior compared to those of men. In-fact no woman's position has exceeded beyond subordination to man.

It will be recalled that before the white man came (Anikpo, 1998), gender division of labour was restricted to farm and household activities. Today certain dialectical changes have occurred and is creating new roles and opportunities for women in various fields of occupational endeavor. The central argument is that (Wika & Ifeanacho, 1998), inevitable imperatives of development or under-development in Nigeria, will continue to enhance gender equity through opportunities for the acquisition of education and property by women. What this means is that the time has come for women to occupy their proper position in the society; therefore there is need for deliberate attempt to assist women for the realization of their benefits.

According to Anikpo (1998), the most destructive of these prejudices is the strong belief that the educated woman could not make a good wife. Parents for this reason were reluctant, even where they could afford it, to send their female children to school. In a seminar organized for the youths in Okposi village in Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni Local Government Area (ONELGA) by community development committee, a girl child asked this question "as a girl do I have human rights" (Enem, 1998). The rights of women and girl child we must know are integral, inalienable and indivisible parts of the universal declaration of human rights. Most women today are not aware of this and that is the reason they willy-nilly encourage the various forms of neglect on women.

The thrust of this paper therefore, is to encourage women empowerment through an equitable Land Tenure System that will avail women the opportunity of land acquisition in our communities.

Women empowerment is the process whereby women are made to realize and become conscious of their inner power to express and

defend their rights and gain greater self confidence, self-identity, self-esteem, and control over their own lives, personal and social relationships. According to Nwaosu (2006), through empowerment of women, apart from being able to take decisions about their lives; gain access to economic resources and other good things in life.

During the pre-colonial periods, parents were not training their female children in schools. They were rather trained at home, on domestic affairs on how to become and remain good wives i.e. good husband carers and children rearers Ogungbamila (2006). And according to Anikpo (1998), as the colonial system stabilized, inevitable contradictions set in and gradually shattered the exclusive male monopoly of the new occupations, such that the man needs the woman to make it in life.

Women these days have been seen to be doing well in occupations most men could not. According to (Kalu, 1998), women the world over are making a vast and unacknowledged contribution to the wealth and welfare of their communities in unpaid domestic work and in small-scale business and trading activities. Besides, men who earned salaries for working in the industries, and related occupations have increasingly been unable to sustain their families adequately through the wages they earned. Making it imperative that the man and woman must combine to earn enough money for the upkeep of the family. Today, market women in many urban towns are not merely economic force, but also a political force to be reckoned with during electioneering campaigns (Wika & Ifeanacho, 1998). If at the level of a market woman, a woman is not just an economic force, but also to be reckoned with, it then means by empowering women through an equitable land-tenure practice, the issue of unemployment will be adequately addressed. Given this situation, (Anikpo, 2006), observes that there is the need for a change of attitude towards the status of women. Thus the above scenario has so badly affected women that most women are finding it difficult to realize the dignity of their humanity. If this is true, (Kalu, 1998), is asking. "How educated is the educated woman? How has the education acquired by women affected their values in life, their self-perception and their understanding of the concept of womanhood and motherhood?

Given the above scenario, it is easy again to see why most women especially in the developing countries are engaged in the informal sector of the economy. According to the United Nations Economics Commission report (1997), women in Africa do up to three quarters of all agricultural work in their domestic responsibilities. Yet they do not have traditional

rights to the land they work on because of some societal norms and values such as religious and superstitions beliefs, as well as development polices which have tended to allocate land only to men. This situation (Kalu 1998), perhaps lends credence to the perceived view that there is feminization of poverty which had taken place on a global scale; but more in Africa.

In-view of the above, empowerment by allowing women own land in the communities, will help women to articulate their concerns and also enable them to contribute to the best of their ability to national development.

Land tenure system

The most constraining problem confronting agricultural practice and development in Nigeria is the issue of "Land tenure system". Land by its nature is the economic and subsistence base of a people (Obioha, 2004). The economic importance of land accounts for its use as the base for agricultural activities in the African continent. To this extent, land constitutes the ecological background in which social, political and economic activities of a people are determined.

According to Coker, Lioyaland and Obi (in Obioha, 2004), land in Africa includes the soil and things on the soil, which form part of the land in which they exist. Irrespective of the differences from the studies of the above mentioned authors, the common belief, ethos and worldviews; land cannot be taken for granted. Physically, (Anikpo, 2004), land has become the progenitor of not just wealth but mere existence. Settlement, farming, and other aspects of some of human existence are interrelated in one way the other with land. Thus, it is this various significance of land that formed the basis for instituting in societies how land is to be exploited.

In pre colonial African societies, the ownership of land is a subject that is beyond the present generations. Indeed, both the generations past, present and unborn are equally stake holders of land in African context (Obioha, 2004). The rules and regulations stipulating ownership of land form part and parcel of customary laws and custom of societies. Customary land law as practiced in Africa in essence constitute the rules, which guide the ownership use, and acquisition of land in African societies. These laws are natural and ancient and its supposed antiquity is the

basis of its authority today. According to Anikpo (2004), these laws define the working framework of tenurial procedures such as inheritance, rule, land pledging, gift land and Kolo tenancy.

There appear however, to be no monolithic opinion on whether there is a common land ownership pattern that fits all African societies. The system of land holding recognized by most African customary laws is neither absolutely communal nor individual ownership in nature (Elias, 1951). In whatever pattern of ownership adopted, women are usually discriminated against this system of tenure thus, influences agricultural production through limiting the opportunity of women involvement in agricultural production through limiting the opportunity of women involvement in agricultural activities.

Land tenure as contended by (Olajuwon, Olabisi, Essang, 1981), is essentially the "body of rights and relationships between men that have been developed to govern their behavior in the use and control of land and its resources".

It is worthy of note, that the above assertion did not consider women as an integral part of the people when sharing land. Besides John Cole in (Bale & Smith, 1990), observes, that traditional inheritance practices prclude sub-division of land holding passing intact to a son-inlaw through daughter. Thus it implies that the woman is not supposed to own land or be allotted land because it means automatic transfer of the right to the land to the husband after marriage.

Many scholars have however, observed that women occupy important aspect in nation building. Their contribution toward the development of the national economy through agricultural activities alone is immeasurable, Ijere (in Ifeomoacho & Accra, 1998), observed that women are perceived as the invisible farmers of the third world-yet in Nigeria they are marginalized. Oruwari (1996), on his own did not mince words, when he asserts that unlimited number of women have contributed immensely to the well being of their homes. Also Bender and Cain (1996), provides that in most countries of the world; women do most of the agricultural work like carrying out long distance as well as local trading.

During the colonial encounter in Nigeria, while the men migrated to the cities, women and their children were left behind in the rural areas to maintain the home front. About this period, such things like food scarcity were unheard off and remittances homes from their husbands were adequately managed which eventually resulted in a spontaneous increase in rural urban migration.

Following the argument on the system of land ownership which discriminates against women in spite of their contribution to the growth of societies; one thing is basic if the contribution of women must be sustained. According to Anikpo (1998), women in rural areas produced most of the food items and cultural beliefs restrict their responsibilities not beyond the house, home garden and market. Thus it may be concluded that if women are not allowed a conducive environment to continue their contributions the nation may not only have more women in the reserve army labour; but will soon experience acute food crisis.

Land ownership reform

Land reform has always been identified as the reformist approach to rural development and also associated to a feature of technocratic and radical strategies (Cole, 1990). Some reform programmes advocated in the past highlighted the following areas for reform.

1. Government should introduce measures which will seek to develop and enforce improvement in contractual relationship between land-lord and tenants. This will include the introduction of regulations to limit rents that tenants may be charged as in Iraq, Taiwan, Egypt etc.
2. Enactment and implementation of measures that seeks to promote efficient cultivation of large holdings.

No mention was made on how this reform will be inclusive of women. Even though they appeared silent on how this reform will benefit women; the implementation would affect the high charges by landlords and this in turn would enhance the ability of capital accumulation and expansion. Bale and Smith (1990), agreed with the above view, when they noted that "during the colonial period, the establishment of private ownership of land was a key element in breaking down subsistence production. However, there is the fear that such reform will definitely affect the existing political and economic structures and consequently affect agricultural production. This is very true if we examine the setting of the rural areas critically.

The rural area is a pleasant dominated agrarian environment and by virtue of that, classes emerge from surplus generated. Again in some

areas leadership depends on the economic life of the people and so wealthy people are made leaders and premised on that "authority" exist in those areas. Peradventure, given the above scenario; through land reform, the wealth of the man is affected, the existing economic structure and political system will be affected and in some communities women will become their leaders. But be that as it may, those advocate of land reform saw in it the magic wand that would bring equitable redistribution of income that would latently reduce poverty and tension between the "haves and the have not" in our society.

The essential part of the reform if done in consonance with the position of this paper; aims at alleviating the situation of womanhood in the society. This is because, believe it or not, there is a close link between poverty and the present land holding pattern in many third world countries today. If the reform pattern is in cognitive of what obtains in other societies. For instance, in United Kingdom, there is a sex discrimination Act which legislates against any form of discrimination on grounds of sex or marital status (Radford, 2000).

Beside if this reform is essentially accompanied by measures to raise the productivity of land it may consequently ensure equitable distribution of inputs. The essence of this argument is that an enabling legislation in place will prohibit any art of discrimination against the woman to acquire land.

Higher educational attainment

Most women in our society are been deprived the opportunity to higher education. The common belief is that a woman's education ends in the kitchen and as the woman's education is terminated, her contributions to the society will be limited.

Methodology

In a research work of this nature, it will be necessary to state the method used in gathering desired data/information. In-view of this, the study made use of the simple random technique in drawing up the sample so as to ensure that every element in the population had an equal chance to be picked as part of the sample. Again, the sample size of 300

participants was selected. Out of this size 150 participants representing 50 percent are women while the remaining 150 participants are male.

The fact that this study is essentially a qualitative survey research, the methodological thrust of this study is based on the following sources of data collection. These are: Focused group discussion (FG DS), Questionnaire and Observation methods.

In social science research, there are several techniques or methods for the analysis of multivariate data. The mode of data analysis is to a reasonable extent, a function of the nature of data collected. In other words, since data by nature could either be qualitative or quantitative, the analysis would naturally reflect such diversity (DFD, 2000).

On account of the foregoing, the analysis of data in this study is based on the qualitative model of analysis which involved the testing of research questions raised. The analytical and interpretational tools include the inductive and deductive triangulation of different descriptive sources. To triangulate is to examine data in details from three or more angles or perspectives. On account of this, what is then important in a methodology or conception in social research as Anikpo (1996), puts it, is the internal coherence of its postulates and the occasional reappraisal of its practical application in solving a problem of development.

In-view of this, simple percentage, histograms, bar-charts and pie-charts were applied in the analysis of data elicited for the study.

Analysis

The primary concern of this segment is to analyze data collected on the interface between changing cultural values and women empowerment among the Delta Igbo speaking people of Rivers State who are located within the coastal area of Ogba-Egbema-Ndoni Local Government Area (ONELGA) of the state.

Testing/Measurement of research questions

Research Question 1

Does the inverse relationship between cultural values and the empowerment of women in the study area; affect the women.

In measuring the above stated research question, the following case studies were considered.

- A woman's place is only in the kitchen.
- Marriage is more essential in the life of a woman.
- Cultural values and women empowerment in the area.

Case one:

Occupation	Agwe-Obodo	Ase-Azaga	Utu	Odougiri	Ise-Ala	Ogbe-Ogene	Total	%
Farming	55	55	15	30	5	30	190	33.3
Fishing	30	40	75	65	90	60	360	60
Trading	10	5	5	5	5	5	35	4.2
Others	5	–	5	–	–	5	15	2.5
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	600	100

Source: Field Survey-2016

As observed in the above table, the major occupation of women in the area is Fishing mostly and Farming in some communities where land is provided for use. Between 1980 and 1990, more of Agwe-Obodo and Ase-Azaga women farmed, and then followed by Odougili and Ogbe-Ogene while Utu and Ise-Ala women did not farm much; but instead did better as fisher women than every other communities in the area. Reason for this situation, as given by the discussion was because most women have opportunities to fish more than farming in these area. What we experience in Agwe-Obodo, and Ase-Azaga was a result of self effort where women have to lease land in order to farm.

Assessment of the Occupation Engaged by Women between 1991–2001

Occupation	Agwe-Obodo	Ase-Azaga	Utu	Odougiri	Ise-Ala	Ogbe-Ogene	Total	%
Farming	75	67	68	70	60	75	415	69.2
Fishing	5	3	30	25	40	15	118	19.7
Trading	20	30	2	5	–	10	67	11.1
Others	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	600	100

Source: Field Survey-2016

The table above shows that there is remarkable improvement in Agricultural activities and trading in the study area.

The focus of this study is to understand whether or not there is a relationship between the cultural practices of the people and the empowerment of women in the study site.
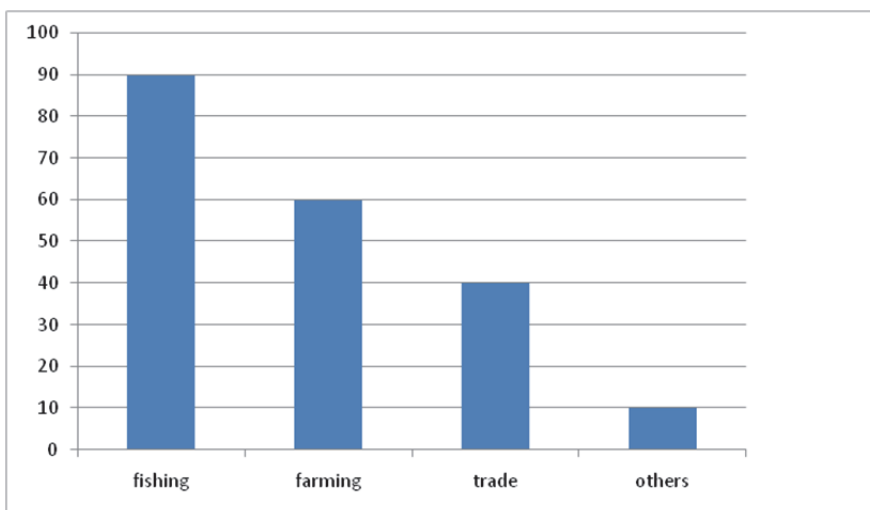
Figure 1. Occupation by Women between 1980 and 1990

Source: Field Survey, 2015 (A Histogram)

The increase in the number of women who engaged in Agricultural works and trading is a resounding testimony that with little changes in cultural values more women had more freedom and space to compete with their male counterparts. These changes occurred between the adopted interval of ten years because of modernity. The interval of ten years was adopted and thus represented in the two histograms showing the nature of the occupations the women got involved overtime to ensure the well being of their families. Here between 1980–1990, we noticed that more women in search of what to do and in absence of available land, got involved more in fishing than any other occupation.

From the figure above, it is now obvious that more women took to fishing than farming, trading and other petty economic activities in these

communities. The reason for this variation may not be unrelated to lack of farm land and finance to either buy a land for use or trade and maybe get involved in other business ventures in the area.
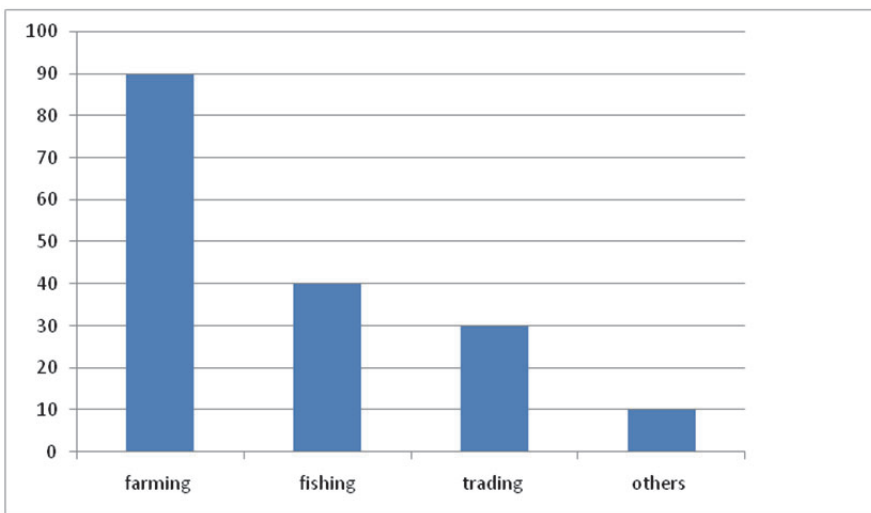
Figure 2. Women Occupations/Resources between 2001 and 2011
Source: Field Survey, 2015 (A Histogram)

The figure above shows that between 2001 and 2010 the economic activities of women in this coastal area of Delta-Igbo speaking people in Rivers-State had a tremendous twist. There is present a change in that more women are now involved in farm work more than the previous years.

Right in the above histogram, we can see that farming rose to 75% (percent) as against 55% (percent) it was in the past years. Even trade also rose, meaning that women now had more latitude to be involved in farm work and trading more than the situation in the previous years.

Discussion

From the table one above, we noticed that despite the strident conditions of owning farm land, Agwe-Obodo and Ase-Azaga women were involved in farming, while in the other communities, women were

into fishing more than they participated in farming and other economic activities in the area.

However between 2001 and 2010 women have gradually become aware of how much they could make in a year by engaging more in farm work than any other activity in the area. This awareness became an impetus for them to indulge in the process of capital accumulation which became a spring board to their ability to buy land and leased with which they are able to farm.

What this means is that if the tenurial system is eventually changed in such a way that when can easily own land; the area is likely to experience a boom in farm produce during the harvesting season.

From the figure two histogram, it is evident that the rise in farm work had a corresponding increase in the volume of trade. What this means, again, is that farming is a foundation to better life for the women since they could use their gains from farm work to improve their other aspect of life.

Research Question 2

Is it correct that, the more the people's cultural values changes, the greater the opportunities for women empowerment among the Delta-Igbo speaking people of Rivers-State?

On account of the above stated research question the following case studies in the study site are being examined, using the period between 2001 and 2011 as bench-mark.
- Farming by women.
- Fishing by women.
- Trading by women.
- Others by women.

Based on the number of case studies, four pie-chart were used to show how the changes in the cultural values of the people, gave rise to women empowerment in the study area.

In verifying the above Research Question, farming; was categoryzed as one. By this we mean that all women from the different communities are grouped into one and they are represented in the pie-chart according.

Case 1:
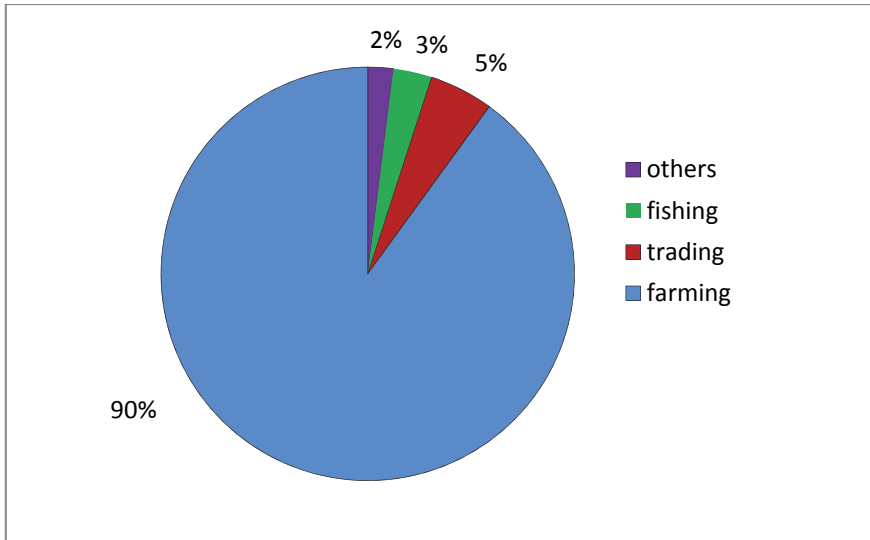
Figure 3. Percentage of women involved in farm work between 2001 and 2011
Source: Field Survey, 2016

The above figure showed that farm work in the period under review had 90% of women involved in farm work. During the same period 3% of women were involved in fishing while 5% of women went into trading and 2% went into different uncategorized activities in the area.

Discussion of findings

Farming from the findings of this study within the period under review is a major occupation for the women. Reason for this, is attributable to the high preference for working women by men and husbands. More women are now seen working, whether they had higher education or not. Those who went to school are given the opportunity to work and support their husbands while those who did not have the opportunity for former education, took to farming and so with the little they were doing in the past they were able to raise money and buy themselves some plots of land or lease land and through this method they have become economically empowered.

The empowerment of women is so essential now because at this age and time elsewhere in the world, women have shown that they are pillars of homes. Women today (Uzorka, Okemini & Odoemalom, 2013) have been seen to be doing well in most occupations men could not venture into. Again, if we take a look into the pie chart, it is interesting to see how women took the bull by the horn through ensuring that they move on in life.

This survey also found out that if women are given an enabling environment; these coastal communities of Delta Igbo speaking people will experience some kind of development they least expect, will come to the area in this short time. The reason is within this short time, some of them have ensured that both their male and female children are now in school.

The position of women in this area is quite clear and understandable. The area is gradually becoming the food basket of the Ogba-Egbema-Ndoni Local Government Area as the harvest from the women's farm alone has gone beyond local consumption. People now come from neighboring towns and villages like Omoku, Abacheke, Oguta, Owerri etc to buy food stuffs and other products from the area. If the above is presently being experience in the area; and the women are desirous of seeing themselves owning land to create the enablement needed for their independence.

The issue of who benefits between these women and their male counterparts, seemingly as it appears depends on our perception of what a woman does or will do if she becomes economically or politically empowered tomorrow. The sky may be the limit of the benefits accurable to these communities. What is important is the relaxation of some of these cultural practices to create opportunities for women empowerment. When a woman is rich, the whole of that family is rich.

Summary of findings

The historical experience of mankind at this age and moment has brought to limelight the fact that disempowering women, poverty in a way is institutionalized in the societies. On account of the foregoing, in this study it is evident that modern husbands now have great preference for working women and this new interest had spurred most women whether in urban or rural areas to work.

Again, the desire to be empowered by women in the area of this study has made most women to own land by buying plots of land from original owners in order to have good life.

With what women are doing in these communities, from the finding of this study; the Delta-Igbo speaking people of Rivers-State in no time would experience a boost in educational development in the area.

Finally, it was found out that with a change in our cultural values women will be greatly empowered and this would not only reduce prostitution in the area but would go a long way to boost both economic and political development among the Delta-Igbo speaking people in Rivers-State.

Recommendations

Arising from the findings of this study; we have recommended the following in order to save the women of Delta-Igbo speaking people of Rivers-State from impoverishment and disdainful life style. A change in cultural values which would bring a reform in tenural system in the study area would be a welcome development.

Values are deeply held criteria for judging what is good or bad, and therefore abstinence from those things perceived to be bad as underlying goal of any social activity is to maintain good relations, save face and keep society going. In-view of the foregoing, it will be pertinent to examine the hardship the observance of some of our values have subjected women into, in the same spirit of keeping society going as it has become the underlying goal of modern societies today.

This is in consonance with the fact that by disempowering women; ostensibly we make the society incapable of growing. This is because it is not just the condition of human deprivation, disempowerment, disablement and low income but it is capable of debilitating individual's mental and manual capabilities to function as members of the society.

1. Empowerment of women will reduce the incidence of prostitution not only in the area understudy but also in other parts of the country.
2. A reduction in rural urban migration.
3. Food surpluses and a reduction in prices of other meaningful things in life.

4. Reduction in unemployment—not only among the people but the country at large.
5. Reduction in crime and criminal activities in the country.

Conclusion

The issue concerning changes in cultural values and women empowerment calls for urgent attention. This is principally because it does sound somewhat strange, that women cannot access loan from the bank because they do not posses landed property which they may require to be presented as collateral in order to secure a loan. If a woman had excel as stated above in time past, and even till date are still making wave wherever they are, the consensus should be that the sky would be their limit, if all the impediments are removed and they are empowered like their male counterpart.

We have argued in this paper that the major impediment against women is land ownership pattern which is the consequence of our cultural practices. Again, that the fears that a woman will one day begin to direct the affairs of the community if given the opportunities she deservedly desired in life as a person. I doubt the possibility of any woman dominating a man in this world, so let's encourage women to become developed.

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Jarema Drozdowicz

Adam Mickiewicz University (Poland)

Chasing Tinderella: love and affection in the age of the mobile device industry

ABSTRACT. The extensive use of mobile phones is today a constant part of our daily routines. This social habit had afected also the sphere of emotion, sexuality and the ways people show affection or discontent towards the others. This paper aims at the main characteristics of the relatively new phenomenon of online dating and dating applications in the cintext of the mobile industry's rise in contemporary economies. The process of a growing number of devices and applications sold worldwide cannot be disregarded in a sociological sense as it clearly affects other areas of public and private lives of individuals. The issue of online security is here also brought into attention. The main thesis of this paper is however based on the notion of the mobile industry as a main factor in changing the technological side of social relations in the todays reality, but on the other hand a certain historical evidence is being highlighted that shows a continuity on a more personal level of the way people deal with love in general.

KEYWORDS: Tinder, mobile industry, mobile phone, dating dating applications, apps, technology

In an archetypical romantic fairy tale's narrative we usually find a leading plot, or a simplistic and linear story structure in which a male and female protagonists, despite numerous obstacles, finally find their way to into a romantic relationship and fall in love. This very *leitmotiv* is being played by many authors in various time periods and belongs strictly to the historically shaped canon of Western literary tradition in most of its genres. Starting with the antique Greek plays of Euripides, through medieval romances sung by numerous minstrels on Europe's most notable royal courts and ending with the uber romanticism of gothic novels by Mary Shelley and Walter Scott—the picturesque of emotional engagement between two individuals is vastly relying on a feeling of a deep and truly partnership of souls. Romantic expectations towards this affection are usually common not just in love stories *per se*, but also in dramas, comedies etc. In fact the comedic potential of romantic love is being well put into a working praxis in William Shakespeare's most known dramas like *Much Ado About Nothing*, *As You like It* or *A Midsum-*

mer Night's Dream. These selected literary texts present the affection occuring between the dramatic characterts as a specific *force majorie* in terms of creating a comedic plot leading to an unevitable happy ending. Thus romantic love might be regarded in this context as humorous adventure with no other goal to achieve except true love itself. With time romanticism became not just a cultural habit but also a compulsory element of the paradigmatic emotional discourse, especially when speaking of marriage or other forms of socially accepted partnership. No other factors leading to a marital status of an individual are still so highly appreciated today as a rosy story how a couple met and fell in love at first sight.

The loving gaze of a partner is just a small part of a broader romantic picture. It is being painted with colors like commitment, sacrifice and understanding the other person's needs. Just as any other picture it is therefore exaggerated, full of contrast and could be regarded in many ways as hyperbolical. The necessity of "seeing" emotions of the other is something what has a profound impact on how the relationship will develop or come to an end in a spectacular catastrophe because of the lack of it. The visual context of this issue is becoming even more significant when we move onto the field of popular culture. The representations of romanticism in film, web content or popular visual arts range from banality of the *Twilight* saga to complex metanarratives of Quentin Tarantino's *Pulp Fiction*. The diner conversation between "Pumpkin" and "Honey Bunny" in the opening sequence of the movie might serve here as a good example of a tragicomic aspect of affection. Love is being presented in it at the same time as a main driving force and a series of gags caused by the total commitment the two characters present. The cinematic screen is transforming the feeling into a two way situation, or a structural dichotomy of signs so to speak. We either participate in the lover's affair by accepting their controversial actions or perceive them as rogue antiheroes along with other popcultural impersonations of greater or lesser evil. The choices made by viewers in this situation are ambiguous in their nature. We love to hate these two and hate to love them as the pair robes the restaurant's guests of their possessions. This semiotic ambiguity seems to be similar to the one found in the main characters in *Bonny and Clyde* or towards Leon and Mathilda in *Leon the Professional*. The emotional dichotomy seems to be a not just a signifier for the Tarantino's movie itself but with success might be regarded as a constant element of the whole contemporary cultural landscape.

As screens got smaller and movies are no longer solely watched in theatres the technological advancement allowed us to get more mobile. The mobile industry became in the last 15 years one of the fastest growing segments in the global economy. According to the *Business Insider* for example just the market for mobile phones alone will grow constantly, reaching 3,5 billion devices sold until 2020 (Bussines Insider, 2016). This trend is referring not just to the number of sold cell phones, but also to the number of new users of mobile technology worldwide. It is being forecasted that in the year 2017 the global number of cell phone users will reach over 4,7 billion people (Statista, 2016). It is also worth noting that most of this new users will come from so called developing countries like India and China which has one of the fasting growing markets for technology in general. At this point we might make a statement that the proliferation of mobile devices in those countries is a sign of a economic, social and cultural change in a structural sense. The former Third World is chasing the West in this matter with a increasing speed and in some aspects it has already surpassed it by at least an arm length. An exemplification of this trend might be the fact that Chinese internet users numbers are already higher than in the United States as for 2014, followed closely by India (Internet Live Stats, 2016). As Fredric Jameson puts it, connecting the issue of technological improvement with cultural transition following the first one is the most common ways to understand modernization (Jameson, 2002). By doing so we are theoretically able to grasp the key factors of the process by putting side by side these two areas of human agency. Technology and culture become entangled in a holistic global process of modernization which, in a sense of technological determinism, inevitably leads to homogenization of culture itself. We seem to use today very much the same brand cell phones, computers and other IT inventions produced and distributed within a relatively small world of industrial corporations and retail chains that had grown to gargantuan proportions and still keep on expanding in new markets.

Thus the mobile revolution we are witnessing since at least a decade is a social fact and influences highly contemporary arts of communication. Recalling Marshall McLuhan, we might say with a large dose of certainty that the next leap in communication will happen through the means of handheld devices creating a complex structure of interconnected cells of a ephemerid global mobile body. The demise of print media, dropping book sales and the fight for sheer survival among today's book authors and many publishing houses forces them to go online.

Blogs, tweets and web data feeds are replacing memoirs, letters and newspapers. The virtual universe is expanding and taking one after another every area of former human physical existence and agency. New fields arise and the old ones are being emphasized and transformed in order to obey the consumer logic. As Jean Baudrillard stresses out contemporary culture is always focused upon what appears to be bigger, better and faster than the previously consumed good (Baudrillard, 1998). This creates and endless chain of consumption that drives itself and constantly gains momentum. Its almost like a ride on an American highway with the imperative of speed and consumption instead of the physical road and destination. However, Baudrillard's notion of consumer culture serves here a higher purpose, i.e. his own project of critical analysis of the American culture based on radical consumerism and the idea of speed. In his book *America* the French sociologist makes a clear statement on this matter by saying that: "speed creates pure objects. It is tself 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 that cause by outstropping it" (Baudrillard, 1999, p. 6). Thus all consumer goods are being forced to obey this logic in order to be placed and made highly visible in an already maximazed hyper-reality. In this context its no wonder that love and sex quickly became in focus of the mobile industry. Larger than life bodies of supermodels, romances of celebrities and wannabe movie stars are displayed in the media through screens, billboards and glossy covers of lifestyle magazines. The devices we use are mostly equipped now with large touch screens allowing us to swipe through endless streams of data, facebook status updates, instagram photos or short twitter messages. The information highway is however forcing us to meet the requirements of speed and necessity of going global instead of staying put and grow roots in what was once local.

In this light the former picture of romantic live is being transferred into a speed dating contest. Having just a eye blink to asses other person's qualities and physical attractiveness is in consequence a dromology of love (to quote Paulo Virilio's notion) and squeezed into few minutes of small talk. This exaggerated view of contemporary amorous relations is reflected in the praxis of the mobile world as well the mobile industry. New dating applications are making their rounds in recent years and their popularity is constantly growing. They key use feature is focused on fast evaluation of other people on the basis of their physical

appearance and short notes each user usually writes to describe him- or herself. Some of these applications are pointing out those people in their database who match in a lesser or larger extent either our search criteria or our This leads to the effect in which the smart phone becomes a modern day love counselor—a digital Cyrano de Bergerac for the swiping generation so to say. The bound between man and machine is in this example a close and personal connection based on data links and wifi spot accessibility. Mobile dating is creating instantly new opportunities to meet people in real life, however most of these relationships seem to be still born, prosper and finally fade away mostly online. This might clearly change in the near future. As an evidence we might recall the data gathered in the United States between 2005 and 2012 showing that one third of American marriages start as an online relationship (USA Today, 2016). According to the sociologist Michael Rosenfeld, what is remarkable in this phenomenon is the fact that online marriages are more likely to last longer than those of couple who had met in a more traditional way. Certainly marriage isn't a compulsory outcome of the relationships started in the virtual universe but we might take this socially accepted point of reference into account for further considerations.

Nevertheless, the new interconnectivity through mobile devices replaces often traditional arts of communication and not just in the context of the dating applications. We depend today without any doubt on information technology and data circulation not just in our individual lives but merely in the very basic structure of the social, political, economic and cultural reality. The information society built on this structure is becoming increasingly determined by the flow of data as it is fundamental for its sheer survival as a global network of individuals, groups and institutions. Hacking, electric black outs and cyber criminality are being presented today as a serious threat to global and national security and to a large extent it is true. Manuel Castell's remarks on the link between the information society and the welfare state lead us to the notion of innovation and progress. Technological modernization is an obvious sign of dynamics in both areas, but nowadays this technical leap is treated as a constant and necessary part of our every day reality. Furthermore technological advancement is a key factor of economic growth in most western societies. Technological determinism, as put by Neil Postman and Marshal McLuhan before, is multiplied through the number of devices we carry, sometimes more than one at a time. Increasing sales of

mobile phones, tablets, smart watches and other devices make a large part of the current global economic growth and national industries producing those devices compete against each other in a fierce fight over patent rights, new customers and new emerging markets, just like the Korean Samsung and American Apple companies do today. Therefore it is not a surprise that the dynamics of the global mobile market and industry are being reflected in the part of the complex focused on delivering love, simulacra of romanticism and casual sex.

To the most trending dating applications today we have to include "Tinder". The company behind this application was founded in 1995 in New York. Since then its *modus operandi* in business was based mostly on acquisitions of other companies, creating start-ups and introduction of new media platforms (for example new television broadcasting services). In 2012 Tinder was launched by the company as the first ever swiping application, in which users made their matches through swiping movement on the touch screen—left for no and right for yes if they wanted to increase their chances for a real meeting or at least a conversation with the other. The revolutionary aspect of this app is considered to be the swiping mode of the user's interface. Many other applications copied this idea in order to allow users to choose the content they want to see by a slight movement of the finger left or right. Swiping apps are today becoming more and more popular thanks to their simplicity of making decisions. Tinder users make their decisions on the basis of pictures posted by other people and a brief description. The photo content of user's profiles is linked also to their Facebook pages, including potential mutual interested or friends shared online. Basically the choice for swiping right is being made on physical attractiveness and the virtual persona created through one's pictures and minimal self-description. This very feature of Tinder had led also to its critique as a shallow and one dimensional way of judging other people. As in 2015 the world was shocked by the idea presented by two American entrepreneurs to create a much more direct application called "Peeple" of actually evaluating people, Tinder's focus on the importance of the first look seems to be outdated (The Washington Post, 2016). What is significant however is the fact that Tinder was the first of such applications and the vast scale of the whole enterprise.

By the year 2015 Tinder claimed having a number of estimated 50 million active users worldwide, 10 million active daily users, 9 billion matches being made and 1,4 billion swipes in general being made so far

(DMR, 2016b). Most users of Tinder are in the age between 25–34 (with a second largest group between 18–24), over a half of is single, where users already in relationship make 12% overall. Every second 16000 swipes and 300 matches are being made. The overwhelming scale of the enterprise is being also reflected in the application's popularity as a cultural phenomenon. Popular language quickly adopted the term "Tinder dates" to describe hookups based on brief online encounters and usually leading to a casual sexual adventure. Tinder itself and similar dating applications became a cultural point of reference in numerous talk shows (Conan O'Brien for example), television and other media.

What we witness today is a real turning point in the dating game through the massive invasion of mobile technology and new software into the sphere reserved until recently for more traditional and non-digital means and regulated by more conservative social norms. The shift in this matter is made by technology in the first place, but also by a deep transition in global cultural patterns of understanding affection through the smart phone screens and instant accessibility to everyone's online profile and information. Other factors for a growing interest in online dating might be related to the crisis of certain values perceived in the past as dominant. Thus the crisis of masculinity as described by Pierre Bourdieu and Jean Baudrillard on one hand or the discontent with the formal institution of marriage (as well other formalized areas of life) on the other might serve here as an example of such *signum temporis*. Tinder's idea of minimize the necessary and basic content to what is really essential is simultaneously a step towards rejecting all the formalities and social rituals connected to past ways of meeting people, carefully constructing emotional engagement and eventually falling in love. In fact love is not the key point in online dating. What seems to be in the center of this phenomenon is creating the possibility of a match with someone we find attractive, who has similar interests or we expect to like.

What cannot be neglected however are the expectations for a touch of romanticism in the endeavor. The criticism expressed towards Tinder is basically based on the argument that its killing the romantic aspect of male/female relationships by degrading them into quick sexual satisfaction without keeping the whole romantic entourage found in popular culture. The decline of romanticism through the rise of dating apps is not just related to the crisis of romantic love itself but rather linked to a broader cultural turn through new media, especially social sites. The

fundamental rule of most of these web sites and applications is the act building up and maintaining a social profile of ourselves. The carefully chosen elements of our own identity are being presented online in display for others to witness. The constructed virtual self is for many people as real as the physical world around them. The importance and the social impact of the digital *la bella figura* overcasts sometimes direct interaction, the intimacy of face to face conversation and the human touch of a date. However the mobile industry has also filled this gap with an application based on crossing our daily paths with strangers. The location tracking based app called "Happn" is expanding immensely in recent time with 10 million users as for 2015 (DMR, 2016a). It is regarded as a more romantic and paradoxically more "real" as Tinder. It's a well made and marketed alternative to Tinder, nevertheless it still remains a digital product which has to sell and attract new customers.

As Happn capitalizes on the vision of regaining the long lost romanticism in the most peculiar way, on the other end of the phenomenon we find applications deliberately stripped of the whole romantic aspect and focus just on pure sexual encounters. Recent hacking scandal in relation to the Ashley Madison affair, in consequence of which large quantities of personal user data leaked (and some of these users were also blackmailed), revealed a much broader issue. The lack of privacy control and the vulnerability of digital databases is an important and current problem not only in this case, but also in regards to all our cyber activities in general. Sex oriented mobile applications, like "Mixxxer" or "3ender" for example, promise privacy and safety in that context. Both of them advertise as online places for like minded individuals who share a liberal attitude towards sex and may safely interact with each other. The first one is focused on finding the right person with similar sexual preferences mostly for one night stands, the other on finding the right person for a *ménage a trois*. Some certainly may find these applications as morally doubtful, but human sexuality has historically always been categorized through moral standards set by one or another group of influence. It is worth noting that the inventor of 3ender reflects upon his invention as a spontaneous step in the direction of legitimization of the mentioned preference. The social determinism towards open expression of sexual preferences is however more visible in the context of sexual minorities. The influence of dating applications might be also seen as a factor for emancipation of minority groups. It cannot be surprising that also the LGBTQ groups are being offered a variety of mobile applications, like

"Grindr" or "Her" for example, seen often as a technology liberating from small town social pressure, logistic hustle in arranging meetings and minimizing the fear of rejection and stigmatization.

As we speak today of the rising role of dating applications and their influence on arranging our emotional and sexual lives a question might arise—is this kind of interaction really something entirely new to our collective experience? It is striking that the "Lonely Hearts" advertisements posted already in the 18th century in the first newspapers had a similar principle but were placed in a different medium. Short descriptions of one's personal qualities, connection within the establishment and wealth displayed to the public view had certainly much of today's social profiles not just on dating sites but also Facebook or Instagram. The detachment of the virtual self from reality and the imperative of being online is closely linked in this matter to the tissue of culture and its structures. Thus the argument of Tinder's instrumentalization of love, affection and killing of romanticism seems to be invalid in the light of historical evidence. What Tinder and similar inventions had however successfully done is to market a long existing niche; or more of a part of human condition which not necessary finds imagined and constructed romanticism obligatory for male/female relationships. Dating applications are here regarded as a time saver in choosing the person we find simply attractive enough without the need to dive into specific situations which might lead to a rejection. However, we might on the other hand highlight this very cultural turn in acceptance of mobile dating in the area of social meanings, roles, aesthetics or practices with the emphasis of new technology. The mobile revolution in hand held devices is therefore a phenomenon which affects social behavior today more than ever.

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Alyssa Eck
California State University, Fullerton (USA)

Melinda R. Pierson
California State University, Fullerton (USA)

Effective social skills strategies for teaching boys and girls identified with Autism Spectrum Disorders

ABSTRACT. The purpose of this manuscript is to present best practices in teaching social skills as determined by researchers in the United States for boys and girls identified with Autism Spectrum Disorders. Research reviewed includes strategies focusing on the following areas: early intervention, social stories, video/peer modeling, and teacher/paraprofessional training.

KEYWORDS: social skills, gender, Autism Spectrum Disorders

Introduction.
Background and purpose

Learning appropriate social skills for boys and girls is important if one wishes to be a functioning and accepted member of a community. Specifically, people with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) have difficulty understanding social cues, body language, or facial expressions of social partners. Autism spectrum disorders are defined under three prongs: social delays, linguistic delays, and repetitive/perseverative behaviors. Many diagnosed with ASD begin to show signs in infancy, but major identifying factors are often noted between the ages of two and three in young boys and girls. When typical toddlers/children are exploring social relationships and learning receptive/expression language, children with ASD are missing crucial developmental milestones. Strug-

gling with social skills leaves a person at a disadvantage not only social-ly, but studies show people with social difficulties also have difficulty academically as well.

There are many approaches to social skills' training including social stories, video modeling, teacher training, and early intervention. Studies show that early intervention should be considered a very important factor teaching boys and girls with ASD appropriate social and commu-nication skills and can have long-term positive affects throughout the child's life (Jamison et al., 2012). Early intervention through the use of social stories and video modeling is a strategy that is beginning to be-come widely used in social skills instruction. Social skills' training through the use of social stories and video modeling are gaining popu-larity especially for boys and girls with autism (Bozkurt & Vuran, 2014). A social story is a short and comprehensive story that directly instructs a child on how to react/act in a given situation (Mena & Pierson, 2015). In addition, teacher and paraprofessional training in specific strategies for teaching social skills should also be addressed. Regardless of the instruc-tional strategy, it is important to note that social skills' education is im-perative to boys and girls with ASD. Falling behind in the area of social skills and communication can lead to a lifetime of struggling to find a place in to the wider community and will often have immensely nega-tive effects on that person's well-being.

Definitions

Social stories: Stories to help boys and girls with disabilities learn appropriate social skills

Direct instruction: Teaching a subject directly and in a small group setting

Inclusive classroom setting: Environment in which boys and girls with disabilities are included in a general education setting

Peer modeling: Typical peers modeling appropriate social behavior

Early intervention: Giving intervention in areas of need during early childhood

ABA: Applied behavior analysis

ASD: Autism spectrum disorder

Seminal research

The purpose for pursuing this research was to determine which strategies will improve the appropriate social skills of boys and girls with ASD. The use of social skills will help boys and girls learn how to be successful in socializing with typical peers, which leads to greater self-confidence and independence.

Early intervention

According to Jamison, Forston, and Stanton-Chapman (2012), appropriate social skills are a crucial part of typical development for all young girls and boys. If children experience social difficulties, even in early childhood, it can have lifelong negative ramifications. Delayed social skills are often related to developmental delays, social awareness delays, or communication delays. The most effective strategy for teaching appropriate social skills is through early intervention practices. Early intervention for boys and girls with disabilities especially ASD has been known to provide lasting positive changes in many areas of difficulty, especially social skills (Jamison et al., 2012).

Social competence is measured through the following three areas: expressing interest in a topic, joining others in play, and participating in goal orientated activities with peers. In order to improve social competence in students lacking these important skills, teachers should focus on facilitating hierarchical play, social proximity, joint attention, and individual adaptations. In early childhood classrooms, especially special education, teachers need to provide social instruction through social play, opportunities for boys and girls to play together using social scripts to facilitate conversation, and play hierarchy. Dramatic play, themed play, and social stories for increasing social skills of boys and girls with developmental delays have been widely used with much success over a variety of settings and are recommended as part of the National Association of the Education of Young Children's Developmentally Appropriate Practices (Jamison et al., 2012).

Practices discussed in this manuscript are meant to improve the social skills of boys and girls with ASD in an effort to ensure appropriate social practices as they mature. In order to be sure that the practices will be effective, a teacher needs to implement these strategies on a daily

basis for his/her class. This will give students ample time to practice necessary skills and provide the opportunity for maintenance and generalization across settings (Jamison et al., 2012).

According to Jamison, Forston, and Stanton-Chapman (2012), early intervention is one of the most important aspects of teaching appropriate social skills. Stanton-Chapman and Brown (2015) conducted a quantitative study with six three-year-old participants in an inclusive preschool class at the same rural school. The students were screened by teachers in the areas on behavior checklists, social skills ratings' scales, and a preschool language assessment. The purpose of the experiment was to increase social interactions of boys and girls in preschool with language and developmental delays and possible ASD through the use of social dramatic play and intervention toys. These students participated in social learning through scripted plays and social story time that each included a theme with props and intervention toys. For example, boys and girls would read a story about going to the grocery store with pictures of participating students, then act out and play the story after watching and listening. The results of the study were very positive and encouraging for the student participants. The boys and girls were able to improve rates of parallel play behaviors from the range of one to two parallel play interactions at baseline data to 20–21 parallel play interactions at post intervention data (Stanton-Chapman & Brown, 2015). Rates began to increase noticeably for all students at about session six of the intervention.

In parallel research, McKenzie and Zascavage (2012) discussed early childhood education techniques for boys and girls with ASD based on the Montessori model. This model for education is founded on three instructional principles: the teaching of academic skills, life skills, and social skills. The Montessori model stresses the importance of "Pre-skills and abilities", meaning meeting the student at his/her present level and playing on his/her strengths (McKenzie & Zascavage, 2012). Montessori style instruction is to include "scope and sequence, curriculum, pacing, and types of learning" (Mastropieri & Scruggs, 2004). Scope and sequence within the Montessori framework have to do with the depth of the content to be taught and in what sequential order it will be taught which begins around the age of 3 (Mastropieri & Scruggs, 2004). The idea is to start with what the student already knows and build from there by activating prior knowledge and relevant skills. Montessori schools usually include three grade levels in one classroom for peer

support and the learning of appropriate social skills. Pacing is determined by individual need and comprehension. Teachers in the Montessori setting are encouraged to take advantage of teachable moments instead of teaching to a particular timeline.

Video/Peer modeling

Ogilvie (2011) created a descriptive review and step-by-step instructions for using video modeling and peer mentoring to help boys and girls with ASD learn social cues and better understand social situations. Video modeling is a research-based practice that uses videos to exhibit appropriate social behavior and role-playing through visual stimuli. Peer mentoring is the practice of involving typical peers in the process of helping boys and girls with ASD both academically and socially (Ogilvie, 2011).

Video models are created and used to fit the unique need of each child, both in learning style and particular interests. Video modeling and peer mentoring promote self-awareness in children with ASD as well as helping to ensure generalization of new skills across a variety of settings. There are seven steps in creating video models.

1. Identify the behavior that needs to be learned, reduced, or modified.
2. Collect informal data using the ABCs of behavior method.
3. Choose a familiar and age appropriate peer to model in the video.
4. Get parent permission for student to participate in the making of the video.
5. Prepare the typical peer for skills to model in the video.
6. Choose the environment of the video based on where the child needs to use the skill.
7. Create a simple video.

Once the video is ready, the final step is the intervention phase with the target student. It is best to begin by explaining the skill to the student with ASD and asking questions about where this skill might be appropriate to use (McMurray & Pierson, 2016). After the introduction, the teacher should go over each individual step of using the skill and have the student repeat. Next, the child would view the video model several times with opportunities following the viewing for practice with the peer mentor (Ogilvie, 2011). It is important to assess the child's improvement from pre-intervention to post intervention in the same way.

The teacher should collect data and assess the student's level to determine the amount of growth the student made in the intervention phase. Some questions to consider when assessing are: Did the student demonstrate the skill? Was is generalized to a variety of settings? What was most effective with the video model? What was not so effective? (Ogilvie, 2011).

Social stories

Social stories take social situations with a character that the boy or girl can identify with and breaks down the components to easier comprehend the steps (Pierson & Glaeser, 2005). For example, the story would include a description of behavioral, environmental, and emotional cues and how the student can/should respond to these cues. Social stories are taught using specific scaffolding including repetition, priming, opportunities to practice, and corrective feedback (Bozkurt & Vuran, 2014).

Social stories can also be used as an effective tool with boys and girls with disabilities other than ASD (Pierson & Glaeser, 2005). Currently, the focus on social stories for boys and girls with ASD focuses on reducing inappropriate behavior, initiating play, and social interaction, but it can be expanded to include other social topics. Bozkurt and Vuran (2014) conducted a meta analysis and descriptive review on social stories and Aljadeff-Abergel, E., Ayvazo, S., and Eldar, E. (2012) reviewed sample activities in the program called "physical model" with which instructional techniques can be applied to 12 target social incompetence areas for boys and girls with developmental disabilities. Children learn best through physical activity and play such as cooperative games and this can lead to acquiring appropriate social skills. A study reviewed by Aljadeff-Abergel, et al. (2012) was conducted in 1995 by Sharpe, Brown, & Crider with third grade students in PE setting. This study conducted multiple baselines of several students with behavioral and social skills problems in the class. Boys and girls struggling socially were first functionally assessed by the teacher. They were then given scripts or social stories for how to play the PE game appropriately. Next, the students were given continued practice toward mastery. Finally, boys and girls were given further support and follow up assessments (Aljadeff-Abergel, et al., 2012). Data taken from the multiple baselines indicated that the

target students all had a huge and positive change in behavior and appropriate social skills. The students, amazingly enough, were able to generalize the skills learned in PE into the classroom setting as well. Data showed a significant increase in leadership and appropriate conflict resolution in the target students, as well as a decrease in off task behavior in and outside the classroom (Aljadeff-Abergel, et al., 2012).

Aljadeff-Abergel, E., Ayvazo, S., and Eldar, E. (2012) reviewed sample activities in the program called "physical model" while Xin and Sutman (2011) conducted a literature review with the purpose of informing teachers about practical uses of the smart board for teaching important social skills through social stories. One study documents the journey of a nine-year-old target student named Calvin with ASD who did not have verbal language. Thus, he used PECS to communicate with his teacher. However, if the teacher did not immediately respond to Calvin when he wanted to tell her something, he would hum loudly and make other distracting noises to gain teacher/staff attention. Calvin's teacher developed a six-step program to help reduce the inappropriate behavior by replacing it with appropriate behavior. The first step is identifying the target behavior and its function. The second step is developing an appropriate social story. The third step is using the computer. The fourth step is self-modeling. The fifth step is presenting social stories on the smart board. The sixth and final step is practicing the skill in a social environment (Xin & Sutman, 2011). The results of this study indicated that the social stories were very effective in decreasing Calvin's humming and noise making. Before the intervention, Calvin was noted to make sounds 15 times a morning and hum about 20 times a morning period. Before the intervention, Calvin never raised his hand to let the teacher know he wanted to say something. Post intervention, Calvin was able to decrease his sound making from twenty times a morning to only eight and he began raising his hand four times a day. However, the hand raising, even after two weeks of intervention still required prompting (Xin & Sutman, 2011).

With continued and regular use of social stories and self-monitoring strategies in the classroom setting, students will be able to increase appropriate social skills. Teaching social stories through technology seems to be motivating for students because many students identify with technology and are motivated to learn from it. Social stories create situations and provide information regarding the social needs for boys and girls with ASD to learn social skills and increase communication

within their environments (Xin & Sutman, 2011). A crucial aspect of implementing social stories is to confirm that the story is created at the developmental level of the student so he/she is able to understand it and use the self-modeling skills, which will help understanding and generalization across settings (Xin & Sutman, 2011).

Teacher/Paraprofessional training

Uysal and Ergenekon (2010) conducted a qualitative study of how well fourteen teachers (ten female and four male) in private special education intuitions in Turkey taught social skills to students with disabilities. The study was carried out through several interviews with the teachers. The interview questions were created as a means of understanding the teachers' practices for teaching social skills. The study determined that teaching social skills to boys and girls was a priority for 12 out of the 14 teachers and the 12 teachers described specific methods of how he/she went about determining which student needs what type of social support. However, almost all of the teachers interviewed felt inadequacy in one or both of the following areas of social skills instruction: (1) planning what skills should be taught, and/or (2) how to effectively implement these plans with the students. The study found that most of these teachers do not have a systematic plan for social skills instruction and that could be the root of the feelings of inadequacy (Uysal & Ergenekon, 2010). The lack of training or understanding in how to teach these highly important skills is something that needs to be remedied in these schools to see that these students are receiving the most adequate education, which includes teaching them how to interact in social situations. The authors found it interesting that all the interviewed teachers stressed the importance of social skills instruction, but about half felt it was not their responsibility as a classroom teacher to instruct in this area. It was also interesting that not any of the teachers had a precise method for planning or teaching social skills to their students.

In conclusion, the authors found that treating social skills instruction as one would treat academic instruction changes the way a teacher approaches the instruction in a much more positive manner. For example, instead punishing negative and inappropriate behavior, one must teach what the student should do instead. If a student has a problem

with calling out, an appropriate replacement behavior would be teaching a student to raise his hand. The authors stated that people would mostly rather make a good choice than a negative one, but sometimes appropriate behavior is not known or understood. That is why punishment will not effect any lasting change in boys and girls with social deficiencies.

Conclusion

The goal of this manuscript was to determine best practices in teaching social skills to boys and girls with ASD. Several key strategies were presented—all of which have a strong research base of evidence in the United States. Boys and girls with ASD may struggle with acquiring appropriate social skills, but given the necessary tools such as social stories, access to video models, and a structured play setting with typical peers, these students can learn and generalize information across settings. With continued support of schools, teachers, and paraprofessionals, social skills' strategies will become implemented into the regular classroom curriculum.

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Kamila Kacprzak
Kazimierz Wielki University (Poland)

Adolescents' experiences of being in a romantic relationship—an example of using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) to analyse data in pedagogical study

ABSTRACT. Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) is a recently developed qualitative approach, not only in psychology but also in pedagogy. The aim of this article is to present pedagogical research project with a description of the analytic process. The article is divided into three parts: first, a characteristic of IPA is provided, later I am going to present a research project as an example of using IPA in pedagogical studies. In the last section, I go through steps of IPA analysis by showing short extracts of an interview and explaining subsequent steps of analytic process using gathered data. Conducting research is concerned with illuminating how experiences of being in romantic relationship and accompanying feelings, thoughts and expressions appear to the adolescents.

KEYWORDS: Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis, pedagogy, research project, analytic process

Introduction

Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis is a framework methodology, which determines the theoretical and practical tips on constructing a research project—this approach is more and more frequently used by representatives of the humanities, social sciences and health sciences. The focus of research is the position of the human beings with their dilemmas and troubles, or more broadly—coping with the world and in the world. IPA is a qualitative research approach, which examines how people give meaning to their important life experiences. Those experiences have personal meaning for individuals, actively involving their thoughts and feelings into the interpretation of phenomena, objects and

people, which they meet in their lives, regardless of the subject of these experiences, their result or how they were judged. Access to the experiences of respondents always depends on what the participants will tell about them. The researcher can understand this experience only after interpreting the received explanation, description, story (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009, p. 1–5).

Primarily, IPA started in psychology and much of the early work was in health psychology but this approach is not limited only to discipline nor connected with having formal psychological education. The popularity of IPA increasingly grows among those working in cognate disciplines in the humanistic, social and health science. Most of the early work was in the UK but later this approach has spread to other English-speaking countries and finally it is known also in regions where English in not the first language (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009, p. 1, 5). According to J. Smith (2011, p. 9) IPA is a recently developed qualitative approach which, since its inception, has rapidly become one of the best known and most commonly used qualitative methodologies in psychology. It is true because after using key words *Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis* we receive 3228 results in EBSCO database[1]. What is more, over 2.5 thousand articles have been published in the last 6 years. We can also observe an increase in employing IPA in pedagogy. I used key words *Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis* and *education* to find articles. I received over 500 articles in EBSCO database and half of them have been published in the last 6 years. In Poland, this approach is not known yet, however pedagogies have employed connection of phenomenology and hermeneutics in their research[2]. The aim of this article is to present a pedagogical research project with a description of the analytic process. All analytic work has been done during my internship in Birkbeck University of London, where Professor Jonathan Smith works. My arrival was a result of getting financial grant in contest "ETIUDA 4" organised by the National Science Centre. The research project, which I am describing in this article, is being conducted now and I am preparing a doctoral dissertation on its basis.

The article is divided into three parts: first, a characteristic of IPA is provided, later I am going to present a research project as an example of

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[1] Date of access to database 12.03.2017 r.

[2] More about possibilities of employing IPA in pedagogical research in: Kacprzak, 2016.

using IPA in pedagogical studies. In the last section, I go through steps of IPA analysis by showing short extracts of an interview and explaining subsequent steps of the analytic process using gathered data.

Characteristic of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis

IPA refers to the basic principles of phenomenology, hermeneutics and idiography. The starting point in building a theoretical basis of IPA is human life experience. The experience itself is elusive and inaccessible; we are its witnesses after the event. Speaking of studies, in which the aim is to reach the experience, we aim at a research that is "close to the experience". Man is a being that interprets themselves, being a participant of an experience when it becomes it, gives the meaning only to the representation of the experience. Both human activity and cognitive or affective response to this activity (e.g. memory, regret, lust) can be considered as an experience, because IPA is focused on the study of the subjective experience, which is always a subjective experience of "something" which becomes meaningful for an individual and which makes it unique. (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009, p. 32–33). In this sense IPA culls from phenomenology. However, IPA also emphasises that the research exercise is a dynamic process with an active role for the researcher in that process—this assumption is closer to hermeneutic approach. The researcher is trying to get close to the participant's personal world, but one cannot do this directly or completely, because access to experiences depends on and is impeded by one's own conceptions. That is why it is necessary to make sense of that other person through a process of interpretative activity which is known as a double hermeneutic. Firstly, "the participants are trying to make sense of their world; the researcher is trying to make sense of the participants trying to make sense of their world" (Smith & Osborn, 2014, p. 53). The role of researcher is twofold. On the one hand, one is trying to understand a human predicament, stand in their shoes, but on the other hand, one is looking at participant's life situation from a different angle, trying to ask questions and be more critical. It is connected with the change of analysis character—from representation of what a participant said to different levels of interpretation. The process of analysis is iterative, dynamic and non-linear—"we may move back and forth through a range different ways of thinking about the data, rather than completing each step, one after the other."

This process is described as a move between the part and the whole, because "to understand any given part, you look to the whole; to understand the whole, you look to the part" (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009, p. 28, 36).

The third major influence upon IPA is idiography, which is in contrast to nomothetic rules. They are observed in research in which the main aim is to establish the likelihood of a phenomenon occurring under particular conditions (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2012, p. 362). IPA does not refer to what is universal, but to the particular at two levels. Firstly, in the sense of detail and therefore the depth of analysis. Secondly, in the sense of context of participant's life and their own perspective. Because of that, IPA utilizes small, purposively selected and carefully situated samples (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009, p. 29–30).

Idiographic is presented as one of the three characteristic features of IPA apart from inductive and interrogative (Smith, 2004, p. 41). "The skill in writing IPA is in allowing the reader to parse the narrative in two different ways: a) for the themes which have emerged and which the participants share (but illustrate in particular ways); b) for the individual's own account by linking the material presented on that person through the write up, i.e., one should be able to learn something about both the important generic themes in the analysis, but also about the life world of the particular participants who have told their stories" (Smith, 2004, p. 42).

The inductive emphasis in IPA is also highlighted. This feature of IPA is typical for many qualitative approaches. "IPA researchers employ techniques which are flexible enough to allow unanticipated topics or themes to emerge during analysis. Thus, IPA researchers do not attempt to verify or negate specific hypotheses established on the basis of the extant literature; rather they construct broader research questions which lead to the collection of expansive data. The most exhilarating analysis is often that which develops unanticipated while engaged with the material and the flexible data collection and analysis techniques of IPA facilitate this" (Smith, 2004, p. 43).

The last feature of IPA is related to using construct and concepts within mainstream psychology [pedagogy or other science disciplines—K.K.] to engage in a constructive dialogue with existing theories and results of research. "Indeed a key aim of IPA is to make a contribution to psychology through interrogating or illuminating existing research. While IPA typically involves an in-depth analysis of a set of case studies,

the results of the analysis do not stand on their own, but rather are subsequently discussed in relation to the extant psychological literature" (Smith, 2004, p. 43–44).

Justification and methodology of a research project

A planned research project aims at conducting theoretical exploratory research. The aim of the research is description and interpretation of senses and meanings made by adolescents for their experiences which relate to being in romantic relationships (establishing, building and braking up of these relationships). Formulating the aim of the research in categories of description and interpretation of the meanings and senses made by adolescents justifies the chosen approach—Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis. In the planned research project, the subjects of studies are senses and meanings that are made by adolescents on the basis of their experiences related to being in an emotional relationship (establishing, building and deterioration of these relationships).

It is believed that growing up is a long and varied period between 10/12 and 20 year of age. Young people engage in mixed-gender and multitask peer groups, master gender roles, get their independence from parents, thanks to which they can engage in their first romantic relationships (so called preintimate relationships) and test themselves in their new role. (Bardziejewska, 2005, p. 345–347). Being in an emotional relationship is crucial for the adolescents in their teenage lives. The relationships are the main topic to discuss and they cause strong emotions. As B. B. Brown, C. Feiring and W. Furman claimed the emotional relationships occurs as a main topic in lyrics of popular songs or TV series for teenagers (1999, p. 4–5). Dating plays a vital role not only as a significant fact but is also essential for their general development in adolescence. Dating is one of the main tasks of development. According to W. Furman and L. Shaffer it may also have an influence on other vital roles in their adolescent development, such as: identity development, changes in family bonds, development of relationship with peers, sexual identity, educational development and planning the career (2003, p. 3). Dating my be also influence the vital parts of development in early adulthood. Furthermore, the period of adolescence is an important developmental stage on the way to achieve maturity to create an intimate and satisfying

relationship in adulthood. According to B. R. Karney, M. K. Beckett and R. L. Collins, R. Shaw (2007, p. 4, 72) research, the adolescence marks a time of maturation, which manifests in the relationships in adulthood.

As far as the sampling method is concerned, due to the specific context which must be taken into account when trying to understand the specific experience, the sample selection is purposive. In the IPA psychological similarities and differences are usually analysed within a homogeneous group, which is determined on the basis of relevant features (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009, p. 50–51). The homogeneity of the group will be ensured by determining the selection criteria: having at least 3-month experience in being in an emotional and heterosexual relationship during the last year, age, gender, having so far maximum 3 emotional relationships, being moderately religious, living with parents who are together.

Information about this study was sent to middle and secondary schools in Bydgoszcz, and during organised meetings with the students a proposal for participation in the research was presented and short questionnaires were distributed based on which it will be possible to determine whether a particular student has met the established criteria of purposive selection. Interested individuals gave their phone numbers or e-mails. Individual meetings were organized with chosen participants to carry out interview.

A comprehensive interview enables easy access to data—facilitates learning about the history, thoughts and feelings about a given phenomenon. IPA researchers are primarily interested in obtaining rich and detailed account in the first person about the experiences and phenomena which are the subject of research (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009, p. 57). The choice of in-depth interview conducted on "one to one" basis seems to be beneficial because of the flexibility to ask questions, to modify their order, scope and contents, but also leaves space for the emergence of unexpected but important threads in the conversation. Questions congruent with IPA theory focus on exploring of the sensory experiences, mental phenomena (thoughts, memories, associations, fantasies) and personal ways of interpreting phenomena (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2012, p. 364). It is recommended that adult respondents prepare six to ten open questions with a clarification (hints). The duration of the interview should be between 45 to 90 minutes (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009, p. 60). It has been planned that the participants will be asked 10 questions along with specific questions. Depending on the experience

of the respondents and their account skills, interview will take place within the time frame indicated above. The conversation will begin with the questions that will allow the participant to describe some event or experience (e.g. Specific question: How did you meet your partner? Please tell me about your relationship?). More analytical questions will be introduced when the person tested will have greater ease in sharing their thoughts and feelings (e.g. detailed question: Which event / experience would you rate as the turning point in this relationship? Why? What does it mean for you?). This reflects the rhythm and dynamics of interactions during the interview. The researcher should know and be able to respond to these changes that affect the transition in terms of: descriptive—affective, general—specific, superficial—disclosing. If there are any new and previously unplanned threads, participants will be asked to develop them. It is necessary to record interviews, of which the participants will be informed. After collecting the material, interviews will be transcribed (word-for-word statements of participants, with the metalinguistic layer and observed non-verbal signals).

Acknowledging the assumptions described in the proposed approach does not involve the use of a particular method of data analysis. The basis for work will be elaborated notes on the contents of the interview. The next stage involves the conversion of notes into a list of emergent themes and searching for relations between emergent themes, grouping them and creating a structure. An earlier prepared study of each person constitutes a basis for further work—searching for patterns within all cases, their similarities and differences. The final step of the work is discussion, explanation and illustration of the accounts of the participants by presenting an exemplary piece of their accounts. In the next section of this article, I describe in detail the steps of IPA analysis by showing short extracts of an interview and explaining subsequent steps of analytic process using the gathered data.

The analytic process in IPA illustrated with an example of case study

In this section I am going to explain each step of IPA analysis and illuminate it by presenting chosen extracts of an interview with a participant. The interview was carried out in June 2016, transcribed and translated into English. The quality of the prepared data was checked by Pro-

fessor Jonathan Smith who also monitored later progression in the analysis process. The interview lasted over 2 hours and transcription totalled 33 pages (nearly 20 thousand of words). In the research, a girl at the age of 18 took part who is a student in the last class in high school. She described her experiences in being in two emotional relationships—with previous and current boyfriend. Because of expanded transcription I show the subsequent steps of working and later I focus in detail on one of the superordinate themes but only partially.

I emphasise once more that acknowledging the assumptions described in the proposed approach does not involve the use of a particular method of data analysis. Some guidelines that can be flexibly used by researchers have been developed as an example of one possible strategy. The essence of the IPA is to draw attention to the way in which the participants give meaning to the phenomena which are the subject of analysis and then to present the interpretation of these phenomena from the researcher's perspective (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009, p. 79–81; Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2012, p. 365). "As a result, IPA can be characterized by a set of common processes (e.g. moving from particular to the shared, and from the descriptive to the interpretative) and principles (e.g. a commitment to an understanding of the participant's point of view, and a psychological focus on personal meaning-making in particular context) which are applied flexibly, according to the analytic task (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009, p. 79). Basically the analytic process in a case study implies 5 steps: reading and re-reading, initial notes, developing emerging themes, searching for connection across emerging themes. The following stages will be described with examples of what I had done being in London.

At the beginning it is recommended for the researcher to completely immerse in the data—listen to the interview and read it repeatedly. At this stage, there may be thoughts and emotions, which the researcher felt while conducting the interview. As he/she recalls the circumstances in which the meeting took place, the first ideas are generated and possible connections between threads are made. It is worth writing everything down and focusing attention on understanding what was said by the participants (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009, p. 82; Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2012, p. 366).

The basis for further work will be elaborated notes on the contents of the interview, its semantic contents, the language used, its context, and preliminary comments concerning interpretation—all that seems to

be of interest within the transcription. It is important that the contents should not be read superficially, which could lead to a situation in which the commented contents will be the one which is expected by the researcher to be important. In the process of production of notes it should be kept in mind to pay attention to key concepts around which the accounts of the participants were centred, what is their meaning and which context they have been used in, using which linguistic means. The process of analysis is multidirectional; the excerpts of the interviews should be understood both in the context of the whole and the currently analysed part (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009, p. 83–91; Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2012, p. 366). That is why I reverted to some point of interview and wrote something in addition or reformulated my comments. The more I was immersed in the data, the more I could notice. In this way I realized that participant repeated particular terms or I could monitor a changing way of telling a story of a relationship. At this stage it is useful to ask questions, put hypothesis or even inconsistent arguments. There are a few ways of explanatory commenting by focusing on the content of what the participant has said (descriptive comments), the way of using language (linguistic comments) or engaging in what the participant has said at a more interrogative and conceptual level (conceptual comments) (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009, p. 84).

Making notes is crucial for the researcher also to be aware of the way how he/she thinks to verify the way of drawing conclusions and avoid being under the influence of own presumptions about the subject. The first step of IPA analysis—making notes is presented in Table 1. I have chosen a short extract of an interview because there are a few connected emerging themes in this utterance and basing on it I will be able to show how I worked with the data.

The next stage involves the conversion of notes into a list of emergent themes, which are to be a brief and concise definitions of what was important in a variety of comments linked to the subsequent parts of the transcriptions. The researcher tries to formulate concise phrases at a slightly higher level of abstraction. Emergent themes reflect not only the original words and thoughts of the respondents, but also the interpretation of the researcher. In other words, in the course of analysis there is a synergistic process of description and interpretation, the effect of which is to be an understanding, also at the level of interconnectedness, of certain connections and patterns (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009; Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2012). It is a quite difficult step of analysis.

Table 1. Extract of interview with initial notes

Notes	Respondent
	K: Okay, okay. Let me just go back to what you said that when he told you, I mean, that he just told you that he loves you and how you reacted then?
She has some kind of picture how people should feel when somebody tells them that they love them. She felt terrible and awful because she did not reciprocate his feelings. It was not even nice because she was loved. She felt bad because she could hurt him or it was difficult for her to tell the truth.	R: (laughs) I felt so **terrible** then ... It was **awful**. It was.. **It should probably be nice (laughs), I mean, it definitely should be nice** when someone tells somebody that they love them, but ... I simply had a problem with that. It was like that when I heard it and **I knew for sure** that I can't say it back and I simply felt just, he said it..., I don't even remember what I did, I just remember this feeling. It
She said earlier that "you can never know" but then she was sure that she could not say this love bombs back.	was something like that ... He was kind of getting ready for so long and said that he can't say it, and I say, that maybe if he can't then
It is also interesting that she could recognise the moment when he struggled with saying the declaration. She tried to avoid that situation and discouraged her ex-boyfriend from saying it. It could have been better for her if he had not told these words.	maybe he shouldn't say it, because **I knew what he wanted to say,** because I felt it right away and he says that no, he has to say it and he said ... But no, it wasn't like there was an awkward silence, or something, he just said "I love you" and let's say that, I don't know, he hugged me or something. It was such a.. **It was like he didn't**
She wanted to avoid the situation when he told her that he loved her because she was worried that he would expect her to say the same. She felt a relief and understanding from him.	**expect me to say it,** because then I told him that "XXX, I don't"— I guess I shouldn't have said the name.
	K: Well, I already don't remember, really.
She said that it had been a little sad and laughed. Is it her defence mechanism about which she warned me or a sign of disrespect to ex-boyfriend, his lower position?	R: I guess I shouldn't. No, I told him that I don't know if I will ever be able to say it to him. He said "Well, I know" and **it's a little sad (laughs)**, but well, that's how it was.
	K: And how did you feel when he said that he knows that you won't say it to him?
She felt the pressure before their conversation about feelings. She had picture of how she should behave, what he would want her to	R: Well, surely I felt such understanding from him and I'm sure **I felt the pressure go away that I don't need to say it, that he doesn't**

do. She felt a relief when it occurred that he did not expect her to tell him that she loved him. Telling "love you" change the whole situation, it was the key point when it turned out what would happen with the relationship. Even he knew that she did not love him it was not say aloud, after that the sense of continuing that relation is questioned. She had a picture or expectation of how she should feel or how people in general feel in romantic relationships and it was a benchmark for comparison between her "how it should be" and "how it is". She said that it had not been like that she had spent time with him and she was happy. Relationship means nice spending time together vs Relationships means routine, fatigue, unwillingness. She again used term "terrible" when she told about nonreciprocal feelings towards him also concerns expressing feelings. She was unable to feel something more to this boy and she knew about it and it transferred to her attitude towards him, spending time together or kissing. She felt forced to spend time with her partner or kissing. She thought that not taking care of herself and her needs was a mistake. She is aware of her needs, her type of personality and earlier she mentioned her defence mechanism. It is interesting that at the beginning of the relationship she did not feel tiredness because of frequent meetings. She told about her unfulfilled needs which caused frustration. She sacrificed her time and as a results she could have done something for herself.	expect this from me, but on the other hand, I thought that it was, that since he knows this and I know about it, whether it all makes sense, that it shouldn't be like that. It was such a... Well, it was so unpleasant. K: And how did you know that, or maybe you didn't know, but did you notice any signs that it's all falling apart? Or that it's going to fall apart? Your relationship. R: It seems to me that mostly just how I felt, my feelings that it wasn't like that I spend time with him and I am happy all the time and all, it's only that I had such a thing already, ... the routine that it was like, "Oh no, I have to go there", "Oh no, something" —and so "Well, hello, hi", and so it was simply that I no longer felt as if, well, as if, I just simply didn't feel it. It wasn't even some kind of behaviour, only that it was just my attitude to all this. That just even, I don't know, that this is so terrible, but even when we, let's say, kissed, it was for me such a thing that I didn't even feel like doing it, because I was just tired of it all, I just had so ... So much of this and I felt like having a break, and it seems to me that we might just also a little, well, because there were some very serious mistakes, among other things, just that I didn't open up, but also that I, for example, I don't know, for example, that I am an introvert and I just devoted so much time for him that I no longer had time for myself and I just, I was probably upset that I can't do anything for myself, because I forever have to meet with him. I mean, at the beginning it was wonderful, because it is so, that you meet—a person meets a person every day, it's wonderful, great, but in the end you have to find time for yourself, and I didn't really have this time for myself. Even though, it's also that...

It is important to formulate emerging themes not categories—it was my first mistake and it took me some time to understand how to put emerging themes appropriately. I took advantage of Professor J. Smith's advice to formulate a theme which catches the meaning of experiences but it is still close to participant's experiences. When I read this emerging theme later, I should be able to remind myself the whole extract of utterance. Developing emerging themes is an analytic rather than a descriptive process. I give examples of how this process goes through using Professor's explanation about one short quotation from the transcription on which we worked during consultations. I provide below an utterance of transcription, my comments and the first and definitive attempt to name emerging themes.

> R: *(...) I can say that right now my relationship lasts. Well, all in all it's quite fresh, I think it's been two or three months now. My previous relationship officially lasted eight months but it generally lasted just about a year and it ended in July last year. Just recently the boy with whom I had been called me, and well, and wanted to meet, and we even met, well, on such friendly terms, because I remember when we broke up, he just said that it would be a pity if we lost contact, but that we probably would anyway.*
> K: *Why?*
> R: *Because we changed so much and after this meeting, I saw that it was something like that ... that we no longer got along, as we used to, even at this level of a normal relationship. It was normal, well, it wasn't even hard or something, but it was just that all in all I found that generally I have my own life, that we already hadn't spoken to each other for a year, well, at least half a year, and it's so that all in all, I no longer need such a person in my life. Maybe it's a bit cruel, but well, all in all, I also have a new boyfriend and I also know, maybe it wouldn't be nice for him, if I met him, because after all I had been with this guy for a year, so it's so ... I found that I don't need it. Previously I had been with a guy for two months, who was my first boyfriend, and well, I don't know what to tell you ...*

My first proposition to call emerging themes was "*social expectation*", "*importance of new boyfriend and devaluating of ex-boyfriend*" and "*cutting him off her life*". In my opinion the participant has some kind of a picture about how the relation with an ex-boyfriend should look like and her behaviour is against the rule, especially when only he insists on this contact. She makes a choice—more important is her new boyfriend's well-being than maintaining contact with her ex-boyfriend. She shows that the first one is important and she can forgo the relation in favour of

the new boyfriend. Later the respondent finished the sentence with a repetition of uselessness of the ex-boyfriend and she suddenly mentioned her first boyfriend. In this way she put the previous boyfriend to the past. During the meeting Professor drew my attention to the fact that the term "*social expectation*" is more a category than an emerging theme because it tells nothing about participant's point of view and her experience. All of my suggested terms can be linked by using one emerging theme "*being torn by loyalty*" because the previous relation lasted longer, she was committed to her ex-boyfriend and this attachment can threaten the new relationship. She tries to be honest and true to the new boyfriend so it is necessary to finish previous emotional bond and devaluate it. That is why I finally added an emerging theme "*ex-boyfriend's affiliation to the past and needlessness of ex-boyfriend/worthlessness of ex-boyfriend*". This version of term was accepted by Professor.

Table 2 is filled with emerging themes. The numbers next to emerging themes designate the number of page where it is located. It is a useful solution because in this way in the next stage of work it is easier to find particular emerging themes in the transcription.

The purpose of the next step is searching for relations between emergent themes, grouping them and creating a structure, by means of which it will be possible to indicate the most interesting and important aspects of meaning-making process by the participants. It is useful to prepare a list of superior (super-ordinate) and inferior themes or try to visualize spatially the relationship between the threads. It should be noted that some of them might be abandoned if they do not fit into the emerging structure or are too poorly embedded in the material. There are several possible ways of searching for the patterns and connections. They can be distinguished from even more superior categories or adopting the principle of organisation of these categories. It is also possible to confront emergent themes and focus on their differences, specific functions, the frequency of occurrence or specifying the relations between emergent themes, and their location in time (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009, p. 91–100; Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2012, p. 366–367). Professor J. Smith suggested making a list of emerging themes and later cutting it into small pieces of paper, which should be spread over table to look for connections between them. However, in this case I received over 200 emerging themes and the amount of them was quite overwhelming also in a practical aspect. The intermediate stage of searching for relations between emerging themes was one additional reduction of emerging

Table 2. Developing emerging themes

Notes	Respondent	Emerging themes
She has some kind of picture how people should feel when somebody tells them that they love them. She felt terrible and awful because she did not reciprocate his feelings. It was not even nice because she was loved. She felt bad because she could hurt him or it was difficult for her to tell the truth.	K: Okay, okay. Let me just go back to what you said that when he told you, I mean, that he just told you that he loves you and how you reacted then? R: (laughs) I felt so **terrible** then ... It was **awful**. It was. **It should probably be nice (laughs), I mean, it definitely should be nice** when someone tells somebody that they love them, but... I simply had a problem with that. It was like that when I heard it and **I knew for sure that** I can't say it back and I simply felt just, he said it..., I don't even remember what I did, I just remember this feeling. It was something like	Love declaration as a problem (11) Being loved and being unable to return feelings as a problem (11) Confidence of being unable to love ex-boyfriend (11) Love declaration as a problem (12)
She said earlier that "you can never know" but then she was sure that she could not say this love bombs back.	that... He was kind of getting ready for so long and said that he can't say it, and I say, that maybe if he can't then maybe he shouldn't say it, because **I knew what he wanted to say,** because I felt it right away and he says that no, he has to say it and he said... But no, it wasn't like there was an awkward silence, or something, he just said "I love you" and let's say that, I don't know, he hugged me or something. It was such a... **It was like he didn't expect me to say it,** because then	Relationship as an unpleasant routine (13) Generic, negative attitude and evaluation at the end of the relationship (13)
It is also interesting that she could recognise the moment when he struggled with saying the declaration. She tried to avoid that situation and discouraged her ex-boyfriend from saying it. It could have been better for her if he had not have told these words.		Feeling frustration and getting tired of the relationship (13)
She wanted to avoid the situation when he told her that he loved her because she was worried that he would expect her to say the same. She felt a relief and understanding from him.	I told him that "XXX, I don't"—I guess I shouldn't have said the name. K: Well, I already don't remember, really.	Making a sacrifice of independence and time as a mistake (13)
She said that it had been a little sad and laughed. Is it her defence mechanism about which she	R: I guess I shouldn't. No, I told him that I don't know if I will ever be able to say it to him. He said	Changeable hierarchy of needs during the relationship (13)

warned me or a sign of disrespect to ex-boyfriend, his lower position?

She felt the pressure before their conversation about feelings. She had picture of how she should behave, what he would want her to do. She felt a relief when it occurred that he did not expect her to tell him that she loved him.

Telling "love you" change the whole situation, it was the key point when it turned out what would happen with the relationship. Even he knew that she did not love him it was not say aloud, after that the sense of continuing that relation is questioned.

She had picture or expectation how she should feel or how people in general feel in romantic relationships and it was benchmark for comparison between her "how it should be" and "how it is". She said that it had not being like that she had spent time with him and she was happy.

Relationship means nice spending time together vs Relationships means routine, fatigue, unwillingness. She again used term "terrible" when she told about nonreciprocal feelings towards him also concerns expressing feelings. She was unable to feel something more to this boy and she knew about it and it transferred to her attitude towards him, spending time together or kissing. She felt forced to spend time with her partner or kissing.

"Well, I know" and **it's a little sad (laughs)**, but well, that's how it was.

K: And how did you feel when he said that he knows that you won't say it to him?

R: Well, surely I felt such understanding from him and I'm sure **I felt the pressure go away that I don't need to say it, that he doesn't expect this from me**, but on the other hand, I thought that it was, **that since he knows this and I know about it, whether it all makes sense, that it shouldn't be like that.** It was such a... Well, it was so unpleasant.

K: And how did you know that, or maybe you didn't know, but did you notice any signs that it's all falling apart? Or that it's going to fall apart? Your relationship.

R: It seems to me that mostly just **how I felt, my feelings** that it wasn't like that I spend time with him and I am happy all the time and all, it's only that I had such a thing already, ... **the routine** that it was like, "Oh no, **I have to go** there", "Oh no, something"—and so "Well, hello, hi", and so it was simply that I no longer felt as if, well, as if, I just simply didn't feel it. **It wasn't even some kind of behaviour, only that it was just my attitude to all this.** That just even, I don't know, that this is so **terrible**, but even when we, let's say, kissed, it was for me such a thing that **I didn't even feel like doing it**, because **I was just tired of it all**, I just had so... So much of this and I felt like

She thought that not taking care of herself and her needs was a mistake. She is aware of her needs, her type of personality and earlier she mentioned her defence mechanism. It is interesting that at the beginning of the relationship she did not feel tiredness because of frequent meetings. She told about her unfulfilled needs which caused frustration. She sacrificed her time and as a results she could have done something for herself.	having a break, and it seems to me that we might just also a little, well, because there were some very serious mistakes, among other things, just that I didn't open up, but also that I, for example, I don't know, for example, that I am an introvert and **I just devoted so much time for him that I no longer had time for myself** and I just, I was probably upset that I can't do anything for myself, because **I forever have to meet with him.** I mean, **at the beginning it was wonderful,** because it is so, that you meet—a person meets a person every day, it's wonderful, great, but in the end you have to find time for yourself, and I didn't really have this time for myself. Even though, it's also that…

themes. I tried to find similar emerging themes and clustered them in more general groups by linking them. It was necessary to change terms of emerging themes also in the transcription[3]. In Table 3 I show the first and the second version of them. It is a proof that researcher has to carry out continuous process of analysis.

Table 3. First step of reduction process

The first version of emerging themes	The second version of emerging themes
42. Atypical reaction to ex-boyfriend's love declaration (11) 45. Recognising ex-boyfriend's intention and trying to get out of love declaration (12) 46. Anticipating and worrying about ex-boyfriend's reaction to her response to love declaration (12) 47. Feeling a relief not having to respond to love declaration (12)	42. Love declaration as a problem (11, 12)
43. Being loved and being unable to return feelings as a problem (11) 48. Questioning the sense of relationship when the lack of love is disclosed (12)	31. Being loved and being unable to return feelings as a problem (10, 11)
44. Emphasising certainty of lack of feelings in the future (11)	26. Confidence in being unable to love the ex-boyfriend (7, 11)

Later I cut again all emerging themes and organized them into groups and labelled them. The first column in Table 4 presents super-emerging themes which gather all suited emerging themes. The label of group is a more abstract term, which catches the meaning of the emerging themes put in the second column. The term "super-emerging themes" is not used generally but because of a huge number of emerging themes I had to find a term which catches the essence of participant's experiences. This reduction was necessary because I am planning to conduct an across-cases analysis in my research project. In Table 4 I bolded all definitive emerging themes which appeared earlier in Tables 1–3. The rest of the emerging themes were located on different pages but I collected them together in Table 4 to present the whole of super-emerging themes content.

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[3] Please notice that in table 2 there are improved emerging themes.

Table 4. The second step of reduction process

Super-emerging themes	Emerging themes
Struggling with not being able to love ex-boyfriend	23. Implicitly articulated lack of love (7) 24. Feeling unhappy as an incentive to think over breaking up (7) 25. Unsymmetrical strength of feelings (7, 10) **26. Confidence in being unable to love ex-boyfriend (7, 11)** **31. Being loved and being unable to return feelings as a problem (9, 10, 11)** 38. Strenuous and recurring search of cause of unreciprocated feelings (10) **42. Love declaration as a problem (11, 12)**
Emotionally oppressive relationship with ex-boyfriend	70. Becoming aware of her animosity towards her ex-boyfriend (18) **50. Relationship as an unpleasant routine (13)** 52. Feeling frustration and getting tired of relationship (13) 71. Unwanted and demanding attention ex-boyfriend's presence during party (18) 72. Feeling guilt but excusing herself for not having influence on her frustration (19)

In the next step of working I used only super-emerging themes to find a connection between them and create the final table of super-ordinate themes. In the second column of Table 5 there are located talked-about super-emerging themes. These and the other super-emerging themes belong to one super-ordinate theme called "*Experiencing and coping with her emotions*".

Table 5. Developing super-ordinate themes

Super-ordinate emerging themes	Super-emerging themes
Experiencing and coping with her emotions	1. Experiencing unaccepted feeling of jealousy 2. Trying to cope with problematic and exaggerative emotions **3. Struggling with not being able to love ex-boyfriend** **4. Emotionally oppressive relationship with ex-boyfriend** 5. Being satisfied with current relationship

The final table of analysis includes super-ordinate themes, emerging themes and the most significant quotations to reflect each of them. It is useful to remember to put the number of page where an extract of utterance is located. Some researchers use key words instead of quotations. In the presented case I pointed to 6 super-ordinate themes:

- The role of self-esteem in the relationship,
- **Experiencing and coping with her emotions**,
- Publicly constituted relationship with limited access to it,
- Progressive development to become a mature person in a mature relationship,
- Being attached to each other and the need to cease previous relationship,
- The way of constructing narration.

There is a possibility to complete the analysis of the studies basing on only one case, but frequently it is assumed that more than one person will take part in the project. In that case it is necessary to go through the steps of analysis for each respondent, trying to avoid the situation in which the conclusions which have been formulated earlier, would limit the open character of the analysis in terms of emergence of new topics in subsequent transcription of the interview. An earlier prepared study of each person constitutes a basis for further work—searching for patterns within all cases, their similarities and differences (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009, p. 100–103). In the planned research project I have 4 three-cornered groups of participants featured in virtue of age and sex and I am going to make a comparison between these groups.

This makes it possible to transfer the analysis to a higher theoretical level, when the superior categories that are specific for individual cases can illustrate a more general concept. In this way, in the framework of the IPA approach, it is possible to show the way of understanding characteristic for the participants of the study, but also the quality of higher order (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009, p. 100–103).

In view of the fact that in the project it is planned to interview a larger number of persons, the analyses of the individual cases cannot be so specific. Having data for analysis, themes that are considered to be emerging for the whole group will be specified. There is a requirement for the researcher to identify what it means for him that a particular category is recurring, to what extent it illustrates the perspective of the selected individuals and to which it illustrates the perspective of the whole group—for the moment, however, it cannot be predicted. Work on the analysis of many cases requires the negotiation of the relations between similarity and difference, and between identity and specificity (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009, p. 106–107).

The final step of the work is discussion, explanation and illustration of the accounts of the participants by presenting an exemplary piece of

their accounts, which relates to the discussed subject. The final report will consist of both the account elements and comments of the research-er, which will contain several levels of interpretation—starting from low and ending with highly detailed, interpretive and theoretical level (Piet-kiewicz & Smith, 2012, p. 368). Given that the participation of 12 re-spondents has been planned, analyses of individual cases will not be as detailed as it would be in case of a lower number of participants, thus the focus of the report will be on the group.

Conclusion

What constitutes the paramount value of good IPA study is intangible in a sense that it is not a collection of simple guidelines which can be followed and applied in own research project. As R. L. Shaw (2011, p. 30) said the indicator of high-quality IPA research is focused, in-depth and well-documented interpretation. That is why the process of interpretation is not only a simple passing through subsequent stages, but constantly moving within different stances—being sensitive to context vs. being sus-picious; being close to raw material vs. being more creative in analytic process; being focused on person vs. being focused on totality; depending on intuition vs. verifying presumptions and checking validity of interpreta-tion. It is not a mystical moment when emergent themes appear and tracks of interpretation are known. It is hard, time-consuming, rigorous work with data, when suddenly we can be inspired by one extract, one deviant case or pattern which is sought-after but we were led by our pre-sumptions and now we need to deconstruct them to make a move.

The aim of this articles to present a pedagogical research project with a description of the analytic process. However, I should stress that I omit description of the process of interpretation in IPA study because in my case this step lies in store. It is worth getting to know J. Smith's book (cf. Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009) and an article where he has explained or used levels of interpretation (cf. Smith, 2004), using meta-phors (cf. Shinebourne & Smith, 2010) or conception of gem—the most demanding level of interpretation (cf. Smith, 2011; Rhodes & Smith, 2010; Smith & Osborn, 2007). IPA gives a lot of possibilities to go through the analysis and interpretation and the choice only depends on the research task and the researcher's experience in using qualitative approach.

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Shannon Lynn Sparks
California State University, San Bernardino (USA)

Postsecondary education and gender outcomes for individuals with disabilities

ABSTRACT. Transition planning is important for all students with disabilities and their families. The teacher's role is to help individuals with disabilities understand the expectations and roles of various jobs in turn helping them to set realistic goals to meet their interests so they are gainfully employed (Wehman, 2006). Unemployment rates are even higher for females with disabilities (Lindsay, 2011). It is important for educators as a whole to investigate why gender is affecting employment and success in the workplace for individuals with disabilities.

KEYWORDS: postsecondary education, gender, workplace, disability

Importance of implementation of transition and postsecondary education for males and females in special education

During the 1980s and 1990s, there was focus on the postsecondary adjustment for students with disabilities (Wehman, 2006). This movement stemmed from the negative patterns of postsecondary employment for young adults with disabilities in previous decades (Wehman, 2006). Thus, federal laws were implemented to ensure that individuals with disabilities were given a fair opportunity in the workplace (ADA, 1990). The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) made amendments to PL 105–17 in 1997; in addition, adding transition planning into Individualized Education Program's (IEP) in PL 108-446 (IDEA, 2004). Legislature and incentive programs have tried to reduce these barriers for individuals with disabilities so they can become gainfully employed in the labor market (i.e., Ticket to Work). Despite these major changes in the law and incentives for individuals with disabilities the

labor market continues to show limited access to the work setting (Boeltzig, Timmons & Butterworth, 2009).

Wehman (2006) defined transition services "as a set of coordinated activities that are intended to promote a successful shift from school to adulthood" (p. 439). Wehman noted that it is important for individuals with disabilities to be included in the transition planning process. Students have goals, and in many cases opinions as for what they want to do vocationally, socially, academically, and residentially. Often students with disabilities have unrealistic wants or desires on the types of jobs they can perform (Wehman, 2006). The teacher's role is to help students with disabilities understand the expectations and roles of various jobs in turn helping them set realistic goals to meet their areas of strengths and interest (Targett et al., 2013; Wehman, 2006). Carter et al. (2016) emphasize the importance of transition services and postsecondary education outcomes for individuals with disabilities. There needs to be a streamline from school to work transition, opportunities for work based experiences, and community collaboration (i.e., work programs, internships). Additionally, individuals with disabilities need to be provided with employment opportunities that focus on vocational skills, network, and community supports. Postsecondary education programs provide students with disabilities the opportunity to work in a job setting once they have graduated from their local high school with a diploma. Postsecondary education programs differ in each state and the opportunities vary depending on the choices that are available to them (Wehman, 2006). Students with disabilities have decreased opportunities in receiving transition services after high school often leading to poor post-school outcomes (Bouck & Joshi, 2014; Burgess & Cimera, 2014).

Due to the emphasis on transition services, changes have occurred in the past few decades promoting individuals with disabilities inclusion in the workplace. Students with disabilities now have increased opportunities be competitively employed or work in supported work environments. When individuals with disabilities work in competitive settings they work without any supports in the natural work environment. Supported employment means individuals with disabilities are provided with supports within the natural work environment. They may need a job coach to guide them in the work setting or model how to complete the job task successfully. Often individuals with disabilities face numerous barriers to employment such as limited hours, wages, and opportu-

nities for advancement in the workplace (Newman et al., 2011; Rose et al., 2005). Wehman, Revell and Brooke (2003) indicate that individuals with disabilities who live within the United States continue to be at a disadvantage. This article investigates the postsecondary education models, the power of transition and success in the workplace, and employment and gender.

Postsecondary education models

Nationwide, school systems partner with two and four-year public and private colleges to offer programs to individuals with disabilities (i.e., autism, intellectual disabilities) 18 years of age and over who receive services from a local school districts and IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act). Postsecondary education (PSE) is an option for high school age students with disabilities who want to be in cluded in technical, vocational colleges, or in a variety of adult educational programs (Hart et al., 2006). Postsecondary education programs provide opportunities to practice real life functional skills. There are three types of PSE models (Hart et al., 2006). The first model is a mixed/hybrid model where students participate in social activities and academic courses with students with and without disabilities. Students with disabilities, who participate in this model, participate in a curriculum that focuses on life skills or transition. In addition to on-campus activities, employment experiences are provided on and off campus. The second model is a substantially separate model, where students with disabilities have the opportunity to participate in social activities on campus and may be offered employment experiences. Employment experiences are pre-established with agencies on or off campus (Hart et al., 2006; Stansbury-Brusnahan, Ellison & Hafner, 2017). The third model is an inclusive individual support model. The goal is to assist the student with employment experiences through internships and work-based learning programs within the community (Hart et al., 2006). The student's vision and goals for the future are what drives the services for the student.

Zafft, Hart and Zimbrich (2004) conducted a study with 40 individuals with intellectual disabilities, ranging from 18–22 years of age. Twenty students attended a PSE program and 20 did not attend. All participants received a 21-question survey that addressed identifying

information, their participation in a PSE program and work. The survey included open-ended questions that asked participants their coursework, specific job titles, and the accommodations they were provided. Results yielded that there was a positive correlation between PSE and competitive and independent employment. Students who received a PSE were more likely to obtain competitive employment (57%, 43%), require fewer supports (67%, 29%), and gain higher wages. They had the opportunity to work in competitively employable settings where their employment occurred within the community requiring far less supports (i.e., job coach) (Hart et al., 2006). Students who did not receive PSE received less pay and worked in sheltered employment. Overall, students who participated in PSE experienced high levels of self-esteem and had a social network with individuals without disabilities. Additionally, Hart et al. (2006) conducted a survey that reviewed 13 PSE programs in one state. Results revealed that 87% of the 163 students did receive employment training at the PSE site. The remaining 36% who participated in the survey were enrolled in a college course, and more than half of the remaining participants were actively involved in college campus activities. Out of the 163 students 84% of the participants were able to obtain a job over the summer, and 65% exited with a paying job.

Vanhaneghan (2012) conducted a qualitative analysis of five individuals with developmental disabilities who participated in four different PSE programs in 2008. Vanhaneghan (2012) examined the effectiveness of their PSE programs in the areas of: (1) Community living, (2) Employment, (3) Socialization, and (4) Transportation. One of the five participants lived with a friend and not with family members. All five participants were employed who had participated in different PSE programs (100%). Varying PSE programs taught them how to interview for a position, practice resume skills, search for a job, provided internship opportunities, and how to be professional. Participants stated they had gained meaningful friendships from their PSE program. The majority of the participants expressed they socialized with their friends or significant others more than family members. All participants utilized transportation services independently (i.e., drove a car, received rides from others). All participants felt their PSE program set them up for success where they were able to maintain friendships, gain meaningful employment, and have access to the community.

The power of transition and success in the workplace

Frank and Sitlington (2000) conducted a study of two different graduating classes from 1985 and 1993. All participants were students with intellectual disabilities. They graduated before IDEA and transition services were being put into law and incorporated in IEP's (Frank & Sitlington, 2000). The graduating class of 1993 received transition services under IDEA and had an individualized transition plan. Data showed that the class of 1993 had advancement in the areas of employment compared to the 1985 graduating class. Independent living skills differed between the two classes; as well with 28% of the graduating class of 1993 living independently compared to only 21% of the class of 1985 graduating class.

Brown, Shiraga, and Kessler (2006) conducted a long-term study with 50 participants with significant disabilities (i.e., cerebral palsy, autism, hearing impairments); aged 15 to 24. Participants included 28 males and 22 females. Forty participants were served by community work service, a school vocational program. Seven participants were supported by outside agencies upon leaving high school. Brown et al. (2006) found that participants performed jobs that were either full or part time. Participants worked in over 150 different work settings and maintained jobs.

Botuck, Levy and Rimmerman (1998) examined job placement outcomes and tracked wage, hours, and benefits of 109 individuals with disabilities (i.e., intellectual disabilities, learning disabilities) working in a competitive work setting for a 24-month period. The individuals all lived in an urban area of New York and worked through an employee-training site that served individuals with developmental and psychiatric disorders. Results showed that individuals with disabilities had a difficult time retaining their job and over 72% changed their jobs within the 24-month period. Gender differences play a role in this study noting that women worked fewer hours than men. Researchers hypothesized the gender difference was due to women's involvement in parental duties that further reduced their work load, however, no more data or factors were investigated. Additionally, there were not any significant factors associated with job retention (Botuck et al., 1998). The possibility for this could be a combination of problems with the individual, employer, or the job market (Botuck et al., 1998). For the individuals who remained employed they gained more confidence and left their current position for a higher paying position where they were challenged.

Employment and gender

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (2015) the unemployment rate is the same for men and women (i.e., 10.6%, 10.8%) however when it comes to the civilian labor force more men are employed than women (i.e., 20.4%, 14.9%). According to the American Community Survey (2008–2010) more males than females were employed in the workforce (54.8% vs. 45.2%). Overall people with disabilities do experience and have barriers to employment; additionally, they also have high rates of unemployment due to gender inequality. Gender seems to play a role for an individual with a disability if one is either a male or female.

England (2003) stated that women with disabilities continue to be at a disadvantage in the workplace compared to their male counterparts. Females also make significantly less than males in the workplace, which can affect their overall quality of life (England, 2003). Lindsay (2011) found that there were barriers to employment in teens and young adults with disabilities. Females with disabilities reported family responsibilities as being a major barrier to employment when compared with males who were seeking employment. Women with developmental disabilities tend to make less if employed. They receive less hours and wages and do not experience a sense of stability in the work place (Boeltzig et al., 2009).

Coutinho, Oswald, and Best (2006) investigated the outcomes for males and female students who were in special education. They analyzed data from 1994 after IDEA and transition services were to be strengthened. They compared students with and without disabilities and used 24 different variables to look at male and female students. Coutinho et al. (2006) found that of the 12 variables (i.e., success in the workplace, finding steady work, level of education), males were favored more than women when it came to wages, how much they earned, increased hours, and receiving medical benefits. Brown et al. (2006) emphasized all persons with disabilities should be respected in an integrated environment. It is important that all individuals with disabilities regardless of gender, race, and ethnicity are provided with appropriate transition services (i.e., postsecondary education programs, interagency collaboration) in order to support the transition into adulthood.

Frank and Sitlington (2000) pointed out there needs to be a continuous effort to implement transition planning and postsecondary education programs early on in the students' life. In order to address gender related issues for females, it is vital that young women be given additional transi-

tion services as they transition into adulthood. Transition services need to be ongoing. Additionally, women need to be provided with more opportunities to engage in work and job experience, vocational and occupational opportunities. Coutinho et al. (2006) suggests that young women's curriculum should focus on gender related issues in the areas of self-determination and the focus needs to be ongoing and consistent.

Summary

Transition plays a critical role in the future outcomes of individuals with disabilities and their families. It is the job of educators to provide parents and families with supports and services to ensure that young adult with disabilities are provided with postsecondary education and alternative options for the future (Carter et al., 2016). Families need to be educated about the transition process, related services and community supports, informed about job opportunities, and the benefits of working. Individuals with disabilities who are working in the job force need to be supported (Botuck et al., 1998). Quality of life for individuals with disabilities has evolved over the past few decades providing options to become active respected members of society. Studies conducted by researchers' show that postsecondary vocational programs help young adults build friendships, maintain stable employment and provide them with a sense of belonging (Botuck et al., 1998; Brown et al., 2006). However, research still suggests that there are a number of variables that affect women and their outcomes (e.g., lack of employment, low pay). It is important that we come together as a whole and address the gender disparities in postsecondary programs. This means that transition services and practices should be put into place early on so that every student with a disability regardless if male or female will be provided with appropriate transition and related services to prepare them for employment. Additionally, research will in turn start to reflect these positive outcomes for young females in the workplace (Wehmeyer & Schwartz, 2001).

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BOOK
AND JOURNAL
REVIEWS

Urszula Kluczyńska, Wiktor Dynarski, Anna M. Kłonkowska. *Poza schematem. Społeczny konstrukt płci i seksualności*. Gdańsk 2016: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Gdańskiego. Pp. 145.

The field of gender and sexuality studies suffers from an Anglo-American bias. Too many publications in the field are either written in English, or concerned with issues, phenomena, and communities in English-speaking areas, mainly the United States of America and the United Kingdom (most commonly they are both at the same time). A field that exists in order to devote attention to marginalized, underprivileged groups, to give them the space and voice they deserve, should be taking greater care to study communities in other areas of the world and include languages other than English in its discussion. With this goal in mind, I have decided to offer a review of a book written in Polish and about Poland. Since many of my readers will not be able to read the publication under review themselves, this text also serves as an extensive summary of the book's main points and claims.

The collection *Poza schematem. Społeczny konstrukt płci i seksualności* ('Out of the box. Social construction of gender and sexuality') consists of eight separate chapters, each written by one or two of the three authors, and a short introduction co-authored by all of them. In the introduction, the authors clearly define the goal of their scholarly work in general and the book in particular: it is an attempt to abolish, or at least question, the double standard in socialization into feminine and masculine roles and the "terror of binarism" in defining femininity and masculinity (p. 7). In the collection at hand, they do this above all by focusing on transgender identities and issues (all the texts by Wiktor Dynarski and Anna M. Kłonowska), as well as by critically deconstructing the practices and processes of male/masculine socialization in Poland (Urszula Kluczyńska's chapters on heteronormative socialization and medicalization of male sexuality). Devoting so much space to transgender issues is definitely one of the volume's strengths, as the topic has not attracted much scholarly attention in Poland so far (p. 110). On the other hand, the fact that the chapters dealing with these issues tend to focus on transmen more than on transwomen can be seen as a disadvantage. The book's reviewer Tomasz Basiuk, however, whose text is partly printed on the back cover, chooses to see it as a positive "thematic narrowing", which allows the volume to go deeper into the topic of cis- and transmasculinities.

The first chapter "Gender i inne kłopotliwe terminy. Czyli jak mówić o różnorodności i (nie)normatywności płciowej i seksualnej?" offers a glossary of over 70 terms that illustrate the diversity of identities (e.g. *agenderowość* 'agender [identity]', *biseksualność* 'bisexuality', *interseksualność* 'intersexuality', *queer* 'queer', *transpłciowość* 'transgender'), concepts (e.g. *cisnormatywność* 'cisnormativity', *męskość* 'masculinity', *orientacja seksualna* 'sexual orientation, *płeć hormonalna* 'hormonal sex'), attitudes (e.g. *bifobia* 'biphobia', *homofobia* 'homophobia') and terms associated with the process of transition (e.g. *falloplastyka* 'phalloplasty', *histerektomia* 'hysterectomy', *test realnego życia* 'real life test'). What I find particularly useful is the list of all the various ways to define sex/gender, which does a great job demonstrating the complexity of gender and questioning the practice of assigning gender at birth on the basis of external genitalia. Similarly valuable are all the terms for medical, legal and social procedures constituting gender transition, which could be of real help not only to the persons undergoing it, but also their family, friends, allies, doctors or activists. On the other hand, I am somewhat puzzled by the omission of the most common terms used to designate homosexual identities in Poland (*gej* 'gay' and *lesbijka* 'lesbian') and of the concept of coming out (i.e. Polish equivalents of 'coming out', 'the closet', etc.). I also think that some entries are not dealt with sufficiently, in particular *gender* and *ideologia gender* 'ideology of gender' (especially with an entry on 'gender theory' missing) as well as *queer*, which is reduced to a "collective term for non-hetero- and non-cis-normative identities and practices" (p. 18; *queer* can stand not only for a robust theory in social sciences, but also for an identity in itself, and one that not all LGBT people would want to be included in).

Wiktor Dynarski's text "Trzy opcje to za mało. Różnorodność transpłciowych tożsamości w badaniach społecznych" demonstrates why including transgender identities in social surveys constitutes one of the most interesting and demanding methodological questions in social research. It draws attention to the significant fact that the category of LGBTI, if considered a category of social identity, makes it possible to only declare a homosexual/bisexual OR transgender/intergender status, erasing transgender/intergender people who are also homosexual or bisexual (p. 29). The chapter's definite strength is the presentation of actual social research questionnaires/questions that provide more possibilities of describing one's gender status and sexual identity (Dynarski & Jąderek, 2015), EU LGBT Survey (2012), Motmans (2009); the latter two are in English). This way, the reader is offered some workable suggestions for inclusive questionnaire design.

The chapter actually starts with a discussion of the so-called "third option", which could be an alternative to being identified as female or male in official documents. An example could be the letter X that functions as the third option in Australia or New Zealand (p. 22–23). Dynarski draws our attention to the disad-

vantages of such a solution, which could be abused as a way to mark transgender people in order to marginalize/isolate them even further, or as a forced neutral identification completely unsuitable for persons who identify with the other gender than the one they were assigned at birth within the binary gender framework (p. 25–26). While definitely important and valuable, this first section does not form a cohesive whole with the title of the chapter and the second section, both concerned with declaration of identity in social surveys, which is distinct from the issue of official, legal gender status.

One of the longest texts in the volume is Urszula Kluczyńska's "Seksualność to "męska sprawa". Instytucje i praktyki socjalizujące w heteronormę", concerned with institutions and practices enforcing heteronormative socialization of men (i.e., all the people who are perceived as men and socialized into masculine roles, p. 39). The chapter begins with a historical account of the development of 'sexuality', in particular 'heterosexuality', as a discursive social construct, based on readings of Foucault, Chodorow (1992), Katz (1995), Seidman, Kimmel (e.g. 2008) or Richardson (2010), and briefly discussing Freud and Lacan, among others. A somewhat shorter section, relying mostly on Connell (e.g. 1995) and Anderson (2009), introduces the main tenets of hegemonic masculinity and inclusive masculinity theories.

The main body of Kluczyńska's text discusses heteronormative socialization through medicalization of (hetero)sexuality, school, sport, and language. First of all, the pathologization of erectile dysfunction and impotence by medical and biological discourses constructs sex as vaginal and heterosexual, erases the existence of men without penises and denies sexuality (and thus masculinity) to aging and old men (p. 47). The school, in turn, constructs masculinity as based on compulsory heterosexuality, misogyny and homophobia (p. 48). Sport, next to being an instrument of social control and the enforcement of respect towards authority, has also become a tool of socialization into dominant masculinity and the traditional male role (p. 52–53). It is also one of the most homophobic institutions in our society (p. 54). Last but not least, language use presupposes (takes for granted) and signals heterosexuality through mentioning former and current partners, weddings, marriage, children, discussing other people's attractiveness, appearance or style, also in conversations that do not explicitly address the issue of sexual identity (p. 56). The author does not say this herself, but for me this finding clearly constitutes an argument against the popular homophobic claim that it is gays and lesbians who demonstrate, propagate, "parade around with" their sexuality.

Kluczyńska's text relies in full on previous research and is thus not an original study; still, it constitutes a robust state-of-the-art overview. While rather predictable for advanced students of Anglo-American gender theory, it can be an informative summary and source of further reference for Polish readers relatively unfamiliar with it.

Dynarski's second text "Od niedostatku do «przemokrości»—*mangina*, *trans-man pride* i płyny ustrojowe", reprinted from a literary journal, is less an academic article and more a manifest of pride. Pride towards a transformed body, body of a person who identifies as a man—is a man—and yet possesses a vagina ("mangina"). This mangina, profusely moist, always ready for sex and additionally equipped with a mini-penis, is offered as an attribute of a new—though "traditionally" libidinous—masculinity (p. 66). The abundant, "overflowing" fluid produced by the mangina seems to combine the sticky consistency of vaginal fluid with the smell and taste of semen (p. 67). Also the sexual role that this body can assume is fluid, undefined, irrelevant (p. 67–68). The trans-male body with a mangina thus becomes the symbol and herald of breaking the hegemony of female-male dichotomy. And that is undeniably something to be proud of.

In their next text, "Kiedy binaryzm zawodzi—matczyne tranzycje, rodzący mężczyźni a homonormatywność polityki równościowej", Dynarski continues to discuss phenomena that upset the binary gender order—here, men that become pregnant and give birth—but from a different, socio-political perspective. According to the (Polish) legal system, the status of a mother is contingent on the recognition of female gender. Polish law has nothing to offer to pregnant (trans)men, and in practice can even try to force them to reverse their transition (p. 73) or give up their parental rights. The author emphasizes that sterilization of transgender persons, required in many countries (but not in Poland) by law, is not only a step towards acquiring a body unambiguous in form and function, but also a way of preventing transmen from becoming pregnant (p. 75). Dynarski does not really offer solutions to the problem of male pregnancies in law, but does signal what I interpret as strategies to operationalize it for political/activist purposes. It could be applied to challenge stereotypes about motherhood and fatherhood (p. 72); resist the "transsexual monolith" (p. 75) in medicine and sociology, which expect transitioning persons to feel disgust towards their bodies and thus give up their reproductive functions with relief; help transmen accept the bodies they were born into due to the possibility of experiencing pregnancy and birth that they offer them ("usefulness" of the body, p. 76) and finally, challenge cisgender hetero- and homo-normative realities (p. 77).

Urszula Kluczyńska's second text "Medykalizacja męskiej seksualności" is the longest in the collection and has been reprinted from the journal InterAlia (vol. 10, 2015). In it, medicine is understood above all as medical discourse that constitutes and defines its objects, such as 'masculinity', 'sexuality', 'homosexuality' (p. 81). The author justly questions the possibility of assuming the medical perspective with the aim of challenging it, as using medical terms and categories reproduces the discourse (p. 80). We have thus been warned to read the proceeding text through a critical lens.

Medicine has become a leading institution of social control. It has the power to define a "problem", to produce it using medical terms and to prescribe solu-

tions to it. Examples include transsexuality, homosexuality, impotence, obesity, infertility, alcoholism (p. 82–83). Medicalization is not absolute but gradual: some phenomena, such as birth or death, are more medicalized than e.g. menopause or sex addiction (p. 83). Others have become demedicalized, e.g. masturbation (p. 84). Medicalization is inextricably linked with capitalism: new professions, technologies and businesses emerge to benefit from defining a phenomenon as a medical problem (p. 82), or rather (in my opinion) from people's anxieties and insecurities that the medical discourse is capable of triggering.

In the domain of sexuality, medical discourse is concerned with the establishment of the norm—there exists one type of normal erection, ejaculation, orgasm (understood as a determinant of sexual potency and health), frequency and object of desire (p. 86). The psychosocial dimensions of sexuality are ignored (p. 85), and everything that does not fit the norm is a pathology—an individualised "problem" which can be "fixed" with standardized solutions. Being "normal" in terms of sexuality is a value not only in physical and psychological, but also moral terms (p. 89).

This part of the text clearly connects to and expands Kluczyńska's first chapter in the collection. The current chapter's most valuable component regards the medicalization of transsexuality. The very possibility of transition depends on defining transsexuality as a medical problem, to which medicine can offer solutions. But the price for this medical support is high.

First of all, medicalization of transsexuality reinforces and legitimizes the binary gender (or rather sex?) order (p. 94, 95). Second, due to procedural standardization, transsexual persons need to "prove" that their experience fits the standard in order to be treated; this leads to the silencing of less "standard", individual experiences (trans-normativity; p. 95). Third, it grants sexologists, psychiatrists and psychologists both decisive power and the gatekeeping role (p. 96). Central to Kluczyńska's analysis is the following paradox: in spite of the significance of genital pleasure in our phallocentric culture, trans-masculinity is defined through the mere possession of a penis, whatever its functionality. Sexual satisfaction is often (due to low-quality genital surgery) sacrificed for the sake of this symbol (sic!) of masculinity, a symbol that I would call desexualized, to make the paradox even more pronounced.

The next chapter by Anna M. Kłonkowska, "(Trans)mężczyźni, (trans)kobiety i seksualność. O społecznym konstruowaniu seksualności w odniesieniu do osób transpłciowych", is actually the only chapter in the collection based on the author's own empirical study. Kłonkowska conducted research on transgender people's self-declared sexual preferences and attitudes towards the hetero-/homo-sexual dichotomy, on the basis of 296 posts from the Internet forum transseksualizm.pl published between January 2007 to March 2013 (p. 118). The issues of interest to the researcher were: the problem of socialization into

gender and sexual roles; the distinction between sexual and asexual fascination towards a given gender; social pressure to define one's sexual identity or the influence of transition on one's attitude towards (broadly defined) sexuality, among others (p. 118–119).

Kłonkowska reached some very interesting conclusions, which, however, cannot be considered representative of the transgender community in Poland due to the low number of participants and other methodological shortcomings. First of all, the speakers seem to subscribe to the belief that sexual identity is socially constructed and that the hetero-/homo-sexual distinction is arbitrary. They emphasize their fascination for the gender they identify with, which can be sometimes interpreted as sexual. Another finding is that treating one's own sexual orientation as a factor determining one's gender identity (e.g. "I am a man because I am attracted to women") seems to be more common among trans-men than among trans-women. This may be associated with lower social acceptance of men transgressing the masculine (heterosexual) role than is the case with women (p. 123).

Kłonkowska concludes that the higher "flexibility" (p. 127) or diversity of sexual orientations among the transgender community, as compared to the general population, is not an essential trait or characteristic of this group, but rather an effect of their specific experiences: they more frequently wonder about and challenge the socially defined and determined patterns of gender and sexual roles.

The collection concludes with Wiktor Dynarski's "W stronę transpłciowej reprezentacji. Społeczeństwo obywatelskie a interesy osób płciowo nienormatywnych" on the issue of representation of gender non-normative community's interests in the open society. The paper begins with a theoretical discussion of some central concepts: *społeczeństwo obywatelskie* ('civil society'), *kolektywne interesy* ('collective interests'), *(neo)liberalizm* ('(neo)liberalism'), *sprawiedliwość* ('justice'), *grupy wrażliwe* ('vulnerable groups'). Dynarski classifies the gender non-normative community (i.e. all those who live, permanently or temporarily, outside the traditional binary gender system, where gender is understood in terms of expression, identity, or as a biological, genital, hormonal etc. trait) as a vulnerable group. It is worth noting that the term *nienormatywność płciowa* 'gender non-normativity' that Dynarski uses here was not included in the glossary at the beginning of the book.

The rights of gender non-normative persons—or rather, then, trans- and inter-gender persons—became an issue of public discussion in Poland around the year 2010 (p. 139). In 2011, the transwoman Anna Grodzka was elected to the lower chamber of the Polish Parliament; perceived by the "LGBTQI community" (p. 141) as a step in the right direction, still it was only the first step in a long and complicated process. The term LGBTQI itself, i.e. the alliance of gender non-normative persons with the LGB community, seems in practice to be the source

of discrimination and exclusion for the former (p. 143), which is also confirmed by transgender persons I do my own research with. Dynarski's first practical recommendation for representation is thus to be extremely careful when establishing "alliances" and constructing "communities" (p. 143). Another is to seek support from well-known and established majority individuals, groups, organisations, institutions (so-called "allies", p. 144). The current understandding of the concept of human rights must also be continually updated and reflected upon.

In conclusion, the collection is a welcome contribution to the field of gender and sexuality studies in Poland whose most significant strengths are the focus on transsexual/transgender issues and the connection it draws between scholarship and activism. Next to the minor critical remarks I mentioned when discussing separate chapters, I have one more general comment. The authors clearly side with the social constructionist approach and take a stance against essentialism. Still, their focus on the distinction between cis- and trans-masculinities, to the exclusion of agender, bigender, queer, and other identities, creates a division between gender normative cis-community and the non-normative trans-community, which in a way reinforces essentialism. This impression is definitely not the authors' intention, as in several places they mention other ways of being non-normative and the impossibility to take up those due to lack of space. Also, Kłonkowska makes a significant claim in this regard when she writes that many cis-people challenge traditional gender roles as well (p. 129). I think it is important not to make the mistake of equating *cis* with uncritical, mindless following of gender norms and *trans* with nonconformist rebelling against them. This would make the term (cis-)normativity a term of essentialist discourse. Maybe, then, the next step in gender and sexuality research should be to focus on non-normative behaviours and attitudes towards the rigid hegemony of the gender order beyond the cis/trans divide.

Joanna Chojnicka
University of Bremen (Germany)

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Randy Schekman. "e*Life*—absolutely new, free and equal journal". elife.elifesciences.org.

Geared towards financial profits and utterly ossified, the character of many scientific journals has become a commonly criticized and emphasized plague of academic environments. Instead of making the idea of intellectual freedom reality, the journals fit the trend of either the neoliberal pursuit of money or the old-fashioned concept of closed enclaves of research institutions (e.g. Sorokowski et al., 2017). Many of them thus only publish lucrative papers or exclusively those written by professors from nearby universities that they are friends of (e.g. Beall, 2012). Furthermore, not only has the publishing process in many journals that have a long publishing tradition been extended beyond decent bounds, but it has actually crossed any reasonable thresholds. What kind of a scientific discovery would not suffer due to 2–3 years of waiting to be published?

This academically unfavourable situation is addressed by more and more enterprises aimed at modernizing academic journals and liberating them from the limitations of the paradoxical neoliberal and conservative rationality. An example of such an initiative is the creation of eLife, a journal that I find absolutely new, free and equal.

The journal has been founded in 2011 by Randy Schekman, Nobel Prize winner. It publishes papers that explore the following academic disciplines:
  – Biochemistry
  – Biophysics and Structural Biology
  – Cancer Biology
  – Cell Biology
  – Computational and Systems Biology
  – Developmental Biology and Stem Cells
  – Ecology

– Epidemiology and Global Health

– Genes and Chromosomes

– Genomics and Evolutionary Biology

– Human Biology and Medicine

– Immunology

– Microbiology and Infectious Disease

– Neuroscience

– Plant Biology

eLife publishes all articles in open access (using the Creative Commons Attribution license) and owns only their electronic version. The journal's website includes a full set of papers published with the option to read or download them (in several formats) completely for free. Schekman justifies it with the idea that scientific papers are read not only by academics who have purchased access to databases with academic journals, but also non-academics, i.e. ordinary people who are curious about the world.

Apart from caring about the high quality of research discussed in its pages (which is ensured by a professional team of editors and always accurately selected reviewers), the journal puts a lot of emphasis on the formal aspects of the texts, especially simple language and the quality of visuals that accompany the articles. Figures are supposed to be the core of each publication, visualize the phenomena studied in a clear and engaging way, and be of very high resolution. eLife also encourages the authors to use visuals of multimedia character: including sounds or animations, or even film fragments (presenting e.g. how the human brain works in real time or a fully-filmed experiment carried out with the use of a microscope).
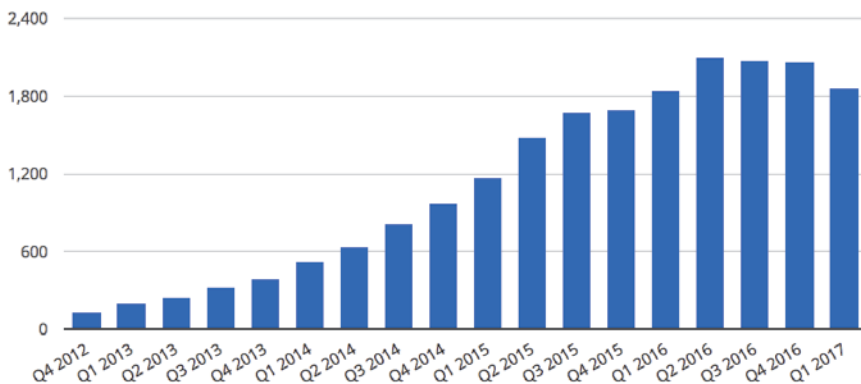

Figure 1. Number of eLife submissions. This shows the number of initial submissions received each quarter. Please note that publication fees were introduced on January 1, 2017 (source: submit.elifesciences.org).
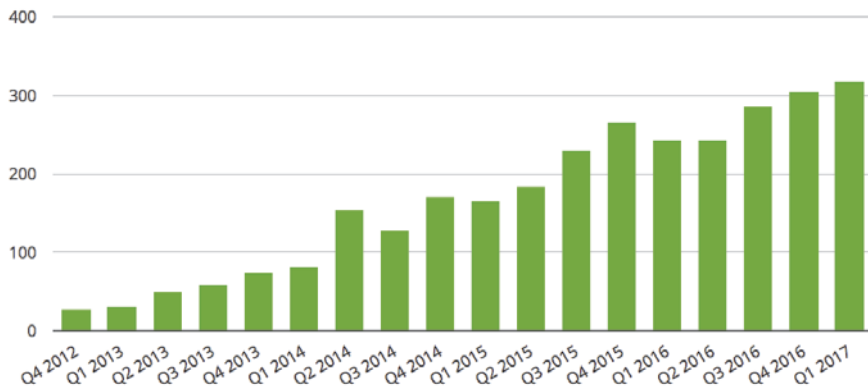
Figure 2. Number of research publications. This shows the number of research publications each quarter (source: submit.elifesciences.org).
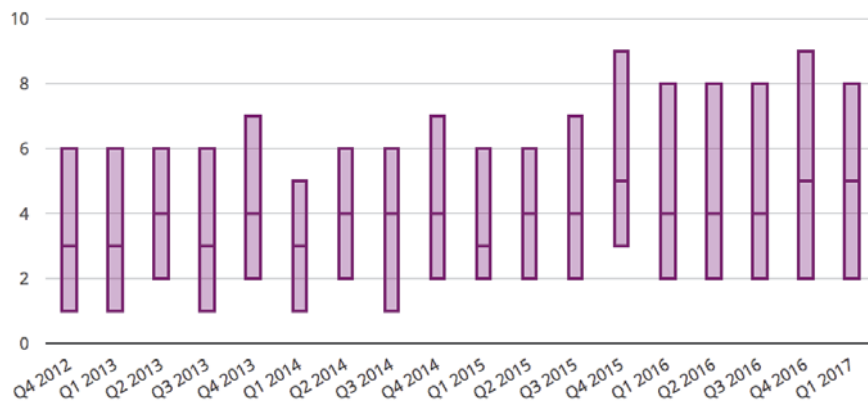

Figure 3. Decision times before peer review. This shows the number of days between receiving the initial submission and making a decision on the initial submission (25th, 50th, and 75th percentiles) (source: submit.elifesciences.org)

eLife systematically publishes statistics on the number of articles submitted (Fig. 1) and published (Fig. 2), as well as precise calculations on the length of the publishing procedure (Fig. 3–5).

Despite its short history, eLife has a substantially high Impact Factor that places it among the best scientific journals in the world, not only exceptionally often quoted, but also read. It is thus easy to see that transparent procedures, speed, openness and return to academic freedom does not hinder the scientific process of the highest quality. Moreover, such an initiative increases the popularity of papers published in the journal among readers also beyond the
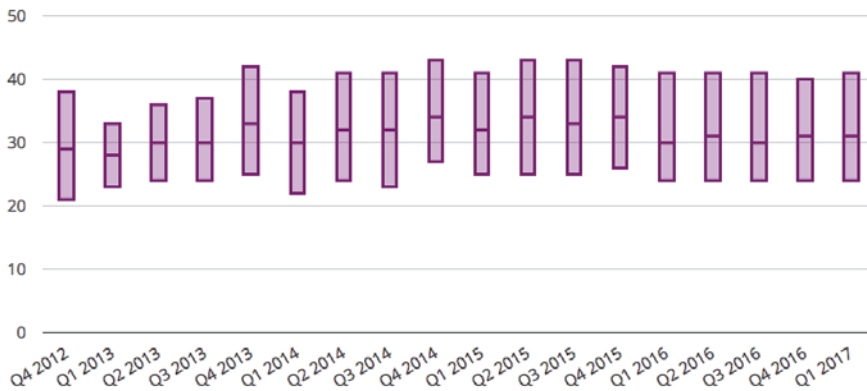
Figure 4. Decision times after peer review. This shows the number of days between receiving the full submission and making a decision on the full submission, after peer review (25th, 50th, and 75th percentiles) (source: submit.elifesciences.org).
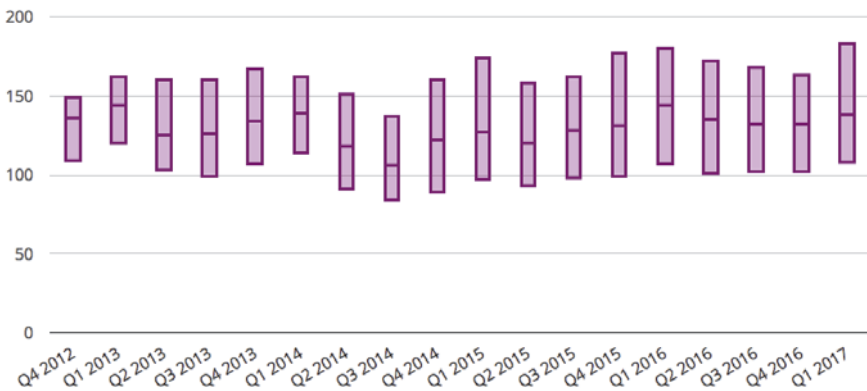

Figure 5. Submission to publication. This shows the number of days between receiving the initial submission and publication (25th, 50th, and 75th percentiles; summary table PDF|Excel). Publish on accept was introduced in April 2014, which allows authors to have their accepted manuscript PDF published within a few days. About 60% of authors opt for this, with the remaining authors preferring to wait for the typeset, author-proofed version (source: submit.elifesciences.org).

academic community. eLife is thus an example of an absolutely new, free and equal journal, as well as a simply ideal journal whose modern character goes hand in hand with locating it within the ethos of free science.

Michal Klichowski
Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznan (Poland)

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