

Discussion: Gender Studies and Feminism in Contemporary Science in Poland: Present and Future

I present an analysis of women's participation in the parliaments of Macedonia and Poland. Owing to a quota system introduced in the Macedonian election statute, the representation of women in that country's parliament has greatly increased, and presently exceeds 30%. In Poland it was impossible to introduce such a system, so the representation of women in the Sejm for years has been about 20%. In Macedonia women hold more high-ranking parliamentary positions, and it can be observed that higher descriptive representation, to a certain extent, implies better substantive representation. In both countries, however, women MPs point to similar difficulties hampering their political representation. Attempts to marginalize women and place them outside decision-making circles, or in auxiliary roles with respect to male leaders, are often extremely sophisticated, and based on cultural stereotyping, which assigns to women mainly caregiving, negotiatory, supportive and interpersonal relationship-forming functions. Some of the interviewed women spoke about activity barriers and discrimination experiences even though during their political career they have held elevated positions i.e. of cabinet minister, party chairperson or deputy prime minister. Although thus promoted, they remain fully aware of the existence of these barriers as well as of the practice and mechanisms eliminating competent women from political life. Especially in Macedonia, they indicate the quota system as the best way of fostering equal opportunities for men and women engaged in politics.

Joanna Mizielińska

Between the New and the Old. Feminism and the Challenge of the Present

I attempt to outline the history and typology of feminism, and the way it reacts to such phenomena as the critique of feminist subjectivity or the challenge of multiculturalism. Indicating problems concerning the definition of feminism and its relation to politics, I present a summary of major feminist trends (liberal and radical feminism) and their propositions. I go on to show feminism/feminist approach to the problem of difference following the 1980s critique of the feminist tendency to speak in the name of "all women", undertaken by nonheterosexual and nonwhite persons. I conclude with a reflection about the nature of contemporary feminism: how does it deal with diversity and multiplicity of views? has it learned from its earlier mistakes? At the end I discuss the changed attitude to difference, possibly exemplified by intersectionality theory and books such as *Is Multiculturalism Bad for Women?*

Katarzyna Szaniawska

Cosmodromes of Symbolic Structures and Bodies of Cosmonauts. On the Risk on Transgressing Gender and the Norms of Sexuality

I present a fragment of a thesis written under the direction of professor Paweł Dybel at the Interdyscyplinarne Studia Podyplomowe nad Kulturą i Społeczną Problematyką Płci Gender Studies ISNS UW. Drawing upon concepts of M. Foucault, G. Agamben, J. Butler, G.S. Rubin and M. Wittig I address the problem of subjects' social construction of identity (gender and sexual) and I describe

the mechanisms (of culture and law) which society and the state have at their disposal to freely introduce regulations and discipline.

Aneta Gawkowska

New Feminism. In Search of the Essence of Femininity

I present theoretical foundations and practical propositions of a social movement known as the new feminism. Persons representing this movement assume the existence of an essence of femininity, which in their opinion, however, is not a static reality or a limitation to women. New feminism is based on the so called theology of the body, viewing men and women as equal, different and complementary, and calling for transcendence of the restrictions of gender. Instead of a struggle between the sexes, new feminism envisions mutual complementarity and cooperation. Extracting the idea of feminine essence from the writings of new feminists, I find they emphasize femininity focused around receptivity, relationship and revelation. These three key concepts create a vision of woman as the embodiment of human receptivity to personal relationships, and human fulfilment through communicating personal gifts. New feminism, with its focus on personal relationships and human development in a network of community ties, might provide an interesting subject for sociological research, and might also be viewed as an alternative version of the communitarian outlook.

Izabela Kopaniszyn

New Integrative Feminism. Theory and Practice

I address the topic of new inclusive feminism, discussing the reasons for an urgent need to continue and reformulate the main premises of feminist thought. New feminism in my understanding is a movement which takes advantage of all that has been achieved in the areas of equal rights, technology, social communication and management. It is also a sphere of reflections and actions which include both men and women. Integrative feminism assumes the complementary nature of the male and female element. Its practice focuses on granting equal rights to gender attributes of both sexes, while recognizing and respecting their difference and making the most of the potential of complementary male and female predispositions. I point out the multidimensional and ambiguous nature of gender identity, involving biology, socialization process, personality traits, and influence of culture and media. One of the tools to systematize this complex problem and to aid communication is provided by four fundamental areas of gender cooperation, consisting of individual, behavioural, social and cultural domains. I indicate the similarity – differences notwithstanding – of integrative feminism to the so-called „new Christian feminism“. I also cite the example of Scandinavian historical tradition as a starting point for likestiling policy: the successful inculturation of feminist ideas in local cultural conditions.

Jacek Kurczewski

Raisins in the Dough. On the Representation of Women within the Representation of the People

I reflect on the theoretical dilemma related to questions of gender differentiation among the representatives of the People. This problem is marginal to the interests of contemporary sociologists, although the Parliament remains in the center of political transformation in post-Communist countries. Various aspects of representativity, especially sociographic representativity and representativity of political opinions, are confronted, on the one hand, with the ideas of mandate and „representation of the People”, so deeply ingrained among the MPs, and, on the other, with the public opinion, which to a large extent grants itself the right to dismiss MPs who, in view of the represented, do not perform their representative functions properly. However, opinion supporting women's suffrage is partially independent of the opinion that women should be present in the representation. In the former case, the argument is reduced to proof that there are no essential differences between men and women which would make women ineligible to being elected; in the latter, the argument for necessary presence of women invokes the essential categorial difference between the sexes. It seems that arguments for the obligatory presence of women in the parliamentary representation should be provided by difference feminism. Since with respect to level of education – a key criterion at the time when mass democracy was born – women have caught up with, or sometimes overtaken men, employment structure and child-rearing infrastructure have evolved to such a degree that the number of financially independent women is sufficient for them to engage in the works of Parliament. Thus, the argument runs as follows: since women can directly participate in the collective shaping of the common good, there is no reason why they should be represented by proxy. In addition, since half of the People feel the need of a tangible sign of their entitlement, the other half should give way, not because of good manners, but through respect for the Ideal which is the community of free citizens, male and female. Lastly, women's taking part in the representation is not to anybody's detriment; women engage in almost all professions and occupy all social positions, so they can represent others, including men, irrespective of their femininity. An adequate theory of representation needs to justify not the presence, but the absence, and not proportional presence, but deviating from it in favour of others.

Małgorzata Fuszara

Equal Chances or Barriers? Women in the Parliaments of Poland and Macedonia

I present an analysis of women's participation in the parliaments of Macedonia and Poland. Owing to a quota system introduced in the Macedonian election statute, the representation of women in that country's parliament has greatly increased, and presently exceeds 30%. In Poland it was impossible to introduce such a system, so the representation of women in the Sejm for years has been about 20%. In Macedonia women hold more high-ranking parliamentary positions, and it can be observed that higher descriptive representation, to a certain extent, implies better substantive representation. In both countries, however, women MPs point to similar difficulties hampering their political representation. Attempts to marginalize women and place them outside decision-making circles, or in auxiliary roles with respect to male leaders, are often extremely sophisticated, and

based on cultural stereotyping, which assigns to women mainly caregiving, negotiatory, supportive and interpersonal relationship-forming functions. Some of the interviewed women spoke about activity barriers and discrimination experiences even though during their political career they have held elevated positions i.e. of cabinet minister, party chairperson or deputy prime minister. Although thus promoted, they remain fully aware of the existence of these barriers as well as of the practice and mechanisms eliminating competent women from political life. Especially in Macedonia, they indicate the quota system as the best way of fostering equal chances for men and women engaged in politics.

Joanna Szczepańska i Mariola Piszczatowska,

Women in Public and Family Life. Poles' Opinions vs Reality in the Light of Sociological Research

We are living in the postmodern era with its emphasis on individualisation and creating one's own identity. But the observed tendency to self-realization and personal achievement seems to concern mainly the domains of professional life and public activity. In this context, it might be illuminating to observe the attitudes of women who have long ago discarded their feelings of attachment to a single family and homestead, or to one field of activity, but are still active within this sphere at the cost of other occupations. Has there been a change of the situation of women in Polish society? Have Polish women become more active in the public sphere?

We try to answer these questions by analysing the results of a survey conducted by the Centre for Research of Public Opinion (CBOS).

Jolanta Arcimowicz

Women in the Service of the State. About the Civil Service Corps in Poland

Poland is not the only country where the disproportion between the number of men and women in public life is evident. This problem, involving the analysis of factors inhibiting or fostering the development of women's professional careers, belongs to the canon of sociological and legal research. Public administration is a domain where the principle of equality between men and women was put into practice relatively early, mainly by introducing regulations concerning employment and entitlements for both sexes, as well as privileges of executive personnel. We address the interesting subject of women civil servants in the Republic of Poland, trying to answer the question if the Civil Service Corps, under formation since the late 1990s, guarantees equal employment and promotion opportunities for both men and women. A significant part of our analysis concerns women's promotion to higher civil service positions, and focuses on question whether existing procedures are an enhancement or a barrier to women's professional careers.

Agnieszka Majcher

Glass Ceiling in Science? Gender and the Trajectories of Academic Careers

I discuss the problem of gender inequality on the academic labour market, especially women's access to higher positions in the academic hierarchy, as well as gender-dependent differentiation of

scientific careers. I base my paper on a questionnaire research conducted in 2003 on a representative sample of women professors, employed in public colleges in Poland, and a corresponding – with respect to scientific title, age, represented discipline and place of employment – group of men. In my research I attempt to address the following questions: What kinds of barriers are encountered by women following scientific careers? Who are the men and women who were able to attain leading positions in the academic world? And finally, how do the academic labour market, scientific career models and organization culture influence the scientific careers of men and women? An important part of my considerations is the problem of interpreting the observed inequality of the sexes and countering gender discrimination in the context of discussions and reforms undertaken by EU and Western European countries, and the way academic gender inequality is perceived by Polish professors (men and women).

Jerzy Kuniewski

Career and Family in the Opinions and Reflections of Women from the Kaszuby Region

In this paper I present the opinions of 74 women from a rural Kaszuby region, who reflect on important issues of maintaining their families and their proper functions from the perspective of gender. The main problem they consider is: who should support the family? According to 64.39% of the interviewed women, the family should be supported by both spouses, however, none of the respondents think that the woman should be the sole breadwinner. The respondents present interesting reflections on the favourable and unfavourable aspects of women following professional careers. Asked why women take up jobs at all, they mainly point out that men's earnings are not sufficient to provide for their families. Next in order, however, is an emancipation argument: women want to be financially independent. The majority of respondents – albeit small – would not give up their careers in favour of home and family even if all their financial requirements were satisfied. Referring to theoretical works on problems relating to labour, family and gender, I conclude that Kaszuby women are individualists, but with a feeling of responsibility for their families and communities. There is no doubt that not only an increasing number of women from the region will take up jobs away from home, but some of them will hold the positions of managers or run their own enterprises. It remains an open question, not only from the Kaszuby perspective, how the changing situation of women will influence the community spirit they usually foster, and whether male community-disrupting individualism will prevail.

Natalia Krzyżanowska

Media Image of Women's (Non)Existence in the Public Sphere. Analysis of Press Accounts of the „Sex Scandal” in Samoobrona RP (Self-Defence Party of the Republic of Poland)

I attempt to analyse the discourse on the place and role of women in the public sphere, as revealed by media accounts of the so-called „sex-scandal” in Samoobrona RP. I have tried to show how the problem of women accidentally present in the public sphere, reiterated by the media, makes itself manifest in reports and comments about the scandal. According to J. Turowski (1992: 13) „by the term 'public' many authors understand not only the common good, but also actions leading to its

achievement, and the public's participation in these actions. They write about 'the public sphere', while describing the functioning of large social groups, the state, the global society". In some approaches, like R. Senett's, „the public sphere" really means „political life in a given society, i.e. outside family social structures" (Turowski 1992:13). For Habermas „the public" is situated „between civil society and the state, where critical public discussion concerning questions of general interest is guaranteed"(McCarthy 1999: xi, Habermas, 2008:98). Multiplicity of public discussions is related to the notion of democracy as „a modus of historical awareness, openness to discourse, multiperspectivity, pluralism and recognition of recipients and their aims" (Ziółkowski 2001: 84).

Marta Juza

Traditional Ethos or Reflective Identity Project? Images of Women's Social Roles in TV Series and Internet Debates

I would like to demonstrate the connection between the medium and the contents of the message. On the one hand, television as the traditional mass medium presents messages adapted to the viewers' expectations; on the other, it wields a great persuasive power, possibly used to manipulate public opinion. Therefore, the female roles presented on TV seem to combine stereotype public notions with the intentions of the message sender. By contrast, Internet is a medium allowing women to speak for themselves. The picture emerging from Internet debates shows that an increasing number of issues become questions of choice, while woman's identity becomes less a result of a rigorous role model than an individual reflective project. Both TV series and Internet discussion groups take note of the postmodern confusion and indicate the necessity of making choices in spheres previously controlled by various customs or institutions. But TV messages create the illusion that these choices are based on women's traditional role model, since such are the expectations of the viewers and the intentions of the senders. However, in Internet discussions this role is clearly questioned and we observe some attempts to define it anew. The analysis of images of women presented on TV and the Internet not only provides a comparison of different types of media discourse, but also illustrates the confrontation between traditionally formulated woman's role and its reconstruction in postmodern context.

Małgorzata Bogunia-Borowska

Magda M., or a single's big city life. Media image of the thirty-somethings' lifestyle.

I attempt to reconstruct the image of the generation of thirty-year-olds as presented in the popular TV series Magda M produced and broadcast by TVN television station. I analyse the characters' lifestyle, their life priorities and aims, their attitude to career and personal life, to material and consumer values, and to their family and friends. In my analysis of „Magda M. generation" lifestyle in the area of popculture, I focus especially on the category of singles, as personified by the heroine Magda. Besides presenting different types of singles I also attempt to find the reasons for this increasingly widespread phenomenon and for the growing number of single women in large cities. Until now only foreign series like Sex and the City or Ally McBeal provided viewers with inspiration and material for confrontation and/or identification, so Magda M. is an important

product of Polish popular culture. It illustrates the Poles' notion of success, shows behaviour patterns of male and female Polish singles, and demonstrates their lifestyle, ways of spending leisure time, and systems of values governing their conduct.

Beata Łaciak

Media Image of Women in Executive Positions

I present an analysis of popular culture texts – TV series and feature films – showing women managers and enterprise owners, actively participating in political life. I investigate how frequently women in executive positions appear in Polish media, in what branches of economy, and how their careers are presented. I analyse the ways of showing women as bosses in their professional environment, in family relationships and in private life. I confront this media image with results of sociological research, investigating how much the former is a reflection of actual Polish reality, or how much it consists of copying and strengthening certain gender stereotypes.

Małgorzata Awdziejczyk

Women in the Labour Market. Towards Equal Treatment

Although women's professional activity has been a fact for many years, we still observe many acts of discrimination. A common form of inequality is paying men and women different wages for the same work. Such practices seem to spring from the belief that – generally speaking – women are inferior workers. To what extent this conviction is unjustified we observe when viewing specific data on the effectivity of individual workers. I support my theoretical argument by an analysis of a sales effectivity report, conducted in an automotive industry firm with the gender criterion in mind. The obtained results juxtaposed with generally accessible reports on salary levels, demonstrate that women workers are just as good as men, and that gender does not determine work quality. My analysis might even lead to the conclusion that women as a sex are more effective, but the sample size does not allow such a thesis (notice, however, that my research concerns the automotive branch, considered a typically male industry). The image of the woman worker is changing before our very eyes, but the process is not easy and certainly prolonged. On the one hand, women are increasingly known as dynamic, ambitious, highly qualified – a status which (see the report results) can no longer be denied. On the other, a way of thinking in terms of „inferior woman worker“ is unusually deeply rooted in many firms. A comparison of these two extremes, reinforced by solid analysis and different case descriptions, might provide a viable method of accelerating the advent of real equality of the sexes.

Ewa Stroińska

Telework as a Chance for Increasing Women's Activity on the Labour Market

I reflect on the role and place of women in the information society and on the problem of their professional identity. Basing on collected empirical material, I address the question whether telework – defined as an emerging opportunity to reconcile different roles played by women, and to encourage their greater professional activity – is being treated as an element of social and

occupational inclusion, helping to decrease the segregation of labour still present in the traditional career market.

Dominika Karasek

The Image of Women Soldiers in Regional and National Polish Press

Women became eligible for a professional soldier's career in 1988. But after 20 years there are 780 women serving in the Polish armed forces, which is less than 1% of army personnel. As shown by CBOS (Centre for Research of Public Opinion), Polish public in its majority (68%) accepts the decision to allow women to enter professional military service. However, many traps await women candidates in this previously all-male territory. The small female representation must clear the terrain and negotiate its position in the army. Stereotypical images of women clash with preconceived visions of army service. This gives rise to problems and controversies ranging from legal regulations to everyday obstacles such as uniforms for pregnant women. Women's military service provides an attractive subject for reporters, so it seems justified to verify how women soldiers' image is shaped by regional and national press. For this purpose I have decided to isolate the categories used by journalists to describe and judge women's military service.