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Gender and Energy Transition

Case Studies from the Upper Silesia Coal-mining Region

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Preface

Direct inspiration for the book at hand came from a research project carried out from 2016 to 2018 in the Upper Silesian region. The project *Women as agents of change* was conducted through participatory action research starting in the greater metropolitan area of Katowice. Our participatory practices approach, aimed at the empowerment of women, was made possible due to inspiration and funding from the Heinrich Boell Foundation in Warsaw. We acknowledge the help of the Boell Stiftung team, with special thanks to Gert Roehrborn who always had time for our discussions and meetings with activists. We would also like to thank our initial contacts in Katowice, great and passionate women who welcomed us openly, sharing their lives and experiences: Anna Miczka-Klosa, Monika Czuma, Beata Wyszkowska, and Bernadeta Grobelny.

The individual interviews with many women from the region gave us better insights into the forms that narratives took among people experiencing changes in the ways that social structures (often very strongly rooted in lifestyles) were being (re)produced. Starting our study from the role of tradition and macrosystem transformation, we investigated the perceptions and possibilities of implementing change on a microscale. Our key research problems included topics related to (1) social changes; (2) socio-economic activities; and (3) perceptions of environmental and energy sector changes, environmental actions, and the ecology.

We were interested not only in what the interviewees think about the ongoing transition, but also what they were doing in response to it and what civic capital they possessed. An important aspect was exactly how women perceive the changes and what the consequences of the energy transformation in Silesia (particularly mine decommissioning) mean for them. To start, we delved into a variety of sources of extant literature on the people of this particular region. Further in the course of our gradual "discovery" of Upper Silesia, we established many contacts with people from the region (not just women) and followed closely the local activities occurring within our research space.

The direct contacts afforded us with a unique opportunity to cooperate with some female activists—especially managing to capture the fleeting moments just around

the 24th Conference of the Parties (COP24) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. That conference in December 2018 was held precisely in Katowice. Being situated amidst this, concurrence led us to believe that a pivot in social and environmental awareness was taking place.

The experiences from our research project inspired us to prepare a volume about the challenges faced by women in a changing Upper Silesia. Our aim was to present the most recent studies among women in the Silesian community against a broader background of philosophical, socio-historical, and political analyses of the region. However, the publication does not abandon our participatory inquiry and practice orientation. We wish ourselves to see how the civic and ecological engagements of women from a "hard coal region" makes a difference locally and globally in the future.

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Part III

Women's Agency in a World of Flux: On Silesian Energy Transition

Katarzyna Iwińska and Xymena Bukowska

Abstract The chapter introduces a gender and energy nexus and presents an Upper Silesia case study of the energy transition as viewed locally. The main aim of this text is to explain some of the historical and industrial contexts of the "black gold" region when seen through a gender and ecofeminist lens. We present the recent processes of deindustrialization and decarbonization in Upper Silesia and show how these changes affect people living in an intensive flux. We emphasize the need to overcome the gender inequality in energy transition and to study the situation of women in the region. This chapter also presents some theoretical inspirations which link subsequent chapters—particularly modernization, feminism, and subjectivity/agency. We illustrate here the mosaic image of how women's and cultural studies are intertwined with environmental and energy issues within shifting structural and economic contexts.

Women and Energy Transition in Upper Silesia: An Introduction

This book stands at the intersection of feminist and energy transition studies. From a social sciences perspective, it tackles the complex issue of transition. This is a story about changes in acting and living in a region which—like no other place in Europe—has been experiencing all successive episodes of modernity: where intensive development has been fuelled for over two centuries by the heavy, metallurgical and mining industry, and which is now facing the challenges of deindustrialization, decarbonization, etc. Looking at a relatively unexplored intersection in one specific place, the book at hand examines an array of sociocultural, civic, and political expressions in the domestic, economic, and professional lives of female (and male) inhabitants in Poland's Upper Silesia.

The original version of this chapter was revised: Chapter 1 is changed as open access and the license text is updated in the chapter which has been corrected now. The correction to this chapter is available at https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-78416-4_12

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Women have always been central actors in the processes of change explored herein, yet much literature on gender and climate change categorizes women as a vulnerable minority. On the one hand, females are seen as ending up as victims of energy industry transformations; on the other hand, females are seen to be gaining opportunities for emancipation and sources of motivation to act up and revise traditional gender roles (Terry, 2009; True, 2003). The latter outcome is particularly crucial in light of the fact that, in hierarchical dualisms and socio-economic positions of dominance, women are often marginalized and excluded (while their unpaid labour is exploited).

Theoretically and methodologically, this volume is constructed with a feminist approach, although acknowledging that there are various ontological views (and many different theories) within feminism regarding the nature of reality and the objects of study (Ramazanoglu & Holland, 2002). Thus, we focus on the identities, actions, and perceptions of women with reference to the environment, ecology, and the energy sector. By describing the situation of women in a regional case study from Poland, we introduce a world of flux scaled down to feminist ecology at a local level. We investigate this world as viewed by the women themselves during a major transition period which is affecting the economy as well as social and environmental structures and values (Lieu et al., 2020).

In our eyes, the Silesian energy transition unfolds as one of the most graphic examples of the huge changes taking place not only in Poland, but also in many other countries all over the world similarly dependent upon coal (also against the backdrop of rising political polarization and anti-women, pro-coal backlash). This means capturing "glocality" at play, because the climate crisis and energy transition demand both global and local actions at multiple levels. Densely populated, Upper Silesia—with one of the longest histories of industrialization, extraction, and environmental degradation in Europe—can be considered a microcosm of the entire country, continent, and world. The traces of telling socioeconomic changes, as well as the tangle of modernity and tradition, are both clearly visible in the local region as in many other societies.

About Silesia: A "Black Gold" Region

Silesia (Śląsk, Slezsko, and Schlesien in Polish, Czech, and German, respectively) is a historically established region rich in mineral and natural resources, primarily situated (since WWII) in southwestern Poland. The area's multicultural diversity provides a wealth of material for extensive and enriching research into local culture and social practices.

Silesia's largest major metropolitan area is that of Upper Silesia, with Katowice at its centre. Coal mining and heavy industry are mainly located in the Silesian Voivodeship in Poland, which was, therefore, chosen as our focal area. The province is inhabited by 4.56 million people, which constitutes almost 12% of the total population of Poland; it also has the highest degree of urbanization (77% compared

to 60% nationwide) and serves as one of the primary economic centres for the country. In 2019, the share of the Silesian Voivodeship in generating the national GDP amounted to 12.4%, second only to the Masovian Voivodeship, which includes the capital city of Warsaw (Yearbook of Labour Statistics, 2020).

A longstanding characteristic of the Silesian economy has been its high degree of industrialization. Regardless of the restructuring processes of the traditionally Silesian heavy industry sector—as a result of which the industry's share within the voivodeship GDP has fallen—its share has remained for almost a decade at almost 35%; as such, compared with other sectors, it is still the largest in Poland. The picture looks similar from the perspective of the employment structure. Despite the gradual decline in employment in Silesian industries—down from 32% to 29% between 2005 and 2015—the total number of persons employed in those industries remains the highest in the country (Statistical Yearbook of Silesian Voivodship, 2020; Yearbook of Labour Statistical 2020).

Conducted in successive waves as of the 1990s, the restructuring of heavy industry has directly affected the socio-economic conditions of Silesia as a whole. Among other phenomena, this is evidenced by strong fluctuations in the numbers of unemployed or economically inactive individuals, negative migration proportions (especially an outflow of young people), an aging society, etc. Experts, however, argue that despite the accompanying social and political difficulties, the continuation of the changes in this sector of the economy seems inevitable—both for economic and environmental reasons. In the overall scheme of things, anthracite coal mining—the most renowned Silesian resource—has failed to contribute to the country's economic growth in the last decade due to low productivity of extraction alongside proportionately high labour costs (Bukowski et al., 2015).

Furthermore, the unit cost of hard coal mining in Polish mines is constantly growing due to a necessity to excavate ever deeper with more difficulty in extracting deposits, lack of investment, overstaffing, an ineffective labour system and mode of operation, as well as interest groups shaped around the mines. Additionally, global competition in the coal market has also increased: other countries (e.g. China, India, Russia, the USA, and Kazakhstan) extract better and cheaper coal (Bendyk et al., 2015, pp. 81–89).

At the same time, trends are taking shape, which indicate future declines in demand for this fossil fuel. In 1989, the year of Poland's political transformation, 177.4 million tons of coal were mined, with 415.7 thousand people employed in the industry (Euracoal, 2018). In Silesia, in particular, transformations in the mining sector over the past 25 years (e.g. decommissioning of mines, restructuring of coal companies) have led to a decrease in hard coal production. In the last decade alone, 35.5 thousand people "left" their jobs in the Silesian mining and quarrying sector (GUS, 2017a). After the mass unemployment caused by industrial closure in the 1990s ties, levels of employment in the mining sector have been steadily decreasing also in the last decade; at the moment, there are approximately 125,000 people working in the coal industry. Analyses show that the most effective strategies for dealing with the future employment of former miners are retraining, combined with the process of older workers retiring (Sokołowski et al., 2021; JRC, 2018).

Nevertheless, the drop in mining industry employment is unfolding against the backdrop of relatively stable employment in the Silesian industry as a whole. The situation is similar when looking at sales of the regional mining industry production versus that of Silesian industry production in its entirety: the former is falling (from 15% in 2005 to 10% in 2016) while the latter is rising. This data suggests that today's Silesia can still be dubbed "industrial," but it no longer spells "coal." Indirectly testifying to the fact that "Black Silesia" is already a thing of the past are various strategic documents: there one seeks in vain for a vision of development in the mining sector of the economy, one strains even to find some reference to Silesian coal at all. From the economic perspective, Silesian coal is now receding into legend, but its commercial marginalization appears to be a taboo topic. The coal industry continues to be meaningful politically, culturally and socially, and the mining trade unions make use of this regionally and nationally. Unsurprisingly, the sociocultural consequences of this phenomenon constitute an important focus of analysis in the book at hand.

Declining hard coal production in Poland (mainly in Silesia) does not necessarily mean a decrease in demand as hard coal consumption is still high on a national scale, requiring annual imports of over eight million tons of anthracite from Russia, the Czech Republic, Australia, and Colombia. In contrast, Polish coal is heaped at dumps and ever harder to sell (both at home and abroad), because it is more expensive and of inferior quality. Thus mining invariably remains a political issue, and, due to the complexity of coal pricing on global markets, it can be a taboo in Silesian discourses so that people do not really know how cost-effective it is (Euracoal, 2018).

Industrial Silesia and the Green Deal

In 2018, the European Commission reached an agreement on the European Union's climate policy. Although the Polish government had stated consistently that it would not commit to achieving the EU's 2050 climate neutrality target, noting the transition's social and economic costs, a long-term plan has been eventually created, the main goal of which is to counteract climate problems and remedy their consequences. The crucial issue, according to the EU, is to ensure improvement of the situation in the energy production and use sector and thus reduce greenhouse gas emissions. This agenda is a result of the Paris Agreement concluded in 2015: an objective set for EU countries is to lower temperature increases to less than 2 degrees, and to try to reduce the rate of climate warming to 1.5 degrees by 2050.

The European Union and international regulations concerning the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and other harmful substances (to human health) are slowly but steadily making an impact on energy and heat production in Poland. Although the Polish energy mix is still based on coal (73.6%, with anthracite at 48.1% and lignite at 25.5%), its share is gradually decreasing in favour of alternatives, including renewable energy sources (RES), which currently comprise 15.4% (ARE 2020).

According to the Energy Policy of Poland 2040 (EPP 2040, 2021),[1] the share of coal in electricity production will not exceed 56% (and the RES share will not be less than 32%) in 2030.

The European Green Deal, however, means that carbon neutrality targets will affect all member states by 2050. Poland will need to go through this energy transition process because of the technology, regulations, and environmental aspects listed in the strategy. The assumption is that Poland must be supportive of the climate neutrality goal, however, with a just and responsible transition to be tackled by the country's government. Coal miners are aware of the commitments, and their unions have re-negotiated the agreement endlessly. Even in the last 6 months, mining coal unions have threatened the strikes if their demands were not met. And finally on 29 April 2021, the government and trade unions reached an agreement to end domestic coal mining by 2049. However, this is just the tip of the iceberg, as the modernization of energy and industry depends on ongoing political and economic decisions.

The decarbonization of the energy system in the European Union is to be fostered, *inter alia*, by the improvement of energy efficiency. In Poland, the energy efficiency has gradually improved over the past decade, especially in the industry (GUS, 2020). At the same time, the development of technologies limiting the energy consumption in industry is conducive to reducing the emission of air pollutants. Research shows significant decreases in the emission of various substances nationwide over the last fifteen years: 51% decrease in sulphur dioxide, 25% in carbon monoxide, 16% in ammonia, and 14% in nitrogen oxide. The total emission of carbon dioxide and non-methane volatile organic compounds also decreased by 2% (GUS, 2017a, 2017b).

However, due to its persistently industrial nature, Silesia—more than other voivodeships—is struggling with one of the highest air pollution levels in Europe; the trend towards decarbonization here is seen as extremely slow and unstable (Brauers & Oei, 2020; Frankowski, 2020). It is in Silesia that 17.8% of the plants, particularly ruinous for air quality, are located. Although in absolute numbers the emission of particulate pollutants from the worst offender plants is decreasing in this region, Silesia's share is growing in relative terms: in 2016, almost one quarter (23.6%) of all particulate pollutants discharged from the most damaging plants in Poland came from Silesia (in 2012, the Silesian share was 20.2%).

Air quality in Poland (as well as in Silesia) is affected not only and not chiefly by established energy and industrial plants. Although emitting noxious gases, they almost completely filter harmful dust. This means that plant contribution to air pollution is systematically decreasing—"in favour" of sources not subject to such a degree of official control and legal sanction (e.g. transportation and the low-emission due to heating system) (GUS, 2017a, 2017b). As regards dust pollution in the Silesian Voivodeship, the primary culprit is what is considered to be "surface" emission: local boiler rooms, home heating systems, as well as small plants and

[1] The EPP2040 is compatible with the National Energy and Climate Plan for the years 2021–2030.

workshops that do not need any emissions permit. Industry generates "only" 14% of suspended particles, similar to the figures for transportation (about 15%), while nearly two-thirds of dust pollution stems from low-emission sources (GUS, 2021).

The high proportion of individual heating system contributions to air pollution overall is due to two major reasons. First, energy-inefficient boilers or coal-fired furnaces do not follow all emission norms, and that is why, predominantly in winter, smog is created—a disruptive, but, above all, harmful phenomenon. Second, the combustion of low calorific fuels—sludge and other cheap mining waste in particular—is still possible in Silesia. Due to proximity to the mines and easy access, these fuels are still quite commonly used notwithstanding a coal-burning ban in anti-smog resolutions.

Despite the variety of clean energy programmes and transformations underway, Silesia is still very "dirty" and the mining communities, concerned about future job prospects and the demise of cultural and social legacies, play a great role in maintaining this *status quo*. Inhabitants of Silesia need a clear vision for a just transition, reflecting the needs and expectations of all groups concerned. Therefore, a just transformation of Silesia must provide solutions to the problems which have already developed in the region: depopulation, an aging population, a lack of skilled workers, a relatively low standard of living for inhabitants, and a very bad air quality (Ślimko, 2019). Although the government of Poland has approved the Energy Policy of Poland 2040, this seems to be just a single, minor step in the decarbonization process. There continues to be hope among local mining communities that more favourable terms about a final decommissioning of the coal mines will be negotiated.

Here, the concept of energy justice should be introduced as a recently developed and reconceptualized framework by many scholars in the context of the energy transition. This concept is not directly mentioned in the Energy Policy of Poland 2040, but a just transition is the first pillar of this programme.[2] Energy justice has been usually used in a localized context, ensuring justice for people affected by decarbonization in terms of job loss due to a move away from fossil fuels. However, in the last decade, the concept's origins from activist accounts of energy issues were reviewed, returning to its philosophical roots in environmental justice (Jenkins, 2018; McCauley et al., 2013). Specifically, energy and environmental justice are defined by the three tenets of distributional, procedural, and recognition justice (Sovacool & Dworkin, 2014). Distributional justice is concerned with infrastructure effects (e.g. equal access to energy services), procedural justice is concerned with decision-making procedures, and justice as recognition is concerned with state processes where people must be equally represented, free from physical threats, and given full and equal democratic rights (Schlosberg, 2003). Therefore, one of the applications of recognition justice is to enhance women's leadership in public life.

[2] "The energy transition to be carried out in Poland will be: (a) just—it will not leave anyone behind; (b) participatory, conducted locally, initiated bottom-up—everyone will be able to participate in it; (c) focused on modernisation and innovation—it is a plan for the future; (d) stimulating economic growth, efficiency and competitiveness—it will be the engine of economic growth" (EPP2040, p. 6).

Ultimately, the invisibility of gender aspects in the energy nexus has been recognized (Feenstra & Özerol, 2021; Allen et al., 2019).

It has also been established that equity, inclusiveness, and justice are to be considered in all policy and decision-making situations, including transition plans and restorative justice to correct the mistakes of the energy sector (Sovacool et al., 2016; Heffron & McCauley, 2017, Iwińska et al. 2021). This is particularly relevant in the context of energy transitions in the Global North where decarbonization policies might not be inclusive of the whole society.

A Gender Gap in the Energy Transition Process

Within the context presented above, the perception and positions of women are still quite modest in proportion to the enormous advancements in energy transition scholarship. Nevertheless, recent studies reclaim the position of women within the topic of energy issues, showing that "energy transition is a feminist issue" (Wilson, 2018). From the feminization of nature to women's environmental activism, feminist political ecology and ecofeminism have become common approaches to understanding a variety of phenomena—energy transition as well. Still, most such studies have emerged within development studies pertaining to the Global South; hence we continue to have a limited understanding of how gender and energy operate in the Global North. New studies, however, show how gender norms can influence perceptions of energy, technology, the environment, and political participation (Bell et al., 2020; Cohen, 2017). The small amount of research within energy scholarship dedicated more specifically to women is a consequence of the traditional masculinization of the field of energy and fuel technologies. That said, even men's roles and experiences or questions regarding how various aspects of masculinity affect environmental issues also draw little attention in environmental studies (Hultman & Pulé, 2018).

Similarly, the process of decarbonization concerns mostly those who directly work in the industry and traditionally maintain power as breadwinners in the family and decision-makers in public life. Women in resource-dependent societies are often viewed at the micro level as a homogenous and undifferentiated social group. Moreover, they are rarely included in the day-to-day operation of projects that could impact their agency in decisions. Women are silent actors in the industry, usually described as the female associates of professionals, managers, workers, and other employees who put in long hours at their jobs. In fact, women contribute in several ways to the tasks assigned to their male counterparts who, in turn, participate in the direct and indirect corporate exploitation of women's work (Rhodes, 2003).

We agree with those researchers (Bell et al., 2020) who assert that women-centred issues are crucial for a just transition. In this framework, Feenstra and Özerol (2021) investigate the energy justice concept using the "gender-energy nexus" as a key to understanding the linkages between the perspectives of gender and decision-makers; these authors stress the issues of energy poverty and the limits of energy policy.

Feenstra and Özerol also stipulate the inclusion of the triple role women play—producer, decision-maker, and consumer—in the entire energy system. Although feminism does not necessarily mean faulting "men" as such or any other specific group, a holistic system approach demands focusing now primarily on women as the energy system has been predominantly expressed by masculinity through culture, tradition, and institutions (Bell et al., 2020; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005).

This involves the distinct masculinity culture that has been reproduced in coal (black gold) regions since the industry started. That culture has been characterized by Daggett (2018), who introduced the very useful concept of "petro-masculinity" to explain the historical and cultural constitution of fossil fuel status in the globalized world. Petro-masculinity and mining are intertwined within the technical, ideological, and economic relationships that constitute the patriarchal order. Obviously, this is not simply a matter of profit and power: fossil fuels shape human identities and mindsets, which, in turn, "pose risks for post-carbon energy politics" (Daggett, 2018, p. 25). Similar observations and categorizations of forms of masculinity in miner communities ("tough guy" and "family man") have been described in order to inform the gender roles interwoven with the coal industry as well as with cultural institutions deterring any environmental movements (Scott, 2010). Hypermasculinity goes together with the idea of the ego-logical, industrialized breadwinner in opposition to femininity and environmental protection (see Daggett, 2018; Hultman & Pulé, 2018).

The situation in Upper Silesia is a good example of this. As Daggett (2018, p. 5) indicates petro-masculinity, like other masculinities, manifests in various multiple, locally specific ways. Behind the political and the public life, the interplay between socially constructed breadwinner men and identities of "traditional women" in the private sphere sustain the power relations between men and women generally. Petro/oil/coal masculinity involves the struggle to maintain the *status quo* on all levels of social and political life, with coal its underpinning fuel, both literally and metaphorically. Also, as it is deeply structured in social and cultural life, it has an enormous impact on the decision-making processes at local and national scales and (the lack of) climate change mitigation, too, of course.

The Silesian *imaginarium* is founded on the motifs of "family" and "coal" rooted in "traditional" power relations in the private and public sphere. These motifs impart meaning to social practices, make them possible, and structure them and thus are an important element in the processes of women becoming subjects (Iwińska & Bukowska, 2018). Women in Silesia were seen as guardians of values and norms in mining or industrial families: they were wives, mothers, sisters, and neighbours of men working in this sector. This image of a traditional mining family (with the clearly separate, gendered roles of work versus home) can be treated as a peculiar Weberian ideal type, one that could only be partially realized in social practice. At the same time, however, for Silesians it is a permanent, cognitive construct existing as an idealized and shared cultural symbol, a residuum helping to shape the contemporary system of meanings and references, one that has partly resisted the ongoing economic and sociocultural changes (Świątkiewicz, 2009; Piłat-Borcuch, 2013). The processes of deindustrialization and decarbonization in Silesia affect the

very foundations of the community based on this "coal culture"—and our aim is to enhance the descriptions of the energy transition through women's understanding.

Even if the feminist perspective has many dimensions and critics, its most valuable feature (similar to other critical paradigms in the social sciences) is its stimulation to action. Through triangulation of methods, theories, practices, and policies, such a standpoint facilitates emancipation and rearticulation, which facilitate the creation of new social identities and political possibilities. This frame of reference also opens up the chances for environmental activism as, in its complexity, it incorporates an ecofeminist approach. Since women and men have different experiences and evaluations regarding climate change—and are affected differently by it as a function of their gendered social and economic positions—we maintain that an (eco)feminist view can shed new light. This perspective can lead to opportunities for the development of more socially just ways of living which put the concerns of a thus far invisible group—women—at the core of energy transition politics.

More Theoretical Inspirations

Philosophical and sociological disputes about structural and cultural constraints and about the free will of individuals are rooted in the concept of human agency. In contrast to behaviour and ideas dictated by social status, the agency of subconscious, historical powers or other factors means that individuals have the freedom to choose their goals and act upon them. According to most feminist perspectives, female agency means that women have the power to make choices and be morally responsible for their actions.

The matter of agency (in both the sciences and humanities) is a much broader category. For this reason, we use Giddens's (1984, p. 25) illuminating insight of structuration theory, which shows that "the constitution of agents and structures are not two independently given sets of phenomena, a dualism, but represent a duality." According to Giddens, all human beings are knowledgeable agents who can perform intentional causative interventions in the course of events-in-the-world. Their agency (i.e. in the civic sphere) is characterized by the possibility of choosing an action and the independence to take further actions; this means more free will and no predetermination of the future. But, at the same time, actors cannot fully determine their behaviour taking place within institutions that reward, punish, and persuade; actions can drift from their main objectives and rules. Thus, structuration theory confers a general framework for the respective influence of agency and structure where one engenders the other.

Among the elements that help to analyze agency constrained by structure are the three levels of consciousness: discursive, practical, and subconscious. The first level concerns motives and endowing actions with meaning. The second level refers to the silent awareness of routine forms of practice—how people actually act when they take *ad hoc* actions without the need (and ability) to define and name them. At the

final level, subconsciousness determines how actors act, how they reproduce and change structure.

Structure in sociological terminology refers to the permanence of social life, but Giddens emphasizes the immanent dual process between action and duration. Structures are used by actors to help them organize interactions with one another in time and space, and then these interactions are, in turn, used to recreate or transform the very same structures. Specifically, subjective agency means "the individual's ability to make a difference" in the world (or a particular social situation), as "knowledgeability embedded in practical consciousness exhibits an extraordinary complexity—a complexity that often remains completely unexplored in orthodox sociological approaches, especially those associated with objectivism. Actors are also able discursively to describe what they do and the reasons for doing it" (Giddens, 1984, p. 281).

Another important inspiration has been Margaret Archer's considerations regarding the emergence of properties and the rights of subjects. In her book, *Being Human: The Problem of Agency*, Archer (2000) reflects upon who acting subjects really are, how their traits develop, and how they arrive at their own identity (both individual and social). As a premise, the author theorizes a mutual relationship between the constitution of individuals, the social world, and the necessity of mutual interactions between the two. Such thinking is part of the paradigm of social realism, which assumes a stratification model of the subject made up of four forms: the self, the person, the acting subject, and the actor.

Of the four layers, the last two (subjective agent and actor) are social forms arising out of a subconscious entanglement in the social context as well as the voluntary and conscious involvement of individuals in social roles. Society is presented here as a means that connects two of the layers of the individual (the self and the person) with the other two, so to speak, socialized layers (the acting subject and the actor). Archer (2000, pp. 258–259) seeks answers to the following questions: (1) how does it happen that, as social beings, we become both acting agents and social actors; (2) what is the process of building social identity; and (3) what is the relationship between individual identity and social identity? We translate these questions into an operational definition in which civic actions equal targeted actions for the common good broadly understood. Those actions then "engender" cooperation in local communities (based upon previously developed behavioural patterns) or are spontaneously shaped in the search for effective solutions to diagnosed social problems.

Approaching the topic from a different epistemological angle, yet another theory that inspired the analyses contained in this volume is Pierre Bourdieu's concept of habitus and field. With the ambition to go beyond the classic dichotomy of subjectivism and objectivism, Bourdieu defines habitus as systems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures—that is, as principles that generate and organize practices and representations (Bourdieu, 1990). Therefore, it is an internalized structure that manifests itself in social practices in social fields as a practical sense (meaning a sense of what needs to be done). Habitus combines the objectivity of the structure and the subjectivity of

internalization: the "subjects" are active and knowing agents endowed with a practical sense that is an acquired system of preferences, of principles, of vision and schemes of action (Bourdieu, 1998, p. 25).

Since the field and habitus are interrelated, slow social changes correspond to changes in the habitus. Deep institutional changes in social fields and rapid structural changes constitute a challenge to the practical sense of "subjects" understood thusly: their habitus cannot keep up. Bourdieu and Passeron (1990, p. 60) call such a situation the "effect of hysteresis." Hysteresis creates new opportunities for subjects, but it is associated with risks. A struggle for social position in the fields takes place under as yet undefined rules of the game and unknown sources of legitimation (symbolic capital). Looking from the gender perspective, the question arises, how do female and male subjectivities co-create the fields of family and work in the face of a deep transformation in Upper Silesia?

All three of the aforementioned theoretical approaches serve as sources of possible insight in linking the relational approach of structure and agency. We thus claim that the subjectivity of social actors should be seen within the reflectivity of social entanglements. Entering the "Silesian constellation" we use these theoretical paradigms only as starting points in the analysis of the social change realized by the agents.

Women in Silesia: The Structure of the Volume

The deliberations and diagnoses found in this work fit neatly within the framework of the subjectivity of late modernity. Now, as time and space are being reorganized, tradition intertwines with modernity, the past with the future, and what is local with what is global. Late modern subjectivity depends reflexively on the increasingly fleeting and liquid structure it co-creates. Each research study is a kind of photograph—a temporary still frame of events in the (non-existent) "here and now." The changing lifeworld of Silesia, captured in the studies presented here, shows its specifically "Silesian" face. However, in speaking of "Silesianness," in no way do we refer to any "traditional," "cultural," or "ethnic" understanding of this category. The "Silesianness" we aim to explore is a new configuration of tradition-modernity and, above all, locality-globality. The unique arrangement of the "here and now" in Silesia is at a point and moment in a process of reconfiguration stretching "Silesianness" between the micro (i.e. family) and macro (i.e. coal) levels. At the same time, it also stretches to encompass the past (i.e. tradition) and the future (i.e. a vision of how we want things to be). The analyses contained in this volume capture, in various ways, different points of a "Silesian" system of reference. Consistently, nonetheless, these studies will reflect the perspectives and voices of women from Upper Silesia.

From the perspective of the data and research objectives presented herein, the following chapters are based on various analyses touching upon the main research question: how do women in Silesia cope with changes, and how do they work

towards (within) changes in their environment? The focus of the studies presented here was an investigation of the social and professional activities of women, with particular emphasis on their action strategies in the context of changes that are cultural, socio-political, and civilizational, as well as economic and environmental. We were interested in the behaviour of women, but, above all, their narratives about life, their methods and strategies for acting in various fields, and their perception of change.

This multidisciplinary approach is illustrated in the contributions to this three-part volume with its 11 chapters discussing gender in a number of ways, not all of them explicitly linked to energy. Ensuing in Part I are a few theoretical works that can serve as interpretive frameworks for the analysis of engendered energy issues. In Chapter "Ecofeminism and Social Reproduction: Towards Subsistence Economies," Katarzyna Szopa opens up the broad perspective of ecofeminism which aims to change the world by resisting all forms of discrimination and exploitation of people and nature. This piece offers an important analysis of ecofeminist genealogies, starting from Maria Mies and Vandana Shiva and then moving to the "ecological economy" concept introduced by Luce Irigaray. Then, Chapter "A Morphogenetic Approach to Social Aspects of Energy," confers a more global portrait of the energy transition in Central Europe wherein Germany, Poland, and the Czech Republic represent three different policies towards decarbonization. Martin Durdovic proposes a morphogenetic approach to Archer (1995) as a suitable starting point for theoretically-grounded research into the social aspects of energy. He demonstrates the appropriateness of this perspective, with coal serving as a case in point. In the final chapter of the theoretical section, Marielle Feenstra presents the energy justice concept within a gender and policy dynamics. She explores at the level of the household and community how gender roles, forms of capital, and relations frame agency and different types of participation, decision-making, and benefits in an energy transition—not only in the Global South, but especially the Global North. These three paradigms are meant to show a spectrum of diverse perspectives which can provide new understandings of pre-existing and well-established social science theories and concepts. However, these paradigms are not exclusive and do leave room for other points of departure for further engendered analysis in the future.

Subsequently, Part II of this book tackles the historical changes in Upper Silesia, based upon empirical data from projects covering a period from 1999 to 2014. More specifically, this section addresses the importance of identity, opening with a chapter on the "Cultural Identity of Upper Silesians," an updated version of a text first published in 1999 (Mucha, 1999). Here Kazimiera Wódz and Jacek Wódz provide a summary of key moments in Silesian history which have determined regional culture and identity. Next, Jolanta Klimczak and Kazimiera Wódz write about the specifics of the mining industry restructuring, also delving into cases of women's experiences working in the coal mines. In turn, Urszula Swadźba presents the value of professional work and fulfilment of the role of an employee in the life of Silesian women. Examining both historical as well as current empirical data, Swadźba considers the transition from the materialistic values of labour to the post-materialistic (with

reference to Inglehart, 1990). In Chapter "Transformations of Female and Male Models in Post-mining Communities," Jolanta Klimczak analyses the new social roles of men and women, looking into normative and axiological justifications for the changes taking place in the gender habitus. With quotes from interviews providing illustrations, Klimczak (re)defines the everyday micro-practices of men and women.

Part III of the volume offers the most recent qualitative analyses of the complex constellation of identity, activity, and family—as well as of the energy awareness—of women whom we met and interviewed in the years 2017–2018. Firstly, Barbara Markowska's "Silesian Women's Situated Identity and the Question of Subjectivity" explores the temporal patterns of female subjectivity situated between the industrial world of coal mines and the post-industrial trends of global climate change. Markowska identifies types of female identity strategies and refers to real or imagined communities of women in their attempts to construct new subjectivities. As environmental issues increasingly demand more attention, a chapter on "Environmental Awareness in a Coal Mining Region" by Katarzyna Iwińska scrutinizes the themes of the environment and energy in female narratives showing their understanding of environmental and ecological awareness. She claims that ecological feminism is slowly rising, though still requiring much support to make the mindset change impact visible in the public sphere.

In this book's final chapter, "Heated Attachments to Coal," Irma Kinga Allen explores the constellation of smog and coal in Upper Silesia from the perspective of postsocialist masculinity studies. She argues that the role of historically and culturally sedimented, traditionally gendered subjectivities (particularly in relation to the practice of home heating) have been overlooked in understanding the broader phenomenon of smog and attachment to coal within the region. Allen describes a coalminer's family based on her year of ethnographic fieldwork, which included participatory observation and interviews with local residents, to show the role coal plays in forming and securing gendered (petro-masculine) identities that feel threatened by the rise in concern over the environment, particularly air pollution. This chapter serves as the final word on contemporary developments in a women's world in flux, entwined in a relationship with coal in both the private and public spheres.

Conclusion

Through the selection of the texts described above, we have aimed to participate in and co-create a feminist approach towards feminist ecology rooted in various conceptions of social theories. The genesis of this approach is not clearly rooted in any one theoretical or philosophical pathway, so we agree with Ramazanoglu and Holland (2002, p. 15) that the connection "between ideas, experience and reality can be thought of as a social process of knowledge production. [. . . .] For feminists, this process is intrinsically political and has ethical implications." Therefore, we want to emphasize that the research studies presented (especially in the third part of this

book) also benefitted from a practical and thus political inspiration—one inescapably inscribed both in the logic of the qualitative fieldwork as well as the theoretical and ideological references noted in this volume.

Feminism is taken here as the key to real democracy because it liberates the human voice from patriarchy and enables women to describe their social lives and their understanding of social change. This triangulation of theoretical paradigms (ecofeminism, social capital, and energy justice along with a morphogenetic and public sociology approach) spotlights a more holistic picture while encompassing complex female entanglements with hard coal culture during an energy transition.

We acknowledge that the work presented here is rather an introductory study of an engendered carbon and coal culture. It is also an invitation for further research and a closer look into the lives of people of various identities in energy studies. Due to a certain flexibility in this project, and a willingness to include relevant threads, the book at hand may seem fractional, patchwork-like or even incomplete. We decided, however, that, in this work, the selection must be made in such a way as to focus on the truncated, but nevertheless most important (in our opinion) topics that directly exemplify or herald a "women's transformation." This meant that we had to omit some questions and analyses, choosing not to follow certain issues. We are aware, however, that many inquiries and topics surfacing in this publication remain to be further investigated and rediscovered. The "here and now" tradition, activity, and ecology of Silesian women presented herein is, therefore, a pretext to talk about the growing emancipation and subjective empowerment of women—not only in Silesia, but in general.

As we complete this compendium of texts, we find ourselves in the time of the Covid-19 pandemic. Gender inequality is increasing, whereas the women's strikes in Poland have recently been decreasing. The year 2020 was thought to be exceptional, yet 2021 prolongs this period of abnormality. Still, this strange new world can bring new ways of thinking and acting, so we perceive it as a chance and challenge. More to the point of the book at hand, we believe in the activism of women and their agency that will resist the darkness.

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Part I

Ecofeminism and Social Reproduction: Towards Subsistence Economies

Katarzyna Szopa

The entire male economy demonstrates a forgetting of life, a lack of recognition of debt to the mother, of maternal ancestry, of the women who do the work of producing and maintaining life.
(Irigaray, 1994, p. 7)

Abstract The article aims to describe ecofeminism as a political and theoretical practice within feminist movements that expands academic deliberations. I argue that its roots lie in the grassroots movements often led by women and their communities. In the heart of these movements lies an anticapitalist fight for the means of subsistence. By tracing ecofeminism's forgotten genealogies and showing its various manifestations, such as "the subsistence economy" of Maria Mies and Vandana Shiva, "the politics of the commons" of Silvia Federici, or "ecological economy," coined by Luce Irigaray, I want to expand its theoretical framework and redirect it to the question of social reproduction. Instead of presenting ecofeminism as a cultural trend, it should be considered from the Marxist-feminist angle as a movement that aims to change the world by resisting all the forms of discrimination and exploitation of people and nature.

Introduction: Ecofeminism of Subsistence

Now in the time of the increasing global threat of ecological catastrophe and numerous attacks and even assassinations of ecological activists, women for the most part (e.g. Latin American activists such as Marielle Franco and Berta Cáceres, just to mention the most recent), it is necessary to rethink the link between the capitalist politics of growth, development, and exploitation of the environment and

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increasing violence against women, indigenous people, and minorities. In light of this evidence, the question of shared roots of women and nature's oppression should be at the centre of feminist attention more than ever before. Such a perspective has been developed in particular by those ecofeminist activists whose studies are focused on women's efforts to "protect sustainable local economies" to "save their livelihood and make their communities safe" (Salleh, 2014, p. ix).

Ecofeminism emerged from the political and intellectual activity of women all over the world. At the elementary level, it could be understood as a perspective that tends to correlate the environmental question with the so-called feminist issue. Contrary to deep ecology, however, ecofeminism's primary concern is the interrelation between man's exploitation of nature and his domination over women and other human and non-human beings (Salleh, 1984; Warren, 1999). Thus, it would be insufficient to limit ecofeminism to homogenous and isolated movement, as it exceeds identity politics. Despite its various typologies, such as radical, cultural, Marxist, socialist, and poststructuralist (Sturgeon, 2008, p. 245), ecofeminism should rather be seen as a perspective that intersects multiple spheres of activism and multiple disciplines (e.g. religious studies, philosophy, political science, art, geography, women's and gender studies, etc. [Sturgeon, 2008, p. 239]). In more general use, it describes "a politics that attempted to combine feminism, environmentalism, antiracism, animal liberation, anticolonialism, antimilitarism, and nontraditional spiritualities" (Sturgeon, 2008, p. 241). Within academic discourse, ecofeminism should be understood as a cross-disciplinary perspective that provides analytical tools for understanding and, above all, for resisting such processes as degradation of the environment and deepening social inequalities that harm women, children, and their communities in the first place. But as one of the key figures of the ecofeminist movement, Vandana Shiva emphasizes, it cannot be limited only to academic research:

> We did not gain these insights sitting in the British Library, where Marx had studies capitalism. We learned our lesson in the 'University of the Streets', as I call it. We were activist scholars. We did not rely on book knowledge in the first place, but on experience, struggle and practice. Through a worldwide network of like-minded women we learned about their methods and protest, their successes and their failures (Mies, 2014b, p. xxiii).

This article aims not to describe what ecofeminism is since it is impossible to provide one unified definition of such a perspective.[1] I deliberately avoid typology or classification of ecofeminism according to the already established and dominant Western paradigm of feminist movements.[2] Perspective like that is always already limited and exclusive, and therefore, I would not be able to provide a fixed and stable map of ecofeminism. Thereby, I prefer to present it as a set of various types of

[1] For more adequate characteristic of ecofeminist movement see for example (Gaard, 2011; Estévez-Saá & Lorenzo-Modia, 2018; Sandilands, 1999).

[2] It is common to classify ecofeminism as third wave feminist movement (see for example Moore, 2004).

activisms or political movements that challenge exploitative forms of the patriarchal-capitalist mode of production.

Therefore, I will argue that the question of the relation between women and nature within ecofeminist studies cannot be discussed separately from ties between women and men, including the sexual division of labour and the overall economic, political and social situation influenced by patriarchal capitalism (Irigaray, 1994; Mies & Shiva, 2014, p. 293). Accordingly, patriarchy should not be discussed in separation from economic conditions (Pateman, 1988), such as capitalism with its growth and development ideology. Ecofeminism has been seen as a reactionary perspective due to the separation of these two spheres, patriarchal and capitalist, and consequently ecological and economic, personal and political, nature and culture. It is thus crucial to develop another perspective that would be at the same time anti-capitalist, anti-patriarchal, anti-colonial, and non-eurocentric. As I will argue, such a stand can be traced in various feminist standpoints, be they sociological, political, or philosophical. I will examine three of them, which, in my opinion, attest to the ecofeminist perspective, namely, "the subsistence economy" of Maria Mies and Vandana Shiva, "the politics of the commons" of Silvia Federici, or "ecological economy," as coined by Luce Irigaray.

As I will argue later, it is essential to abolish the old sexist division of labour, namely, the contradiction between production and reproduction, which requires a shift within feminist epistemology. Although the ecofeminist subsistence perspective emerged from Marxist feminism,[3] but at the level of everyday practices, it can only be found in the survival struggles of grassroots movements (Mies & Shiva, 2014, p. 297). Thus, four issues need to be discussed: (1) the genealogy of ecofeminist movement, and (2) the change within feminist epistemology caused by environmental activism; (3) the relation between the exploitation of women and nature should be seen through the relation between production and reproduction within the capitalist mode of production; and finally, (4) the emancipatory potential of ecofeminism. Such a possibility, as I will argue, lies in the subsistence perspective.

[3]Nevertheless, it seems necessary to recall that the approach of subsistence feminists towards Marx is based on a thorough critique of his work. For example Luce Irigaray has posed following question: since "Marx defined the origin of man's exploitation of man as man's exploitation of woman and asserted that the most basic human exploitation lied in the division of labor between man and woman" then "why didn't he devote his life to solving the problem of this exploitation? He perceived the root of all evil but he did not treat it as such" (Irigaray, 1996, p. 19). Analogically, in her essay "Marxism, Feminism, and the Commons" Silvia Federici highlights all the missing points within Marxist analyses, such as marginalization of the question of social reproduction or perception of nature as passive and inert, while the only active agents are human beings and their labor. She emphasizes, however, the importance of Marxist theory for anti-capitalist feminism: "[f]ar more important for feminist politics than any ideal projection of a post capitalist society are Marx's relentless critique of capitalist accumulation and his method, beginning with his reading of capitalist development as the product of antagonistic social relations" (Federici, 2019, p. 154).

Ecofeminist Genealogies

It is commonly assumed that the term "ecofeminism" first appeared in 1974 in the book of French feminist author and civil rights activist Françoise d'Eaubonne. In her famous publication entitled *Le Féminisme ou la Mort* d'Eaubonne draws a parallel between the patriarchal suppression of women and the exploitation of nature (d'Eaubonne, 1981, 2008) and calls for women to lead an ecological revolution to save the planet (d'Eaubonne, 1981, p. 65). Leaving aside the idea that it is exclusively women's task to clean up the mess, what is highly significant is the time in which d'Eaubonne publishes her book. In the year 1974 political revolution and increased activity of the *Mouvement de libération des femmes* (MLF) reached their climax, which resulted in an enormous explosion of French feminist writing. Although I do not necessarily agree with the conviction that the ecofeminist movement began in France in the 1970s, what seems to be crucial here is its political origin, which characterizes not only its French background.

In order to outline the complicated history of ecofeminism briefly, it would be helpful to recall the discussion around the invention of the term within feminist theories. It is worth stressing that d'Eaubonne's book was not translated into English until 1994. In *Toward an Ecofeminist Ethic* (1988), Karen Warren argues that it is precisely d'Eaubonne who coined the term. Nevertheless, Noël Sturgeon notices that Ynestra King should be credited for introducing the notion in the USA's context.[4] Moreover, as evidenced by Sturgeon, "centering d'Eaubonne as the founder of ecofeminism, in turn, closes off possible non-Western origins for the word" (Sturgeon, 2008, p. 247). There is no doubt that ecofeminism as both theory and practice did not emerge solely in the West in the 1970s. According to Salleh, the term "ecofeminism" spontaneously appeared "across several continents during the 70s" (Salleh, 1991, p. 206).

The discussion around the origin of the term reveals an "imperialist" prerogative of Western feminist knowledge production. There is an enormous number of writings related to ecofeminism and many names associated with this movement. The classic ecofeminist literature contains Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* (1962), Rosemary Ruether's *New Woman, New Earth* (1975), Mary Daly's *Gyn/Ecology* (1990), Elizabeth Dodson-Gray's *Green Paradise Lost* (1979), Carolyn Merchant's *The Death of Nature* (1980), and the list goes on. Many feminist writers, activists, or philosophers may not identify themselves as ecofeminists but are concerned about

[4]Carolyn Merchant also highlights the importance of Ynestra King's contribution in the USA: "In the United States, 'eco-feminism' was developed in courses by Ynestra King at the Institute for Social Ecology in Vermont around 1976. It became a movement in 1980 as a result of a major conference that King and others organized on 'Women and Life on Earth: Ecofeminism in the '80s' and of the ensuing 1980 Women's Pentagon Action in which two thousand women encircled the Pentagon to protest anti-life nuclear war and weapons development" (Merchant, 2005, p.194). Moreover, Greta Gaard traces yet another genealogy of ecofeminism by indicating Rachel Carson's book entitled *Silent Spring* (1962) which "launched the environmental movement that took form by Earth Day in 1970" (Gaard, 2011, p. 27).

the relation between women's oppression and the exploitation of nature. Thus, it is impossible to examine the genealogy of ecofeminism without limiting it to one particular perspective. Such a tendency to reduce feminist historiography to Anglo-American perspective seems to be well known within feminist epistemology and the production of knowledge. Salleh notices that "[f]or politico-economic reasons then, eco-feminists working from more visible niches in the dominant English-speaking culture have tended to get their views broadcast first" (Salleh, 1991, p. 206).

There are several reasons for which ecofeminism has become appropriated, or somewhat "Americanized," by the Western feminist movements. The discussion around ecofeminism, as I argue, emerged within the particular historical context when a so-called neoliberal policy arose in the West with its emphasis on radical technological development. It is common to claim that both the movement and the term "ecofeminism" originated with the Western antimilitarist and antinuclear movements in the early 1980s[5] (Sturgeon, 2008, pp. 238–241) when identity politics dominated feminist theories in the U.S. (Fraser, 2013). As a result of such a change, an ongoing dispute between the radical constructivist brand of feminism and so-called "essentialist" feminism dominated the debate among feminist theorists of that time. This "culturalist" tendency of Anglo-American feminism has become a prevalent one also in ecofeminist literature.[6] As Sturgeon notices, "[a] constant and ongoing focus of ecofeminist theorizing, as well as critiques of ecofeminism, has been how to conceptualize the 'special connection' between women and nature often presumed by the designation *ecofeminism*" (Sturgeon, 2008, p. 242).

The discussion on ecofeminism was dominated by two questions: an essentialist notion of nature and a dualistic view of women and nature. Firstly, it was based on the assumption that all women share a common experience of oppression and that the exploitative relation to nature could be resolved if women were liberated from the patriarchal system of domination. Secondly, the discussion's main frame is organized by the set of binary oppositions, such as nature/culture, body/reason, women/men, non-human/human, and their role in constituting a system of domination and hierarchies. However, according to Catriona Sandilands, this discussion on hierarchical dualism not only oversimplifies the development of Western traditions but also tends to take ideas of women and nature out of their historical and sociological context (Sandilands, 1999, p. 20).

This primary narrative of dualism, as well as the lack of agreement concerning the very notion of nature, resulted in a proliferation of different positions among ecofeminists who examined the relationship between women and nature from

[5] According to Stephanie Lahar, "The largest identifiably ecofeminist actions that have taken place in the history of the movement were the Women's Pentagon Actions in November of 1980 and November of 1981, which were organized by participants in the "Women and Life on Earth: Ecofeminism in the 1980s" conference in Amherst, Massachusetts" (Lahar, 1991, p. 31).

[6] After the accusations of essentialism, as Greta Gaard notices, most ecofeminists decided to rename their approach to distinguish it from essentialist feminism. Hence, the proliferation of terms such as "ecological feminism," "feminist environmentalism," "social ecofeminism," or "critical feminist eco-socialism" (Gaard, 2011, p. 27).

different angles: cultural, liberal, or social (Merchant, 2005, p. 197). There is, however, a profound critique of these three stances within ecofeminist literature. The main objection concerns the question of developing an effective strategy for change. Liberal and cultural ecofeminism is criticized for failing to provide a deeper analysis of ecological catastrophe caused by the capitalist global economy. Moreover, it does not recognize such problems as poverty and racism. Social ecofeminism, or ecosocial feminism, is also criticized for using the women/nature rhetoric to justify its actions. Still, the main objection applies to limiting the scope of ecological examination only to social issues and ignoring the mutual relations of the human and non-human world (Gaard, 2011, p. 32).

In the 1980s, several factors which have been causing a significant change within ecofeminist discussion emerged. First of all, there was a shift within feminist knowledge production from the "centre" to the "margins," with some voices from the "periphery" being finally noticed (such as Vandana Shiva from India, Maria Mies from Germany, Wangari Maathai from Nairobi, and women of colour such as Alice Walker, Audre Lorde or bell hooks). They uncovered both the elitist and ethnocentric approaches of early classic ecofeminist analyses, especially to non-Western traditions.[7]

The postcolonial perspective initiated by indigenous activists and scholars challenged the discussion about ecofeminism and the movement itself. As Greta Gaard noticed, "Indigenous women called attention to the colonialism and environmental racism that legitimates hazardous waste, military bomb tests, coal mining, nuclear storage, hydropower construction, and PCB contamination on reservation lands" (Gaard, 2011, p. 31). Such a shift implies a shift from abstract deliberations on the link between women and nature to more materialist analyses that stress the importance of challenging the global economy. Thus, the main objection of Salleh and other non-American ecofeminists addressed to the production of writing within the US middle-class academia,[8] which was "largely preoccupied with ethics, life-style, self-realization, cultural ritual, and art. This, while 456 million people starve today, and one more species will have died out by midnight" (Salleh, 1991, p. 208). As she continues, "What is missing is an explicit and concerted challenge to the multinational structure of economic oppression: a global economy which has a so-called 'advanced' world utterly dependent for its daily survival on the labours and resources of an 'undeveloped Two Thirds World" (Salleh, 1991, p. 208). Thus, it should be widely acknowledged that women from the Third World countries challenged ecofeminism in the predominantly white United States (Sturgeon, 2008, p. 244).

[7]The most significant example of such a debate is Audre Lorde's "An Open Letter to Mary Daly" (Lorde, 1984/2007).

[8]Salleh mentions here such classic ecofeminist books like Rosemary Ruether's *New Woman, New Earth* (1975), Elizabeth Dodson's *Gray's Green Paradise Lost* (1979), Carolyn Merchant's *The Death of Nature* (1980).

Another critical thing to notice is women worldwide's engagement to fight for the right to energetic security in the aftermath of chemicals and nuclear disasters such as these, which took place in Seveso in 1976 or Chernobyl in 1986. The latter provoked the transnational feminist discussion about ecological security, including women from socialist countries in Eastern Europe. Not only feminist or environmental activists but also ordinary women protested against atomic energy. They claimed for the simple necessities of life, such as uncontaminated food or clean water for their children (Mies & Shiva, 2014, pp. 91–97). Luce Irigaray wrote in the context of the Chernobyl disaster that "[h]uge amount of capital are allocated to the development of death machines to ensure peace, we are told. This warlike method of organizing society is not self-evident. It has its origin in patriarchy. It has a sex" (Irigaray, 1994, pp. 4–5). In light of the Chernobyl disaster, it became self-evident why women are in the lead of ecological fights. Women fight for environmental justice not because of their biological connection with nature through the capacity of giving birth but rather because most of them have realized that their bodies are sites of political interventions. That is the reason for which they try to abolish a male-dominated order which leads to ecological disasters.

At the beginning of the 1990s, ecofeminism, perceived both as theory and practice, began to draw on experiences and knowledge of grassroots politics. Instead of wasting the energy of the movement on abstract divagations, whether the relation between women and nature originates from biology or is a cultural construct, the discussion shifted to the feminization of poverty, migration, and nature exploitation. However, within the critical theory and mainstream feminism itself, a robust anti-ecofeminist backlash has continued to appear.[9]

[9]Greta Gaard, in her essay "Ecofeminism Revisited: Rejecting Essentialism and Re-Placing Species in a Material Feminist Environmentalism" (2011), summarizes the discussion around ecofeminism in the 1980s and 1990s. According to Gaard, the "feminist backlash against ecofeminism" exposed an exclusive tendency among so-called "cultural" (or rather, liberal) feminism, which was determined by identity politics. One of the main objections of cultural feminists concerned the question of the relation between ecology and sexism, racism, or classism. As a result, the diverse and intersectional perspective of ecofeminism has been oversimplified and presented as apolitical, ahistorical, and exclusively essentialist despite the fact that "ecofeminism in the 1980s was indeed a broad umbrella for a variety of diversely inflected approaches" (Gaard, 2011, p. 32). The discussion has become hostile to such extent that there were even questions posed whether ecofeminism is truly feminist or ecological enough. Subsequent another accusation formed by the critics of ecofeminism was against its supposedly essentialist spirituality and fixation on the celebration of goddess spirituality and the critique of patriarchy rather than on the set of political activism. "Yet", as Gaard point out, "ecofeminist theory, spirituality, and practice have consistently been rooted in activism that challenges any notions of essentialism" (Gaard, 2011, p. 38). It became clear, however, that the whole "essentialist panic" was, strictly speaking, part of a larger political strategy to silence certain feminists. It is not by accident that such prominent figures, like Luce Irigaray in France, Maria Mies in Germany, Vandana Shiva in India, who declared that the oppression of women and nature must be examined together, were accused of essentialism (see e.g. Cecile Jackson's review essay "Radical Environmental Myths" in which she summarizes Mies' and Shiva's perspective (Jackson, 2001, p. 287).

This ecofeminist perspective, adopted by materialist feminists (e.g. Maria Mies, Vandana Shiva, Ariel Salleh, Silvia Federici, Mariarosa Dalla Costa), is focused on reproduction which is at the same time the sphere of most extensive exploitation. Still, at the same time, it is capable of destabilizing a capitalist economy. As Salleh puts it,

> Ecofeminism is the only political framework I know of that can spell out the historical links between neoliberal capital, militarism, corporate science, worker alienation, domestic violence, reproductive technologies, sex tourism, child molestation, neocolonialism, Islamophobia, extractivism, nuclear weapons, industrial toxins, land and water grabs, deforestation, genetic engineering, climate change and the myth of modern progress. Ecofeminist solutions are also synergistic; the organization of daily life around subsistence fosters food sovereignty, participatory democracy, and reciprocity with natural ecosystems (Salleh, 2014, p. ix).

The main concern of materialist ecofeminists is to create just and sustainable relations between the human and the non-human world. The latter should not be perceived as a transcendental world independent of human intervention or a dominant object. Nature should rather be seen as an active agent which interacts with human activity. Thus, materialist feminists stress the importance of maintaining subsistence economies through ecologically sustainable development or taking care of the commons necessary to sustain the reproduction of life. It is commonly acknowledged among materialist ecofeminists that in a capitalist system of production, the sustainable relationship between women and nature has been circumscribed or even irretrievably broken. Men have appropriated women's traditional knowledge. Hence, in the time of intensive development of reproductive technologies, materialist feminists call for the protection of the reproductive capacities of women and nature (see more: Merchant, 2005; Oksala, 2018).

Materialist ecofeminism avoids the charges of essentialism by emphasizing women's actual material conditions in specific geographical and cultural contexts. Still, it also stresses the importance of developing subsistence production oriented toward the reproduction of daily life. Instead of focusing on the dilemma about the link between women and nature, materialist ecofeminists prefer to examine complex mechanisms that put into effect the relationship between the exploitation of women and the exploitation of nature within patriarchal capitalism. Therefore, they analyze all mechanisms that determine one part of the world's domination over the other. As Johanna Oksala summarizes the materialist stance of ecofeminism, "there is a clear strategic incentive for feminism and environmentalism to join forces: protecting the environment also directly improves the lives of poor women" (Oksala, 2018, p. 219).

To avoid generalizations about ecofeminism's complexity, it is necessary to continuously uncover another, less evident genealogies of the ecofeminist movement and pose a question about its emancipatory potential. Far more interesting to examine are these feminist perspectives, which are not necessarily recognized as ecofeminist but present a thorough critique of domination and create an opening for a non-exploitative, non-patriarchal, ecologically sound, and just future.

The Myth of Mother Earth and Catch-Up Development

There are two myths constitutive of the patriarchal-capitalist ideology of domination and oppression: the myth of constant growth and development, accompanied by the myth of inexhaustible resources of hospitable and caring Earth. These two myths, as I argue, are two sides of the same coin defined by Karl Marx as "metabolic relation to nature" on which capitalist accumulation relies. Thus, as noticed, "labour is the father of material wealth, the earth is its mother" (Marx, 1906, p. 50). Marx referred to the development of agriculture, which should be seen as a crucial stage of the process of enclosure of the commons. This development was inevitably connected to the dispossession of women of their lands, the destruction of subsistence economies, the beginning of the slave trade, and mass migrations. The most relevant illustration of the process is provided by Marx in a passage from *Capital* often quoted in ecofeminist analyses:

> All progress in capitalist agriculture is a progress in the art not only of robbing the worker, but of robbing the soil; all progress in increasing the fertility of the soil for a given time is a progress towards ruining the more long-term sources of that fertility. The more a country proceeds from large-scale industry as a background of its development, as in the case of the United States, the more rapid is this process of destruction. Capitalist production, therefore, only develops the techniques and the degree of combination of the social process of production by simultaneously undermining the original source of all wealth—the soil and the workers (Marx, 1906, pp. 555–556).

The imperative of constant growth of capital is based on a fetishistic assumption regarding the sphere of production. According to this assumption, the developed North would bring emancipation to the rest of the world. But, as many feminists have already shown, its growth depends on consuming vast proportions of the non-Western countries' resources. To maintain such a model of the growth economy, capitalism needs new lands, namely colonies, "whose production can be appropriated almost free of costs" (Mies, 2014b, p. xvi). As ecofeminists try to show, some of these new colonies are both female bodies and land because the capitalist economy is interested in their reproductive capacities.

Thus, the image of nutritious and protective Mother Earth is a founding myth of modern politics of development and industrial society. Being one of the most evocative symbols of the Enlightenment, the myth is based on the naturalization of women and the feminization of nature (Plumwood, 2008, p. 227). Women and nature are both presented as fertile, passive, and ready for being explored, colonized, and possessed. Mother Earth's myth also strongly influenced popular ecofeminist literature, but there is a troubling absence of critical discussion around it (Lahar, 1991, p. 38).[10] The anthropomorphization of nature within ecofeminist studies leads

[10]Although, as Gaard notices, for a decade, ecofeminists like Patrick Murphy, Yaakov Jerome Garb, Catherine Roach, and Sandilands "had advanced critiques of the Mother Earth metaphor (popular among hunters and deep ecologists, as well as advocates of goddess spirituality and cultural ecofeminism) for its gender essentialism and homogenization of ecological, cultural, and species differences" (Gaard, 2011, p. 39).

to the creation of reactionary mythology, which turned into "motherhood environmentalism," i.e. neoconservative discourse based on patriarchal and traditional "family values." As Catriona Sandilands notices, "women's concerns about nature, even if they have eventual public appearance and impact, boil down to an obvious manifestation of natural protective instincts toward home and family. It is all about threats to the children and self-sacrifice for the sake of future generations" (Sandilands, 1999, p. xiii).

Nevertheless, imagining Earth as a mother has not always necessarily been seized by the conservative narrative. Throughout history, there is much evidence that it has been an empowering manifestation of relations between nature and women responsible for reproducing life. This connection, however, was interrupted by the pre-modern patriarchal-capitalist mode of production, which dispossessed women (and other human and non-human beings) of their lands and autonomous control over modes of productions. The process, which Marx defined as primitive accumulation, began in the sixteenth century, and it harmed in the first place women and their communities. Uprooting women from their lands were accompanied by dispossessing them from knowledge, relations with other women, and finally, their bodies (Federici, 2014, 2018; Dalla Costa & James, 1975). Ecofeminists, such as Silvia Federici, Catherine Merchant, and Maria Mies, provide historical documentation of the process, which exposes how the three centuries of European witch-burnings eradicated women herbalists and midwives. The process of primitive accumulation continues to appear with the dominance of neoliberalism and the development of biotechnology.[11] Today it occurs in many different forms of "gynocide" throughout the world (Dalla Costa, 2007; Daly, 1990), e.g. contemporary gynaecology, pharmacological industry, and reproductive technologies.[12] Thus, the domination over women and nature stems from the logic of science and capitalism. The naturalization of women and their bodies, on the one hand, and the feminization of nature, animals, children, people of colour, farmers, and slaves, on the other, serve as a powerful instrument for exploitation in the dominant system of control. As Maria Mies puts it,

> All the labour that goes into the production of life, including the labour of giving birth to a child, is not seen as the conscious interaction of human being *with* nature, that is, a truly human activity, but rather as an activity *of* nature, which produces plants and animals unconsciously and had no control over this process. This definition of women's interaction with nature – including her own nature – as an act *of* nature has had and still has far-reaching consequences (Mies, 2014, p. 45).

[11]The idea of ongoing process of primitive accumulation was elaborated by Rosa Luxemburg, and it is central for Marxist feminists, such as Mies, Shiva and Federici. Thus, as David Harvey suggests, the very process today can be called "accumulation by dispossession" (Harvey, 2005).

[12]It is worth to explain, however, that the critique of technology development is not an attack against technology in general, "yearning for an impossible return to a primitivist paradise", as Federici puts it, "but to acknowledge the cost of the technological innovations by which we are mesmerized and, above all, to remind us of the knowledges and powers that we have lost with their production and acquisition" (Federici, 2019, p. 188).

One of the said consequences is the naturalization of the process of reproduction of life and the division of labour between sexes. From then on, the relation between production and reproduction is going to be seen as the relation between "human labour" and "natural activity" (Mies, 2014, p. 46).

As Luce Irigaray showed, such a process is deeply rooted in patriarchal economies' foundation based on the fundamental forgetting about her—Mother, Goddess, and Nature (Irigaray, 2013). Thus, the capitalist mode of production is just another manifestation of men's exploitative control over women. In *Thinking the Difference: For a Peaceful Revolution* Irigaray clearly asserts that

> [. . .] [W]ealth, understood as accumulation of property through the exploitation of others, is already the result of the subjugation of one sex to the other. Capitalization is even the organizing force behind patriarchal power per se, through the mechanization of our sexually differentiated bodies and the injustice in dominating them (Irigaray, 1994, p. 16).

Although, as Irigaray argues, the oppression of women precedes capitalism and is much more fundamental (Irigaray, 2013), it is within the patriarchal realm that the exploitation of women *as* women is the most intense (Dalla Costa & James, 1975, p. 23): "never had such a stunting of the physical integrity of woman taken place, affecting everything from the brain to the uterus" (Dalla Costa & James, 1975, p. 31).

Thus, Mother Earth's myth functions as a synecdoche for all the forms of exploitation within the patriarchal-capitalist mode of production. Both figures, nature seen as mother and woman seen as nature/mother, are necessary to legitimize male-dominated social orders based on appropriation and exploitation of the others. Simultaneously, women's work on the production of life has to be devalued, marginalized, and even forgotten in favour of labour done by men as producers of surplus value. Various myths even strengthen the disparagement of both nature and women's role in the process of production of value—be they religious (e.g. God conceiving the world without women's intervention), economical (the invisible hand of the market), cultural (male fantasy of giving birth), or scientific and technological (e.g. modern technologies of reproduction)—of man as capable of reproducing his self and by himself. Let us follow Irigaray's compelling argument:

> Instead of germination, birth, and growth in accordance with natural economy, man substitutes the instrument and the product. Harvests become a mere outcome of agriculture, as products of industry. Man cultivates nature and manages its conservation, but often at the price of birth and growth. The cultivation of nature becomes exploitation, which risks destroying the vitality of the soil and the fertility of the great cosmic rhythms. This is the danger we incur when we forget what we have received from the body, our debt toward that which gives and renews life. When we forget our gratitude toward the living being that man is at every instant (Irigaray, 1993, p. 100).

Similarly, Shiva claims that "the reductionist world-view, the industrial revolution, and the capitalist economy were the philosophical, technological, and economic components of the same process" (1989, p. 23). She calls this process "maldevelopment," which is defined as total commodification of natural resources and people, mainly women who are the producers of 80% of the world's food

supplies (Gaard & Gruen, 1993; see also Mies & Shiva, 2014; Dalla Costa & Chilese, 2014; Federici, 2019).

Furthermore, the process of maldevelopment, also known as the Western green revolution or even the blue revolution, is formulated by the ethnocentric and racist ideology of progress against backward traditionalism of the Third World countries. The green revolution, based on agricultural methods, such as growing crops in monocultures using genetically engineered seed, chemical pesticides, deep ploughing, and intensive irrigation (Lahar, 1991, p. 33), has been imposed on the developing countries to intensify the productivity of natural resources. This process destroys indigenous soils and replaces traditional methods and skills acquired by women throughout the centuries by breaking up the collective forms of production defined as subsistence economies (Leacock, 1981, p. 315). Similarly, the blue revolution is related to the aquaculture industry, which causes the degradation of oceans and coastal communities. Not only it forces people to abandon their land to make space for the cultivation of shrimp, but it also destroys natural cycles allowing for spontaneous reproduction of life in favour of "fictitious abundance" replicated in the new "marine prisons" (Dalla Costa & Chilese, 2014, p. 5). There are plenty of forms of such practices, but there is just one aim: to rupture "the 'productive' woman-nature nexus" and to leave "starvation and ecological destruction in its place" (Salleh, 1991, p. 209). One of many consequences is the rise of violence against women, which has lasted for centuries, and the expulsion or rather the appropriation and privatization of their knowledge by modern academic science and technology. It is also no accident that in the countries which applied green- and blue-revolution methods, violence against women has increased.

Now, as Mies and Shiva clearly show, the so-called "postcolonial" Western development, also described as "progress without subjugation," was a new phase of colonialism carried out at the cost of the non-Western (i.e. the Third World, but we should not omit Eastern Europe) local communities, and indigenous women (see, e.g. Mies, 1982). The development policy strips local communities, and women above all, of their economic and personal autonomy by depriving them of their control over the means of subsistence. Basing the myth of catching-up development (which presupposes that "by following the same path of industrialization, technological progress and capital accumulation taken by Europe and by the USA and Japan the same goal can be reached" [Mies & Shiva, 2014, p. 55]), the very process is, in fact, an outright form of plunder, theft, and violent expropriation of nature and human labour. It legitimizes the Western model of economy of growth, but it also preserves the stereotypical view of the non-Western societies that are not capable of reaching the same level of affluence as modern societies (Mies & Shiva, 2014, p. 59). Such a view also characterizes the Western, liberal discourse of equality, according to which women from the Third World countries could gain equal rights without addressing, let alone sizing, the problem of exploitation. As a result, the economic, social, and ecological costs of constant growth in the industrialized countries are carried mainly by the environment and women from the colonized countries of the South (Mies & Shiva, 2014, p. 58).

The critique of the catching-up development myth is fully compliant with the feminist philosophical critique of Western metaphysics and its internal logic. The capitalist imperative of growth, as Irigaray clearly shows, is nothing more but a poor imitation of the natural growth of a plant from bottom to top because it abandons its natural roots. Thus, such growth is seen as mere idealism. Still, its effects are even more serious: it disturbs natural rhythms, which makes us extraneous to our environment and substitutes natural roots for Platonic goods, such as money and commodities. As a result, as Irigaray puts it, our culture separates any cultural development from its natural growth: "More and more we pretend to scorn natural rhythms, substituting the time of our clocks, the tempo of our work or our travels, of economic growth or of sociopolitical or sociocultural events for living in accordance with the rhythms of nature" (Irigaray & Seely, 2018, p. 3). Consequently, the process of "maldevelopment" based on an imperative of growth has even more far-reaching consequences as it affects not only women's bodies or all ecosystems, but it also produces individuals (or rather "dividuals"[13]) incapable of relating to one another. Yet, as Irigaray continues, living by the rhythms of nature

> [. . .] would be beneficial not only to our physical development but also to creating a world community. Indeed, we are beginning to understand, unfortunately for bad reasons, that we all share the same universe and that if some do not respect it here, others will pay for our way of behaving elsewhere.
>
> Respecting the rhythms of nature also allows us to celebrate the same real, even if it happens at different moments and in different modes throughout the world, a celebration which bears witness to the fact that living in communion with nature has a psychic, emotional, and even religious dimension that could cement a community in a non-coercive way. It can create a basic universal link between all living beings (Irigaray & Seely, 2018, p. 3).

Along with the destruction of ecosystems, the turbo-capitalist mode of production inevitably destroys social relations and promotes a culture based on the neuter. To live in accordance with natural rhythms, it is inevitable to elaborate a culture of respect for differences, starting from transforming our tradition. Thus, it is not enough to relate to indigenous knowledge and cultures, but rather, as Irigaray insists, to create a world culture that would solve the following question: What does it mean for a living human to be indigenous to Earth? (Irigaray & Seely, 2018, p. 4). As Irigaray claims, the first biodiversity which we need to take into account is our "sexuate" belonging. It serves as the framework for our relations to the world and the others, be they human or non-human living beings: "[a]ny living being is sexuate. If we consider ourselves as neuter individuals, we cannot behave in an ecological way" (Irigaray, 2015, p. 103). Thus Irigaray insists on elaborating ecological ethics, which

[13]I refer here to Gilles Deleuze's term coined in his famous essay "Postscript on Societies of Control" (Deleuze, 1992). The term has also been used by Mies in her essay "From the Individual to the Dividual: the Supermarket of 'Reproductive Alternative'" (Mies & Shiva, 2014, pp. 198–217), in which she refers to illusion of autonomy and individual choice when it comes to reproductive rights of women. 'Dividuality', according to Mies, is a "control over reproduction process, particularly over women's bodies" (Mies & Shiva, 2014, p. 201).

necessarily coincides with respecting and acknowledging our embodiment and sexuation. As Irigaray notices,

> We have thus been induced to talk a great deal about social justice, but in the process we have forgotten that it needed natural reserves and roots to survive. This is particularly obvious for women as reproducers, for raw materials, for arble soil, but it is also true for any body. No society can exist without its constituent bodies. This tautology is continually forgotten for reasons of male subjective economy, at least in our patriarchal cultures (Irigaray, 1994, p. 17).

Thus, it is inevitable, to begin with, relations between women and men to renounce an already existing model of hierarchies and domination of one human over another and a human being over a non-human being. Such a perspective relies on the assumption that our sexuation, understood as a framework beginning from which we experience the world and relate to it, is a source of reproduction of life. Therefore, as Irigaray suggests, it is urgent to develop a culture based on a relational mode of being in the world. Irigarian ethics of sexuate difference, understood in terms of relational ontology, is thus a project opened to the future, as it requires a radical change of our manner of thinking, relating to oneself, to the other(s), and the world.

Conclusions: Towards Ecofeminist Reproduction of Life

Ecofeminists focused on the subsistence economy, and the reproduction of daily life challenge the capitalist economy. By highlighting the importance of reproductive labour of women and their communities (Mies and Shiva), as well as focusing on the politics of the commons (Federici) or on a new ontology which is based on being-in-relation with other(s) (Irigaray), ecofeminists reveal the limits of commodification and its fixation on the measurement of the unmeasurable.

> The absurdity of trying to monetize the unmeasurable becomes obvious once we ask ourselves questions such as what is the economic value of the planet or what would you be prepared to pay for the life of your child. Feminist ecopolitics must thus begin from the recognition that we need an economic system in which values other than profit, consumer preferences, and economic growth have a chance of coming to the fore (Oksala, 2018, pp. 230–231).

Such an economic system, as I argue, is based on the subsistence perspective (Bennholdt-Thomsen & Mies, 1999). However, the very concept of subsistence perspective has been developed by many feminists, activists, and philosophers who analyzed the hidden, unpaid and undervalued work done by women, peasants, or immigrants worldwide. “Subsistence work as life-producing and life-preserving work in all these production relations was and is necessary precondition for survival; and the bulk of this work is done by women” (Mies & Shiva, 2014, p. 298). At the heart of the subsistence perspective lies a deep concern about the reproduction of life and everyday needs endangered by the global politics of development with their new reproduction technology. Thus, the link in which subsistence ecofeminists see the

correlation between women and nature is related to the reproduction of life in its broad understanding. From the subsistence economy, the perspective reproduction of life is always already a reproduction of social life. It concerns all the spheres and practices responsible for sustaining life, such as food production, providing shelter, childbearing, housework, education, and healthcare. All of these must be seen as inevitably linked with ecological actions. As Salleh puts it, "[e]cofeminists see ecological sustainability and social justice as clearly interlinked. The dismissal of women's expertise 'developed' over thousands of years is the key contributor to both ecological breakdown and rural impoverishment" (Salleh, 1991, p. 210).

The most creative potential of "subsistence alternative" lies in its relational vision of the world, which manifests itself in many different ways, for example to promote a commonality of ecological and feminists initiatives instead of commodity relationship; to challenge individualistic, self-centred, and alienated subjectivity in favour of "such principles as reciprocity, mutuality, solidarity, reliability, sharing and caring, respect for the individual and responsibility for the 'whole'" (Mies & Shiva, 2014, p. 319); to stress the importance of knowledge production not only within academia but at the grassroots activities of local communities; to create and to re-create of life; to preserve and regenerate the commons, such as water, air, waste, soil, resources; to establish cooperation between human beings and nature through maintaining small economies (Dalla Costa & Chilese, 2014, p. 4).

In the face of ecological crisis and constant announcements of the upcoming apocalypse, our capability to imagine a different world and our collective potential to create such a world has been paralyzed. Ecofeminist actions, such as the Chipko movement in India, the Green Belt Movement in Kenya, and the Zapatista movement in Mexico, just to mention a few, provide another vision of the world in which shared control over the means of subsistence and life-ground is set against capitalist destruction. Over the last few years, there have been numerous actions taken throughout the world against all forms of capitalist domination, and women are in the lead of these uprisings. Such activities as #Black Lives Matter in the USA, #NiUnaMenos in Latin America, Black Protests in Poland, or women's march on parliament in Nigeria (see more Giacomini et al., 2018), as well as plenty of manifestos signed by women from grassroots organizations (see Weiss, 2018), indicate that ecofeminism is on the rise (Giacomini et al., 2018, p. 5). Thus, the subsistence perspective is not something that does not yet exist; instead, it has been practised to this very day in many parts of the globe by women, indigenous people, or various minorities. It can also be traced in numerous relations between human and non-human beings, which are based on cooperation and partnership. In other words, the subsistence perspective consists of social relations between human and non-human beings. But we need more than that: we ought to fight for radical reconstitution of our culture, humanity, and our mode of being in/with the world.

As Irigaray notices, life, being the most universal and elementary value, is exposed by multiple threats: "our irreducible place of life, our planet, is itself in peril; our daily atmosphere is polluted in various ways; our food is often toxic; our place of habitation, when it exists, is in various ways subjected to the law of profit rather than of respect for life; murderous wars are carried out by supposedly

democratic regimes with arguments and economic means and technologies beyond the reach of their adversaries; the death penalty exists in countries that present themselves as models of democracy, etc." (Irigaray, 2011, p. 198). Thus, it is urgent to recognize that fresh air, clean water, non-poisoned food, and free access to the means of subsistence are fundamental human rights and should be seen as common goods. However, the discussion cannot be limited only to the discourse of equal rights or opportunities. Instead, it should be based on a quality of relations which is a foundation for each community. As Federici notices, "the production of life inevitably becomes a production of death of others" (Federici, 2012, p. 145). If we continue to keep our blindness to the distance between what is produced and what we consume, we base the reproduction of our life on the exploitation of others. This separation from the others has to be overcome. "Indeed," Federici continues, "if 'commoning' has any meaning, it must be the production of ourselves as common subjects. This is how we must understand the slogan 'no commons without community' " (Federici, 2012, p. 145).

Ecofeminism is and should be a form of political activity that provides us with tools for constructing such commons and transform our social relations. "Commons (communing or 'recommoning', to defend the commons) refers to the new and already existing social relations ('ancient futures') that defend and build shared control over the means of life while prioritizing those who are most exploited and undermined by capitalism" (Giacomini et al., 2018, p. 5).

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A Morphogenetic Approach to Social Aspects of Energy: The Case of Coal

Martin Durdovic

Abstract This chapter proposes the morphogenetic approach, as elaborated within the confines of Margaret Archer's critical realism, as a suitable starting point for theoretically grounded research into social aspects of energy. It demonstrates in outline the suitability of this approach in the special case of coal, the mining and combustion of which epitomize the ambiguity of the industrial era. Five sections of the chapter apply the morphogenetic approach in a way, which is both comprehensive and responsive to empirical data. The analysis draws attention to the present-day constellation in Central Europe, where Germany, Poland and the Czech Republic represent three different policies towards the active use of coal. The chapter concludes with a typology of structures conditioning social interaction around coal. This makes it possible to draw up a comprehensive research strategy embracing women's perspective.

Energy Research and Social Theory

In recent decades, the social impacts of energy production, distribution, consumption, and savings have become an important research topic in EU countries and elsewhere. The importance of the topic is likely to rise from several major reasons. It is due to the ageing and gradual decommissioning of energy facilities and infrastructures, as well as manifold industrial technologies and premises bound to energy strategies of the twentieth century and earlier times; due to adaptation of business models to the principles of Industry 4.0 (esp. smart solutions, internet of things, big data; Schwab, 2016); due to the ongoing energy transitions to low-carbon and more environmentally friendly economies (Smil, 2010); and due to increasing use of renewable energies and the related trend towards decentralization of energy systems.

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In their effects and consequences, all these shifts in our understanding of energies concern individuals and collectivities as users of energy technologies and systems. They act as drivers of emergent social change, taking global populations to the middle of the twenty-first century (Miller et al., 2013).

European countries differ considerably in terms of geographical conditions, availability of (primary and secondary) energy sources or path-dependent government policies to secure energy supplies. In spite of the robustness of energy systems and the need for international cooperation and collective action that lie at the crux of the Energy Union Project (European Commission, 2020), individual countries pursue their unique energy strategies and are free to design their energy mixes. Although an ambitious commitment to stop emissions of greenhouse gases has recently been declared in the European Green Deal (European Commission, 2019), there is no universal formula for the energy transition. On the contrary, the future seems abundant in uncertainties making various scenarios possible. Whereas energy experts are at odds, which scenario is more likely to happen or which strategy is the most viable one, politicians and decision-makers are often reluctant to respond to evolving conditions within the energy sector on time. As we surely need energy to power the expanding army of fancy technologies we employ on a daily basis, the tensions are growing, and the public is becoming concerned. The time has long been ripe for the kind of reflexivity that sociology has been offering in energy matters for many decades now.

The engagement of sociology (or more broadly of social sciences and humanities) in energy issues often takes the direction of *applied research*. This corresponds well to the nature of energy research, which is rather practical in its orientation and aims for applied results. Nowadays, energy engineers and technicians are becoming increasingly aware of their work's impacts on various stakeholders (populations, communities, social groups, organizations, etc.). Energy projects, technologies, and facilities develop within the large contexts of social structures. They influence economies, lifestyles, culture, and normativity. They generate disputes and conflicts over differing values and interests. Many energy experts rightly assume that collection and proper evaluation of social data may contribute substantively to interdisciplinary knowledge and capture phenomena that technical data themselves are unable to register accordingly. In addition, the expertise of sociology proves useful in situations when it is necessary to foster communication among stakeholders and participation in decision-making (Callon et al., 2009). Tensions occur between narrowly defined expectations and technicians' practical needs on the one hand and sociological reflexivity on the other. Sometimes these tensions give rise to multilaterally enriching experiences, other times, they may become puzzling and frustrating.

The meaning of social data lies in their *interpretation*. It should be kept in mind that data collection, however tricky and laborious, is only one part of the sociologist's job. In the perspective of critical realism (see Danermark et al., 2002; Archer, 2015) that I adopt in this study, the purpose of social data is to reveal generative mechanisms and employ them in describing and explaining societal transformations (and relative non-transformations). Yet every data set or piece of evidence provides

only indications of these mechanisms, while the remaining work relies on the judgmental rationality of sociologists. Similarly, translating sociological findings into applicable measures or policies is scarcely a matter of purely technical reasoning. What is typically required for putting things in motion is the involvement of more individuals in communicative reflexivity and collective action. To tackle tough practical problems efficiently and responsibly, our solutions not only have to be technically correct, but they also need to intervene in existing structural settings in a creative but socially acceptable manner.

Sociology has the advantage over many other sciences in that its language sticks closer to the language of laypeople. Politicians, business people, or other decision-makers sometimes feel overconfident about understanding the meaning of social data, especially the brief messages presented in quantitative data. Such disregarding of proper sociological data interpretation is risky. It may result in oversimplification and excessive accommodation of research outcomes to a technical point of view or expectations of groups with vested interests. This is one of the main pitfalls of applied research in sociology against which we should guard ourselves with the principle operating almost everywhere in basic research: to get interesting social data and gain the most from their analysis, we need convincing theory to guide us in our efforts. If employed adequately and sensitively, the social theories we have will make the data interpretation more complex, revealing and illuminating.

Thereof we arrive at the subject of this chapter. The effect of theoretical estrangement is essential for the engagement of sociology in energy issues too. My aim is to propose the morphogenetic approach, as elaborated within the confines of critical realism by Margaret Archer (1995), as a suitable starting point for theoretically grounded research into social aspects of energy and demonstrate in outline the suitability of this approach on the special case of coal. The chapter will deal not so much with narrowly focused theorizing on particular social phenomena; it will rather treat the morphogenetic approach as a *metatheory,* making it possible to systemize sociological investigation of energy issues on a large scale, covering various topics. In my endeavour, I will be partly drawing upon my book published in Czech, where I have made use of the hermeneutic concepts of narrative, conversation and dialogue to argue that it is beneficial for social theorizing to combine critical realism with hermeneutics (Durdovic, 2019).

The first task of the chapter will be to sketch some distinctive features of the morphogenetic approach briefly. In the next four sections of the chapter, I will attempt to explore the merits of this approach for an explanation of the changing role of coal in late modernity. I will strive to make my application of the morphogenetic approach to the case of coal both comprehensive and responsive to empirical data. To attain this, the analysis will draw attention to the present-day constellation in Central Europe, where Germany, Poland and the Czech Republic represent three different policies towards the active use of coal. The last section of the chapter will summarize the results of previous sections and put forward a typology of structures conditioning social interaction around coal. It will also indicate steps towards a comprehensive research strategy embracing women's perspective.

Distinctive Features of the Morphogenetic Approach

The book *Realist social theory: the morphogenetic approach* by Margaret Archer (1995) is likely to be the most important and complex sociological elaboration of the general philosophical position of critical realism developed by Roy Bhaskar (2005, 2008). The book opens with an unyielding critique of "downwards" and "upwards conflation" in social theorizing; or to put it in different terms: it refuses to accept both sociological holism and sociological individualism as adequate bases for explaining society. In addition, it rejects the intermediate solution of "central conflation" which maintains that structure or system on the one hand and agency or individuals on the other are constitutive of one another, and it is, therefore, necessary to "elide" both holism and individualism (hence the term "elisionism" coined by Archer notably for the structuration theory of Anthony Giddens). This polemic vein of presenting the morphogenetic approach helps us understand its positioning in contemporary social theory.

However, to demonstrate its suitability for the study of social aspects of coal, we have to limit ourselves to positive features of the morphogenetic approach. In contrast to conflationary social theorizing, Archer argues that it is crucial for the methodology and practice of social research to focus on the *interplay* between structure and agency. Not the "duality" (as in Giddens), but *analytical dualism* distinguishing between structure and agency, as two parts of emergent social dynamism, becomes the leading clue for the study of societies. "Analytical" is meant in contradistinction to "metaphysical" dualism here. The point is not to divide social being into two ontologically disconnected entities but to pursue the general insight that structural settings and interactions among social actors represent two peculiar forces coproducing the concrete historical totality of any social whole. The morphogenetic approach is an attempt to translate this general idea into a coherent model of social reality susceptible to various applications within social sciences.

Archer (1995) grounds her argument in two basic propositions: "(1) That structure necessarily pre-dates the action(s) leading to its reproduction and transformation; (2) That structural elaboration necessarily post-dates the action sequences which gave rise to it" (p. 15). From these two propositions, the morphogenetic approach derives a multitude of points that are extremely beneficial for the reconstruction of theorizing in the age of late modernity, when emergent impacts of societal transformations materialize into an indisputable reality of changing environmental, material or technology structures conditioning human existence.

In our context, it is important to highlight that these propositions entail two essential recommendations for the practice of social research. On the one hand, it is advisable not to treat interpretations and actions of individuals and collectivities as self-contained units disconnected from broader structural settings and instead to always search for their structural conditioning. On the other hand, it is desirable to resist the temptation of treating structures as matrixes operating behind the backs of people or in their heads, and instead to always conceive of them as (often unforeseen and continuously evolving) results of prior interventions into the world made by

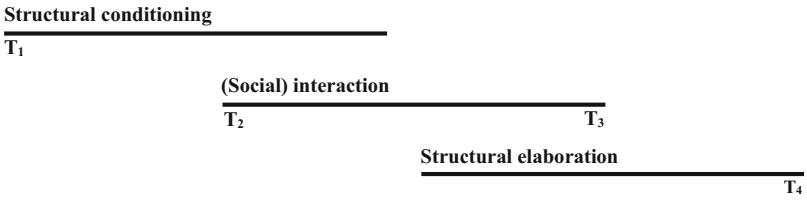

Fig. 1 The morphogenetic sequence. Source: Archer (1995, p. 76)

social actors themselves. It is this interplay between structure and agency and its tracing back to the past and forwards to the future that, as I am going to argue, seem to be favourable for the study of social aspects of energy. Today, the actors of energy transitions not only have to come to grips with the inheritance of the industrial past, but they also have to make decisions that will shape our future in the increasingly interdependent global world.

It is apparent from Archer's definition of morphogenesis that terms like "shaping" or "forming" are indeed symptomatic of this approach. Even though the concept of morphogenesis has, in fact, its origins in biology and found its way to sociology through cybernetics, Archer (1995) prefaces her definition with a caveat that "society is not a simple cybernetic system, which pre-supposes a particular structure capable of carrying out goal-directed, feedback regulated, error-correction" (p. 166). It is because societies, especially the modern ones, are open systems, inhabited by people and permanently remoulded by their ingenuity, creativity and innovations. The actual definition emphasizes the dynamics, which is at play here. "Hence the use of the term 'morphogenesis' to describe the process of social structuring; 'morpho' indicating shape, and 'genesis' signalling that the shaping is the product of social relations. Thus 'Morphogenesis' refers to those processes which tend to elaborate or change a system's given form, state or structure. Conversely, 'morphostasis' refers to those processes in complex system-environmental exchanges which tend to preserve or maintain a system's given form, organisation or state" (Archer, 1995, p. 166). It is possible to claim without further qualification that it is precisely the rising share of morphogenesis that makes nowadays the events in the energy sector in Europe so unpredictable.

The Fig. 1 of the morphogenetic sequence above uses the temporal sequence of T_1 to T_4 for the most abstract presentation of the historical (temporal) dynamics of social change. At the outset of the sequence (time T_1), structural conditions result, as intentional or unintentional consequences, from previous ideas, plans, actions, events, etc. Following is the interaction across social relations (T_2 to T_3) in the course of which actors (individuals, collectivities) influence or affect one another by way of action and, in effect, intervene in the continuous flow of events. At the end of the sequence (time T_4), the interactions generate structural elaboration or transformation and thus give rise to future structural conditions. The illustration makes clear the generality of the morphogenetic approach, which is applicable to the study of diverse phenomena in the practice of social research. It should also be noted that the

lens of the morphogenetic *cycle*, as Archer sometimes calls it, is nothing absolute but is relative to the position of a sociologist, who analyses society in a certain time span and with regard to a defined substantive area of reality.

How does it come about that social interaction and its outcomes transform into structural elaboration? How can the power of agency intervene in the course of events in a way that leads to new structural conditioning? The most important tool that helps critical realists to capture the specific nature of morphogenetic processes is the concept of *generative mechanisms*. To use one illuminating example: When representatives of a municipality respond to a problem of rising traffic in the city centre by adopting a norm by virtue of which coloured lines appear along many streets, preventing non-residents from parking there (as it happens in Prague and elsewhere), then reflexivity of actors seeking their individual solutions intensifies. New choices reshuffle value preferences and bring about changes in behavioural patterns. A number of interdependent effects may pop up in different places that, in their sum, foster further structural modifications: accumulation of cars in suburban areas, increasing demand for parking lots stimulating new business opportunities, growing interest in the use of public transportation, etc. As a recent collective volume (Archer, 2015) testifies, the precise description of generative mechanisms as causal pathways triggering, through initial intervention in one structure, further structural modifications is surely not a matter of unanimous consent even among realists themselves. The sociological engagement in energy research can contribute to exploring the merits of the concept for the explanation of social processes.

Another point repeatedly emphasized by Archer (2020) is that "every theory about the social order necessarily has to come in a sack, SAC: it must incorporate Structure, Agency and Culture" (p. 138). Archer's defence of this explanatory triad and treatment of culture as a ubiquitous, irreducible phenomenon of social life goes back to her earlier book, *Culture and Agency,* published first in 1988 (Archer, 1996). The incorporation of culture strengthens the plausibility of the morphogenetic approach as it acknowledges that ideas are forces at work during social interaction and enter the emergent logic of structural elaboration. However, Archer's (1996, pp. 103–111) ambition to conceive of culture as the objective content of intelligibilia, as theorized by Karl Popper with his concept of objective World 3 knowledge, has provoked an internal debate within the critical realist community (Archer & Elder-Vass, 2012). In contrast to Archer, Dave Elder-Vass argued that the external moment of culture takes the form of normative pressures exerted by groups of people, something he proposes to call "norm circles" (Elder-Vass, 2012).

In my view, it is essential to acknowledge the fact that actors or agents do actualize entrenched cultural contents in novel ways, thus transferring their meanings. I have proposed elsewhere the term *generative hermeneutics* to denote the area of research that—in compliance with critical realism—examines how meaning articulated in speech emerges out of social interaction and generates shifts in understanding that, through their conversion into action, co-produce social change (Durdovic, 2018). As I will point out later in the text, I believe that accentuating the hermeneutic activity of *interpretation* may be beneficial for the topic that is of our concern here too.

Coal as a Precondition of Industrial Modernity

Energy transitions in European countries—be they already underway, as in Denmark (Eikeland & Inderberg, 2016) and Germany (Agora Energiewende, 2017), or only in their early stage, as in many other cases—are important drivers of societal changes. With its emphasis on continuous elaboration of real structural settings, the morphogenetic approach matches up the peculiarity of the energy sector and seems to be convenient for capturing the interdependencies between energy and societal transformations. The example of coal that I will sketch is nothing but one partial attempt to follow these interdependencies. Contrary to the currently predominant research trend that views energy technology innovations as means of getting to a brighter, sustainable *future* of Europe and the global world, this example inevitably takes us back to the *past*, which gave rise to the structural orderings conditioning our *present time*. It discloses the present as an emergent consequence of aspirations pursued vigorously by historically preceding generations of people.

Coal as raw material, its mining and combustion epitomize the ambiguity of the modern industrial era (Freese, 2016). On the one hand, they represent a contested, undesirable inheritance of the past from which we want to dissociate ourselves. Roughly since the 1980s, the noticeable and measurable negative effects of coal mining and combustion (land degradation, pollution, acid rains, the devastation of ecosystems, effects on human health) contributed considerably to the rising environmental awareness. As the erstwhile buzzwords of "risk society" and "reflexive modernization" coined by Ulrich Beck (1992; Beck et al., 1994) testify, sociology started readily dealing with environmental problems, and it did not take long to denunciate the energy sector because of the two demons it cherished: massive coal combustion and nuclear fission. The new expert consensus emerged that the usage of coal is one of the main causes of global climate change. According to the latest comprehensive report on climate change, the whole of fossil fuel combustion contributed 78% to the total greenhouse gas emissions between 1970 and 2010; and the same increase between 2000 and 2010 "directly came from the energy (47%), industry (30%), transport (11%) and building (3%)" (IPCC, 2014, p. 46). In accord with this, the EU founded its overall "2050 energy roadmap" on continuous and consistent decarbonization of energy systems (European Commission, 2012).

In comparison with nuclear energy, which is potentially highly dangerous and produces the burden of nuclear waste, but does not emit greenhouse gases, relatively less speaks in favour of using coal as a strategic means for securing electricity and heat. Similarly, the continuous use of petroleum products (including liquefied petroleum gas—LPG) and natural gas (including compressed natural gas—CNG) also seem to be in part more tenable in terms of environmental policies, in part still indispensable in transportation and shipping worldwide. Apart from this, we could extend the list of the wrongdoings linked somehow to coal to cover historical (excesses of industrial capitalism) and contemporary (coal mining in the third world or under totalitarian regimes) social injustices stemming from mining itself

or the unequal distribution of related profits and damages. All these and other factors furnish the image of coal with gloomy colours. The "carbon price" imposed since 2005 on CO_2 emissions by the European Trading System led to a drastic reduction of electricity production from coal; as of 2019, only three major exceptions to this trend occur in Europe: Germany, Poland, and the Czech Republic (Jones, 2019).

On the other hand, we should remain conscious of the fact that for more than a century, coal has been widely accepted and celebrated as a crucial energy source in Europe. Smil (2006) points out that the common equating of the nineteenth century with the quintessential coal era is correct only as far as England and parts of continental Europe (Belgium, coal-mining regions of France, Germany, Bohemia, and Poland) are concerned. Taken as a whole, it was only during the second half of the 1890s that the energy content of fossil fuels (industries, households, transport) surpassed the aggregate content of biomass fuels (wood, charcoal, crop residues) consumed worldwide (Smil, 2006, p. 29). Even with this qualification, however, it is indisputable that it was the power extracted from coal that set in motion the mechanisms of the industrial revolution and only then was overridden gradually by other carbon or low-carbon energy sources.

Energy production is the backbone of complex infrastructures securing the smooth operation of contemporary societies. Continuous energy supply is a precondition for the majority of other activities or processes to take place. In the course of the twentieth century, European countries witnessed an amazing increase in standards of living that would not have been possible without many sophisticated and revolutionary industrial products and consumer goods pervading the day-to-day lives of their populations. Yet this industry development resulted from the employment of innovative technologies, whose operation, in turn, depended on steady and reliable input of energy. In this regard, the mining and combustion of coal conditioned complex processes of industrial modernity in Europe with large and long-lasting social impacts (Folkers 2021). The morphogenetic approach not only helps us to organize the knowledge of these impacts, but it also improves our understanding of relations among different structural conditions and elucidates the function of agency in the ongoing structural elaboration.

Semi-Social Structures: Material, Technology, Environment

In this and the following sections of the chapter, I will attempt to tailor the morphogenetic approach to suit the needs of theorizing the social aspects of coal. Firstly, let me distinguish a set of structural conditions that we can call *semi-social*: they concern structures that, in spite of not being social in their very nature, have an impact on social interactions and, at the same time, evolve under the constant influence of these interactions. These structural conditions anchor the social order and disorder in realities transcending human interpretations and thus pose more-or-less tangible and often inviolable limits to capacities of individuals and collectivities for deliberate actions or behaviour of any kind.

We do not have to reinvent the wheel in order to see that such conditions marked, in varied ways, the very outset of the modern era. *Material* structures recognized during the development of manufactories and trade (national, international, intercontinental) in the early modernity embroiled the discovery and production of raw materials, as well as the ownership of wealth in an emerging framework of economies and their uncompromising calculations of profits. Coal became an indispensable part of the overall business mechanism as the most efficient source of heat and power for steam engines and later as a means of electricity production. Processes of material reforms and restructuring have revised old traditions, by far not only economic ones, and generated new, more secular positioning of social actors. Needless to say that many found themselves swallowed up by crushing forces exceeding everything known from previous human history (Polanyi, 2001).

One of the forces, seemingly non-social, started to rise unprecedentedly and exert enormous pressure on the formatting of social interactions. The advancement of modernity is inseparable from a growing network of *technology* (infra)structures, whose existence conditions ways of interaction among people and enhances their ability to carry out work and intervene actively in the ongoing course of events. Coal combustion contributed markedly to unleashing the potentials of the technologically grounded world, as it provided energy for an endless assemblage of industrial machines and appliances. The impacts on social interactions attendant on the elaboration of technology (infra)structures encompassed, most importantly, the well-known processes of urbanization and automation, as well as revolutions in the areas of transportation and communication (Smil, 2017, pp. 295–384). Despite the declining importance of coal as an energy source, these impacts have become an integral part of the European past, and their emergent outcomes make up the legacy of the industrial era that European nations still have to deal with.

This is especially the case of the most notorious coal-mining regions and the adjacent large heavy industry parks. Not only because of the multitude of the labour force (primarily men-miners, secondarily women) attracted to the surrounding areas and attached to the material and technology conditions of an industrially governed social life, but also due to changes brought about in the natural environment. Thereby we arrive at the third type of semi-social structures resulting from prior structural elaboration: *environmental* structures.

Unsettling impacts on the environment are likely to be the ones most often discussed and associated with the repercussions of coal mining and combustion. To be sure, they are profoundly interlinked with both material and technological structures because the coal industry naturally flourished in localities, which were rich in coal as the material substance—and those localities then became transformed so as to host requisite technology facilities and make efficient exploitation of deposits possible. Alternatively, coal power plants and factories were based at the points of entry of imported coal. All these are structural interdependencies generated by practical interventions carried out during the modern industrial era by the alliance of entrepreneurship on the one hand and natural and technical sciences on the other. However, it is mistaken to think that the expert engagement of these sciences alone can suffice to heal the wounds caused to the environment, as the sheer technocratic

view sometimes suggests. It has long been acknowledged that assisting societies in coping with the impacts of transformative technologies is part of the mission of social sciences and humanities in the age of late modernity (Beck, 1992; Latour 2013).

As much as it is true that material, technology, and environmental structures are real and dependent on nature, its processes and fortunes, it is also uncontested that we encounter these structures in a shape which resulted from prior social interactions. They would not exist without actions, or abstentions from the action, by the past generations, without the effort, labour, or restraint of our predecessors. It is the strength of the morphogenetic approach that it enables us to treat both *social* and *semi-social* structures partly as products of structural elaboration, partly as conditions for the future agency. This dynamism generates the emergent historical uniqueness of societies, making it so difficult to foresee what the presently evolving interactions among events and actions will bring about in a more distant future. The fate of coal that turned the celebrated substance into a controversial relic of modernity is just one telling example.

Morphogenetic Elaboration in the European Coal Heartlands

Germany, the Czech Republic and Poland are three countries where the ambiguous social legacy of coal is present more markedly than elsewhere in Europe (Alves Dias et al., 2018; Osička et al., 2020). From the sociological viewpoint, this legacy continues to shape the *social structures* of entire nations and leaves behind a highly pervasive trace, especially in regions directly bound to the coal industry. Yet, the strategy of decarbonization and overall transformation of energy systems unleashes a new dynamism of social interactions. Rising environmental awareness, changing economic view of energy resources utilization, and the influx of technological innovations endorse revisions of energy systems and entangle societies in structural elaboration. Nowadays, the three countries represent three different policies towards the active use of coal: a fast phase-out, a progressive phase-out and phase-out deferral via modernization.

As is well known internationally, Germany has set out on a pioneering journey of the *Energiewende*. In the course of time, the two demons of unrestrained modernity, nuclear energy as well as coal, are to be expelled uncompromisingly from the country's energy mix and replaced by other sources, preferably renewables, which are to cover at least 55% of the domestic electricity consumption in 2035 and 80% by 2050 (Agora Energiewende, 2017, p. 4). Both Germany's trust in affordable technological innovations and its geographical position, which predisposes it in particular for the utilization of power from onshore and offshore wind farms, are the most important drivers of the change. The *Energiewende* intensified after the Fukushima Daiichi accident in April 2011 and meant a nuclear phase-out (*Atomausstieg*)

primarily. However, it is clear that if Germany is to meet the national climate goals, it needs an exit from coal-based electricity as well (Agora Energiewende, 2016). The fact that such an exit is not yet happening and its advent remains a long-term matter (with complete phase-out from coal-fired electricity generation envisioned in 2038, as reported in Agora Energiewende & Aurora Energy Research, 2019), is a thorn in the flesh of those who criticize the undertaking of the *Energiewende* as unrealistic.

The advances made towards reducing the coal mining and combustion in Germany match in part the situation in other European countries, where efforts to make electricity (and heat) generation more environmentally friendly run up against the prior morphogenetic elaborations of the industrial era. Even though the trend towards decentralization of energy systems is immense and the share of traditional big utilities is falling in favour of "citizens-owned projects" (Agora Energiewende, 2017, p. 27), Germany still needs stable energy from coal-fired power plants and, instead of simply switching them off, it has to aim at their ecologisation. The mining of hard coal in Germany was replaced entirely by imports in 2019 in the wake of low commodity prices and due to a growing force of the Emission Trading System, while its combustion amounted to 12.9% of gross electricity generation in 2018, well behind lignite with 22.5% (Agora Energiewende & Aurora Energy Research, 2019, pp. 14–17). Finally, yet importantly, German politicians are aware of the fact that the turning down of both hard coal and lignite will have large impacts on the respective regions and will necessitate complex strategies of regional redevelopment. The state administration will have to assist in social interaction among stakeholders, during which the regional communities will seek viable ways of disengaging from the trap of obsolete structural conditioning.

Compared to Germany, Poland opts for a much more conservative approach to coal. Whereas the German ambition is to cut down the proportion of coal in electricity (and heat) generation to as low as 17% in 2030 (Agora Energiewende and Aurora Energy Research, 2019, p. 5), the updated *Energy Policy of Poland until 2040* foresees, within the same time frame, only a mild reduction from 69% in 2020 to 56–60% in 2030, with a further decline in the next decade being conditional on the launching of a nuclear power plant in Poland by 2033 (Ministry of Energy, 2018; 2019, p. 21). The words voiced by Energy Minister Krzysztof Tchórzewski in 2016 portray the strategy as a way forward: Poland is to become "the leader in modern coal-fired power generation" and "first in Europe in terms of clean coal technologies" (Kuchler & Bridge, 2018, p. 136). In fact, it is an exceptional departure from the EU decarbonization policy that revives sentiments of the past, when coal deposits, mining and heavy industry used to be emblematic of national development and security. Understandably enough, the Polish way out of the labyrinthine situation in the energy sector in Europe and worldwide not only meets with critiques accentuating the environmental aspects but also raises concerns about depletion and decreasing quality of resources in Polish coal regions (Gawlikowska-Fyk & Maćkowiak-Pandera, 2019; Kuchler & Bridge, 2018, p. 143). After the European Green Deal package of 2019, the negotiations between Poland and the EU carry on in a redefined and more pressing context (Tomaszewski, 2020).

With its plan to add new units to existing nuclear reactors by 2035, with its share of coal-fired power generation in 2018 equal to 47% (43 lignite, 4 hard coal; Energy Regulatory Office, 2019, p. 9) and with the intention to shift away from coal gradually during the next decades (Ministry of Industry and Trade, 2014, pp. 48–49), the Czech Republic's energy policy occupies the halfway position. The only hard coal mining company (OKD) located in North Moravia faces serious economic difficulties, declared bankruptcy in 2016 and underwent a government bailout. Together with this, the opencast mining of lignite in North Bohemia is accompanied by tense debates on the territorial limits preventing runaway exploitation that were imposed by the Czech Government in the past. It is symptomatic that the two just mentioned coal-mining regions developed historically into the poorest ones in the Czech Republic and are infamous for attracting social problems and exclusion, not to mention health hazards. This is a lesson known from many other countries dealing intensely with the legacy of industrial modernity: semi-social structures tend to interlink with social structures and generate emergent adverse effects.

In spite of inevitable oversimplification, the brief sketch of the variance in national energy strategies I ventured in the preceding paragraphs can help us to examine further the application of the morphogenetic approach to energy issues. On the one hand, we observe important structural similarities among the Czech Republic, Poland, and Germany. They lie geographically in the "coal belt" stretching across Europe from the west to the east, which was the first necessary material condition (HBF, 2015, p. 14). Technological progress in all three countries unfolded under the flag of the industrial revolution, yet its local and cross-border environmental impacts subsequently cast a black shadow on the very idea of modernity. We could, without doubt, trace similar patterns of economic relations being in place in the coal regions of these three countries. Finally, yet importantly, Poland, the Czech Republic and former East Germany were part of the Eastern bloc. Social interaction in these countries was subject to strict control by communist ideology, which produced phenomena of social engineering uncommon for the Western world (e.g. a glorification of miners at the expense of other social groups, centrally managed regional development or harsh demolition of settlements).

It is important, on the other hand, to keep in mind that the variance in national energy policies represents an offshoot of an ongoing structural elaboration. Constellations of interests, values, and power peculiar to the given country or coal region translate into historically unique interactions (conflicting, consensual) among stakeholders and either give a specific direction to a novel morphogenetic shaping of social relations or nourish the countervailing tendencies towards reproduction or morphostasis. Vis-à-vis trend changes unfolding in the energy sector, the coming to grips with the *social legacy* of coal that we can observe in Europe, and most markedly in Germany, Poland, and the Czech Republic, calls for adopting a viewpoint that will be clearly sociological in its nature. A viewpoint that will address both the generative *mechanisms* weaving the social interactions around energy in historically unprecedented practical problems and the generative *hermeneutics* through

which the experience of these problems finds its way into the spoken and written language organizing the relations among actors.

As signalled earlier, I believe in general that the accommodation of hermeneutics in critical realism can help us grasp the emergent nature of contemporary advanced societies in a manner that will overcome the traditional methodological disputes between "explanation" and "understanding." The approach towards the study of energy advanced herein conforms to this view. Everyday *conversations*, oral or literal *narratives* of episodes, events or processes, and reflexive *dialogues* not only depict the commonplace; they also produce information and knowledge in which the meaning attributed by actors to ongoing structural developments manifests itself (Durdovic, 2019, 2021). An extensive subject matter for energy transformation studies surfaces here that has already been significantly explored and elaborated on in the field of "energy humanities" (Szeman & Boyer, 2017), in narrative research on energy matters (Moezzi et al., 2017), in a discourse analysis avoiding the stalemate of French (post)structuralism (Dryzek, 2013) or in a combination of various interpretative approaches (Sovacool, 2019). Following the pathways of intersubjective or technically mediated communications, emergent interpretations resonate across social relations, bolster imagination and reflexivity, influence decision-making, and translate into actions. By virtue of the morphogenetic cycle that advances from the past to the future by the force of structural elaboration, the possibility of social change arises that is inseparable from the élan of human agency.

Social Structure Conditions: Explicit, Implicit, Latent

In order to complete my proposal for employing the morphogenetic approach in the study of social aspects of energies, let me distinguish the second set of structural conditions that I call *social* because these conditions indicate that freedom of agency is wedged in the constraining order erected and maintained by people through their action or behaviour. As in the previous section, we obtain a complementary threefold classification that can serve as a metatheoretical guideline for a sociologist conducting empirical research.

In some cases, actors spell out normative rules more-or-less intentionally, make agreements about these rules, respect them consciously and even codify them in legally binding norms, policies, or social institutions. The resulting *explicit* structures are crucial for the long-term success of collective action because they provide the relatively most precise and reliable framework for cooperation with others (Elder-Vass, 2012, pp. 15–74; Horne & Kennedy, 2017). Energy legislation is a good example of such structures. In many other cases, however, ways of acting and behaving do not rest on such an explicit framework of meaning. The most common day-to-day practices we do not think about much, such as the care of our own body and its needs, manipulation with things and devices or routine interactions with other people, including their gender dissimilarities, follow a different pattern of non-verbalized habits, tacit knowledge or formal speech phrases. These *implicit*

structures of our daily lives rely mostly on many previously acquired experiences with the world that have hardened in the course of time into the fixed preunderstanding we take for granted and are reluctant to reflect on anymore. We can consider the energy consumption (and "prosumption") patterns of individuals, households, or larger social units as examples of such implicit structures governing people's behaviour.

The logic of the morphogenetic cycle entails that both explicit and implicit social structures are susceptible to continuous modifications initiated by actors themselves intentionally or taking place as an emergent unintentional effect of many concatenated actions and events. In order to respond effectively to novel situations or pressing problems or to open up opportunities and create incentives, changes to explicit normative structures made by decision-makers in a top-down fashion typically need to be coupled to changing implicit practices, habits, or daily routines. Deep-seated habitual behaviours on the part of end-users pose an obstacle to the diffusion of energy innovations (DeSombre, 2018, pp. 107–130). As the recent interest in "practice-based interventions" testifies, the strategy of complementing explicit norms, policies, or institutions with experimental practice-centred projects looms as a means to energy savings and more profound acceptance of technology innovation (Laakso et al., 2021; Sahakian et al., 2021).

Energy experts like quantitative data that they can add to their technical models. The recent upswing of smart meters makes the availability of such data about households, communities, businesses or municipalities much easier than it has been until now but raises persistent questions concerning privacy. Likewise, it is obvious that the knowledge read from displays of (smart) metering devices has its limits and does not ensure that we will understand properly the meanings motivating actors to do what they do. Social sciences and humanities have accepted to be part of their scientific and public engagement to demystify the idea that the study of social life can surrender fully to the quantitative, technical model of knowledge. However, we should be careful not to throw the baby out with the bathwater. There is no doubt that in order to provide full-fledged descriptions or explanations, sociologists need to keep track of large-scale social phenomena and that the role of quantitative data (in sociology, most prominently data from questionnaire or public opinion surveys) in monitoring these phenomena is indispensable. This is the rationale for singling out *latent* structures as the third type of social structures. They connect sociology not only with branches of knowledge located on the boundary with natural sciences, like demography or economics but also with other softer disciplines dealing with distributions of attributes across populations, such as political science in the first instance.

Steps Towards a Comprehensive Research Strategy

In previous sections of the chapter, I used the case of coal to argue for theoretically grounded research into social aspects of energy, and I put forward the morphogenetic approach as a metatheory underpinning the systematization of such research. My proposal revolved around the major thesis of morphogenetic sequence, while other, more specific analytical tools introduced by Archer (1995) were put aside. To make further steps towards adapting the morphogenetic approach to our topic would require reducing the level of abstraction and admitting an array of concrete phenomena into our analysis. Even though I myself did not take such steps here, the general outline provided in my chapter marks out the critical realist version of theorizing about coal in general and in relation to the Polish region of Upper Silesia in particular.

It was not my intention to tailor my proposal to suit some methods or techniques of social research more than others. I believe that the principle of analytical dualism, which lies at the heart of the morphogenetic approach, is compatible with a variety of data collection and analysis procedures, be they qualitative or quantitative, micro-, mezzo- or macro-oriented. It is obvious that analyses of explicit norms and of the reflexivity bound to them would follow different routes or overlap only partially with analyses of implicitly governed daily practices or of latent social structures. Moreover, further differences in methodology might arise from interdependencies between the social structures under study and the related semi-social structures reflecting material, technological and environmental conditions. A combination of various types of data and the use of mixed-methods research design addressing diverse structural features of reality seems to fit the needs of the research into social aspects of energy.

In Table 1 I summarize the distinctions suggested in the preceding text. In agreement with Archer's rejection of conflationary social theorizing, structures are conceived of as only temporarily stable features in the flux of ongoing social and non-social happening. Sometimes they are more durable, sometimes they are rather ephemeral, but in spite of the constraints and opportunities they imply to actors, they are always historically transient, susceptible to change. It is therefore imperative to reject the assumption that *structural* relations coincide with *social* relations. On the contrary, it must be acknowledged that social relations necessarily enjoy a certain,

Table 1 Typology of structural conditioning and elaboration

Structures	Specification	Manifestations in social phenomena
Social	Explicit	Legal norms, policies, social institutions, organizations
	Implicit	Interpretative schemes, tacit rules, practices, patterns of behaviour
	Latent	Distribution of attributes in the population (views, behaviours, facts, etc.)
Semi-social	Material	Raw materials, commodities, chattel and real estate
	Technological	Technology facilities and appliances and their social uses
	Environmental	Conditions of natural, rural, and urban environment

situationally varying degree of freedom and independence stemming from individual subjectivities engaged in them. By virtue of such partial indeterminacy of actors, their social interactions are *in principle*, if not in fact, capable of breaking through the mantle of existing structures, reforming social relations and altering the parameters of structural order. Research into the emergent nature of socially (co-)induced structural modifications leaves sociology with the task of permeating through the muddle of evidence in a quest for the generative order of morphogenesis (or morphostasis).

These metatheoretical considerations are applicable to the special topic of this edited volume, which explores coal sociologically and interlaces two distinct research areas: gender and energy. The effort to interlink these areas represents a nascent research agenda. I am aware of only one publication that made a similar manoeuvre in our national Czech sociology and emphasized the interrelation between energy and gender equality (Marková Volejníčková et al., 2016). To be sure, international scholarship on the matter is much richer. According to a recent survey of scientific articles published in last 20 years, gender perspectives do influence energy research (Cannon & Chu, 2021). Up until now, however, the resulting literature has focused mostly on the Global South (Fathallah & Pyakurel, 2020). Adoption of the hermeneutically enriched morphogenetic approach to the study of the relationship between gender and energy is conducive to seeking a pathway beyond the antinomy of realisms and (radical) constructionism in global environmental debate (White et al., 2016, pp. 8–11).

The morphogenetic approach makes it possible to pose or reframe research questions in realist manner as questions about the interplay between structure and agency (in the sense of analytical dualism) and pursue these questions along the temporal axis drifting from the past through the present to the future: What were the structural conditions influencing the social position of women in the industrial coal region? What were the main constraining factors inflicted on them, and how (if at all) did, on the contrary, opportunities open up for them for recognition and asserting of their gender-specific interests? What were the main activities through which women participated in social interaction, and from what activities were they excluded? What imprint did the relative non/participation of women in public life leave on the ongoing structural elaboration*?* How much did the results of these processes co-determine the current social constellation in the region? Has the structural elaboration led to the re-evaluation of the position of women? To what extent do they take up new, different roles, emancipating them from the traditional model of male breadwinners? What might be the role of women in the future rebuilding of the region? This selection of questions illustrates the variety of ways the morphogenetic approach can orient empirical research to follow-up the "analytical histories of emergence" (Archer, 1995, pp. 194, 324–328).

Let me conclude this chapter with a remark about the bipolarity of consent and conflict, the interweaving of which keeps in motion the concrete forces of social interaction. One of the most general conceptual tools developed by Archer concerns the relationships between *structural emergent properties* or—to use a concise verbatim description—between "the results of the results of past actions" (Archer,

1995, p. 213). The author (ibid: 218) distinguishes four of these general relationships between structural settings in a society (my own macro-examples related to energy in parentheses): necessary complementarity (combining coal mining with coal combustion industry); necessary incompatibility (linking coal with the policy of clean energy); contingent incompatibility (coupling the stepping up of renewables with withdrawal either from coal or from nuclear energy); and contingent compatibility (justifying nuclear energy by its compatibility with the policy of clean energy).

The essential point is that groups of actors are being positioned in different situations by the varying relationships between structural emergent properties. This positioning entails constraints and opportunities for the actors' social interactions and enmeshes them in a *situational logic* that motivates strategic action as a means to attain their vested interests. This general argument developed by Archer has bearing on gender studies. If we take women as a specific group of actors, then we can—to borrow the locution from the title of a recent book (Clancy et al., 2020)—give the argument its "engendered" meaning. We can study the interconnections between the existing structural conditions in a society bound to coal energy and the position of women in social interaction with other groups of actors. We can design our research to uncover the situational logics that place women in relation to other groups and the intersecting strategies of communication and action that unfold in response to the changing place of coal in societies across Europe and worldwide.

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Women Engendering the Just Energy Transition

Mariëlle Feenstra

Abstract In this chapter, the role of women as actors in the energy transition is described using an energy justice and gender lens and with a policy perspective. Based on the concept of agents of change, three roles of actors in the energy transition are identified: consumers, producers and/or decision-makers. Caused by the gender inequalities in society, the agency of women and men are different. Against the backdrop of international commitment, national governments feel the urgency to transform their energy policy towards renewable and efficient energy resources to meet the needs of consumers as well as a commitment to climate change and sustainability goals. Policy interventions towards a just energy transition aim to provide clean and sustainable energy sources for all citizens. The energy justice framework identifies energy injustices based on three tenets: distributive, recognitional, and procedural justice. Insights into the gendered inequalities of energy needs, use, and access could contribute to designing energy transition policies that acknowledge and address current injustices.

Introduction

In the energy shift from a long history since the nineteenth century of coal extraction to the current uptake of renewables and alternative energy sources, the Upper Silesia is the backdrop of this book chapter. In this edited volume, women's perspectives on the change in the Upper Silesia coal mining region in southern Poland are voiced in the different chapters using several methods and theories. How do women position themselves in the energy transition from coal to renewables in the supply side of the energy system? What is the current role of women in the energy sector, and what could be their potential role towards a just energy transition? Within this chapter, I am taking a policy perspective by describing the gender-energy nexus in international commitments, like the SDGs and the EU policies and how they are

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implemented in national and local policy instruments. I am adding to the narrative of this edited volume a theoretical contribution juxtaposing the energy justice framework with the concept of agency to deepen the understanding of gender inequalities and energy injustices.

The current context and future consequences of climate change require a change of how we produce and consume energy on macro, meso, and micro level. In order to secure a just and inclusive energy transition, there is a need to understand both the effects of a low-carbon energy transition on different policy levels and groups in society, as well as how people can engage in such a process on an equal basis. Social inequalities and energy justice are two key emerging streams in the energy policy literature, with yet little but growing attention to gender equality. Social inequalities are the heart of social justice theories and shaping the gender lens of feminist theories. Three roles of women as actors in the energy transition can be identified: consumers, producers and decision-makers (Clancy & Feenstra, 2019). However, gender inequality embedded in societies might limit the agency of women in these roles and to participate in the energy transition. Agency in this chapter follows the definition of Kabeer (1999, p. 438): the ability to define one's goals and act upon them. Policy interventions can create enabling conditions to strengthen the agency of the women and men to participate and benefit from just transitions. Women as actors in the energy transition are claiming energy justice by overcoming social inequalities in energy access. Their role is embedded in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that address gender equality (SDG5), eradicate poverty (SDG1) and access to affordable and clean energy (SDG7). Despite the global commitment, enforcement of national governments is limited, creating a lack of implementation at the local level.

A successful low-carbon energy transition requires equal attention to the political and social dimensions. There is an urgent need to recognise both the effects of the global energy transition on different policy levels and societal groups and how people can engage in the process on an equal basis. Further, we need to understand how this knowledge can be translated into policies, interventions, and communication (Grübler et al., 2016). A socially inclusive energy transition is necessary to ensure social acceptance (Sovacool, 2017) and avoid detrimental consequences (Fuller, 2019; Standal et al., 2018; Clancy et al., 2017). Given that energy access, consumption, and services globally are gendered (Clancy & Feenstra, 2019; Standal et al., 2018; Fraune, 2015; Bell et al., 2015; Clancy & Röhr, 2003), establishing an energy system that reflects gender differences and that is aware of gendered relations in society is essential for a just energy transition.

This chapter explores how gender relations frame women's and men's participation, decision-making and benefits in the energy transition on the household and community level from a theoretical perspective. Based on the existing scientific literature, I illustrate how the agency of women and men influences their engagement with energy transitions. I discuss the triple role of actors in the energy transition and juxtapose it with energy justice as a conceptual framework. This conceptual discussion could provide insights into shifts in energy communities, like the mining community in Upper Silesia.

This chapter starts in Section "The Gender-Energy Nexus: A Policy Perspective" by describing the gender-energy nexus and engendering energy transitions. Section "Women as Change Agents in the Energy Transition" describes the role of women as potential change agents to engender a just energy transition. Three roles for change agents are discussed: producer, consumer, and decision-maker. Section "Gender Just Energy Transition" explains the theory of energy justice and the concept of just energy transitions. To understand the shifts in the energy system, three dimensions of just energy transitions are distinguished: the technology, policy, and governance shifts. The conceptual frameworks of the sections are then combined to conclude with proposing policy choices acknowledging the triple role of actors in engendering the energy transition. Throughout the chapter, a policy perspective is leading, meaning that both gender inequalities and energy injustices need a policy reaction to overcome them.

The Gender-Energy Nexus: A Policy Perspective

Globally, energy access, consumption, and services are different for women and men (e.g. Khamati-Njenga & Clancy, 2002; Listo, 2018). Therefore, the aim is to establish an energy system that reflects gender differences and is aware of gendered social relations. Acknowledging the socially constructed and dynamic nature of gender relations, energy policy should acknowledge cultural differences in their social context and should contribute to the overall aim of gender equality (Feenstra & Özerol, 2021). The literature on the low-carbon energy transition has only recently begun to include gender dimensions. The general literature on the energy-gender nexus is dominated by engineers and economists (Listo, 2018) or "grey literature" (Winther et al., 2017). This approach to studying energy is also discernible in the low-carbon energy transition literature (Strengers, 2013). Here the main focus has been towards technical innovation such as renewable energy sources (RES) and different economic models to evaluate its usefulness within market logic. Within social science, the inclusion of gender has emerged within studies that take into account people's experiences and perspectives, as well as governance and justice issues (Feenstra & Özerol, 2021).

The Gender-Energy Nexus

In understanding the impact of energy policy decisions on gender relations, gender analytical frameworks provide insights and knowledge. The value of gender analysis in energy policy development is that the gender analytical framework seeks to understand the differentiated needs and pre-dispositions of women and men. It enables an understanding of the existing gender situation before and after a policy intervention by assessing the intervention's impact on access to and control over

resources (Khamati-Njenga & Clancy, 2002). However, the universal applicability of gender analytical frameworks is contested (Feenstra & Özerol, 2021). The influence of normative approaches of international organisations, activists, and NGO's is recognised in the way many gender analytical frameworks are a product of co-design between academics and practitioners. The body of grey literature on gender frameworks in relation to energy access is extensive compared to the limited academic publications on the gender and energy nexus (Feenstra & Özerol, 2021). Furthermore, with a background in development studies and a substantial research tradition with empirical evidence from the Global South, applying a gender framework to energy access may be considered unsuitable for the Global North (Feenstra & Clancy, 2020). The Global South and Global North are concepts not used in a strict geographic sense but in a political economic sense of large disparities in wealth and political instability.

Considering the free-market economy and non-discrimination law, the assumption is made that industrial countries have gender-neutral energy policies. In the definition of Khamati-Njenga and Clancy (2002), a gender-neutral energy policy is based on the idea that a good policy, programme, or project will benefit both male and female equally in meeting practical needs. However, the few research publications on gender and energy policy in the Global North conclude the opposite (Clancy & Röhr, 2003; Clancy et al., 2017; Fraune, 2015; Wiliarty, 2011). As Fraune (2015) points out, women and men reveal different preferences for energy policy options, especially when it comes to energy transition and the adaptation of renewable energy. Furthermore, energy consumption is not gender-neutral (Clancy & Röhr, 2003; Räty & Carlsson-Kanyama, 2010). Social norms and gender relations shape consumption patterns and behaviour like purchasing power, preferences, needs, and everyday practices (Fraune, 2015). Energy poverty is understood as the inability to afford the energy consumption needed for a decent and comfortable life (Bouzarovski & Petrova, 2015). Energy poverty has a strong gender dimension since more women than men are living in poverty and is an emerging concern for the European Parliament, which is starting to support research on gender and energy poverty in the EU (Clancy et al., 2017).

Despite the political attention for just transitions that benefit all, there is a policy gap in relation to gender in the low-carbon energy transition. On the policy level in the EU, there has been an emerging focus on engaging consumers to foster sustainable energy consumption and to empower people to become managers of their energy needs (Standal et al., 2018; Mengolini, 2017; Schuitema et al., 2017). Energy policies thus do not consider that women and men have different opportunities and ways of engaging with energy in policy, research, business (Standal et al., 2018; Pearl-Martinez & Stephens, 2016; Clancy & Röhr, 2003) and as individuals (Winther et al., 2019; Bell et al., 2015; Carlsson-Kanyama & Lindén, 2007), though empirical studies suggest otherwise.

In the policy context of the Global South, the gender-energy nexus has gained more traction, stimulated by donor organisations and financial support by international institutions like the UN and World Bank to stimulate compliance to international agreements (Standal et al., 2018). However, women have mainly been

presented under policy agendas that focus on women as vulnerable (without agency) or neoliberalist ideas where energy access is instrumental in transforming women to become productive citizen's securing economic growth and well-being to their families, communities, and national level (Listo, 2018; Standal et al., 2018).

These policy logics, including the gender blind/neutral logic of the Global North, do not treat the underlying mechanisms of discrimination that reinforce gender inequality in the political economy of energy and therefore provide an inadequate understanding of women's roles and resources concerning energy. A just energy transition can be engendered by highlighting women's agency not only in the Global South but also in the energy system of the Global North. Agency can both be used in a positive sense, the power-to, as in a negative sense, the power over (Kabeer, 1999). A just energy transition enables that all actors in the energy system have the capacity to define their own choices and to pursue their own goals by ensuring that both choices and goals will "leave no one behind" in access to clean and sustainable energy.

Enabling Conditions to Engender Energy Transition

The current context and future consequences of climate change necessitate that we accelerate towards a decarbonised energy future by replacing fossil energy with renewable energy sources (RES) and reducing energy consumption. This challenge comes in addition to making access to sustainable energy universal in the Global South and North to ensure development and social justice. Global commitments such as the Paris Agreement, Sustainable Energy for All (SEforAll) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG); SDG#7—"clean and affordable energy for all" and SDG#13 on "climate action," are important frameworks for government policy implementation in the energy transition. The SE for All initiative has three major targets by 2030: (1) ensuring universal access to modern energy services, (2) doubling the rate of improvement in energy efficiency and (3) doubling the share of renewable energy in the global energy mix (United Nations, n.d.).

The energy transition is often presented as being dependent on technological innovation and market mechanisms. Replacing fossil fuels like coal with RES in electricity production is highly beneficial and has been hailed as a win-win solution that reduces emissions and ensures continued energy security. Solar energy has lower greenhouse gas emissions than coal, and the costs of solar are competitive. However, the two sources of energy have different qualities in the electricity production and supply and national or regional electricity supply cannot be powered by solar alone. European policies, like REDII and the European Green Deal, are promoting local energy initiatives to stimulate the uptake of RES and facilitate prosumers, energy consumers that are producing their own energy through, for example solar panels. Men are still more participating in local energy initiatives and are overrepresented as prosumers (Standal, 2018; Standal et al., 2018).

Table 1 Conditions of an enabling environment for engendering energy policy

Enabling condition	Description
Participatory planning	An approach involving a range of actors (including civil society) is considered more likely to create a greater opportunity for women's voices to be heard than traditional approaches to policy-making.
Gender methodology	Involves having a gender strategy, collecting sex-disaggregated data and conducting gender analyses to develop a gender-aware energy policy.
Legislation on gender equality	Form and scope: e.g. is gender equality enshrined in the constitution?
Political commitment	Putting pledges into practice: e.g. the existence of a National Gender Policy.
Institutional support	This support can come from within the government, such as a Ministry for Women's affairs or a gender ministry, or civil society, for example NGOs active in gender and energy.
Financial commitment	Allocation of sufficient resources to implement gender-aware policies.

Source: Feenstra (2002)

Although the energy transition is a major concern for many policy-makers and reflected in a range of policies both at the local, national, and European level, reflecting gender and overcoming gender inequalities and energy injustices keep lacking in energy policy (Feenstra & Clancy, 2020). To overcome gender blindness in energy policy, Feenstra (2002) identified six enabling conditions that support or hinder the process of engendering energy policy. These factors are summarised in Table 1, which shows how policy analysis can identify the enabling conditions engendering a just energy transition. Implementing these conditions could create an enabling environment to strengthen the agency of the actors in the energy system.

A diverse terminology, using terms such as "gender-sensitive," "gender-mainstreaming," "gender-responsive," and "gender-aware" is used to address gender in policymaking (Feenstra, 2002). This chapter uses the term "gender-aware" that draws on the definition of Feenstra (2002) where a gender-aware energy policy (1) recognises that women and men have different energy dynamics (role in the household, decision-making areas, energy needs, responses to crises or coping mechanisms); (2) makes available energy technologies and services that match those dynamics; and (3) employs appropriate policy instruments (such as taxation) to provide an enabling environment.

Engendering energy policy is defined as the process that aims to create a gender-aware energy policy (as just described in the definition above), in which the needs and the rights of both women and men are addressed to realise a gender-equal policy outcome (Feenstra & Özerol, 2021). Engendering energy policy resonates with the prevailing academic debate on energy justice and equal access to energy services, as is reflected in international commitments and national policy plans towards a just energy transition (ibid). If governments strive to implement an energy transition policy that "leaves no one behind" and that resonates with the justice discourse, the costs and benefits of the energy transitions need to be equally distributed in society, taking into consideration the existing inequalities and injustices. The role of different

actors in the energy system depends on the capacity to act upon the agency these actors possess, as will be described in Section "Women as Change Agents in the Energy Transition".

Women as Change Agents in the Energy Transition

The national level is a suitable scale to formulate a gender-aware energy policy. National governments are urged to acknowledge the universal declaration to provide Sustainable Energy for All (SEforALL). This is a global commitment that requires local action and nationwide implementation under country action plans supported by international partners (AGECC, 2010). To understand the extent to which gender is being mainstreamed in SEforALL-related activities, Prebble and Rojas (2017) analysed 61 SEforALL country action plan documents from 52 countries. Their main finding was that 82% of these documents included gender considerations to some extent and, in which women were mentioned as potential beneficiaries of activities and actions, but seldom were they characterised as agents of change.

The methodology used by Prebble and Rojas (2017) included a framework for context-specific analysis using a characterisation of women in policy documents. These characterisations are recognisable in the terminology used in national policy documents, and four descriptions of women can be identified: vulnerable, beneficiaries, stakeholders, and agents of change. The first two mostly refer to women as end-users or a target group for a specific programme or policy outcome, without an element of their participation or influencing the policy at stake. On the contrary, documents that referred to women as stakeholders identified women's role as decision-makers or as a group targeted for participation in decision-making. As demonstrated by Prebble and Rojas (2017), only a few policy documents described women as driving sustainable energy development activities as agents of change that also had a voice in policymaking.

Recognising women's knowledge and capacities is a key objective of agency theories. Ignoring women's agency hinders their access to sustainable and affordable energy services and limits their participation in the energy sector. The World Bank used the concept of agency as "an individual's or group's ability to make effective choices and transform those choices into desired outcomes" (World Bank, 2014). Acknowledging the potential of women as change agents in the energy transition is receiving growing interest in the gender-energy literature (Clancy & Feenstra, 2019). However, the main body of literature on gender-energy nexus is based on empirical data from the Global South and has limited the applicability of the agents of change theory to the European context. Clancy and Feenstra (2019) warned that it might be too early to correlate gender equality and a just energy transition. Too little empirical data is available to draw conclusions whether women can be change agents in energy transitions in Europe. Scholars studying the gender-energy nexus in the Global South are shifting their focus to the Global North, applying the same methodology and using similar theoretical lenses to research women's role in the EU energy

transition. This is demonstrated by Clancy et al. (2017), who drew on their experiences in studying the energy access of women in the Global South to analyse the feminisation of energy poverty in the EU.

Women are acknowledged as agents of change within development agencies to boost socio-economic development and cultural change (World Bank, 2014). The gender-energy nexus literature gives women's role in influencing the energy transition more critical attention. Three roles of change agents have been identified in the energy transition (Clancy & Feenstra, 2019):

1. Consumer—i.e. demanding the use of energy services (a consumptive role)
2. Producer—i.e. producing and supplying energy services to end-user (a productive role)
3. Decision-maker—i.e. governing the energy sector (a decisive role)

Agents of change are a social phenomenon embedded in a socio-cultural context (Kabeer, 1999). Gender is a socio-cultural phenomenon, too, and women and men can manifest agency in different ways. Looking at agency in energy access from a gender perspective, a gendered difference in the rights and needs of women and men in the energy system can be identified (Clancy & Feenstra, 2019). Engendering energy transition is a way to reflect and support women's and men's agency towards a just energy transition (Feenstra & Clancy, 2020).

Studies have found that women and men reveal different preferences for energy policy options, especially when it comes to energy transition and the adaptation of RES (Fraune 2015; Ryan, 2014; Clancy et al., 2011; Köhlin et al., 2011). Furthermore, energy consumption is not gender-neutral (Winther et al., 2019; Standal, 2018; Bell et al., 2015; Carlsson-Kanyama & Lindén, 2007). Purchasing power, preferences, needs and everyday practices and routines are shaped by social norms that differentiate access to income and resources (Standal et al., 2019; Winther et al., 2019; Standal, 2018; Fraune, 2015). The ways in which energy consumption is gendered also impacts on women's ability to benefit or lose out in the low-carbon energy transition. Women do most of the energy-related domestic work in both Global North and Global South contexts (Winther et al., 2019; Standal et al., 2018; Bell et al., 2015; Carlsson-Kanyama & Lindén, 2007). In the Global North, there are two additional dimensions of gender inequality in energy. First, women have less decision-making power over what technology is being bought and used in the household (Winther et al., 2019; Standal et al., 2019; Standal, 2018). Furthermore, the recent attention to energy poverty reveals a strong gender face, with women substantially more affected than men (Clancy & Feenstra, 2019; Clancy et al., 2017). This adds to women's contextual vulnerability in the face of climate change and energy transition.

Some literature has pointed to how technological innovation in the low-carbon energy transition is assumed to be gender-neutral but is immersed in hegemonies of gendered identities. In Kenya, Marshall et al. (2017) point to how the private sector approaches to "low-carbon energy development" places a masculine identity in their understanding and communication on the "climate technology entrepreneur." The women entrepreneurs are portrayed in line with feminine values of caring and

nurturing, while men entrepreneurs are presented as competitive, ambitious, and technologically skilled. In Norway and the UK, a study of prosumers (who have invested in rooftop household solar systems) are also generally perceived and communicated in media and advertisement as "techno-savvy, middle-class men with high environmentalist interests" (Standal et al., 2019). Though the decision to become prosumers were made jointly, there was a gendered division of labour where men took care of the process of becoming prosumers, while women had a notable disinterest in the technical side, but took responsibility to change their energy practices such as doing laundry when the sun was shining (Standal et al., 2019). Strengers (2013) has denoted the masculine identity of low-carbon energy technologies (e.g. smart home) in the term "resource man" who is recognised in the image of the male-dominated industries of engineering, economics and computer science, and because visions of him exclude most household labour, which is still predominantly carried out by women.

Gender balance in the energy sector and political representation has also been taken up in research literature. The number of women working with RES is higher than for the traditional energy sector (IRENA, 2017). However, these jobs are mostly low-paid and non-technical, and there is little prioritisation in the industry towards an inclusive energy workforce (Pearl-Martinez & Stephens, 2016), and there is still a gender gap in STEM education recruitment (Clancy & Feenstra, 2019; Diekman et al., 2015). It is important to note that a low-carbon energy transition also does open new opportunities for gender equality. Working with RES appeal more to women than conventional energy sector jobs (Clancy & Röhr, 2003; Ryan, 2014) and providing clean energy access universally offers new prospects and benefits for women such as expanded time and reshuffling of work, new income-generating activities, as well as social and network support through enhanced communication (Standal, 2018; Winther et al., 2017).

When identifying women's agency in the context of the energy landscape of Silesia in Poland, a marginalising of women in the process of reconstructing mining in Silesia can be identified. The unheard voices of women and their invisibility in the mining discourse results in the absence of their needs and their stories in the energy transition in Silesia. Mining is still perceived as a masculinised industry, with women working in the coal sector facing obstacles to express their agency as producer and decision-maker (IRENA, 2017; Clancy & Feenstra, 2019). Also, women as consumers in the Silesia region are facing challenges in meeting their energy needs. Coal is with 70% still the main household heating fuel, despite the extreme air pollution levels caused by domestic heating and industrial coal use. Thirty-three out of 50 of the most air-polluted towns in Europe are found in Poland of which 14 in Upper Silesia. Energy efficiency and behaviour changes to use less-polluting energy sources are encouraged, but when the domestic gender perspective in coal-based home-heating is not taking into consideration, these policies will not be effective. Only when households are efficiently supported to participate in energy transition and when clean energy sources are affordable and available for domestic use, the energy transition will benefit all consumers, men, and women.

Gender Just Energy Transition

The quest for a just energy transition is rooted in the energy justice debate. Energy justice is an emerging framework in energy social science that has developed to analyse energy transition and energy policy. Three main tenets of energy justice are articulated as distributional, recognitional, and procedural justice (Sovacool & Dworkin, 2015). Energy justice has three functions: (1) conceptual, (2) analytical framework for energy policy feeding into the use of energy justice, and (3) a decision-making tool to enable a move towards a just energy transition. The energy justice concept aims to contribute to a just energy transition with a just distribution of rights, recognition of needs, and just decision-making within the energy system (Sovacool et al., 2016).

The energy justice framework is contributing to the development of a just energy policy design by asking the normative questions as laid out in Table 2.

These evaluative questions could be asked to monitor and assess a just energy policy in the implementation phase. However, designing a just energy policy needs agenda-setting and political awareness of energy justice issues. Thus, the contribution of energy justice questions is to assess the *status quo* of an energy policy system in any given country and identify the injustices that should be addressed in the political agenda. The answers to the normative questions can contribute to designing a just energy policy to accelerate a just energy transition. Using these evaluative and normative questions reveals the existing inequalities and injustices in the energy system.

Transition is a complex phenomenon with multiple dimensions that demands a holistic view, including an intersectional approach. The energy transition can be analysed with three dimensions: the technological—aiming at decarbonisation; the policy—creating a policy shift; and the governance—asking a different governance perspective from the actors involved in the energy system. And energy justice lens, with its three tenants, addresses all these dimensions of the energy transition.

The most common understanding of the energy transition is in the technological dimension of decarbonisation, i.e. moving from fossil fuels to RES. Decarbonisation has a strong distributional focus by enabling a just distribution of, and access to, clean energy sources. RES can foster off-grid solutions for those communities not previously connected to the grid, and so renewable energy transitions have the potential to increase connectivity to energy sources and access to the benefits of electricity (Miller et al., 2015). However, distributional justice needs to be assured to prevent the unequal distribution of risks, cost-benefits, and energy rights.

Table 2 The evaluative and normative contributions of energy justice to policy design

Tenets	Evaluative	Normative
Distributional justice	Where are the injustices?	How should we solve them?
Recognitional justice	Who is ignored?	How should we recognise?
Procedural justice	Is there a fair process?	Which new processes to develop?

Source: Based on Jenkins et al. (2016)

Decarbonisation is also the policy aim of many energy efficiency programmes implemented in the EU member states. Distributive energy justice is acknowledged in the programme by providing financial support, such as low-interest rates, to enable homeowners to invest in energy efficiency.

The policy dimension of energy transition highlights the shift from supply-oriented towards demand-driven policy. Recognitional justice identifies the end-user and whether their demand and the needs of the consumer are fulfilled (McCauley et al., 2013). Currently, many policies recognise households as the end-users. However, the household is a contested entity for its use in a demand-driven energy policy. Policy often contains a heterogeneity approach to households as end-users and designs policy interventions with a rather simplistic approach—i.e. one size fits all. Whereas, in reality, there is no standard end-user, and households are more complex than assumed. As Bell et al. (2015) explained, a household is a fluid system with a wide variety in its composition, particularly with the everyday dynamics of diverse, caring arrangements with extended family members. Feenstra and Clancy (2020) argue for a demand-driven energy policy that looks behind the front door of households and invests in recognising the diversity of consumers and their behaviour.

Governance can be considered as the third energy transition dimension. From a governance dimension, we see a shift from a regulative government approach characterised by tariffs and regulations towards a facilitating approach that promotes subsidies and stakeholder participation. With the shifts in the energy sector, combined with the energy transition, more actors are entering the energy market, and this is pushing governments into the role of broker between the energy sector and the community. Energy projects have and are becoming more and more characterised as public-private partnerships (Miller et al., 2015).

This governance shift challenges procedural justice in the energy sector. The procedural justice resonates with the governance structure within a country and the legal frameworks and institutions enforcing and implementing the legal framework. Many changes are taking place with little input from community or consumer voices, and the procedural justice questions whether there is a fair process in danger (Jenkins et al., 2016). Furthermore, the existence of an organised civil society and stakeholder participation in the energy system calls upon recognitional justice of the needs and rights of actors within the energy system. Stakeholder participation also enables procedural justice and strengthens a just energy transition. While decarbonisation is seen as mainly a technological dimension with distributional implications, the issue described in this governance paragraph, i.e. the neoliberal shift, also has distributional and behavioural implications.

What the policy and governance perspectives of energy transition stipulate is to put the consumer central in policy-making (Feenstra & Clancy, 2020). Nevertheless, such a development places the responsibility on individuals and not government institutions. It assumes a strong agency of the end-user to participate in the energy system and claim the role of "actor" in decision-making processes. Gendered power relations result in social differentiation, limiting how women and men can take part in, benefit from and take ownership of the energy transition. A just transition is in

danger when there is gender inequality in a society, resulting in unequal access to energy services between women and men. A gender lens in the energy transition reveals the inequalities and contributes to planning a just energy transition.

The energy transition takes place within a specific governance context, which has implications for energy justice. The key policy goal of the energy transition is decarbonisation: moving from fossil fuels to renewable energy sources and increasing energy efficiency, a plan agreed collectively by EU countries and beyond. The process of decarbonisation requires us to pay close attention to distributive justice: to prevent the unequal distribution of risks, cost-benefit, and rights, a key aspect needing attention is monitoring and measuring energy poverty.

The second point of attention is an expectation that decentralised self-generation will play a greater role in meeting decarbonisation targets. It is expected that the energy transition will include a policy shift from supply-oriented towards demand-driven energy policy. The EU, for example envisions an internal energy market where citizens take ownership of the energy transition, benefit from new technologies to reduce their bills and participate actively in the market. In short, it places citizens central to empower households to self-generate, sell or store necessary supplies, participate in citizen energy communities, or enter into dynamic price contracts which will allow (and require them) to respond to peaks in (cheaper) renewable energy at any time of the day (Diestelmeier & Hesselman, 2018). This will be made possible by new (smart) technologies and demand-driven policies. With this shift, it thus becomes essential to ask who will become the energy providers, who will (chiefly) remain end-users, and who will be able to navigate all these new options and invest in relevant technologies (e.g. solar panels, batteries, smart tech). More questions are also key in considering recognition justice: who may face specific challenges in participating and reaping benefits of the transition fully, and how to ensure that a range of interests and needs are represented in decision-making and policy action (McCauley et al., 2013).

This goal of decarbonisation is set within a larger shift in energy systems. A governance shift in energy systems from governments acting as public service providers, in pre-liberalised areas, to governments becoming regulators as markets opened up, to governments becoming facilitators of energy transition and various partnerships of corporate, government, and civil society actors, collaborating in a triple helix. In this context, more actors are entering the energy market, pushing the government into the role of broker between the energy sector and consumers. Energy projects are increasingly characterised as public-private-partnerships collaborating in a triple helix (corporate, government, and society). This governance shift challenges procedural justice in the energy sector because, with an increase of actors and entanglement of roles and mandates, energy governance becomes less transparent and fair procedures could be in jeopardy (Jenkins et al., 2016). The possibility for procedural justice in governance of the energy transition relies on the governance structure within a country being open to collaborative working strengthened by the legal frameworks and institutions enforcing and implementing such processes. Furthermore, the existence of a well-organised and cooperative civil society and

space for stakeholder participation in the energy system relies on the recognition of the needs and rights of actors within that system.

The above articulation of the policy and governance context of the energy transition in light of the energy justice framework suggests that several justice issues need close attention here. First, from a perspective of recognition and participatory justice, citizens are vital to the process of energy governance, given the potential for that process to have positive or negative consequences for them. The energy transition might open new ways for citizens to participate in energy governance. This might also be a pathway for marginalised groups to shape energy policy and secure better outcomes. Secondly, while placing the consumer as central in policy-making is important, it also risks suggesting that responsibility for the transition is transferred from government to individuals. There are risks associated, too, assuming that the end-user has the agency to participate in the energy system and can claim the role of an actor in decision-making processes.

Conclusion

In this chapter, the role of women as actors in the energy transition is described using an energy justice and gender lens and with a policy perspective. Against the backdrop of international commitment, national governments feel the urgency to transform their energy policy towards renewable and efficient energy resources to meet the needs of consumers as well as a commitment to climate change and sustainability goals. The question remains how to design such a policy that recognises both women's and men's needs and the rights to energy services. The enabling conditions, as listed in Table 1 are a first step to assist policy-makers to create just energy transition policies. Insights into the gendered inequalities of energy needs, use, and access could contribute to designing energy transition policies that acknowledge and address these injustices.

Just transition will therefore require close attention to all three tenets of energy justice, in this sense that *recognitional justice* may reveal which persons face specific challenges in participating and reaping benefits of the transition fully or fairly, whilst *procedural and distributive justice* may play a role in ensuring that a range of interests and needs are both represented and met in decision-making and policy action (McCauley et al., 2013).

The possibility for procedural justice in governance of the energy transition relies on governance structures open to collaborative working strengthened by legal frameworks and institutions enforcing and implementing such processes. Furthermore, the existence of a well-organised and collaborative civil society and space for stakeholder participation in the energy system relies on the recognition of the needs and rights of actors within that system.

When juxtaposing the energy justice framework with the three roles of actors in the energy system, the matrix below illustrates how engendering the energy transition entails different policy choices based on the role of actors involved in the energy

Table 3 Policy choices for engendering energy transition with examples

Agency role	Energy justice		
	Distributional justice	Recognition justice	Procedural justice
Consumer	*Lack of access to energy services and energy poverty is gendered*	*Recognising gender differences in energy need and uses*	*Give women and men an equal voice in interactive energy policy formulation*
Producer	*Closing the gender gap in employees*	*Create support systems for women working in the sector*	*Equal pay and equal career opportunities for women and men*
Decision-maker	*Equal distribution of energy services for women and men*	*Acknowledging the gender difference in energy needs and uses*	*Equal rights for women and men to participation in energy policy design*

Source: Own work

system. The lack of enabling conditions in a country (Table 1) creates questions on injustices and inequalities in the energy system (Table 2) that could be identified and potentially solved by taking a holistic approach in policy design, as presented in Table 3.

By dissecting the actors in the energy system into their main role in the energy transition (either consumer, producer or decision-maker), policy-makers are assisted to understand how a variety of policy interventions are needed to engender the energy transition. From a consumer perspective, policy-makers need to be aware of the gendered difference in energy access and the capabilities of women and men to act upon their role and express their voices to claim their rights to recognise their energy needs are gendered. When stimulating more gender equality in the energy sector, women working at the productive side of the energy system are facing limitation to enact their agency by feeling a lack of power over their career choices and goals (IRENA, 2019). Employer could create a more enabling environment by developing policies to support women working in the sector, like childcare facilities and mentoring and ensure equal pay and career opportunities for all (Clancy & Feenstra, 2019). From a decision-making perspective, creating enabling conditions for both women and men to overcome distributive, recognitional, and procedural injustices is the policy responsibility towards a just energy transition. This chapter demonstrates a possible theoretical framework in which the Silesian energy shift can assist in how to use the momentum of change to not only invest in the energy shift but also to make this energy transition just for all citizens by reducing gender inequalities and energy injustices.

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Part II

Cultural Identity of Upper Silesia. The Difficult Relationship Between National and Regional Culture

Kazimiera Wódz and Jacek Wódz

Abstract The thesis developed in the chapter is that Upper Silesians should be considered as cultural minority. The Authors argue that there are strong historical, sociological political and ethnographic reasons which justify the feeling of cultural distance of Upper Silesians towards their non-Silesian environment. The chapter is divided into five parts. The introductory section describes the mass movements of the regional population after 1945 linked to the expulsion of Germans and the relocation of the huge number of Poles from former Eastern Poland, and in the following years, the massive influx of Poles form other part of Poland to Upper Silesia in search of work and secure living conditions. Next, the long- lasting perspective was applied to demonstrate the nature of the relationship between the regional (Silesian) and national (German, with the exception for the small part of Upper Silesia between 1922–1939, and Polish after 1945). The next part is devoted to the description of the process of institutionalisation of Regional Consciousness in Upper Silesia after the collapse of communism. In the final part, the authors discuss the dilemmas between the "open" and "closed" visions of the Silesian culture.

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Why the Upper Silesians Could Be Considered as Cultural Minority?

One of the major consequences of the Yalta Conference was the displacement of a mass of people from the pre-war East Poland territory to the newly attributed to Poland Western lands. Soon after the war, especially in the years 1945–1946 in Upper Silesia, the border region located in the south-west of Poland, firstly the Soviet military authorities and consequently the Polish Communist administration carried out a policy of "nationalistic verification," which has finished by arrests and deportations of thousands of people admitting ties with German nationality, but also many Silesians considered German against their own feeling (very often it was a matter of insult and revenge of the recent victims of the Nazi terror or simply an ordinary corrupt practices of the Soviet military authorities or Polish Communist Security and Militia officers) were deported to camps of forced labour in the Soviet Union or were forced to leave their homeland. After World War II, there were three big waves of deportations of the native population to Germany: between 1947 and 1949, after 1956 and in the early 1970s (action of uniting families). This process associated with the mass influx of the culturally mixed population from all over Poland, recruited to work in industry, especially in the 1950s and 1970s dramatically changed the ethnic structure of the region, resulting in a cultural clash, stressing and sensitising of the objectively existing cultural differences between the native population and the newcomers—starting from the language problems, through the patterns of family life, neighbourhood relationship, attitudes to work, religiosity. The Upper Silesian communities, separated by their historical experience, traditions, dialect, everyday culture from the newcomers, found themselves symbolically dominated by the Polish official (literary) culture, transmitted by the mass media, educational or cultural institutions. Cultural inadequacy, associated with the feeling of inferiority and humiliation, was the most typical experience for many children with the Silesian background, entering schools and obliged to learn the "good Polish" when their native dialect was ridiculed and stigmatised. Linguistic-cultural inadequacy was the major factor of the learning difficulties of many young Silesians, especially in the subjects requiring the use of the literary version of Polish language or distant from the cultural tradition of their own regional group leading in consequence to educational failure. The traditionally low level of educational aspirations among Silesian youth could be at least partially understood as avoidance of anticipated failure but it must be also said that there were other barriers to the educational promotion of Silesian children, such as transmitted from one generation to another tradition of sons inheriting their father's profession, generally low-qualified but relatively well paid and socially recognised work in coal mining or metallurgic industry or at least of similar professional status. This tendency observed until very recently among young people coming from Silesian families had been reinforced by the process of spatial and social segregation of local communities from—first the German and then—Polish (non-Silesian) environment.

To understand this phenomenon, it is necessary to remind the history of this region.

Historical Background of the Relations Between Regional and National (German and Polish) Culture in Upper Silesia

Upper Silesia is a typical example of the borderland, where different ethnic groups and different cultural traditions are mixed up. In the Silesian melting pot for centuries Polish, Czech-Moravian and German influences were clashing, and their influence was always connected with the affiliation of this region to the wider political and state structures. However, it would be impossible to understand Silesian culture without reference to long-lasting (in Braudel 's sense) history of this region—the crucial importance for the shaping of cultural face of Upper Silesia had the nineteenth century. It was under Prussian and then German domination when the process of industrialisation started in the middle of the last century, favouring the influx of people from Germany to Upper Silesia. First of all, they were medium and higher office staff, administrators, engineers, technicians, supervisors etc. Those people formed the dynamically developing middle class, whereas the growing working class came mainly from the local rural communities. It was quite usual that the landlords also became the owners of the new factories or coal mines—monopolising on one hand the land and industry. The previously existing Upper Silesian variant of the Polish folk culture was exposed to the influence of German industrial and bourgeois culture. The specific entanglement of the ethnic-linguistic divisions with socio-economic (German population = middle and higher classes, Silesian-autochthons = lower, plebeian classes) for many decades defined the specificity of the ethnic relationship in Upper Silesia. The social and cultural barriers between these two ethnic groups also had their social and ecological face—the workers communities concentrated around the factories or coal mines were spatially segregated from the central part of the growing centres or residential part of the cities, inhabited by the German owners or administrators. The modernisation process linked to industrialisation, obligatory from 1872 German elementary school reinforced by the Bismarck politics of *Kulturkampf,* facilitated the assimilation of these groups of the autochthonous population who joined the general trend of these civilisational and cultural changes, very often at the expense of eradication in one's own ethno-linguistic group. But the other side effect of this confrontation was the strengthening of the feeling of linguistic-ethnic separateness of the native Silesians, closing this community within its own culture, language habits, religion (Chlebowczyk, 1975). Connected with this was the „sacralization" of „homeliness" and deep distrust toward the supralocal institutions, political, administrative, cultural and so on. Born in the period of *Kulturkampf,* a specific union between the fight for preserving the Polishness and the Catholic denomination (although there were also many German Catholics) led to the formation of the stereotype connecting

Catholicism with the Polish character (Lesiuk, 1990, p. 9). The feeling of ethnic separateness of Upper Silesians from the German population favoured the development of the Polish national awareness, empowered by the activities of Catholic priests education, cultural associations, Polish libraries, lecture rooms, theatres, choirs, sports clubs, Polish press but also trade unions (Wanatowicz, 1994, p. 11). The culminating point of the activities of the pro-Polish movements falls for the period of the end of World War I, the defeat of Germany, the renaissance of the Polish State after 150 years of non-existence, the *Plebiscite* and the Silesian Uprisings in 1919, 1920, 1921 (Davies, 1986, p. 116). Without going into wider characteristics of the complicated political situation in which the peace treaty between the *Entente* and Germany was signed and the conditions preceding the final decisions of the League of Nations, admitting the small part of Upper Silesia to Poland it should be stressed that these important political facts have not changed the mixed ethnic composition of this area. However, in this part of Upper Silesia which after 1922 found itself within the borders of the reborn Polish state soon after the partition of Upper Silesia there was a big wave of the massive emigration of the German population. The German minority, although not strong in terms of population (following the different statistics, the population of Germans inhabiting Polish Upper Silesia after 1922 was estimated at between several to a dozen or so per cent of the whole population) has preserved a quite strong position in the economy (in 1922 75% of the heavy industry capital was in the Germans hands and 85% of lands, after 17 years of Polish statehood in 1938 Germans possessed still 55% of capital and nearly the same lands as before (Wanatowicz, 1994, p. 43). The German minority, protected by the Geneva Convention laws (1922–1937), which regulated the legal, economic and nationality problems caused by the partition of the Upper Silesia, had at owns disposal the well-organised political structures, schools, cultural associations, press. In the interwar period in Polish Upper Silesia, the German question has been a matter of numerous conflicts between the Polish authorities, interested in the efficient integration of this region with the whole organism of the Polish state and representing German interests industrial corporations and associations. The Polish–German relationship was of course influenced by the international situation, especially the official relations between Germany and Poland. But there were also other important factors influencing the attitudes of the central government towards the activities of the German minority in Polish Upper Silesia and, more generally—towards the specific ethnic problems of this region. First of all, there were the solutions imposed by the Geneva Convention, which extended for the next 15 years the validity of German law regulations in industry and commerce, labour relations, etc. The fact that these regulations were valid only for the Polish Upper Silesia negatively affected the unificatory efforts undertaken by the Polish administration. The second important factor, which decided upon the unique position of Silesian Province, covering the part of Upper Silesia and of Cieszyn Silesia (belonging before World War I to Austrian–Hungarian Monarchy) in comparison with other regions within the reborn Polish state was the special Organic Status voted by the Polish Parliament in 1920. Following this regulation, Silesian Province enjoyed a large autonomy in the administration, education, social policy, health care,

jurisdiction, economy. All these matters were under the competence of the independent Silesian Parliament. Silesian Province, as the only region in interwar Poland had its own budget, based on local taxes, only the small part of which was paid to the Central Treasury. The autonomy gave to the Voivode (nominated by the President of the Polish Republic) and to the regional administration real power, not comparable with any other regional administration at that time in Poland. In practice, the real scope of the autonomy was very much depending on the general political situation in Poland. As it was already said, the political situation created in Upper Silesia after 1922 did not suppress the mixed composition in both divided into Germany and Poland parts of this area. As Czesław Robotycki writes:

> None of the sides resigned from the measure which in the future would lead to the changes of situation [....].The Polish programme provided the activities in three main directions: supporting the beliefs of the Silesian population that the border solutions are temporary and they will change for the benefit of Poland, strengthening the Polish national awareness among people remaining on the other side of the border, supporting these economic, cultural activities, demographic trends which connected Silesia with the rest of Poland (Robotycki, 1990, p. 29).[1]

The first years after the inclusion of the part of Upper Silesia to Poland, the Polish authorities were preoccupied with the mission of the repolonisation of the public services: administration, courts, police and post offices, railway etc. Silesian Province became one of the most absorptive labour markets for the Polish intelligentsia from other part of Poland—mainly from the former Polish Galicia (up to 1918 under Austrian domination) but also from ex-Russian territory of formerly partitioned Poland. Very soon in the Polish Upper Silesia appeared specific confrontation of the regional Silesian culture and the introduced here by Polish intelligentsia "romantic-nobleman" Polish national culture (Kopeć, 1986, p. 37). There were many factors stimulating this confrontation. One of them was the dissatisfaction of Silesians with the promises of social promotion given to them by Polish plebiscite propaganda. In fact these promises were not fulfilled. The expected promotion was obstructed by the lack of appropriate education and not sufficient acquisition by the autochthons of the literary form of Polish which made difficult the upward mobility of this population. Only small groups of Silesians were able to obtain higher posts in the state government administration, the majority were put down by the better-educated newcomers. This situation, together with the essential incompatibility of the cultural patterns, customs, mentality and language between these two populations, were the most important source of misunderstanding and tensions.

The situation was worsened by the economic recession of the late twenties, which led to the mass unemployment and social unrest. All this favoured the development

[1]There is no place here for the detailed historical analysis. We will thus limit our discussion to the situation of the Polish Upper Silesia as a factor of fundamental importance for the understanding of the sources of mistrust between the Polish administration and the autochthonous population. For the rest of Upper Silesia which remained under the German control the interwar period brought the intensification of the germanisation practices, especially after 1933, leading to the far going erosion of the pro-Polish options.

of the separatist movement, based on the frustrations of those Silesians who felt menaced by the growing, especially after 1926, the influence of the Polish nationalistic parties and organisations. It should be mentioned here that contrary to the other part of Poland in Upper Silesian the pro-Polish ethnic option had not necessarily achieved the "ideological level of national consciousness," but rather was a set of habits and attitudes, having their roots in the local dialect, regional tradition, and attachment to the neighbourhood, a kind of "*private homeland*" (Ossowski, 1967). The strong regional ties, covering both Poles and Germans living for generations next to each other, often in friendship and connected by the kinship, has been instrumentally used by the separatist movement, supported by the German minority as well as by the political opponents of the governing from 1926 authoritarian system called *Sanacja* (Davies, 1986, p. 123). Representing *Sanacja* Silesian Voivode Michał Grażyński openly supported actions directed against the German presence in public life, including the forced changes of German names, defence to using German in public institution and so on. These actions were disapproved not only by the German minority representatives but also Polish Catholic bishops who were aware of the complexity of the ethnic situation in Upper Silesia (Wanatowicz, 1994). Grażyński himself, trying to neutralise the influences of his opponents, undertook an attempt to valorise the Silesian regional dialect and culture, considering them an element of the great Polish cultural tradition. All these activities were dramatically stopped by the outbreak of World War II. Hitler's occupation, including the whole Upper Silesia together with the part of Kielce Province (the districts of Sosnowiec and Będzin) and Cieszyn Silesia to the Reich brought about a complete breakup of open ties with the Polish tradition. Persecutions of Polish and the action carried out on an unparalleled in other regions scale, of enrolment on the German *Volksliste,* which covered the whole Silesian population favoured the regermanization. However, according to Nazis' settlements—far more than half of the Silesian population was classified to III nationalistic group, which meant lack of crystallised German awareness. For anybody who understands the complexity of ethnic and national identifications of Silesians it is evident that the formal access to the *Volksliste* was in Upper Silesia of decisively smaller subjective importance than in other parts of occupied by Nazis Poland (Davies, 1986, p. 69). However, for many Poles going through the gehenna of occupation without even these substitutes of "normality" which were given to the people enrolled on the *Volksliste* considered the attitudes and behaviour of some Silesians during these tragic times as the evidence of opportunism or national betrayal. The oversimplified and unjust stereotype of the "Silesian-renegade" was strengthened by the fact of the mass participation of the Silesians in German military formation (Wehrmacht). These and other similar facts infected the relations between Poles and Silesians and heavily stigmatised the post-war situation of Silesians.

After painful occupational experience, the Silesians experienced the drama of nationalistic verification carried out in a shameful way, without taking into consideration the complicated history of this region. Soon after the War, especially in the years 1945–1946, there were mass arrests an deportations of the German population (or identified as Germans by the entering to Upper Silesia Soviet military authorities

and communist Security Office *or Militia)*, thousands of Silesians were sent to camps of forced labour in the Soviet Union, less than half of them returned home in the late 40s or even later ruined physically and mentally. Many of them were suffering humiliation and torment of the *nationalistic rehabilitation* and restoration of civil rights (Łempiński, 1979; Misztal, 1990; Błasiak, 1990; Berlińska, 1993). Without any doubts this harmful experience left in the minds of many Silesians a feeling of distrust and aversion for the "newcomers," the latter named disdainfully as *gorols*, coming from the Eastern and Central Poland, found themselves in the unfamiliar environment reacted with oversimplified, equally negative stereotype of the *hanys,* the man of the unshaped national affiliation. The lack of confidence in Silesians as the "untrustworthy, nationally doubtful element" was, at least for the decades after the end of World War II, a significant factor limiting the access of representatives of these ethnic group to the higher posts of state administration, education or culture.[2] But, of course, the post-war social situation of Upper Silesia was heavily influenced by the general political situation of Poland. In the "socialist planned economy"the heavy industry of Upper Silesia had to fulfil the role of the source of raw materials and energy. The imposed by the Communist Party model of the extensive industrialisation forced the specific structure of the regional job market, first of all—the unqualified labour force was needed—it was not by accident, then, that in the structure of secondary education of the Upper Silesian Industrial Basin vocational school dominated until very recently. In practice, this policy meant the limiting of the developmental possibilities of the region, strengthening its monocultural character with all the negative consequences in economy, social structures, culture, ecology. Thousands of people recruited from all over Poland came to Upper Silesia in the 1950s and 70s attracted by the promises of "social advancement." They were making use of the preferential allowance of flats in the gigantic housing estates growing on the outskirts of Silesian towns. This housing policy, subordinated to the needs of the industrial production, has to a large extent deepened the social-ecological distance between the native population, concentrated first of all in old workers communities and the newcomers, settled in new blocks. The fate of these old workers districts of the industrial part of Upper Silesia is one of the most striking expression of the marginalisation of a considerable proportion of regional communities of Upper Silesia in the period of real socialism (Wódz, 1995).

[2]The following comments refers mainly to the area of the Katowice Province, the most industrialised part of Poland and Upper Silesia, however the sociological research carried out in the rural area of the Opole Province showed up many similarities, especially when we look for the relationship between the autochthons and the large groups of repatriates from the former eastern part of Poland and the participation of the Silesians in the official structures of larger society (Berlińska, 1989, 1990).

Institutional Aspects of Cultural Domination in Upper Silesia

One of the most astonishing phenomena, which without any doubts is a consequence of the processes described above, is that for the last century, the autochthonic population of Upper Silesia was culturally dominated by two big national cultures, first German and then Polish, without being adopted and assimilated by them. What is even more astonishing is a far going similarity of the position of the autochthonous groups in comparison with the socio-economic position of Germans until their departure in 1945 and with the Poles (for the small part of Upper Silesia attributed to Poland between 1922 and 1939 and then after 1945). It was in a great part a result of the active policy of the states to which this region belonged consequently. The examples of this policy were given above. As we tried to show also after 1945, when the whole Upper Silesia became an integral part of the Polish State, the cultural idiosyncrasy of this region did not disappear. Furthermore, it would be difficult to find another region in Poland where the symbolic content transmitted by the official institutions—mass media, educational and cultural institutions—swerved so much from the symbols and values functioning within the primary groups, local communities, informal communication network and so on. These divergences were observed, for example in the attitudes of the native Silesians towards formal education, the lack of which was often compensated with the higher than average culture of work and practical experience. The Silesian communities as a whole, to a limited extent, use the possibilities of social advancement through education. As a matter of fact, the regional system of education for the last 50 years favoured the reproduction of the traditional models of educating Silesian children limited to vocational training or technical professional high schools. But at the same time—the educational aspirations of young children coming from the Silesian families were comparatively lower than their colleagues of the same age (Mrozek, 1987). We have already tried to sketch in the introduction the possible explanations of this situation. The first one stresses the relative closeness of the Silesians communities, favoured by the endogamy (The mixed marriages are still rare, see: Rykiel, 1989), strong kinship ties and spatial segregation from the newcomers, which facilitate the transmission of the traditional models of carriers from the parents and neighbours to the children. The second explanation of socio-linguistic character stresses the importance of the fact that socialisation in traditional Silesian family, in the relatively homogenous local community means acquiring together with the dialect the specific level of linguistic-cultural competence and thus forming specific for these communities primary *habitus* which often out to be dysfunctional towards the requirements of the official educational system. Referring thus on the one hand to Pierre Bourdieu's concept of habitus and on the other, to Basil Bernstein's theory of linguistic codes, we can explain not only the educational failure of the Silesian children but a larger phenomenon of the *cultural inadequacy* felt by the members of this regional group in contact with all the institutions which like education and propaganda system and mass media were controlled by the political and cultural Centre. The symbolic domination of the Centre so much easier in the centralised political system of

communism meant, after all, the domination of unitarian and homogenous vision of Polish national identity, manipulated ideologically according to the needs of the official propaganda. Without neglecting the political aspect of this domination—it should be stressed that the core of this unitary vision of Polish identity was shaped by the traditions of Polish romanticism, which behind the period of the Stalinist terror was never rejected by the Polish cultural and political elite. In Upper Silesia, because of the historical, political and cultural reasons described briefly above, the reception of these traditions was very weak, the romantic heroes of Polish history and literature were never integrated with the history and cultural traditions of this region, transmitted first of all by the family and the local community. The institutionalised symbolic culture transmitted by the official institutions, was often felt as a form of "symbolic violence," disturbing or even contradictory with the loyalties to someone's own family or regional group. Of course, the most threatening conflicts were between the "official" and "private" version of the recent history, the value attributed to the Polish State or patriotism. To avoid or diminish the feeling of discomfort caused by constant discrepancies between these two "symbolic universes" Silesians looked carefully for their "privacy" and kept their distance from the world of official institutions. This, in consequence, contributed to the preservation of the marginal position of Silesians and connected with this feeling of injustice and discrimination.

The Process of Institutionalisation of Regional Consciousness and Its Impact on Inter-Ethnic Relations in the Contemporary Upper Silesia

Democratic changes taking place in Poland after 1989 opened the possibility of expression and articulation of the interests of regional and ethnic groups. In Upper Silesia this process for historical, cultural and psycho-social reasons has been much more intense than in any other region in Poland and led to the establishment of many organisations representing the interests of regional community as a whole and the interests of concrete ethnic groups. It is not surprising that one of the most dynamic and visible group growing up very quickly after 1989 was the organisation of German minority.[3] What was surprising is the number of people who manifested their interest in joining these organisations, especially in Opole Silesia where more than 10,000 people in 1989 signed the declaration of membership for the Social-Cultural Association of the German minority, recognised officially by the Polish authorities at the beginning of 1990. Similar associations, although not so important in terms of the number of members, emerged in Katowice. The leading figures of the most influential organisation of German minority from Opole Silesia- Johann Kroll and his son Henryk and in Gliwice-Gerhard Bartodziej—presented themselves as the

[3]In fact there were many efforts towards the legalisation of the German minority organisations before that date but they were not successful (see: Urban, 1994).

representatives of the interests of all Germans living in Upper Silesia, interested in the preservation of cultural heritage, language and traditions of this group. Soon these cultural ambitions became insufficient, and the organisation proclaimed the postulates of a purely political character, with the demands of special law regulations for the Germans living in Poland and closer relationship of these groups with their compatriots from *Fatherland,* the activists of the most revisionist organisation—"The Association of Exiled" (BdV), openly supporting the idea of the reunification of Upper Silesia with Germany. The latter issue was a matter of serious controversies between the different groups of the German minority, for example the Social-Cultural Associations of Germans in Opole Silesia and the Working Group "Reconciliation and Future," created by Diethmar Brehmer in Katowice. Contrary to the activists of the first group—Brehmer's main efforts from the very beginning were directed towards the building of the Polish–German mutual agreement and overcoming the mutual prejudices. The controversies between these organisations were of fundamental character, however, in 1990 they joined the same umbrella organisation—Central Council of German Associations in Poland. Brehmer left this organisation soon after their visit in Bonn where the 16 point programme with very categorical claims towards the Polish authorities was presented to Mr. Dietrich Genscher, Minister for Foreign Affairs at that time. It was the period of the official negotiations between Poland and Germany on the Treaty of the confirmation of the existing borders. The signature of the Treaty on Good Neighbourhood and Friendly Cooperation between Germany and Poland in June 1991, despite many contests from the part of the representatives of BdV or the Central Council of Germans in Poland, opened the way to normalisation. Important steps towards the normalisation were the results of the local elections in 1990. In the eastern part of this region, in 21 communes inhabited mainly by the autochthons, German minority representatives gained from 65 to 90% of votes. Consequently, in many villages, the leading posts in local government and administration have been taken by the members of the German minority. In 1990 the first official journal addressed to the members of the German minority—*Oberschlesische Zeitung (Gazeta Górnośląska)* has started. In 1991 the regional radio station in Katowice started the first emission in German, several hours a week, soon the similar programme started in Opole. It was also a year of the great political success of German minority candidates for the parliamentary elections-they have got seven places in the Diet and one in the Senate. One could say that these were milestones on the way to the incorporation of the German minority in Poland into public life, however, it does not mean that the situation became ideal. The growing importance of German minority organisations in Opole Silesia caused many fears on the part of the Poles living there since the middle of the century. These fears resulted in part from the penetration of Upper Silesia by German nationalistic groups, especially just before and shortly after the confirmation of the Polish–German borders (Treaty of 14 November 1990) and 1 year later—signature of the Treaty on Good Neighbourhood. Several actions of these groups, like for example the erection of the monuments comemorating Wermacht soldiers in some villages, substitution of the Polish names of the villages by the German ones, very often names changed in

the thirties by Nazis, striving to eliminate every trace of Slavonic heritage. A good example of this kind of practices was the action of Mr. Helmut Wieschollek, the head of the village Dziewkowice, who removed the boards with the name of his village and installed new ones, with the name *Frauenfeld* although the historical name of this place, from before the Nazi period was *Schewkowitz.* Similar examples could be found in other villages of Opole Silesia. The extreme nationalistic groups gained some popularity, especially between the oldest generation of autochthons who have never experienced the denazification process. For them—the real tragedy started after 1945, when the Soviet Army entered their villages, and the arrests and deportations began. But the official representations of the German minority after 1991 declared their loyalty to the Polish state and took their distance from the activities of the neonazi formations (see: Urban, 1994). Not surprisingly, the Polish nationalist parties manifested their deepest interest to the development of the situation in Upper Silesia. The arguments of the threats for the national interest, the danger of being bought by Germans were of common use in the political discourse of the nationally oriented political parties or organisations like Związek Zachodni (The Association of West), Zjednoczenie Chrześcijańsko-Narodowe (The Christian-National Union). There were examples of physical aggression and devastation of the offices of German minorities organised by the groups of the Polish skinheads supported by the extreme nationalistic movements. Of course, there are also many examples of very good cooperation and mutual understanding between the groups of Germans and Poles living together in the same communities in Opole Silesia. The tensions and distrust, although still present, tend to decrease as soon as the legacy of the Polish–German Treaty from 1991 is fulfilled on the profit of both groups.

The situation in the Katowice part of Upper Silesia differs in many aspects from the Opole Silesia. Here only a small part of native Silesians decided to join the German minority organisations, although many of them will not be unfriendly towards theirs links with German culture or civilisation. The first regional organisation which appeared here after 1989 like the Silesian Association (supported by the Catholic Church) or Movement for the Silesian Autonomy formulated different project of revitalisation of Silesian culture and in reference to the interwar period—built their political programme on the basis of habitual ties, treated as a substitute to the ideological national consciousness (Ossowski, 1967, p. 251). Developed by some regional organisations *regional ideology* (containing strong ethnocentric, exclusivist component, associated with xenophobia and hostility toward the newcomers) was based on the assumption that Silesian culture is still, despite the passing of time and irreversible, to a large extent, demographic process, indivisible, compact whole, in many respects exceptional and attractive for all the inhabitants of Upper Silesia, no matter who they are and where they come from. Stressing the cultural distinctiveness of Upper Silesia and overestimating the cultural distances between Silesians and non-Silesians bring the contemporary Silesian regionalism to the small or "*peripheral nationalism*" (Gourevitch, 1979). In the programmes of some regional groups appeared unfriendly, even hostile accents towards everything which is "not Silesian," one's own traditions, customs, dialect-obtained a universal status, a "stranger," i.e. a newcomer embodied the whole evil of the world (compare

the Information Bulletin no. 1 of the Silesian Autonomy Movement, 1990). It was in this way that aiming at respecting cultural separateness of the native population and cultivating one's own identity changed into discriminatory attempts towards newcomers who felt threatened in their *civil rights* (Wódz & Wódz, 1994; Wódz, 1997). What is more, the more identity claims of the groups of natives are articulated as political projects put forward by various regional movements (regionalisation and autonomy or separation), the greater the resonance among newcomers of the mottoes, declared by the nationalist-populist groups on the threats of the territorial integrity of the state and erosion of the Polish national consciousness in Upper Silesia (Błasiak, 1993; Nawrocki, 1993). The situation became so much complicated that the population of newcomers is now in Upper Silesia in the majority. For them, Upper Silesia became, whether for the necessity or by choice "the small motherland," to which as the citizens of the same country they have the same rights as the autochthons, even if they do not feel any links with the Silesian culture. Aggressive ethnoregionalism antagonises the regional community, diverts the public attention from the dramatic civilisation challenges which the traditional industrial area of Upper Silesia is facing now, discredits in the eyes of many groups the idea of regionalisation. Fortunately, as the time passed, the emotions decreased, and institutional forms of dialogues between different interest groups emerged. But the process of defining the regional identity is unfinished, and the cultural-ethnic arguments in the political projects, developed by the advocates of regionalisation in Upper Silesia, are still too important in comparison with more fundamental questions of democracy, built on the constitutional rules of civil rights and equalities.

Between the "Open" and "Closed" Vision of Regional Culture. Unsolved Dilemmas?

In the mid-2000s, some of the researchers of Silesian identity shared the belief that the future of identity affiliation in the region will depend on which vision of the identity will begin to win a prevailing significance for the big picture of the regional identity: will it be more of a closed version emphasising the principle of sticking to the tradition given only to the indigenous inhabitants of the region, or perhaps a more open-ended version accepting the change of some elements of the tradition, adapting it to the requirements of the times, referring to relationships with others (both on the level of non-Silesian inhabitants of the region and on the level of the relationship with the rest of the country or further still, with the European tradition (Wódz & Wódz, 2006). This dilemma was also connected with a slightly different issue: whether there should prevail a culture rooted in the regional tradition, closing itself to the relationship with the national culture or whether one should see the future in art, literature, cultural actions typical of high culture and attractive for the whole country as well as wide areas of European culture.

During the period from the mid-2000s to the late 2010s, there came about three important social facts slightly changing the above-described dilemma. Firstly, that period of time saw an increase in the importance of decentralisation of the country, enhancement of the role of territorial self-governments, which considerably affected the conditions for further transformations of the regional identity in Upper Silesia. Secondly, in Upper Silesia, there appeared artists clearly referring to Silesian culture but addressing their work to a nationwide and often wider European audience. Finally, during the last 15 years there have emerged representatives of a new generation (often connected with the region yet without being rooted for many generations) who are eager to seriously contribute to the regional culture.

The period of an increasing role of the voivodship self-government and the importance of voivodship regional assemblies is a period featuring a great significance of the Silesian Autonomy Movement. It was meant to be a social movement fighting for the recognition of the social and cultural separateness of this region. However, having succeeded in the election for the Silesian Regional Assembly and managed to establish several deputies there, the movement joined the voivodship's ruling coalition, which led to the politicisation and partisanship of this representation of Silesians and, in general, the discourse about Silesian matters: as the majority party's ally, in the Silesian Regional Assembly, the Silesian Autonomy Movement had to follow the rules which are typical of political parties, coming in for criticism of the opposition conservative and national party, burdening the movement (and then in general—Silesians) with accusations of distancing from the cultural core of the Polish national identity. These processes complicated the course of the formation of cultural identity, and the politicisation of the Silesian Autonomy Movement as the most important representative of the cultural interests of Silesia focused the public debate on the political, not cultural level. Over time the Silesian Autonomy Movement has become a regional proto-party, only to clearly come close to the regional party model in the mid-2010s. This increased its effectiveness within the voivodeship, but at times it did impede playing the role of a promoter of the separateness of Silesian culture on a nationwide scale.

This period of time saw a revival of the cultural activity of young artists clearly rooted in Silesian culture and tradition but addressing their work to a wide Polish audience. There was also rising importance of cultural institutions connected with the region for years. This significance is exemplified by the National Polish Radio Symphony Orchestra in Katowice or the Dance Theatre in Bytom. In the field of symphony music, Silesia has reinforced its very high position, thus becoming a factor clearly affecting the vision of Silesian culture as a mere folklore-based culture. In the area of reviving the social memory of the separateness of the history of Silesia, an important role was played by the new Silesian literature, first of all, Szczepan Twardoch's novels addressed to the Polish reader and enjoying a considerable readership. The phenomena occurred quite rapidly, and their significance was perhaps even greater in promoting Silesian culture outside the region rather than in the region itself.

Finally, the third factor, the scale of traditional regionalism includes care of the language dialect or any forms of linguistic separateness. While there have been

attempts, among the Silesians deeply rooted in silesian culture for many generations, to systematise Silesian dialects, formulate rules aimed at separating "Silesian speak" as a regional language, young people, not always with their own multigenerational language tradition, became interested in putting the language into a wider circulation. In the regional press, there have been articles published in Silesian, authors attempt to introduce, if not the language, just particular typically Silesian expressions. This is also the case in the ambitious young theatre (see: Korez Theatre). An attempt to recognise Silesian as a regional language has failed so far, but in the regional consciousness, the presence of this language has consolidated, especially in colloquial speech.

Interest in Silesian cultural and social separateness found its expression in the discussion several years ago on whether one can speak now of "new Silesians": thus, young or relatively young artists, often without any regional rootedness, become involved in research and promotion of the region's cultural separateness. They are referred to as these "new Silesians." They have reasons for the creative approach to Silesian cultural tradition, but they treat it as peculiar material for their own creative work mostly addressed to a wide Polish audience. This phenomenon is accompanied by a certain pride taken in their own achievements, yet without any necessary reference to their own rootedness. For a wide Polish audience, they are an expression of the region's cultural dynamics—separate from the previously occurring dynamics referring to the closed ethnographic approach to Silesian culture.

Can we then concede that this open-ended trend will slowly dominate this closed ethnographic approach that prevailed some decades ago where collectivity based on the multigenerational rootedness-driven exclusivity signified the Silesian identity? Apparently, we can, although the processes are happening right before our eyes and their results have not been consolidated yet.

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Restructuring of the Mining Sector in Silesian Voivodship from the Gender Perspective

Jolanta Klimczak and Kazimiera Wódz

Abstract In the article, we attempt to reconstruct some essential, in our view, sources and consequences of marginalising of women in the process of the restructuring mining industry in Silesian Voivodship. We draw attention to the left unsaid presence of women in the mining discourse, specificity of the mining as a masculinised industry and gender-determined diversification of barriers and chances in the non-mining labour market. The chapter is divided into six parts. Part 1 is of introductory character and refers to the neoliberal discourse on globalisation, with its emphasis on individual mobility to the Post-Fordist flexible labour market and the consequences of neoliberal transition for women. Part 2 is devoted to the detailed description of the specificity of the process of restructuring of industry in Silesian Voivodship in the last three decades. In part 3, we analyse the restructuring policy from the gender perspective. In part 4, the individual experiences of the woman dismissed form the coal mines are presented. In part 5, we follow the trajectories of the women who are still working in the coal mine industry. In part 6, we are discussing the results presented in the chapter, putting them into the frames of dominating in Poland's patriarchal culture.

Restructuring in the Gender Perspective

The neoliberal discourse presents globalisation as an inevitable process, explicable in terms of the laws of classical economics. Legitimisation of this discourse is based on the "naturalising" of globalisation, its dynamics and structure through the inclusion of its axiology in the transforming symbolic, both national and local capitals. This "naturalisation" is reached through the depreciation of critical, anti/alter-globalisation discourses, discredited as ignorant, incompetent (Griffin Cohen & Brodie, 2006, p. 3), distorted (Dunn, 2008, p. 196). The "hero" of this neoliberal "story" is a rationally acting individual, self-regulating due to his "free will," flexibly

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adapting to changes on the post-Fordist labour market. In the gender aspect this is supposed to mean an increase in women's professional activity, a peculiar feminisation of the labour market, introducing international regulations and standards aimed at counteracting women discrimination and supporting programmes stimulating outsourcing (World Bank, IMF) (Griffin Cohen & Brodie, 2006, pp. 2–3).

In practice, however, the implementation of this neoliberal vision of globalisation results in the genderization of output resources and consequences of entering the global market. Gender, or cultural sex, is not, as liberal feminism would have it, "transparent," and people creating organisations and institutions are not "blind" to gender. This means there is no neutral subject (At most, it is an androcentric subject) and there are different dispositions and experiences of women and men, women workers and workmen, female and male employees. Here are some exemplifications.

Firstly, the neoliberal transformation is accompanied by the social reproduction retreating from public funding (Charkiewicz, 2010, p. 9), which means simply burdening women with the extra load of performing unpaid care and reproduction services in family while performing paid jobs in the public sphere (in Poland ¾ creches and 1/3 nurseries were closed down by 2003 only to provide creche care for 2% and nursery care for 50% children by 2006) (Hardy, 2010, p. 149). This burdening a woman with both the economic and reproductive function is linked by Chang and Ling with the techno-muscular capitalism juxtaposed with the intimate toil based on "the direct relationships between people in reproductive work" (Charkiewicz, 2010, p. 8), the capitalism which took the measurement of "worker" from the male body and submits this body to the disciplinary technologies (according to Foucault (1998)).

Secondly, double-burdened women enter the labour market, swelling the ranks of the precariat: in post-Fordist economy, they are employed on the basis of "junk contracts," short-term contracts with a limited access to employee rights. According to Ewa Charkiewicz, in Poland in 2006, there were as many as 69% young women and 29.8% all working women were employed on the basis of such short-term contracts with a limited access to employee rights (Charkiewicz, 2010, p. 15). Thus the increase in women's vocational activisation, although confirmed in absolute figures, refers to professional work for minimal wages.

Thirdly, the neoliberal concept of "privatised individual" is the cause of informal resistance and actions taken by women to protect their subjectivity and social rootedness. As Elizabeth Dunn (2008, pp. 199–200) says, resisting the privatisation of people proceeds through challenging the neoliberal axiology and conceding that work is for man, not man for work, that moral criteria are more important than financial criteria and that workers make up capital, thus it should work out well for them. Challenging the impersonal standards serving capital, regulations meant for disciplining and exploiting the women workers' bodies also proceeds through infrapolitical resistance, based on micro-confrontations with supervision, gestures, ironic looks or joyful laugh and song humming (Ngai, 2010, pp. 110–114). The list is obviously longer; the resistance map also includes "night dreams, shout, menstrual pains, 'self' inner split, workplace revolt, fights, escapes, petitions, strikes" (Ngai,

2010, p. 192). Finally, resistance will be expressed by exposing their nonoccupational identity: women workers will emphasise first of all, the fact that they are women mothers! (Dunn, 2008, p. 199).

Fourthly, women pay other (higher) social costs, entering the global labour market and adapting to the requirements of capital: economic migrants face the patriarchal patterns of family life, risking negative sanctions when they decide to leave to get a job in town; migrating women mothers are burdened with negative consequences of separation from their own children, bearing large costs of emotional separation; the public space is less open for migrating women than for men, the former being exposed to various forms of violence, including human trafficking (Ngai, 2010, p. 89; Griffin Cohen & Brodie, 2006, pp. 2–5; Slany, 2008; Ngai, 2010, p. 89).

On the Specifics of the Restructuring of Silesian Voivodship

From the gender point of view, talking about globalisation, transformation and restructuring, we must pinpoint each process locally (which may sound paradoxical in the context of globalisation but it is sufficient to mention peripheries to find an appropriate trace), contextualise and seek the specifics of the peripheries. In the case of restructuring experiences of Silesian Voivodship, including Upper Silesia, but also other regions in Poland, the scientific, journalistic, political discourse refers to phenomena and processes which subjectify primarily (but at times solely) men. In the case of Silesian voivodship (formerly Katowice voivodship and neighbouring voivodships) this signifies the universalisation of the experiences of the prevailing category of mining industry employees, namely miners, and consequently the articulation of the androcentric representation of worker (Wódz & Klimczak-Ziółek, 2010). Focusing the economic restructuring on such a narrowly defined actor of transformations is still embedded in the patterns of working-class lifestyle, specific culture of industrial towns, heritage of socialist propaganda and a dichotomic concept of the public and private sphere. This list may also be extended by a relatively new (in reference to the Polish People's Republic) tendencies which accompany the construction of the social, political and economic order, connected with the dominance of right-wing ideologies, both in the political discourse of the ruling party and in the *Solidarity* trade union discourse (Ost, 2007, pp. 178–179). Finally, one cannot forget about the specifics of the region, which manifests itself among others by the accumulation of four million people (or 12% of the country's total population) inhabiting a relatively small territory, with 97% employed outside agriculture but first of all ethos pillars of professional identity, a sense of solidarity and joint responsibility for its *orbis interior*, or family, professional group and local environment (Mrozek, 1972, p. 7) and manifesting anger towards the authority and symbolising resistance (Ost, 2007).

What consequences followed (and follow) from the adopted definition of citizen-worker, and what did the consequences express themselves in in the social practice

of the restructuring process in relation to women and men? One can indicate here several particularly clear social and cultural differences connected with gender, which can be viewed in pairs of opposites: passivity vs. resistance, private vs. public, victim vs. winner, Polish Mother vs. Father Worker, "surface" vs. "underground" (Klimczak-Ziółek & Wódz, 2013).

Firstly then, one of the first victims of the economic restructuring and political decisions proved to be light industries, employing mainly women. Textile and shoe industries fell affected by economic arguments, which are decisive in neoliberal economy. And estimates like "obsolete technologies" and "lack of competitiveness" legitimised the liquidation of jobs and unemployment. This mechanism was also effective in relation to gender neutral industries but already encountered active resistance towards attempts to close down factories of the masculinised industries (heavy, mining and automotive industries). Let us also add resistance often effective as it is equipped not only with the argument of physical strength of the striking worker but also the "breadwinner" or "head of the family" argument.

Secondly, the feminised industries, such as education and health care, were put under a strong privatisation pressure, which did not immediately (and still it does not) mean allocation of jobs in the area controlled by the private sector but rather deterioration of working conditions including loss of employment. Thus, it was not without reason that the female icon of transformation became a nurse (Although it could well have been a teacher if it had not been for the connoted class differences). The elimination of the sphere of social services also had another negative for women consequence: it shifted to the private sphere realisation of many benefits (caring at least) and thus additionally loaded women already assuming their "double burden" (Hardy, 2010, p. 248) making it hard to stay in the labour market.

And thirdly, women fighting for their jobs in health care became a resounding collective actor largely due to the fact that other professional groups, especially miners, got engaged in their protests and strikes. It was a worker who was the subject; he had and still has the power to confront capital and politics. And it is him who had (has) the possibility of returning from this confrontation with the shield. Fourthly, women experienced backlash as right-wing ideologies intensely used the religious and cultural discourse referring to Catholicism (the cult of Holy Mother) in order to revive the conservative patterns of domestic femininity: priestesses of the hearth, nannies of children, wives of hardworking husbands, nurses of the sick and old. Just like in the USA and Europe after World War II, this time in Poland, women were to make room in the labour market giving way to men. And they were expected to do it for the sake of family and nation (Hardy, 2010, p. 245). The same values—family and nation—motivated man to maintain the worker status. It was him who—before he became a mere "hired labourer"—fought for decades for keeping his political capital.

And fifthly, finally, the anthropological approach consists in seeking a relationship with power and sacrum in what is on the top and looking at the bottom aims to find confirmation of metaphorical thinking about the fall and profanity. Meanwhile, in mining paradoxically, we have to do with women placed "on the surface" and men employed "underground." A naïve structuralism fails then! As the following

restructuring programmes and economic policies referred first of all to "underground" employees, and the so-called "surface" had been an invisible and mute participant of the restructuring of the mining industry. Women employed in mining companies were never mentioned, assuming a priori that the restructuring of mining is men's matter. Let us have a closer look at it.

The Restructuring Policy Towards the Coal Mining Industry and Gender

The restructuring in Poland is subject to a different periodisation. We propose after Jane Hardy to distinguish three waves of this process: the first wave 1989–1995 characterised by the fall of large production enterprises and decline of whole industries, such as textiles (thus feminised) and defence, loss of markets along with the breakup of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance; the second wave 1995–1999 embracing the restructuring of the welfare system and privatisation of pensions and marketisation of the feminised health care; the third wave 1999–2005 bringing privatisations of successive industries, this time telecommunications, aviation, railway and postal services and their inclusion in the structures of great multinationals (Hardy, 2010, pp. 119–120).

In each of these periods restructuring meant loss of jobs suffered by thousands of people. Agriculture and mining claimed the greatest fall in employment (Table 1).

In Silesian Voivodship, the industry restructuring gave rise to social and political tensions and resistance on the part of trade unions and mining industry employees. The most industrialised area of the country, with the biggest density of population, with strong influences of the working-class culture and with relatively resourceful households, was confronted with the liquidation of coal mines and steelworks, reduction of industry privileges, deprivation of whole districts and towns dependent on liquidated establishments. High economic costs went along with rising social

Table 1 Changes in employment in Poland during 1995–2005 according to industries (Hardy, 2010, p. 121)

Industry	Change in employment in %
Agriculture, forestry and fisheries	−49.00%
Mining and quarrying	−43.9
Industrial production	−21
Construction	−25.5
Business activity and services	5.2
Retail	7.3
Hotels and restaurants	15.6
Real estate, rental, business services	67.1
Education	9
Health and social welfare	−29.8

costs. The unemployment rate was rapidly increasing, the scale of poverty was dramatically growing, a considerable social stratification began to show, there came into being subclasses and categories of people particularly prone to exclusion from the labour market (Wódz & Wódz, 2006, pp. 150–152). These negative consequences of the restructuring of the region's economy were attempted to control and reduce by introducing legislative solutions serving the purpose of mitigating the social effects of the transformations going on in the key industries, especially coal mining.

Placing mining at the centre of restructuring changes was led by economic, political and social reasons. This industry which prior to 1989 constituted a substantial source of income for the whole national economy and for the region—due to the transition from centrally planned economy to free market—became increasingly deficient and uncompetitive. Considered anachronistic in terms of technology and organisation the industry required financial support and bottom-up solutions. On the other hand, people employed in the industry constituted several hundred thousand social force which, led by mining trade unions, was capable of exerting an influence on political life. This was expressed by powerful industrial actions aimed against consecutive governments. Finally, what proved not less significant were social myths created for the purpose of the region and country, referring to the stereotypical image of "black" Silesia, coal more precious than gold and the mining tradition as a rudiment of regional identity. Such myths legitimised actions in which what was taken for granted, considered acceptable and indisputable, was the dominance of the "male" world of values and experiences represented by the masculinised mining industry (Wódz & Wódz, 2006).

Subjected to restructuring changes, mining had undergone various vicissitudes. At the beginning of the transformation it was an industry employing over 414,700 people; it was also estimated that the number of people directly or indirectly related to it professionally was a million (Wódz, 2001, pp. 33–41). During 1989–1993 employment was reduced by 25.1% (to 311,300 people). It was accompanied by the deterioration of the industry's financial standing, coal prices were down, demand was on the decrease while supply was rising, the coal sold stopped being subsidised from the central budget, 60 mines were grouped and restructured into a public limited company of the State Treasury, being encouraged to reduce extraction costs and greater effectiveness. This policy of restructuring coal mining was pursued on the basis of two documents: "Restructuring of hard coal mining in Poland—realisation of the first stage in 1993 within the framework of the financial capacity of the state," adopted by the Economic Committee of the Council of Ministers on 15 March 1993 and "Programme for the prevention of liquidation of hard coal mining in Poland" resolved the Economic Committee of the Council of Ministers on 1 September 1993. In the successive years, there was implemented the programme "Restructuring of hard coal mining. Part II—Programme for the realisation of the second stage during 1994–1995," adopted by the Economic Committee on 18 February 1994. Due to a rise in remuneration, a fall in coal prices and maintaining unprofitable mines, this programme failed too, and the industry made several million losses again. A way out was to be another mining remedy scenario:

"Hard coal mining, state and sector policy for 1996–2000—programme of adapting hard coal mining to the conditions of market economy and international competitiveness," which was adopted by the Polish Government in April 1996 and the Sejm of the Republic of Poland in December 1996. It served as a basis for the plan to repay mines' debts and bring about mines' profitability through lowering labour costs and the costs of coal extraction. However, finally it turned out that one of the few measurable effects of implementing this restructuring programme was the reduction of employment by 28.7 thousand people.

A breakthrough for mining and the restructuring in the region was to be the period 1998–2002 or the time scheduled for the realisation of the reform programme adopted by the government on 30 June 1998 under the title: "Reform of hard coal mining in Poland during 1998–2002." A legal instrument supporting this idea was the act of 26 November 1998 "On adapting coal mining to the functioning under market economy conditions and special entitlements and tasks of mining communes," which took effect on 14 January 1999. The consequence of the implementation of this programme was, among others, change of entity managing the restructuring of mines, new procedures of electing supervisory boards, complete or partial liquidation of 23 mines, reduction of employment by 97.3 thousand people, lowering the costs of coal sale finally obtaining (in 2001) a favourable coal sales result (Turek, 2008). It was possible due to the introduction of the instruments of the active policy of extrasectorial employment in the form of the Mining Social Package. Retirement and financial benefits effectively encouraged employees to voluntarily leave the mining sector, which resulted in 26,900 employees taking a miner's leave (or early retirement) and receiving a one-off cash severance pay by 29,700 people. The Mining Social Package cost PLN 5.38 billion (Witajewski-Baltvilk et al., 2018, p. 20) and brought a considerable reduction in employment in mining. It had 66.5 thousand beneficiaries. However, every third beneficiary of the severance pay found no employment in the non-mining labour market in the region, and the MSP payments covered consumption costs or debts instead of requalification or establishment of a self-employed job (Witajewski-Baltvilk et al., 2018, p. 20).

In the three consecutive 3 years the mining restructuring was pursued based on the "Act on the restructuring of hard coal mining during 2003–2006," (Act of 28 November 2003) and first introduced instruments of active policy addressed to surface employees. At the regional level, it was supported by "the Regional Strategy of Innovation for Silesian Voivodship for 2003–2013 and Programme of mitigating effects of the restructuring of employment in coal mining in Silesian Voivodship 2003." Since 2007 mining was restructured on the basis of the "Act on the restructuring of coal mining in Poland during 2007–2015 and the Strategy of operating coal mining in Poland during 2007–2015" (Wódz & Wódz, 2006, pp. 157–160). Since 1 January 2016 the restructuring of mining was regulated by the "Act of 22 December 2015 on the amendment of the act on the functioning of coal mining and two years later the Act of 9 November 2018 on the amendment of the act on the functioning of coal mining and several other acts." They all provide for further reduction of employment with the use of tried and tested incentives for voluntary leaving the sector, such as miner's leaves and severance payments. They

were addressed to not only underground employees but also surface and administration staff. During 2015–2017 as much as 850 million PLN was spent to this end, and by 2018 such benefits were used by 9000 people, including 6000 underground employees (Witajewski-Baltvilk et al., 2018, pp. 19–21).

An effect of the pursued restructuring of mining changed in the way the whole industry and the region's economy functioned. The adopted legal solutions and the way they were implemented led to the reduction of employment in mining and requalification of professional activity of those employees who have benefited from severance payments and activisation and adaptation instruments took up their own economic activity. The remaining part of the dismissed employees found employment in mining-related industries or in foreign coalmines or private mining companies operating in the region. And finally, part of the employees leaving coalmines swelled the ranks of recipients of retirement and pension benefits largely contributing to the radical decrease of the age of male pensioners in Poland.

At the start of the transformation in the mining industry, 12% accounted for women. They worked in administration and in the so-called coal processing; they performed office work and extremely exhausting manual work. Their education was rarely higher than secondary, the prevailing group of female employees had vocational education. Besides, most of the women gained the whole of their experience working in a coal mine. In the vocational environment, the attitude towards them is described by the opinion of the Mining Labour Agency expert: "People always used to believe that women employed in mining are miners' wives who should not work but stay by their husbands instead. [. . .]. They always thought that women are not a problem in mining as they have husbands" (Wódz et al., 2005, p. 105). As a result of this way of perceiving women was overlooking them in consecutive restructuring programmes and their presence in the industry was left unsaid. They did not exist as a subject taking part in constructing the mining reform, did not have any representatives (male or female) taking care of their rights, were not an object of interest of authors of successive "rescue" programmes. They lost employment not being protected by any shielding programmes, underground employees were entitled to (Klimczak-Ziółek & Wódz, 2013).

Women were placed in the area of interest of the makers of mining restructuring only when the problem of employing men—underground employees was solved in 2003. By virtue of an enactment,[1] outplacement tools were introduced aimed at surface employees; thus de facto women who accounted for the majority of staff employed there. The programme's propositions were, however neither financially attractive nor did they offer any satisfying shielding benefits, especially when we take as a point of reference the previous restructuring programmes addressed to miners. However, the programme was to increase women's prospects (although it did not guarantee them) for requalification and finding a job outside the mining industry. And to do this, it offered male or female employees of mining company

[1] Act on 28 November 2003 on the restructuring of hard coal mining during 2003–2006 (Journal of Laws of 2003 no. 210 item 2037)

activisation and adaptation instruments, such as requalification grants, requalification contracts, loans for starting business. Effectiveness of the proposed restructuring programme in quantitative terms proved at least dubious: the scale estimated at approximately 7000 employees leaving mining companies was a more than hundredfold overestimation. Few women decided on the first and the third instrument treated jointly. The other women agreed on less advantageous employment contracts or allocation for the sake of being able to carry on working for a mining company (Wódz & Wódz, 2006).

Women's little interest in the restructuring programme addressed to them as surface staff, apart from the above-mentioned little financial attractiveness and very limited work safety can be explained by the time of implementation. Very late indeed. The largest and most dramatic wave of dismissals took place during the first years of restructuring: by 1994, there were 70% women who experienced a job loss (Fidelis, 2015, p. 274).

On the Effects of Restructuring in the Experience of Women Dismissed from Mining Companies

Not only consecutive mining restructuring programmes but also the prevailing scientific publicist discourse marginalised in their reflection on the social and cultural transformations the perspective of women employed in coal mines. Later on, we will attempt to explore this terra incognita and give voice to women losing jobs during 1998–2003 (Wódz & Klimczak-Ziółek, 2011). We believe that their professional experiences as well as the individual and social consequences of the transition of the mining sector, will make women important social actors. And we considered the concept of a social world constructed by this new (mainly in epistemological terms) collective subject an interesting voice introducing polyphony to both the restructuring and mining discourse.[2]

Our interviewees, as people working in a coal mine, were aware that the restructuring process involved job cuts for the purpose of improving the profitability of mining companies. This redundancy policy was announced by the political and mining authorities, mass media (including the industrial media), as well as trade union activists and leaders. However, among women, the confidence in trade unions' effective fight for jobs prevailed, belief in the value of their own competences and irreplaceability in a workplace or finally lack of acceptance to the forthcoming changes, resulting in their conviction that they should stay "till the end." However,

[2]All the quotations used in this subchapter come from the research carried out by K. Wódz, J. Klimczak. A. Niesporek, D. Nowalska- Kapuścik, commissioned by the Ministry of Economy "Effects of the restructuring of employment in hard coal mines with the consideration of fates of surface employees leaving their jobs in mines during 2004–2005" Katowice 2006, unpublished report. Within the framework of the research interviews were conducted with 66 people dismissed from the mining sector during 2001–2005 and with ten trade union activists.

practice showed that under pressure (exerted by mine directors, chief accountants, division managers) and their arguments (from kind advice to extortion and intimidation), they were forced to go. After the dismissal, they felt disappointed by the fact they underestimated their work, loyalty, involvement and resentful because of the mine authorities' unfair action, degraded because of the manifested lack of respect for long-term service: "(. . .) deepening frustration, helplessness, sometimes anger at injustice, decisions made by irresponsible and incompetent people who decide the fate of many people" [II, K, 57].[3]

In these dramatic circumstances, they could often count only on their nearest family's help, the attitude of their relatives was largely benevolent and sympathetic. However, their neighbourly community's response was indifferent, which may come as a surprise bearing in mind the image of mining communities and their peculiar type of relationality and cooperation. There also ensued a process of exclusion from a previous informal group of friends and colleagues: "my acquaintances actually pulled away from me. My friends talk to me only on rare occasions" [II, K, 58]; "Some friends cut off all communication with me. Those who stayed on think they are better than others" [II, K, 55].

Losing a job in the mine made most of the women face problems previously non-existing or rarely coming up. First of all, the financial standing of their families deteriorated:

> finances don't let us fully enjoy life. I'm sorry I can't afford to buy my kid many things, that I live in poverty. I'm concerned about my child's future and how to cover the cost of their education. [I, K, 60]; I am hardly making ends meet using the benefits instead of working and feeling much-needed. I haven't been on holidays for years. I don't use public transport. I don't have enough money to buy medicines for my child [II, K, 59].

In addition, financial problems negatively affected the relationships in the family and led to conflicts with spouses and children as well as resulted in divorces in some cases: "lack of money, misunderstandings in the family, conflicts with husband and children [I, K, 60]; my marriage and family started to fall apart, I and my children suffer as a result of the job loss" [I, K, 59].

The job loss was also the beginning of health problems and low self-esteem: "I became highly-strung, really nervous" [II, K, 55]; "I went to a psychiatrist and psychotherapist—depression" [I, K, 50]; "a lot changed in my life. I suffered from depression, became distrustful and feel deceived" [II, K, 50]; "crying, lamenting and consequently, my depression" [I, K, 67]; "nervous breakdown" [I, K, 62].

Many of the women were first faced up with the necessity to strive for employment and unemployment, and lack of stability was their new, negative experience: "one got so lonely, not needed, going from one place to another asking about a vacant job, often short of money" [I, K, 60]. Those women who did not find

[3] Abbreviated personal data given in brackets: I—stands for dismissal from work before 2003, II—stands for dismissal from work after 2003 on virtue of the Act of 28 November 2003 on the restructuring of hard coal mining during 2003–2006; K/M—stands for female/male, number—respondent's age.

employment made their living mainly from the income of other family members, from the money earned performing casual jobs, unemployment benefits, mining benefits, savings or personal goods sale.

The other women, owing to their connections and help from their relatives, got a job in private firms working as a cashier, packing machine operator, shop manager, cleaner, security guard, accountant, invoice clerk, administration and office worker, specialist for establishing and clearing homeowner associations, nurse, UE funds specialist. Some decided on self-employment or to join an already operating family business: "I'm planning to stay on working for my daughter's business, I like it. I had helped her before only on days off work" [I, K, 57]; "my husband was running his own business, I helped him and decided to focus on that in the future" [I, K 59].

However, these new professional experiences proved less advantageous than their earlier jobs in the mine. Employment in mining offered them: economic security "due to the amount of remuneration (extra allowance "barbórka," fourteenth monthly pay "czternastka," allowance in coal)" [I, K, 59]; life stabilisation: "job stability" [II, K, 59]; satisfaction*:*

> "I had never wished to work in a different industry than mining" [I, K, 67]; "I was leaving under my superiors' pressure, I had never thought of work outside mining because it is my family's tradition, all my relatives used to work in the mine and it was honour for me (...) I did like my job, I liked the people-miners for their hard work and toil, work discipline" [I, K, 60]; "I have great memories of my job in the mine; the people were reliable, helpful, responsible for their colleague at another workplace" [II, K, 59].

The process of seeking employment and new professional experiences in the open labour market consolidated the women's earlier concerns about their prospects of taking a satisfactory professional activity outside the mine. They pointed to their low labour market attractiveness and prejudices functioning in the labour market against people gaining professional experience in coal mines: "unfortunately, applying for a job people who used to work in mining have little chance as they are treated as second-rate candidates" [I, K, 65]; "since work is specific, mining differs from other industries. Being employed in administration and then finding a job as a cleaner at PLN 300 does not sound interesting" [I, K, 69].

Another barrier posed expectations of employers preferring men up to 35 years of age, which resulted in a double limitation of women's professional attractiveness—sdue to their age and sex:

> "I haven' t found a job yet although I have made a lot of effort, despite enormous determination, I guess the reason it is so is (. . .) inappropriate age" [II, K 57]; "A man might find a job eventually, but I doubt a woman will" [I, K, 70]; "Unfortunately I can work only during the day when the nursery school is open. These days employers demand nonstop availability, which a single mother of a young child cannot fulfil" [I, K,30]; "I am a single mother and my child determines my free time and my working hours (...) so the possible versions include: an 8 to 4 job, work abroad and if so, only with my child and guaranteed child care during my working hours" [I, K, 29].

A common experience of women losing employment in mining companies was then facing difficulty to tackle competence-related, logistic and mental challenges in the open labour market. As women, they found it much more difficult to find a job in

the Silesian labour market than men. And although, on the average, they used to hold (and still do) better education than men, it was not competitive in the open labour market. Also, women could find less opportunity to find a job outside the mine performing simple manual work, which was, among others, related to their age: women were largely employed in mines in 1970s and 80s. The most (self)limitations in professional activity affected persons in working non-mobile age, with more than 20 years employment in mining. They were ready to accept the professional degradation (from administration and office to manual work); they also did not trust their own abilities and felt the intensity of economic, mental and social changes.

However, the trajectory of the fates of women dismissed from mining did not follow one pattern. There were at least several, diverse ones determined by the assessment of the decision of terminating their employment in mining, positive and negative changes in their personal and professional lives, self-assessment of their readaptation possibilities and qualifications, marital and parental status and future prospects. Bearing in mind these elements in biographical differences, we have reconstructed the women's life strategies, noting that the character of the obtained knowledge about these choices came from the statements structured according to the respondents' recognised cultural patterns. Consequently, we had to do with more subjective social worlds aspiring to the status of a social fact rather than objective patterns of empirically verified behaviours and attitudes (Wódz & Klimczak-Ziółek, 2011).

The pattern marking its presence the most was the resourceful woman ("working woman"): she responded to professional and life changes, adapting to new circumstances and modifying the concept of the professional role according to external conditions. Nostalgically looking back into their past associated with a better life, she does not, however allow herself any illusions, sitting and waiting for the improvement of their fate. She would seek and find a job earning her living, bringing little stabilisation and being a source of giving her life a sense. The working woman "was not afraid of any jobs because what mattered most was the fact that she actually had a job."

Part of our interviewees represented the pattern of a woman-victim (of restructuring) or the topos of femininity seeking justification for their own strategy of acting in external circumstances and independent factors. Their other-directedness was accompanied by responsiveness and defensive orientation. In practice, this strategy was chosen by the oldest women with long-term period of employment in the mine, coping the worst in the labour market, not believing in the own competences and agency of individual activity. They pointed to their advanced age to account for their "acquired helplessness" and ruthless restructuring to explain the collapse of their professional design or lasting out in the mine until retirement.

Another chosen pattern was the housewife. This was the kind of femininity Irena Reszke (1991), describing the differences between women's and men's unemployment, indicated as adaptive and protecting non-working women against negative, psychosocial consequences. In the stereotypical gender patterns, according to which home is an area of female competence and the family roles (mother and wife) are the rudiment of individual and social identity of women, our interviewees found

legitimisation for their professional passivity and requirement of unpaid housework. This topos of a housewife was chosen by women in preretirement age whose retired husband with a mining pension or running his own business guaranteed economic security. In their activity, the women focused on housekeeping and supporting family members (with care and help). The housewife as a temporary choice was also included in the area of possible choices for young women dealing with bringing up small children.

Among those dismissed from mining were also women liberated (from mining resentments). These were the youngest women who had been working in the mine too short to be able to integrate with the professional environment, nternalise its culture, adopt its system of values, standards and symbols. They got involved with mining as an employer guaranteeing social protection to women on parental leave, organising work flexibly enough to be able to reconcile professional and home duties and, finally, an employer offering sectoral privileges. However, the above-mentioned attributes of the mine as a workplace were a precious issue only during the first period of gaining professional experience. Limitations of advance resulting from the bureaucratic structure of mines, lack of possibility of funding from the mine resources education of women or finally the lowering comfort of work in ever redundancy-threatened divisions, it all had already prompted them to look for an alternative way to ensure professional self-realisation. Restructuring gave them a pretext and activating and adapting instruments facilitating the realisation of their professional plans. These women, liberated from the traditional bonds with the mine, optimistically and bravely looking into the future, became independent professionally, running their own satisfying business activity, requalifying and choosing professions which are attractive in the open labour market or leaving abroad for work.

Reconstructed strategies of coping with the challenge of "dismissal from work" allowed questioning myths underlying the restructuring, like: "As for women employed in mining not only on the surface but in the whole area of administration, etc, I think it was not the only person supporting the family" [M, trade union activist][4] (Wódz et al., 2005, pp. 122–124). Not all women, however, were in marital relationships, some set up single-parent families; not all could treat their salary as an addition to the family income, as there were women who provided for their whole family financially; not all women work for instrumental reasons as there were some for whom work was an autotelic value. However, among the women, there prevailed the instrumental orientation mobilising them to gain funds and the responsibility most of them shared for the realisation of the family's economic function. Professional work proved to have for the women themselves and for their family an economic value and social importance comparable with the one attributed in the traditional restructuring discourse to the male professional activity. This determination to keep it is very well illustrated by the statement by an employee of the Mining Labour Agency: "it happened many times that women from office positions were trained to perform the job of weighmaster while it is considered hard manual job.

[4]A statement of an expert, representative of the Free Trade Union "August 80".

There is a ramp where lorries arrive, it's freezing in winter, dirty. And these women much preferred to take such a job (. . .) they wouldn't leave" (Wódz et al., 2005, p. 131).

Women in the Mine After the Restructuring of Mining

Marginalisation of women in the mining labour market as well as in the trade union legitimised by the conservative public discourse (Hardy, 2010, p. 261), after 25 years started to give way to the liberal narration. Awareness of the low status of employment in mining and—in a wider context—in the masculinised labour market made women decide to collaborate and lobby for the improvement of employment conditions. In 2005 there came into being Women's Trade Union of the Rydułtowy-Anna coal mine. This union was to be a partner in the social dialogue and official representative of the female industry in mining. The union women themselves thus described the role they perceived:

> We are a slap in the face to them all as these were their toys, only theirs and they just can't forgive us that we were bold to start this union, besides—instead of dealing only with this work (. . .) we are doing something more (. . .) We are looking for other organisations, support, outside our enterprise as there is no-one in the enterprise we can count on as for other trade unions or organisations (. . .) These organisations (. . .) are dominated by men where there is a woman in the position of a secretary, not even an assistant, as an assistant would have to be a partner or the boss's leading force (. . .) so in the role of a secretary for making coffee there should be women, so that it looks nicer. However, where decisions are made, where something important happens, there are no women as partners (...) (K, union woman) (Klimczak-Ziółek, 2011, p. 215).

The union women's public and formal coming into existence[5] introduced a spectacular change in the political and social debates about mining and the role and position of women in the sector (and further—in Silesian Voivodship). It also caused interest in female issues shown by other trade unions in the mining sector, creating female sections and exposing women to union structures. This new voice was also important in negotiating "a new gender contract" in connection with the renunciation in 2008 by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy of the International Convention on Labour Organisation No. 45 and the appearance of a formal possibility of employing women in underground positions. Those men and women who supported the removal of limitations in the employment of women in mines pointed to the discrimination resulting from inequality in the access to financial resources related to underground work. An argument was also freedom of choice: work in underground positions: "She doesn't have to work underground but let no-one tells

[5]Unionised in the Women's Trade Union of the Rydułtowy-Anna Mine. The union had originally „mining" in its name. Its activists, however, gave up this name specifier in 2008, seeking integration of women from all employee environments.

her or forbids her to do what she wants to do" (union man) (Wódz & Klimczak-Ziółek, 2011, p.78).

Removing the legal barriers was not, however, equivalent to the increase in the employment of women in coal mines, mining companies still aimed to reduce employment. There were also no changes in the social and cultural conditions for the functioning of women in the labor market. Equality de jure did not mean equality de facto. Union women emphasized women being burdened with nonprofessional roles and deficit of instruments aimed at equalizing chances: "The role of women is not limited exclusively to being an employee. When at work, the woman is also a mother, her parents' carer, she is often the family's sole breadwinner, so all these roles seem to permeate, and there is a need for something more, to enable her, for the sake of our common good to reconcile these two roles" (Klimczak-Ziółek, 2013, p. 198). Experiences of women working in mines in other countries also indicated some other potential obstacles, such as lack of trust in women's abilities and treating them as a threat to underground employees of male culture and gender stereotypes hindering professional adaptation (Tallichet, 1997, pp. 31–49).

Nowadays there are 139 women working underground, 2885 are employed I in mechanical coal processing plants, 3814 account for administration women workers (office service, accounts, HR, cash register), and 1175 women work on the surface as technical inspection (Gałązka, 2019). They account for nearly 9% of all mining sector employees, and their average pay is lower (by 21.5%) (Doniec et al., 2016, p. 19) than men's remuneration. However, there are different conditions for potential resigning from work than in the first period of restructuring, dramatically changing the life of thousands of women and their families. As of 1 January 2016 the restructuring of mining has been regulated by the "Act of 22 December 2015 on the amendment of the act on the functioning of hard coal mining, and since 2018 the Act of 9 November 2018 on the amendment of the act on the functioning of hard coal mining and some other acts." The provide for further reduction of employment by means of financial incentives for voluntary leaving the sector such as paid leave (amounting to 75% of monthly remuneration) offered to coal processing women workers being no more than 3 years before reaching retirement age without diminishing the amount of pay on taking a job outside the mining sector and severance pay amounting to a yearly remuneration for administration female employees. (Witajewski-Baltvilk et al., 2018, pp. 19–21). However, the essential restructuring of mining is still focused on men. And still, the argumentation is based on emphasising the high percentage of men among employees (0.5% nationwide and 5% in the scale of Silesia Voivodship), which is to implicate this special concern about requalifying and preparing other sectors to receive relatively low educated and holding specific qualification present mine employees (Kiewra et al., 2019, p. 41).

In Conclusion

Absence of women in the mining discourse accords with a broader context going beyond the sectoral boundaries. The "blind to gender" transformation ignored women, disregarding the fact that "where women are able to survive well, their families and communities survive well too" (Gibson, 2011, p. XI). The focus of the transition in postcommunist Poland on the implementation in the economy of the doctrine of neoclassical economics (Ost, 2008, p. 11) made effectiveness and profitability an indicator of the progressing modernisation and catching up with the West. For "fitting the society into the ideological model" to become "normal" (Ost, 2007, p. 7), that is neutralise the neoliberal axiology, it meant reconstructing the structure of employment and changing the economic priorities. However, this model of development was to realise the "flexible" entity "making decisions and taking risks" (Dunn, 2008, p. 36), autonomously "self-governing" (89) and enjoying the freedom "identified with economic freedom" (193), an only apparently gender transparent entity, de facto androcentric though.

Male claims to be a pattern setting standard in the post-Fordian market were enhanced by the conservative policy of the ruling party and Roman Catholic Church, legally and symbolically redefining (limiting) the position of woman in the postcommunist society through the restitution of the myth of Mother Poland (Fidelis, 2015, p. 273). Women became less normative category of employee, and their position in the labour market was increasingly threatened. Working women were seen as the cause of excessive employment, their gender disqualified them in production positions labelled as "male" (e.g. metalworking), and finally their professional activity was interpreted in terms of political decisions of the (former) socialist authorities,(as if) with no connection with qualifications or need to earn income. They were also disregarded by trade unions and deprived of support and protection on their part (Ost, 2007, p. 296). The priority was to maintain the employment of men and reduced the number of possible dismissals. It was particularly visible in such an industrialised, based on the extraction sector, out of work area as Silesian Voivodship,[6] where among employees losing jobs, women accounted for approx. 77% of all person dismissed from work and consequently prevailed among the registered unemployed (2/3), especially those being for a long time. This was accompanied with the privatisation of the sector of social services and employers withdrawing from financing welfare institutions and social benefits. Not only did the neoliberal state eliminate women from the labour market, but it also pushed on their shoulders the cost of social care and reproduction. This "cooperation of capital and patriarchal culture" (Charkiewicz, 2010, p. 16) resulted in limiting women in the access to the benefits of the new system, while the post-Fordian model tailored to men (ignoring women's "double burden") doomed them to the status of precarians. Hence, the "losers" of the Polish transformation were first of all women (Gardawski, 2009, pp. 218–220).

[6]Former Katowice Voivodship.

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Place of Professional Work in the Life of Silesian Women

Urszula Swadźba

Abstract The chapter aims at presenting the value of professional work and the fulfilment of an employee role in the life of Silesian women. For a long industrial period of time, women in Silesia were stereotypically perceived as non-working wives, who were taking care of their hard-working husbands—miners. However, the situation has changed, especially since the transition period. The analysis is based on the theoretical concept of changes in Ronald Inglehart's value system (including work value). Then, based on historical sources and studies, the value of professional work and the fulfilment of the employee role of Silesian women is presented. The study is also based on research carried out by Silesian sociologists. The main part of the chapter is an analysis of empirical research conducted among women in one of the working-class districts of Katowice. The research presents the current value of work and changes in the fulfilment of the employee role (stereotypical perception of male and female occupations, professional work of Silesian women and income contributed to the household, work motivation and satisfaction, socio-occupational mobility). The Conclusions section emphasises the transition from materialistic values of work to post-materialistic, in reference to the Inglehart concept.

Introduction

We are currently witnessing a weakening of the cultural pressure on women to fulfil the role of a wife and a mother. Barriers to women's professional advancement and problems arising from combining social roles still exist. The problem of women's professional work has extensively been discussed to date in the sociological literature.

One of the important addressed issues is women's career path and their professional advancement (Duch-Krzystoszek, 2007; Friedman, 2010; Rudnik, 2013). The issues of women's work and occupations for women are explored (Kołaczek, 1993;

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Morse, 1995; Hanson & Pratt, 2003; Mazur-Łuczak, 2010). However, the question arises whether there are typically female professions that are associated with the extension of the role of women in the family (nursery school teachers, teachers, nurses) or whether women should perform all professions, even those requiring physical endurance (Bruni et al., 2004). The earliest works on such dilemmas were undertaken in the context of women's professional work.

Sociologists as well as economists devote considerable argument to women on the labour market in their literature (Domański, 1999; Duch-Krzystoszek et al., 2004; Fortin, 2005; Hagqvist et al., 2017; Jensen et al., 2017). Since 1992, women have been characterised by a lower rate of economic activity than men (difference of about 14.5–16.0%) and a lower employment rate (difference of 12.6–15.9%) in Poland. Both men and women reach the highest economic activity among people aged 25–44, but women definitely reach the peak of their professional activity later (Sztanderska & Grotkowska, 2009, stat.gov.pl). In recent years, the economic activity of women in the 25–34 age range has increased. This is due to the fact that women postpone the decision to give birth to a child, as they want to strengthen their position on the labour market in the first place (Smyła, 2016). The decrease in economic activity in Poland concerns mainly two age groups of women—the youngest up to the age of 25, and the oldest around retirement age. The lower activity of the first group is associated with the increase in demand for highly qualified employees, and thus the extension of the education period. The second group, in turn, used the possibilities of early retirement, pre-retirement benefits to avoid unemployment (Kryńska et al., 2013). The labour market does not favour women. They are more often than men exposed to job loss and have more difficulty finding it (Kotowska et al., 2007; Pactwa, 2008; Kotowska, 2009; Mazur-Łuczak, 2010; Kotowska-Wójcik & Luty-Michalak, 2018; International Labour Organisation 2016). Studies have shown that most often, despite the professional work of women, men have a larger share in providing funds for maintaining a home (Fejfer, 2019). Women, in turn, have a significantly greater share in household chores.

The next problem concerns the 'glass ceiling', i.e. barriers and blockages of women's promotion opportunities to higher positions and better pay (Titkow, 2003; Swadźba, 2009; Suchacka, 2009; Gawrycka et al., 2008). The 'glass ceiling' is an invisible barrier that prevents women from reaching the highest levels of their careers. This concept symbolises the prospect of promotion with its unattainability. The inequality of women in access to attractive jobs and barriers in promotion opportunities were diagnosed within the publications on professional work (Cotter et al., 2001). This situation is not the result of their lower qualifications or professional competences, but of stereotypes that constitute an effective barrier on the path to professional development and promotion (Tyrowicz et al., 2018). The 'glass ceiling' phenomenon is an invisible phenomenon because in almost every case of any promotion difficulties other reasons are provided. Nevertheless, it has been noted that women with the same qualifications as men are less often promoted and receive lower salaries (Brainerd, 2000; Adamchik & Bedi, 2003; Black & Spitz-Oener, 2010; Fejfer, 2019).

A frequently discussed problem is the work of women in two jobs at the workplace and at home, and the associated opportunity of combining work with private life—'work–life balance' (Myrdal & Klein, 1968; Blau & Ehrenberg, 1997; Friedan, 1997; Lachowska, 2012; Jensen et al., 2017; Kotowska-Wójcik & Luty-Michalak, 2018). This concept is defined as: 'directing attention to maintaining a balance between work and personal life, which also allows the individual's pursuit of self-fulfilment in non-working aspects of life while maintaining understanding of the multidimensionality of the situation'. The opportunity to reconcile these two spheres of life is particularly important today—when women want to find fulfilment on many levels, without harming any of them (Gerlach, 2014). Within the concept of 'Work–Life Balance' there is also the concept of 'Work–Family Balance', which generally applies to situations when '(...) an individual is equally involved and equally satisfied with their role at work and in the family' (Greenhaus et al., 2003). The professional work of women was most often associated with the performance of their household duties (Eckenrode & Gore, 1990). Combining two roles by women and working two jobs comes at the expense of their physical and mental health (Barling, 1990; Williams, 2001).

The work and analysis discussed above regarding the work of women and their professional roles presented women in various contexts of social roles. For a long industrial period, women in Silesia were stereotypically associated with a non-working but taking care of her hard-working husband—miner's wife. However, the situation has changed, especially since the transition period. This is a problem that is worthy of sociological research.

The chapter aims at:

1. First, analysing the place of work in women's lives in Silesia from the period of industrialism in the mid-nineteenth century to the transition period.
2. Second, analysing the current professional situation of women and showing the cultural change that has taken place in the Silesian community. The theoretical concept of changes in the value system, including the value of work by Ronald Inglehart is used.

The socio-historical analysis is conducted on the basis of historical sources and studies that contain information on the professional work of women in Silesia. Then, based on sociological research conducted among women in one of the working-class districts of Katowice, the current value of work and awareness changes that have taken place in the positioning of professional work by Silesian women are presented.

The Concept of Changes in Ronald Inglehart's Value System: Application to Empirical Research

An important role in analysing the system of values, including the value of work, is the theory of Ronald Inglehart (Inglehart, 1977). The basis of Inglehart's theory of values was the 'Theory on Needs' of Abraham Maslow. According to this theory, human needs are hierarchical. The most important are physiological and safety needs. After addressing basic needs, an individual will strive for the implementation of other intangible needs. This means that with ongoing economic prosperity there is a transition from materialistic values (ensuring safety and survival) to post-materialist values (emphasising the need for self-expression and quality of life). For these two premises, it can be concluded that there are considerable differences between the value systems of the younger and the older generations. Older people, who live with deficits, tend towards materialistic values. The younger generation, which has matured in conditions of economic growth, the absence of wars and a universal offer of goods and services, would favour post-materialistic values.

Inglehart's concept carries much theoretical weight and explains the change of the contemporary value systems. It also came in for much criticism and additions were its concept (Flanagan, 1987; Fukuyama, 2000). One of them was developed in the Polish context (Ziółkowski, 2006). Ziółkowski believes that Inglehart's thesis requires reinterpretation. In Inglehart's materialism/post-materialism scale, there are—as a matter of fact—two independent tendencies that can be described in a two-dimensional range of values (interests): one is related to existential values (e.g. work), the other—to cultural issues (religion, family) (Ziółkowski, 2006, p. 147). The concept by Inglehart, supplemented with the remarks formulated by Ziółkowski, is very broad and contains an analysis of numerous values. The values analysed are autonomous, they can be isolated and concluded upon separately. This can be particularly true for work which is—according to Ziółkowski—an existential value and its transformations exhibit their own specificity.

Research on the changes in the value system has been carried out in Europe (Inglehart, 1990; Inglehart, 1997; Inglehart et al., 1998; Inglehart et al., 2004; Inglehart & Wenzel, 2007). These studies also concerned women's issues (Inglehart & Norris, 2009).

Such studies have also been carried out in Poland and the results have been published and indicate general changes in the value system in Polish society (Siemieńska, 2004; Jasińska-Kania & Marody, 2002; Jasińska-Kania, 2012; Marody et al., 2019). I believe that some of the values can be selected for testing and the results compared. This will enable analysing changes in specific values. The studied values are autonomous, and the questions are structured in such a way that they can be separated, and based on their results, conclusions about changes in values are drawn (Swadźba, 2008b, 2009, 2012b, 2013a).

The theoretical concept presented above will be used in the interpretation of empirical research. In industrial society, the roles of women were strictly designated by their place in the social structure. Above all, a woman should be a wife and

mother, and in a situation of higher necessity she could take up a job. In a society of growing existential security and the growing importance of post-materialist values, women decide for themselves what is important in their lives. This is due to the growing individualism, combined with a high level of self-expression. This applies to the young generation of women, but also to the generation of their mothers.

We will be interested in the analysis of how the Silesian women approach the expectations that are related to the employee role—to what extent this role is subjected to revision, i.e. to what extent women allow themselves the freedom to interpret it. The formulated research will cover a wide range of topics related to the decomposition of work value and the change in the definition of the employee role of Silesian women, which takes place in Silesian communities in the post-industrial period. It will allow us to trace the transition from materialistic to post-materialistic values.

The Value of Work and Employee Roles of Silesian Women: Socio-historical Analysis

It is pivotal to take into account two factors in the analysis of the value system: the socio-historical situation and the socialisation process in the family. There were three overarching values in the Silesian community: work, family and Catholic religion (Bukowska-Floreńska, 2007; Swadźba, 2012a). Work as an existential value was the most important of these three values. The quality of work was crucial, and it had to be carried out in a reliable and solid manner. The values of work concerned mainly professional work performed by men. Work at home and work in the household had to be performed in the same manner, which was the responsibility of women. Above all, a woman was intended for such work and its good performance determined her image. Contrary to stereotypical opinions, women in Silesia undertook professional work.

Before the First World War, women in Silesia mainly worked in mines, smelters and factories. In 1875, 5462 women worked in the Upper Silesian hard coal mines, and 2041 women in zinc, iron and lead smelters (Jonca, 1966). In 1985, their employment increased to 11,750 workers (Biały, 1963). It was usually auxiliary work on the surface, such as cleaning offices, cleaning factory yards. Some women undertook direct production jobs of: unloading and loading materials and raw materials (coal, lime, coke), drying of zinc diaphragm. In Upper Silesia, the total number of women employed in industry decreased just before the First World War. In 1892, women constituted 9.3% of the workforce in mining and 5.2% in 1913. The largest proportion of women was employed in zinc metallurgy (25% in 1994, 15% in 1909 (Kaczyńska, 1970). The number of jobs increased in good economic times, when there was no shortage of work. Employers willingly employed women because their work was cheaper. Mainly two categories of women worked. First of all, young girls before marriage (16–21 years old), who constituted 40% of employed women.

Such women stopped working along with their marriage. They returned to work in the event of being widowed.

In the interwar period, the Silesian industry experienced a great economic crisis. It was a period of recession that meant that there was no employment for men (Hrebenda, 1979). There was, however, employment for women. In 1931, 115,348 women worked professionally in the Silesian Province, which constituted 25% of all women (among men the rate was 83.2%) (Wanatowicz, 1999). Single and young women dominated among those working in the Silesian Province. As the analysed data showed, only 4.5% of them were married women. Women took up work not only in industry, but as teachers and clerks, they opened their own workshops. A lot of women were looking for work. Kempa (2001), based on the source data, states that 24,792 women were looking for work in 1927, most of them were unskilled workers. Women working in industry agreed to lower pay rates and employers were willing to use this workforce. They performed lighter tasks but requiring greater precision and patience. Young girls often worked as domestic help taking up service for richer people and on farms. They gained experience in running a household. Women also relatively often undertook work in retailing as shop assistants (Kempa, 2001).

In the period of real socialism, we could already learn about the value of women's professional work from sociological research. Initially, research was carried out on the professional roles of men, and as it were we learned about the professional roles of women (Mrożek, 1965; Adamski, 1966). Most often, the value of work and employee roles of women were discussed in the context of analyses regarding the transformation of the family and its values. Sociological research of Mrożek on the mining family showed that in mining settlements (Czerwionka, Murcki), where there were no jobs for women, 7–10% of miners' wives with children worked professionally. In the metropolitan district of Katowice—Bogucice—it was as much as 27%. In the mining environment, the attitude towards women's work, both on the part of women and men, was usually negative. It should be added that the qualifications of miners' wives were usually very low. Almost all of them had only primary education, the number of those who completed vocational or secondary school was small. That is why they worked as unskilled female manual workers. Therefore, their work was of instrumental nature and treated by women as a temporary necessity.

However, this situation begins to change in the 1960s, due to the fact that an increasing number of girls from working-class families of indigenous origin have at least graduated from vocational education. Therefore, some Silesian women combined parental and professional roles, continuing their professional work after having children, thus breaking the traditional fulfilment of social roles. The economic situation often forced them to do so (Swadźba, 2001). In the 1970s, the financial situation of families improved due to the increase in the standard of living in the country. Women also got more opportunities to fulfil their personality through professional work (Mrożek, 1987). The proportion of professionally active women increased, some industries such as retailing, education and training as well as health care and social welfare were dominated by women (Roczniki statystyczne województwa katowickiego, 1974, 1978). The age structure of working women

was evolving. While in the 1950s and 1960s, the highest rates of women's professional activity were characteristic of the youngest age groups, and the lowest were of the oldest group, in the 1970s these indicators levelled out (Frąckiewicz and Strubel 1988). An empirical study carried out by the author of the chapter in 1999, where respondents were asked about the fact of taking up professional work by their mothers, showed that 64.6% of respondents of Silesian origin had working mothers (Swadźba, 2001). They most often worked in the area of services. They very often had a practical occupation of a nurse or shop assistant. Such a high proportion of respondents—the Silesians, whose mothers worked professionally, would indicate the abandonment of the traditional distribution of family roles into male—professional and female—home.

An important factor improving the education of women in Silesia was the establishment of the University of Silesia in 1968, which provided degree courses in humanities, traditionally more often chosen by women. This made it easier for girls of indigenous origin to graduate from university. After graduation, these women took up professional work and considered it as the norm.

The transition period, which took place after 1989, made the Silesian family face a stern test. Disturbing phenomena such as job loss, unemployment, and impoverishment have severely affected Silesian families. The security of employment and earnings that was known to the inhabitants of Silesia throughout the entire period of real socialism was not any longer so obvious. Sociological studies into the value of work, carried out by the author, indicate that professional work is an important value for Silesian women (Swadźba 2001, 2009, 2012a).

These results show a change in their awareness and changes in the value system of Silesian women. The attitude towards work as a value for women also results from the fact that the situation in Silesian families is changing. Men working in mining have the option of retiring, often at the age of 45–50. A woman remains a professionally active person. Recent studies show that the distribution of professional roles in the family has changed. In more than 20% of families, a man is retired and a woman is working. Earnings achieved by a woman are therefore very important for the budget, and a creative aspect of a woman's work is important to her.

Acceptance for women's work has also increased (Rojek-Adamek, 2008; Pactwa, 2008; Swadźba, 2012a; Swadźba & Żak, 2016; Iwińska & Bukowska, 2018). This fact was influenced by the labour market developments. In Silesia, the supply of jobs for women increased due to the service market development (Muster, 2008). Both women and men treat their professional work as an expression of independence, the opportunity to earn money and to experience their personhood. Today, girls in traditional Silesian families are therefore preparing mainly for performing a professional role (Swadźba, 2008b). A sound education is to achieve this goal. Since the 1990s, the percentage of female students in the Silesian Province has exceeded the percentage of male students by 5–7% (Roczniki Statystyczne Województwa Śląskiego, 2001–2008). A lot of women from indigenous Silesian families have graduated from universities and are enjoying a promising professional career. At the same time, they try to combine professional and family roles (Swadźba, 2009). In

conclusion, it can be stated that the stereotype of the Silesian woman—the non-working miner's wife—is becoming a thing of the past.

The above studies on the value of professional work and employee roles of women in Silesia point to impending changes. An analysis based on current research conducted in the Silesian environment is presented in the next section.

Contemporary Silesian Women and Their Professional Work

Methodological Grounding of Research

An analysis of the professional work's importance for contemporary Silesian women will be based on empirical research conducted in two districts of Katowice—Giszowiec and Nikiszowiec. The research was carried out in 2013 as part of the statutory research of the Department of General Sociology of the Institute of Sociology of the University of Silesia. Research topic: 'Changes in women's value systems and social roles in post-industrial areas'. The study covered 397 women in the old workers' districts of Katowice—Nikiszowiec and Giszowiec. Both districts are part of Katowice. The 'Wieczorek' mine operates in Nikiszowiec and some of the district's residents are employees of this mine. Nikiszowiec and Giszowiec were once inhabited exclusively by miners of the 'Gische' mine (together with their families). The sampling design was of a quantitative nature: the key variables were age and education. Such a sampling design of the female respondents enabled the provision of the most exhaustive picture of the situation of Silesian women, because it is a representative sample. Second-year students of Sociology took part in the implementation of field studies. Each student received a set of questionnaires (survey and interview) as well as guidelines on the required socio-demographic characteristics of the research group. Therefore, the results of the research concern a representative group of Silesian women, as reflected in Table 1.

Most of the surveyed women identify themselves with Silesia (they feel Silesian or are connected with Silesia). There is a statistically significant dependence between

Table 1 Regional origin of the respondents and their ethnic identification (%), $N = 397$

	Do you feel Silesian?				
Regional origin	Yes	No	Connected with Silesia	Hard to say	Total
Indigenous	80.2	2.9	12.2	4.1	43.4
Mixed heritage 1	59.6	8.8	26.3	5.3	14.4
Mixed heritage 2	51.5	18.2	15.2	12.1	8.3
Non-indigenous	13.7	26.7	45.8	13.7	33.1
Total	52.5	13.4	25.5	8.6	100.0

Explanatory notes: indigenous—both parents are Silesians, mixed heritage 1 (Silesian mother, non-indigenous father), mixed heritage 2 (Silesian father, non-indigenous mother), non-indigenous (both parents are non-indigenous). Source: own study and computation

regional origin and ethnic identification (at $p = 0.000$ chi-square significant, V Cramer = 0.311). The percentage of female respondents with the indigenous origin is lower than the percentage of female respondents with Silesian self-declaration (52.5%). Such a dependence also occurred in my previous research in the Silesian environment (Swadźba, 2001, 2012a). The higher result is influenced by the self-declarations of people from mixed marriages.

It can be concluded that the research covered Silesian women living in a typical Silesian working-class district. The research concerned changes in the value system and the fulfilment of social roles, the analysis below only concerns questions indicating the value of professional work and the fulfilment of employee roles.

Female Professions: Male Professions. Are They Still Stereotypically Perceived?

Although there is no formal attribution of specific professions to a particular gender, such a division exists in the labour market and in social awareness (Kołaczek, 1993; Hanson & Pratt, 2003; Jensen et al., 2017; Tyrowicz et al., 2018). There is horizontal segregation, where we deal with the phenomenon of domination of one gender over the other in some professions. Therefore, in order to investigate this problem, the female respondents were presented with selected professions and asked to indicate which, in their opinion, should be performed only by men, and which should be practised by both women and men. The results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2 Perception of the possibility of exercising professions (%), $N = 397$

Profession	By woman only	By man only	Both by woman and man
Teacher	6.3	0.0	93.2
Nurse	25.7	0.8	73.0
Cleaner	38.0	0.5	60.7
Shop assistant	20.9	0.8	77.8
Secretary	34.0	1.8	63.7
Driver	2.8	42.2	54.3
Construction site worker	2.0	89.4	8.6
Miner	2.0	89.9	8.1
Physician	1.5	4.0	94.2
Waiter/waitress	6.0	4.0	89.7
Pilot (aviator)	1.3	50.9	47.6
Cashier	14.9	1.3	83.6
Accountant	7.6	3.5	88.7
Director (of a plant, firm, institution)	1.3	10.4	88.1

Source: own research and computation

The research results indicate that there are typical male occupations in the social awareness of the surveyed women, while there are no typical female occupations. First of all, the professions of a miner and a worker at a construction site were specified as male occupations by the female respondents. These occupations are considered as 'male' lines of work because of the difficulty in performing work requiring physical strength. These professions enjoy social respect. There is even no denomination of a female name of these occupations. A particular example is the miner's profession. Pilot's and driver's lines of work are also perceived as male, although not to such an extent as the previous two. It is assumed that these professions can also be performed by women, e.g. public transport drivers, in certain situations. The cited list does not contain a profession considered to be specifically feminine. A cleaner received the highest number of such indications –38.0%, with a minimum of 0.5% as a specifically male profession. The second of these professions is a secretary, in this case 34.0% of female respondents indicated that it should be practised only by a woman and 1.8% that only by a man. More than 1/5 of female respondents believe that only a woman should practise the nursing profession and only 0.8% that only a man. In turn, egalitarianism concerns several professions. These are mainly the professions of doctor, teacher, waiter/waitress and accountant, director. The percentage of acceptance that these are professions that can be performed by both women and men is around 90%. In some of them, the work performed concerns 'service' for both men and women. (e.g. treatment, teaching). Particularly interesting is the change in the perception of the teaching profession. This profession was practised only by men several dozen years ago. Currently, none of the respondents stated that it should only be pursued by a man. The position of a director is a bit similar. Formerly reserved only for men, now the vast majority of female respondents believe that it can be held by both a woman and a man.

The perception of the possibility of exercising a profession depends on age. The older generation of women has more traditional views on the possibility of performing the profession by individual genders, the younger women subscribe to a more modern viewpoint. In one case, there is a statistical dependence, this applies to holding the position of a director (at 0.003 chi significant square, V Cramer 0.159). Only a small percentage of women of the younger generation believe that this position should be held only by men, in contrast to the older generation of women, where about a quarter of women express such a view (18–30 years −6.5%, 31–40 –3.0%, 61 and more years –25.4%). Young female respondents also see women in the position of a director much more often. Certainly, they will strive to break the glass ceiling phenomenon, which has been observed in Silesia (Pactwa, 2008; Rojek-Adamek, 2008; Suchacka, 2009; Hoffmann, 2010). The analysis of responses regarding the perception of other professions in correlation with age was not statistically significant but indicated that it had some impact on the response selection. Older women perceived professional roles more stereotypically. An example would be the teaching profession: 14.3% of women over 60 years of age thought it should be practised by a woman, compared to 4.6% of women from the age group 18–30 years old. Even greater difference in the answers concerned the perception of performing the profession of a cleaner (over 61 years old 56.3%,

18–30 years old –32.4%). Other examples of differences in responses are the perception of pursuing the occupations of a shop assistant (18–30 years old –32.4%, over 61 years old –32.4%) and a secretary (18–30 years old –33.3%, over 61 years old −49.3%). According to older women, these jobs should be carried out by women. In turn, professions such as a pilot should be practised by men (18–30 years old –51.9%, over 61 years old –62.0%).

Education also affects the perception of the occupation. Women with higher education allow, to a greater extent, the practice of some professions by both genders. Women with primary education believe that a specific profession can only be carried out by a woman or only by a man. An example of these differences in thinking are: the profession of a nurse which is considered to be exclusively feminine by 41.4% of women with primary education and 17.9% with higher education, the profession of a shop assistant (primary –34.3%, higher –12.8%), cleaner (primary –54.3%, higher –25.6%), secretary (primary –48.6%, higher –28.2%), waitresses (primary –17.1%, higher –17.1%). In turn, some of the professions are treated to a much greater extent as male by women with lower education, an example is: a director (primary –20.0%, higher −2.6%), a pilot (primary −72.9%, higher –39.7%). Older women with primary education are therefore very conservative as far as their perception of professional roles is concerned.

Based on the analysis of the response to this question, it can be stated that there are noticeable generational changes in the perception of the performance of professions and holding positions. This is the same as in other countries and regions (Kołaczek, 1993; Morse, 1995; Cotter et al., 2001; Hanson & Pratt, 2003; Jensen et al., 2017; Tyrowicz et al., 2018). Younger women with higher education show greater egalitarianism in perceiving the possibility of exercising professions and positions. They allow both genders to perform most of them, and only the hardest jobs requiring physical strength are left only to men. A change is taking place in Silesia, which has already affected other communities much earlier (Bruni et al., 2004; Black & Spitz-Oener, 2010). Older women with primary or basic vocational education have stereotypical views on the occupation. This generational change applies primarily to the youngest women. Also middle-aged women, already better educated, are more modern in their thinking than the oldest generation of women.

Professional Work of Silesian Women and Income Contributed to the Household

Professional work is usually an important value for an individual. At work, a person spends a large part of their life, it determines satisfaction with life and success in life. This applies to women who not only work professionally but also have to combine work with responsibilities at home (Myrdal & Klein, 1968; Barling, 1990; Titkow, 2003; Duch-Krzystoszek et al., 2004; Titkow, 2007; Lachowska, 2012; Brainerd, 2000; Jensen et al., 2017; Beham et al., 2019). This situation also applies to

contemporary Silesian women. Most of the surveyed women work professionally – 54.9%. Professional activity depends on age (at $p = 0.000$ chi-square significant, V Cramer 0.481). The age bracket of 31–40 years of age is the most active professionally (78.8%), then 41–50 years (70.6%), up to 30 years (66.7%), 51–60 years (47.6% %), and above 61 years (8.5%). Professional activity is influenced by education. There is a statistically significant relationship (at $p = 0.000$ chi-square significant, V Cramer = 0.415). As much as 85.9% of women with university education work professionally, 57.7% with secondary education, 52.3% with vocational education and 18.6% with primary education. The professional activity of the respondents is therefore comparable to the professional activity of the general population of the province. National Census data showed that the labour market participation is 72.2% for women with higher education, 54.6% with post-secondary education, 53.6% with secondary education, 44.1% with vocational education (Narodowy Spis Powszechny 2011). Studies have also shown that, for example, 71.4% of women with higher education, 52.8% with vocational education and 28.6% with primary education work at the age of 51–60. The largest proportion of surveyed professionally active women work for a state or local government employer (52.0%), a smaller proportion for a private one (34.3%), and 13.5% are self-employed. People with higher and secondary education are more likely to work for a state employer than less educated ones (H –33.0%, S –35.6%, VE –26.0%, P –5.2%). The type of employment also varies, among self-employed women 43.3% have full-time employment, 59.2% with a private employer and 75.2% with a state employer.

During the research, respondents were also asked a question about their profession. Professional affiliation is a strong correlate of other characteristics of an individual's social position (Domański, 2004). The question about the profession had two dimensions, because it was asked about the acquired profession and the actual profession. Then, the question of whether the current job is consistent with the acquired profession. This question is supplemented with a question about the listed socio-occupational categories of affiliation of mother and father, as well as maternal grandmother and paternal grandmother. Knowledge on this matter allows us to learn about intergenerational mobility as part of work performed in the surveyed communities.

The female respondents were asked about the acquired profession and the actual one. A minor issue was the listing of acquired professions (135 professions). The most frequently mentioned professions were: salesperson (shop assistant) –9.6%, teacher –5.4%, economist –4.3%, financier –3.5%, beautician/hairdresser –2.3%. The professions listed here were more precise because the respondents knew what school diplomas they were holding.

Determining the actual profession was a major issue. The female respondents listed 74 types of professions, or actually the activities they deal with professionally. The most frequently mentioned profession is a shop assistant/trader –10.4%, a waitress –5.6%, a beautician/hairdresser –4.5%, an economist/accountant –3.8%, a nurse –5.6%, a teacher –3.8%. Most of the actual professions were related to the area of services. About 4% of respondents reported ownership of a firm as their profession. Most often it regarded small service companies.

Table 3 Education and job compliance with the acquired profession (%), $N = 397$

Education	It is definitely yes	It is rather yes	No	It is definitely no	It is difficult to say	Total
Primary/lower secondary	14.2	7.1	78.5	7.1	0.0	100.0
Vocational education	28.0	15.8	42.1	12.2	1.7	100.0
Secondary/post-secondary	15.4	13.1	56.0	11.9	3.6	100.0
Tertiary	34.3	17.9	28.3	19.4	0.0	100.0
Total	24.2	14.8	45.3	13.9	1.8	100.0

Source: Own research and calculation

Therefore, the surveyed women often do not work in their acquired profession. The table below presents the extent of this phenomenon in relation to education. Only women who work answered the question (Table 3).

There is a significant statistical relationship between the respondent's education and the acquired profession (at $p = 0.000$ chi-square, significant, V Cramer 0.282). Women with higher education are more likely to work in their profession than women with lower education: secondary, vocational, and primary. The vast majority of women with primary education do not work in their profession (over 80%). Additionally, more than 50% of respondents with vocational education do not work in their profession, nor do those with secondary education (almost 70%). Hence it turns out that a job not in one's profession is becoming the norm. Graduating from school and obtaining a formally defined profession does not guarantee a job in this profession.

One of the most important functions of professional work is to earn a specified income. For income, we take up employment to support ourselves and our families. It is a well-known phenomenon that women receive lower earnings. The trend is ongoing all along and applies to all countries where sociological research was conducted (Barling, 1990; Blau & Ehrenberg, 1997; Brainerd, 2000; Titkow, 2003; Kotowska, 2009; International Labour Organisation, 2016; Fejfer, 2019). Everywhere women in Poland gave ground to men in this regard. Their average income accounted for 55–70% of men's income (Gawrycka et al., 2008; Kotowska, 2009; Lachowska, 2012). Studies have shown that even in situations of equal qualifications and positions held, gender inequality in earnings perpetuates. Belief about women's lower earnings is also widespread among Polish people. It turns out that currently over 2/3 of respondents (69.0%) see a specific impairment of women in terms of earnings. Women are less likely to have this belief, while men more often have it. In turn, the CSO data do not leave any doubt that the average earnings of men and women in the same profession and employed in the same position do not differ (Cybulska, 2013).

We decided to study a similar phenomenon among Silesian women and asked the question about the proportion of household income contributed by the female respondent. Table 4 shows the results in relation to education.

Table 4 Education and income contributed to the household by the female respondent (%), $N = 397$

Income contribution	Education				Total
	Primary/lower secondary	Vocational education	Secondary	Tertiary	
Very small part	3.8	18.9	20.2	17.6	16.8
Less than half	13.2	20.0	22.6	29.7	22.0
About a half	3.8	14.7	20.2	27.0	17.6
More than half	1.9	3.2	4.0	4.1	3.5
Very large part	3.8	5.3	1.6	8.1	4.3
All income	5.7	3.2	4.0	5.4	4.3
n/a	67.9	34.8	37.4	21.4	31.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Own research and calculation

A significant proportion of the respondents belong to the category of women, to whom this question does not apply because they do not contribute income to the household. These are most often school girls, young women on maternity leave, housewives who live on their husband's pension. A significant percentage of women contribute less than half the money to the household budget, and a further 17.6% approximately half. A small percentage of women contribute more than half of their income. Most of the income is earned by women who run their own households—unmarried, divorced and separated.

The contributed income depends on age and education (age: at $p = 0.000$ chi-square significant, V Cramer 0.263; education: at $p = 0.000$ chi-square significant, V Cramer 0.248). This correlation is mainly due to the fact that younger women with higher education contribute income as a general rule (their percentage is lower in 'not applicable' responses). Depending on your husband's/partner's income, this may be a larger or smaller share in the household's income. In a situation where the husband/partner earns a lot, even the high earnings of the wife/partner can only be a low proportion of her contribution.

The analysis of the responses to the question structured in this way proves that women earn less than men, which is a particular characteristic of the working-class neighborhood of a big city. High salaries of husbands who are miners certainly have an impact on this fact. With their earnings, women's income from work is definitely lower (Fejfer, 2019). It turns out that work for Silesian women, as well as other women, has even more self-fulfilling and creative aspect (Eckenrode & Gore, 1990; Domański, 1999; Swadźba, 2009; Hoffmann, 2010).

Work Motivation and Satisfaction

Motivation to work is a process that should spur into action and direct the employee towards specific goals. The strength of motivation depends equally on the perceived

Table 5 Education and the reasons for taking up a job in the current establishment/firm or institution (%), $N = 223$

Reasons	Education				Total
	Primary/ lower secondary	Vocational education	Secondary	Tertiary	
Obtaining permanent work	60	63.1	52.4	54.4	56.3
Obtaining easy, non-tiring work	13.3	1.8	7.3	0.0	4.05
Obtaining satisfying work	13.3	10.5	18.2	27.9	18.9
Obtaining work enabling quick access to trade or occupation	6.6	1.8	2.4	1.4	2.2
Obtaining good income	0.0	14.0	7.3	11.7	9.9
Obtaining quick promotion	0.0	0.0	2.4	0.0	0.9
Other	6.6	8.7	9.7	4.4	7.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Own research and calculation
Information: Only employed women answered the question

value and attractiveness of goals as well as the subjective belief in the possibility of achieving them (Sikora, 2000; Sekuła, 2008). A number of factors decide whether a potential employee will choose a specific workplace. In a difficult labour market situation, when there are no jobs, the employee usually does not have much room for manoeuvre. This situation particularly applies to women who, burdened with children and household duties, are often not attractive employees on the labour market (Domański, 1999; Eckenrode & Gore, 1990; Duch-Krzystoszek et al., 2004; Kotowska, 2009; Lachowska, 2012; Jensen et al., 2017; Fejfer, 2019). That is why the female respondents were asked about the reasons why they took up a job in the current establishment/firm or institution. Table 5 shows the results in relation to the respondents' education.

For the vast majority of women, the most frequent reason for taking up a job at the current establishment/firm or institution is the possibility of obtaining permanent employment. Job security is definitely the most important value and motivation to work. I have also obtained such results in previous studies conducted in Silesian communities (Swadźba, 2012a). Permanent work and income security have priority over good income, which can be temporary. A definitely lower proportion of women gives the second reason, that is obtaining satisfying work. Definitely, women less often provide other reasons for taking a job such as earning a good income. Studies show that women do not attach such importance to this component. It is a more important factor for men while taking up a job and engaging in employment (Swadźba, 2012a).

There is a statistical relationship between education and reasons for taking up employment (at $p = 0.000$ chi-square significant, V Cramer 0.279). Women with higher education more often point out other reasons for taking up a job than permanent employment. For them, it is primarily a satisfying job. Women who are

Table 6 Age and satisfaction with job (%), $N = 397$

Job satisfaction	Age					Total
	18–30 years	31–40 years	41–50 years	51–60 years	Over 61 years	
Yes	58.5	64.3	64.9	55.0	21.4	56.5
No	12.2	12.5	8.8	8.3	0.0	9.5
I do not know	20.7	17.9	12.3	15.0	21.4	17.3
n/a	8.5	5.4	14.0	21.7	57.1	16.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Own research and calculation

Table 7 Education and satisfaction with job (%), $N = 397$

Job satisfaction	Education				Total
	Primary/lower secondary	Vocational education	Secondary	Tertiary	
Yes	27.8	53.9	58.8	71.0	56.5
No	5.6	9.2	6.9	15.9	9.5
I do not know	19.4	18.4	19.6	11.6	17.3
n/a	47.2	18.4	14.7	1.4	16.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Own research and calculation

already permanently employed look for such attributes as creativity, self-fulfilment and social characteristics in their work. Women with lower education (primary, vocational education) more often appreciate obtaining a permanent job as much as they look for good earnings it offers.

Just like education, age also influences the reasons for taking up a job (at $p = 0.000$ chi-square significant, V Cramer 0.274). Women of all ages believe that they have started work due to its stability. However, a significant proportion of them also points to the satisfaction derived from the job.

The work performed should bring satisfaction in life. Not only does professional work offer financial inducement, but also a sense of achievement and accomplishment. Social recognition and gaining a permanent place in the social structure through work are also important. Moreover, job satisfaction affects the family and personal life of employees. Sociological studies show that working women have higher social prestige than non-working ones (Kotowska, 2009; Hoffmann, 2010; Swadźba, 2013a; Lachowska, 2012; Boguszewski, 2013; Beham et al., 2019). Therefore, professional work alone, especially satisfying one, makes women thrive in life. The surveyed women were asked a question about their job satisfaction. The results are presented in Tables 6 and 7.

Most of the studied women are satisfied with their job. Only 9.5% is not satisfied with it. First and foremost, these are middle-aged women with higher education who are satisfied with their actual work. There is a statistical relationship in correlation with age and education, (age: at $p = 0.000$ chi-square significant, V Cramer 0.242;

Table 8 Education and willingness to resign from work in a situation of high earnings of husband/partner (%), $N = 397$

Willingness to resign from work	Education				Total
	Primary/lower secondary	Vocational education	Secondary	Tertiary	
Definitely yes	3.7	11.6	13.8	4.1	9.5
Rather yes	9.3	9.5	11.4	6.8	9.5
Rather no	1.9	18.9	20.3	32.4	19.7
Definitely no	7.4	12.6	22.0	41.9	21.4
I do not know	9.3	11.6	4.1	8.1	7.8
n/a	68.5	35.8	28.5	6.8	32.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Own research and calculation

education: at $p = 0.000$ chi-square significant, V Cramer 0.229). Women with higher education usually do more ambitious, satisfying work and hence the majority of such responses. They also have greater career prospects, which are synonymous with making a career. The work of people with primary education or vocational education only is usually not very ambitious, often monotonous, deprived of promotion opportunities. That is why it is not satisfying for them (Brainerd, 2000; Gawrycka et al., 2008; Kotowska, 2009; Lachowska, 2012; Boguszewski, 2013; Jensen et al., 2017).

The reluctance to leave employment is an indicator of job satisfaction. Therefore, women were asked whether they would leave their employment if their husband/partner earned enough. Table 8 shows the survey results in relation to education.

Research results indicate that the vast majority of women would not leave their employment if their husband/partner earned enough. This trend is similar to the one in national surveys (Kotowska et al., 2007; Mandal, 2012; Boguszewski, 2013). As they point out, the percentage of people willing to leave work for family life is slightly lower than for those who would not want to resign from work. Traditionally, women would be even more willing to resign from work for their families than men, more than half would make such a decision (Hoffmann, 2010; Boguszewski, 2013). It is difficult to say what was the percentage of working women. In our research, 19.0% of all women would make such a decision, 32.1% declared that it does not apply to them, i.e. that they do not work anyway. A positive response was given by 28.0% of respondents from among working women, i.e. those for whom this is a real-life situation. It turns out that Silesian women are very attached to their work and even a family favourable financial situation would not make them leave it. Perhaps such a difference in responses stems from the fact that women of a big city participated in our research.

The answers to the question about readiness to resign from work in the case of financial stability provided by the partner differ depending on education. There is a statistical relationship here (at $p = 0.000$ chi significant square, V Cramer 0.291). Women who are better educated, especially those with higher education, would not want to leave their job. Among working women with primary and vocational

education, more than half would resign from their job, and among women with higher education 11.5%. Persons who would like to leave their jobs are often mothers of small children who would care for their family or older women before retirement.

To sum up this point, it can be stated that Silesian women who work are satisfied with their job. Undoubtedly, some of them are contented because they have a permanent job. Educated women often do a job that satisfies them and they do not want to leave it. There is a large generation gap between older women and younger and middle-aged ones. Older women, if they had worked, did simpler jobs and did not have the experience of satisfying work that leads to self-development that is shared by the younger generation.

Socio-occupational Mobility

Important information that explains the structural changes taking place in Silesian communities is the work of the respondent's father, mother and grandparents, as well as socio-occupational group affiliation (Blau & Ehrenberg, 1997; Domański, 2004; Swadźba, 2008a; Kotowska, 2009). The type of work performed and socio-occupational group affiliation affect the value of work. Affiliation to a given socio-occupational group, to a large degree, impacts the child's further life path. It, to a high degree, determines the level of education attained, the continuation of their career path, or the perception of its shortcomings. An analysis of the characteristics associated with exercising the profession and the resulting socio-occupational group affiliation would be incomplete if the work performed by previous generations was not included in it. The presentation of the dynamics of socio-occupational group affiliation also shows changes taking place in the Silesian communities.

That is why the female respondents were asked about the socio-occupational position of their paternal and maternal father, mother and grandmother. The obtained results are presented in Table 9.

Particular socio-occupational group affiliation of the respondent's parents reflects the studied environment. It was and partly is a working-class environment. The vast majority of the surveyed women's fathers were manual and clerical workers (29.9%) or skilled workers (26.1%). Most often the first socio-occupational group consists of lower supervision positions such as master, foreman, and division mine foreman. The second group performed such popular professions as a miner, electrician, grinder, miller and various other worker occupations. A certain percentage of the respondents' fathers were farmers (7.6%). Detailed analysis showed that these are usually the fathers of migrant women (Swadźba, 2001, 2008a). A slightly lower proportion of surveyed women's fathers held managerial positions. These are usually positions held in mines, such as a division mine foreman, deputy division mine foreman or in other industrial plants. Younger women's fathers also occupy positions in services, education, banking, finance and administration. Respondents' mothers most often belonged to the group of manual-clerical workers, worked in

Table 9 The respondent's education and her father's and mother's socio-occupational group affiliation (%), $N = 397$

	Respondent's education									
	Primary/lower secondary		Vocational training		Secondary/post-secondary		Tertiary		Total	
Socio-occupational group	Father	Mother	Father	Mother	Father	Mother	Father	Mother	Father	Mother
Managerial staff	2.1	2.9	4.8	1.9	7.7	9.9	7.7	11.7	6.8	6.9
Intelligentsia	2.9	2.9	1.9	2.8	4.9	5.0	7.7	9.1	4.3	4.8
Junior clerical workers	4.3	10.1	3.8	14.2	4.9	9.9	9.0	18.2	5.3	12.7
Manual-clerical workers	18.6	11.6	39.0	29.2	31.0	27.0	25.6	29.9	29.9	25.4
Skilled workers	30.6	8.7	21.0	9.4	26.8	9.2	29.4	7.8	26.1	8.9
Unskilled workers	24.4	20.6	8.6	5.7	4.2	5.0	5.1	3.9	5.1	7.6
Farmers	2.9	13.0	8.6	11.3	8.5	8.5	1.3	0.0	7.8	8.4
Self-employed	1.4	1.4	1.0	0.9	1.4	4.3	2.6	2.6	1.5	2.5
Disability pensioners	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.9	0.0	2.8	1.3	1.3	0.5	1.5
Retired persons	1.4	0.0	8.6	7.5	8.6	5.7	9.0	2.6	7.6	4.6
Unemployed	0.0	4.3	1.7	1.9	0.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.8	1.3
Housewives	1.4	24.3	1.0	14.2	1.0	12.7	1.3	11.7	0.8	15.0
Other	10.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.3	0.0	0.0	1.2	3.5	0.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Own research and calculation

lower positions in the mine or in factories or in lower-level clerical positions (12.7%) in offices. Just under 7% of mothers occupy/occupied a managerial position. This is a slightly higher percentage than the respondents' fathers and indicates that the 'glass ceiling' phenomenon is being broken down and women as often as men occupy managerial positions, as previously indicated by studies of Silesian sociologists (Rojek-Adamek, 2008; Pactwa, 2008; Swadźba, 2009; Suchacka, 2009; Hoffmann, 2010). About 15% of the mothers of the surveyed women were or are housewives. This is not a high percentage of women. This applies to mothers of older respondents, when such a model of division of work between women and men prevailed. Currently, as our research shows, it is becoming a thing of the past.

Table 9 shows the relationship between parents' socio-occupational group affiliation in relation to the education of the respondent. There is a statistical relationship between the respondent's education and parents' socio-occupational group affiliation, stronger in the case of the mother (at $p = 0.000$ chi-square significant, V Cramer 0.262), slightly less strong in the case of the father (at $p = 0.021$ chi-square significant, V Cramer 0.209). The more educated the respondent is, the higher place in the structure of socio-occupational groups takes her father, and, in particular, her mother. The fathers of women with primary and lower secondary education are most often or were skilled workers (30.6%) or unskilled workers (24.4%). Hence these are lower socio-occupational categories. By contrast, a large proportion of mothers were housewives or unskilled workers. About 13% of respondents' mothers were farmers. These women migrated from the village with their husbands who were working in the mine. The fathers of women with vocational education most often belong to the group of manual and clerical workers (39%), followed by skilled workers (21.0%). These are slightly higher positions. Respondents' mothers most often belonged to a similar socio-occupational group, most often they were manual and clerical workers, then lower-level clerical employees. A similar proportion of such mothers ran households only. Interestingly, a similar situation applies to women with secondary education. The share of fathers and mothers, who belong to the group of manual-clerical workers and unskilled workers is slightly lower, and slightly higher to the group of managerial staff. A slightly lower percentage of mothers of women with secondary education are or were housewives (12%).

The most interesting is the socio-occupational affiliation of fathers and mothers of women with higher education. There is a difference in social position between fathers and mothers. Women's fathers belong to the group of skilled workers or manual-clerical workers. About 7.7% belong to managerial staff or intelligentsia. Mothers are first and foremost manual-clerical workers, to some extent lower-level clerical workers. A significant percentage of mothers of the surveyed women belongs to the managerial staff or to the intelligentsia (almost 20%). Mothers achieved therefore a higher socio-occupational status than fathers. Hence a thesis can be put forward that mothers, to a larger extent, are role models for their daughters than fathers. In this case, one can refer to the concept of breaking the 'glass ceiling' by women (Cotter et al., 2001; Adamchik & Bedi, 2003; Titkow, 2003; Kotowska-Wójcik & Luty-Michalak, 2018). Through their professional path, they more often

Table 10 Education of respondents' mothers and their professional work (%), $N = 397$

Education	She is working	She worked, but currently she does not work	She has always looked after the home and children	She wanted to work professionally, but father did not agree	She wants to work but does not find employment	Other	Total
Primary/ lower secondary	3.8	40.5	34.5	2.6	3.1	15.5	100.0
Vocational education	19.0	59.1	15.3	1.5	1.5	3.6	100.0
Secondary/ post-secondary	29.6	51.8	14.3	0.2	0.0	4.1	100.0
Tertiary	66.7	28.0	0.0	0.0	5.3	0.0	100.0
Total	19.6	49.8	19.9	1.8	1.8	7.1	100.0

Source: Own research and calculation

stimulate their daughters to achieve higher education to open up the path for further professional development.

Complementing the analysis is to trace the respondent's mother's education and her professional work (Table 10).

The vast majority of mothers with higher education are almost still working and almost none is only a housewife. Higher education, followed by more interesting, creative and self-development work is carried out longer by women. None of the mothers with higher education is just a housewife. In turn, the high percentage of mothers with primary education focuses exclusively on such activity.

Returning to the analysis of socio-occupational groups, interesting processes can be observed when mothers and grandmothers of respondents with higher education are compared (Table 11).

Grandmothers of women with higher education were housewives in large proportion, more often maternal grandmothers, less often paternal ones. Acting as a housewife more often concerned the older generation. In turn, paternal grandmothers were more often farmers. It follows that the fathers lived in the countryside before they came to work in Silesia. If grandmothers worked, they most often were manual-clerical workers, less often lower-level clerical workers. Mothers of respondents with higher education had already achieved a higher professional position and education than their mothers. They definitely belong to the group of lower-level white-collar workers and have a secondary education. They also belong to managerial staff and intelligentsia. Such socio-professional advancement of women from Silesian working-class families was experienced by many families. Higher education and good work, not only for boys but also for girls, was an aspiration for fathers and mothers in working-class families (Swadźba, 2001; Swadźba, 2005; Hoffmann, 2010). This change in the awareness of Silesian parents was indicated by

Table 11 Socio-occupational group affiliation of mothers and grandmothers of respondents with higher education (%), $N = 78$

Socio-occupational group	Mother	Maternal grandmother	Paternal grandmother
Managerial staff	11.7	1.4	0.0
Intelligentsia	9.1	4.1	2.7
Junior clerical workers	18.2	5.5	8.2
Manual-clerical workers	29.9	12.3	11.0
Skilled workers	7.8	8.2	5.5
Unskilled workers	3.9	1.4	2.7
Farmers	0.0	13.7	20.5
Self-employed	2.6	0.0	1.4
Disability pensioners	1.3	2.7	4.1
Retired persons	2.6	11.0	13.7
Unemployed	0.0	0.0	0.0
Housewives	11.7	32.9	23.3
Other	1.3	6.8	6.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Own research and calculation

sociological research and the educational boom at Silesian universities in the 1990s (Swadźba, 2011). Over half of the students were women (Rocznik statystyczny województwa katowickiego, 1998; Rocznik statystyczny województwa katowickiego, 2001–2008). Many of them came from working-class families, as indicated by sociological studies (Swadźba, 2008a). These women, having completed university studies, had different expectations for work than their mothers, and their professional careers were built into their life aspirations (Rojek-Adamek, 2008; Pactwa, 2008; Swadźba, 2009; Hoffmann, 2010; Swadźba 2013a). This was frequently an academic career, formerly rarely undertaken by girls from Silesian working-class families (Swadźba & Żak, 2016). Therefore, the transition period in Silesia, apart from economic and social changes, brought radical changes in the social position and social roles of Silesian women from working-class families. Work has become an important value for them and they have found the opportunity to experience their personhood in it.

Conclusions

Silesian women, as well as other women, have recently become of interest to researchers (Swadźba & Żak, 2016; Iwińska & Bukowska, 2018). Over the 150 years of industrialism, followed by a period of transition, there have been major changes in the place of professional work in women's lives. In part, they resulted from general processes that took place in Europe and the world, in part it was the result of changes that took place in the region (Abdelhadi & England, 2018; Inglehart, 2018).

Analysis of empirical research on the value of professional work and the performance of employee roles by Silesian women indicates large generational changes. Women from Silesian working-class background who used to be limited to their home roles, or worked in low positions for two generations, increased their education level, enjoy fulfilling careers and reach senior management levels. It has become a norm that women from working-class families take up work, perceiving it as an opportunity to experience their personhood and creativity; combining family and professional roles is socially accepted. Professional work is an important value for young Silesian women. The analysis of socio-occupational groups has shown that we are dealing with social mobility in two generations of women. They went from fulfilling the role of wife and mother and running a household in the generation of grandmothers, through lower and medium positions of manual and office work to the role of employees in the field of services requiring higher education. Women more often also occupy managerial and intellectual positions. Their professional work is usually creative and develops personhood. At the same time, young and middle-generation women show greater egalitarianism in perceiving the possibility of performing specific professions. They allow the possibility of both women and men practising these professions. Generally speaking, it can be said that contemporary women from workers' communities have increased their socio-professional position to a greater extent than men.

Referring to the Inglehart theory (Inglehart, 1977), empirical studies have shown that Ziółkowski's concept is sound and that work as a value should be treated in post-communist societies at the economic level (Ziółkowski, 2006). Work is subject to specific trends of change more than other values, especially with regard to women (Duch-Krzystoszek et al., 2004; Kotowska, 2009; Swadźba, 2013a; Marody et al., 2019). In Polish society, the value of work is stronger than in Western societies due to the conditions of the labour market. The difficulty in obtaining a job means that work is overvalued. However, there is a clear trend to move towards post-materialistic values (creativity, self-realisation, self-creation). This trend applies to the young generation of Silesian women as well as the middle generation who has a job. The surveyed Silesian communities are characterised by a stronger emphasis on the value of work (Swadźba, 2013b). It results from structural conditions. Numerous communities of industrial workers (miners) who continue the traditional work ethos still exist here (Swadźba, 2001). It was the result of changes in the value system, especially the value of work and the transition from materialistic values (where work was treated as an existential requirement) to post-materialistic values (where work is treated as a development factor) (Inglehart, 2018). Work is a source of self-fulfilment, creativity and social contacts for Silesian women from working-class families, who are educated and career-oriented.

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Transformations of Female and Male Models in Post-mining Communities

Jolanta Klimczak

Abstract This text focuses on the transformations taking place in the lives of coal-mining community inhabitants with respect to the (re)conceptualization of male and female social roles and of normative femininity and masculinity models. In order to discern and trace changes in gender identities and practices, I examine the situation in the industrialized province of Silesia in Poland after the 1989 shift from communism to democracy and capitalism. Comprising the specific dataset used here in is the research findings of the SPHERE project because one of the dimensions analyzed thereby was precisely the shifts in feminine and masculine identities within Polish communities most affected by mine closures. Delving deeper into the analysis, I reconstruct the previous gender habitus and compare it to the contemporary one. The (re)defining is embodied in the everyday micro-practices of men and women which illustrate how the previous framework is no longer operational under the new social circumstances. There is potential for individual self-location in the newly shaping gender habitus in response to objective, external forces which used to determine location.

Especially key are references to the societal restructuring process which is accompanying the transformations, and the eco-feminist critique of petro-culture and the androcentrism of the idea of environment and development.

Introduction

Femininity and masculinity are, in effect, identity projects changing over time and organizing the lives of individuals and social groups. Key in these projects are the manifested psychophysical features, behavioral patterns, and gender role scenarios. This is one of the fundamental forms of human social identification and a basis for

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social stratification; it is also a cultural response[1] to differences between bodies in the reproductive sense (Connell, 2009, p. 31). Still, social changes occurring in communities turn seemingly stable female and male patterns into the subject of negotiations and give rise to changes in social structures. However, the visibility and cultural permanence of these processes may vary, depending upon the "practicality" of a denaturalization of gender categories.

Social research on femininity and masculinity shows that, on the one hand, male domination and androcentrism are cornerstones of gender order (Bourdieu, 2001; Kelly, 1997, p. 113; Plumwood, 1997, pp. 337–338). As Kelly observed (1997, p. 112):

> Men's domination of women is deep and systematic, and it is accepted around the world by most men and many women as "natural", as something that somehow cannot be changed. But the norms of human behavior do change. Because the oppression of women is so deeply embedded in our societies and our psyches, it continues to be invisible, even to those who are working to overcome other forms of injustice.

On the other hand, attention is paid to the diversity of gender concepts (both between categories and within each gender category) as well as to the intersectionality of gender categories with those of race, sexual orientation, class, etc. (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Hultman & Pulé, 2018; Christensen and Jensen 2019).

The potentiality for various gender representations and practical embodiments of gender structure lie in cultural resources. Yet when individuals and groups are affected by dramatic and dynamic events—be these political, economic, or social, natural disasters or pandemics—there is a confrontation with unfamiliar habitus experiences. Such experiences, unmediated by cultural practices, unveil the inadequacies of a gender logic deprived of its power to organize reality. Ultimately, it is men and women themselves (from their subjective perspective) who select where they will be situated on the trajectory of their lives.

Comments on Methodology and Theory

In order to trace the process by which femininity and masculinity are negotiated, I will analyze the individual experiences of women and men who reside in heavily industrialized, working-class communities shaken by the restructuration of the regional/local economy and the social milieu. Forced by macrosocial processes, transformations in life models were inevitable. Likewise, the normative and axiological framework was stretched, subsequently changing the concepts of both gender roles and feminine vis-à-vis masculine patterns.

[1]This entails differences not only between ethnic cultures, but also within any single community over the course of its history and development.

Serving as the empirical database are the results of the SPHERE project—*Space, place and the historical and contemporary articulations of regional, national and European identities through work and community in areas undergoing economic restructuring and regeneration* (7 PR UE, 2008–2011).[2] The research conducted between 2008 and 2011 was focused on issues of social and cultural identity change under the conditions of a multidimensional transformation. More precisely, the main goal was the identification of the social references—such as consumption, gender, age, ethnic, national, or European affiliation—for a reoriented life trajectory. The investigation focused on the transition from the old, "masculine" to the new, significantly "feminized" labor as well as from the old and more stable to the new and more flexible forms of employment (Wódz et al. 2012, pp. 17–39).

More precisely, I will analyze that part of the research that pertains to the restructuring of the Silesian Voivodship. This is significant and relevant for this chapter which explores fundamental dimensions of that experience: (1) what are the new social roles of men and women; and (2) what are the normative and axiological justifications for the changes taking place in the gender habitus?

One method for collecting the empirical material was the in-depth interview (IDI).[3] This was dictated by a need to extract (1) a practical understanding of selected aspects of the actions undertaken by women and men, and (2) the perceptions and assessments of the changes they experienced. Analysis of the IDI transcripts facilitated the reconstruction of the ways by which their reality is created, and its origin is explained. In statements made by the respondents, I was looking for things that were specifically individual, but which, through repetition, formed a collective structure for subjectivities. I sought out what was shared in common, what kept recurring in the stories about the transformation of the cultural landscape in these coal-mining communities, and what has affected the essence of femininity and masculinity across all the social fields. A breakdown of similarities and differences permitted garnering of the categories and typologies surfacing from the statements of the respondents themselves, inhabitants of the (post)mining communities in Silesia.[4]

[2]This project represents a collaboration by representatives from several academic centers: Middle East Technical University (METU) Turkey (coordinator); Working Lives Research Institute, London Metropolitan University; *Institut fur Arbeitsmarkt und Berufsforschung* (IAB) Germany; Universidad Complutense de Madrid (UCM) Spain; and the Department of Contemporary Culture Studies, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Silesia in Katowice Poland.

[3]In total, 12 IDIs were conducted with women and 12 with men; there was also one focus group interview with women, one with men, and one with activists from the miners' trade unions.

[4]Firsthand citations in this chapter are taken directly from the project interviews, maintaining the original syntax. The letters in brackets represent gender (K = woman, M = man) and respondent place of origin (B = Będzin, Ksawera district; R = Ruda Śląska, Kaufhaus district) while Roman numerals (1–12) represent subsequent respondents. The letter F indicates a focus group interview response.

Reconstructed Femininity

The coal miner employment profile in the local communities chiefly pertains to men. Thus, the connection with the mining culture of the women was mediated through their household and neighborly practices. Those working women who were employed in the mining industry were an invisible minority, excluded from the heroic myth bestowing high prestige and financial benefits to the miners working underground. A region focused on mining-related industry left women with little chance for advancement (Macintyre 2011, pp. 21–23). The dominant pattern of femininity emphasized the role of a wife and mother as the cornerstones of identity. Moreover, early marriage and childbearing excluded women from gaining an education at a level higher than the minimum required by law. Formal education could not serve as an *illusio* in the gender habitus: the only stakes a woman had in the game was the status of a wife, a housewife, and a mother.

The above described was what constituted "traditional" femininity in the regional culture "before," "when the mines were running"; this was a femininity primarily or exclusively reproducing the family and household order. To put it bluntly, "The dame was to the home" [K_7_R]. As one respondent elaborated, "Generally, the miners' wives stayed at home. That was the typical miner family. (. . .) it was precisely like that, that the wife was at home, raised the children, you know. Cooking, washing, cleaning—she just took care of that and the husband took care of earning money" [K_8_B].

If, for some reason, one woman was absent from home, another one replaced her to fulfill the assigned female roles: "When a woman went to work, well then, someone cooked dinner and took care of the children. There was the grandma (. . .). Responsibility for the children, the family and so on, (. . .) all of this fell on the woman" [M_6_R]. In another case, "When mama was sick, the aunts did the laundry" [K_8_B]. Mutual support of women in running a household and caring for children was based not only on intrafamily relations. Neighborly relations were also a fundamental extension of the familial ones: "That's the way it was that, when a neighbor had something urgent to take care of and had to leave home, then she brought her ready soup and put it on our stove—and my mom, cooking for herself, was also watching that soup for her (. . .). When three or four kids from the neighborhood came home with me, it'd never be that my mother gave me something and the kids just stood and stared. All of them got something. Whatever there was, each of them would get" [M_2_B].

The neighbors helped each other in childcare, shopping, and cooking; meals, news, and advice were shared. The women supported each other in the everyday hustle and bustle but also spent free time together: "When we had time in the evening, we'd go down by the walls, there we'd be talking (. . .) about knitting, cooking or children" [K_7_R].

The pattern of femininity—anchored in the role of a wife and mother who is economically dependent upon a man as the head of the family—enjoyed acceptance in the mining communities. As one respondent explained, "At that time, the salary of

a miner was five times higher than the salary of a nurse; now it is only twice as high. So when we were a newly married couple, those salaries were much higher and my women friends, the wives of miners, not all of them worked" [K_11_R].

Furthermore, the social policy of the state reinforced devotion to family life and running a household. When parental leave benefit was introduced in 1981, pregnant women or women planning pregnancy looked for a job in the local factories in order to be entitled to three-year parental leave with financial benefits after each childbirth (in 1988, 95% of the entitled women received such benefits). "I was pregnant with my son and I got a job in the steel mill because they were talking about these childrearing benefits. . . . When I was accepted, I managed to work the [minimum] four months [until childbirth]" [K_7_R]. Hence the status of a worker facilitated the execution of traditional maternal and marital functions while also contributing financially to the household budget. However, as children grew up and entitlements to these benefits were lost, some women formally withdrew from the labor market. Professionally passive, supported solely by their husbands, they returned to running the household and taking care of family members. The difference was that the family's living standard and financial situation were determined only by the man's job. The normativity of such choices and decisions by women, especially in the mining environment, was supported not only by the local ethos but also by the financial security guaranteed by law: the so-called "widow's pension" in case of a spouse's death.

Still, those women whose family budget was too low to permit income reduction did return to work after their maternity leave. Such a choice, however, was not standard and required some socially convincing justification:

> My mum worked all alone to support the eight of us. And she—a woman—went as a sixteen-year-old to work in [a mine]. She worked hard there, sixteen years old, had a son and then she had to bring us all up. And every year there was a new child. And my dad never worked in socialist Poland, not a single month. So it wasn't that now the times are like that—it was like that before, too, only little was said about it. Because that was shameful. A woman, when she came to work in a mine, she would never admit she has a LAZYBONES husband who does not work. (. . .) She would be quiet as a mouse. She would never admit: my husband is a drunkard or something like that. He works like me, but we have so many kids, so we need to earn some [more] money, right? [K_F_R].

Modified Traditional Femininity

The concept of development created by the neoliberal state policy in the 1990s began to place the social, institutional responsibility of the state for the economic and social safety of its citizens above the norm. Implementing the American vision of a self-regulating market and self-directed individuals led not only to the economic decline of working-class communities but also undermined the axiological order (Lahiri-Dutt 2011, p. 2). An economic model rooted in the neoliberal paradigm was supposed to result in growth and development generated by the mechanisms of an auto-optimizing market. Opposed to any form of interventionism and blind to

gender, it, on the one hand, marginalized women on the labor market, depriving them of institutional support in the caretaking of dependents; on the other hand, it unified women, positioning them within androcentric worker patterns (Macintyre 2011, p. 23).

Traditional femininity turned out to be contradictory to this new order and, according to Salleh (2018, p. 29), no alternatives which would recognize gender habitus differences has been found. More particularly:

> Women's monthly fertility cycle, the tiring symbiosis of pregnancy, the wrench of childbirth, and the pleasure of suckling an infant, these things already ground women's consciousness in the knowledge of being coterminous with Nature. However tacit or unconscious this identity may be for many women, bruised by derogatory patriarchal attitudes to motherhood, including modern male-identified feminist ones, it is nevertheless "a fact of life." The deep ecology movement, by using the generic term Man, simultaneously presupposes the difference between the sexes in an uncritical way, and yet overlooks the significance of this difference. It overlooks the point that if women's lived experiences were recognized as meaningful and were given legitimation in our culture, it could provide an immediate "living" social basis for the alternative consciousness (Salleh 2018, p. 26).

This contradiction has deepened the logic of the gender order dominant in traditional mining communities: the household reproduction of women and the labor production of men. Social qualifications, competences, and resources (i.e., the cultural capital) situated women and men in different positions in confrontations with the employment market. Moreover, not only was there a painful loss of objective reality (e.g., the mine as "bedrock," "our whole world", etc.), but also a clash with a normative and axiological chaos which questioned the heretofore dominant female and male patterns in this milieu. As I mention elsewhere in this volume, the restructuring discourse so focused on the mining industry emphasized the priority of men in the fight for jobs—referring once more to the traditional roles of the breadwinner and head of household. At the same time, the neoliberal ideas about the economy simultaneously disowned those outside the labor market and those who did not manifest sufficient agency in performing work roles. This was the case of the professionally passive women.

Taking care of dependent family members, running a household, the traditional set of marital and parental functions so fundamental for the traditional femininity project—all of that has begun to lose its significance when confronted with neoliberal femininity which is oriented toward the effective (i.e., bestowing money and prestige) securing of employment. The traditional femininity dominant in mining communities was losing normative ground, becoming more and more marginal over time. Nonetheless, this did not mean the exclusion of all that had structured the traditional femininity from the project for modern femininity, but it did mean the inclusion of gainful employment as a condition for female normativity. Obviously, this process did not pertain solely to women from the mining communities, but it was particularly severe there due to a relatively great work passivity among women and a relatively low (compared to other regions in Poland) education level.

The very process of moving femininity into this "new" direction introduced (apart from the traditional affiliation of being a wife/mother) the necessity of independent

status achievement: the social position attributed via one's husband no longer sufficed. As late as the 1980s, women in Poland defined their prestige through being the "wife of the director" (*dyrektorowa*), "wife of the manager" (*kierownikowa*) (Reszke 1984), or simply the wife of a miner. By the 1990s, however, a woman's career status, along with the income she contributed to the household budget, was increasingly gaining importance.

Yet what professional position could women reach, if their gender habitus was shaped by the objective living conditions of a traditional mining community? As one respondent noted, "Initiative can be seized when you are educated and when you have achieved something in your life. Because these women mainly had only a primary education or didn't finish any form of secondary education. These were precisely the marriages in which women married very early—eighteen years old!" [K_8_B]. Later, during the transformation, "at the age of forty, they suddenly started looking for a job" [K_11_R]. As unskilled labor, these women had to take low-paid service jobs, applying such resources as cooking, caretaking, or cleaning skills—the routine set of tasks performed in their own household and neighborhood community. However, it was hard for them to compete with unskilled male laborers or with the better-educated young females entering the labor market: "When you reach a certain age, no one will hire you for a job (. . .) especially if you don't have any professional experience. (. . .) It would be better if you had 40 years of experience, were 20 years old and had very long legs" [K_8_B]. The women of Silesia had to leave the framework of traditional femininity and needed to enter the labor market due to the fact that the men—heretofore the sole breadwinners and heads of household—had lost their jobs.

Modern Femininity

Traditional femininity had been founded on perpetuated, routine strategies acquired in a once stable (now threatened) working-class environment. But the postcommunist socio-economic restructuring had deprived that model of a disposition toward practical actions and the possibility of regulating social placement. Traditional femininity was no longer effective; its organizational capital had been depleted. A society disciplined by a free-market economy and the paradigm of self-directed, androcentric individuals triggered processes requiring new dispositions and new cultural capital resources. Adaptation to an impossible world unmediated by practices encompassed several areas of social life: education, employment, the family, etc.

Growing daughters were motivated to commence a profession-oriented education, more likely to guarantee a well-paid job. Girls from mining families began to undertake an education in trade schools regarded as "unfeminine." One man commented, "Everyone here thought that it was a strange choice by those girls, that they joined such a class. I don't know how they'll be directed further now because *Kompania Węglowa* later offers a job after graduating from such a school

and grants scholarships with the idea that one could immediately start working" [M_9_B]. Women began admitting that paid work is a necessity stemming not only from financial reasons but also from a need to have a sense of control over their own lives and financial security: A respondent pondered, "Life can change. (. . .) Let's assume that I wouldn't work my whole life—but what about my retirement pension? And what if my husband leaves me? Or some accident will happen. (. . .) So I have to think about how to provide for my old age" [K_8_B]. At the same time, women began to also criticize traditional femininity for its dependence and passivity. For example, "When I think that there were women who did not have to work—they ran a household and looked after the children while the husband was at work—it seems like a fairy tale to me. After all, you can always find some job, no? In a sense, they were choosing what was easy, no? Once that was just the attitude—Eh, who cares! My husband will support me and I will do everything for him" [K_3_R].

This traditional aspect of the gender habitus that oriented a female's entire energy and activity toward collective self-confirmation of dedication and devotion to the family was also criticized because "a woman should also have a life outside of work and the family (. . .), simply have something just for herself" [K_8_B]. Indeed, "such sitting at home is not the whole world if someone wants to develop and broaden horizons" [K_3_R].

In the eyes of the interviewees, however, the traditional and modern projects of femininity do not differ in their boundary-making (i.e., demarcating "inappropriate" gender activity) in the family sphere. On the one hand, we deal here with postponed marriage and motherhood, the normalization of divorce, the democratization of familial relations, more partnership models in which household duties are shared, etc. On the other hand, with reference to the effects of social changes, our respondents' commonsense wisdom (rooted in the discourse of nature and the natural) legitimizes the reproduction of "women's work." The woman is perceived as the keystone of the family and the sine qua non for its existence. This is so obvious that it cannot be questioned. The only element which could be negotiated is something that threatens the "proper" social position of women thus perceived. One such disturbance in the "domestication" of females is an excessive, overly intense and stressful, time-consuming professional career: "Women work too much and there is no time because the fathers also work, there is no time for the children, for the family. We really want to be modern, but nature delineates certain unbending laws" [K_3_R].

Reconstructed Masculinity

Tracing the political debates of conservatives and the PR strategies of coal companies, Cara Daggett has indicated a convergence in gender and mining discourse. On the one hand, those discourses utilize the traditional paradigm of masculinity; on the other hand, they legitimize political and economic power over natural resources (ultimately, social and cultural resources, too). Obviously, in various social contexts, this parallel variously manifests itself in ways specific to the local environment.

In post-WWII Poland, political discourse (i.e., socialist propaganda) positioned miners as national heroes in the symbolic universe. That bestowed political subjectivity upon this group of workers and rendered the entire mining industry a symbol of the energy self-sufficiency and the economic development of the country. The metaphorical, material, and social engineering cornerstones of the "petroculture" shaped political, economic, professional, and gender relations (Daggett 2018, p. 27). Petro-masculinity and mining were connected by a technical, affective, ideological, and financial relationship—and all this together ossified the patriarchal order (Daggett 2018, p. 28).

After 1989, traditional masculinity has presented a challenge for subsequent governments replacing the centrally-planned economy with neoliberal doctrine. However, for men employed in the mining enterprises, the transformation did not mean sharing the fate of workers from other economic sectors (e.g., unemployment, outsourcing, etc.) It was political arguments and a fear of destabilizing the whole social system that kept this sector under more control. Yet this contradictory institutional protection and support for the mining industry, strayed from the neoliberal paradigm and legitimized the discourse of hypermasculinity. We must remember that the first years of the transformation in Poland witnessed backlashes: open interference by the Roman Catholic Church in political life, communist ressentiments, and the questioning of all socialist states, egalitarian ideas (implemented to various degrees with various effects) regarding women. Hypermasculinity—as a reaction to a perceived threat and destabilization of traditional masculinity (Daggett 2018, p. 33) has been built in opposition to femininity. That masculinity constituted an "ideological legitimization of the subordination of women by men" (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005, p. 832); the systemic misogynistic tactics organize and enforce the norms of patriarchal governments (Daggett 2018, p. 43). Instead of an icon of the PRL's (*Polska Republika Ludowa*, Polish People's Republic) propaganda of success, the miner has become the guardian of a sanctified family—the sole breadwinner and guarantor of the economic security of his wife and children.

Traditional Masculinity

This ideological decorum legitimized a male habitus anchored in career employment as a rudiment of gender normativity[5] and the most available job in the mining communities was the one offered by the local mine. The (male) identity project obligatory for the workers employed at the mine ensured self-affirmation of masculinity; that project also situated those workers within a collective subject—the male

[5]Before 1989, men without fulltime employment (confirmed by an employer's stamp in one's ID card) were subject to constant harassment from the police. Furthermore, being connected to an institution determined access to regulated services and rationed goods in an era of market deficits.

collective. Moreover, "It was generational, first the grandfather, then father, and finally the son" [K_7_R]. Maturing boys ended their education in the vocational mining school and, as its graduates (also often recommended by relatives and neighbors), they would thus take a job in a mine. As one male interviewee recalled, "I can say that I started from the basics just like any miner—various simple tasks, belt cleaning—then I completed some courses. Later I was transferred to the [mine] wall, then I completed a course to be an operator and then a combine operator. And so step by step, it's all lasted about 15 years" [M_5_B].

Along with formal employment the men were becoming not only part of a crew, but also of mining culture with its rites of passage, patriarchal structure, collective solidarity, and male comradeship (or friendship): "After work everyone was getting together, but these were rather men's type of get togethers—some beer or something stronger" [M_11_B]. "Well, women were not allowed, you know when (. . .) Beer, a lot of booze is pouring, some fun, pork knuckle. . ." [M_1_R]. The miners also entered into a realm that offered privileges of the trade such as institutional housing, entertainment, and vacations. Therefore, a mining identity also meant the functioning of the same men in several social fields as a consequence of their work status.

Their very career, focused on the accumulation of heavy-industry capital, was doubly exploitative. On the one hand, the carnal *hexis* was oppressed: miners were exposed to detrimental working conditions. Working in low oxygen, dim artificial light, and hot and cold drafts bears a destructive impact on the miners:

> "You have to work in humidity, in water, in hot temperatures" [M_2_R]. "It's enough that you start working at 2 pm, you go down and don't see the sun. Later you come up and it's night, well, you might have the sun for a couple of hours. It's harmful work, just being in such air, in that atmosphere where oxygen is at the minimum that a human being can bear" [M_6_B].

Yet the perils of working underground—"rock bursts, gas leaks or gas explosions" [M_6_B]—were inscribed in traditional masculinity. Taking such a risk, facing fear of your own life and health, and managing a limited sense of control paradoxically shaped masculinity, evoking stereotypical associations with courage as well as mental and physical resilience. On the other hand, this masculinity—instrumentalizing the body, emotions, and kinetic energy—rendered the carnal *hexis* a tool in the exploitation of natural resources. The slow self-destruction of the men—hidden under the founding myth of the mining (working-class) ethos—also legitimized destructive practices toward the whole of the natural environment, toward the "subdued" Earth.

This entanglement of traditional masculinity in the project of Enlightenment rationality was augmented by the segregation of the men from the household field. Traditional masculinity was making use of economic and symbolic power; the unpaid work in the household was reserved for traditional femininity. One man observed how, "when I returned home and my wife started the laundry, I was leaving the house to drink beer or to my pigeons" [M_3_R]. A woman noticed a similar pattern: "My father never helped my mother with the housework (. . .). Even when my mother was seriously ill, he wouldn't go to the linen press. I had to go although I

was a little kid and carrying all that was very hard" [K_4_R]. This habitus of masculinity, dominant before the economic restructuring of the region, excluded everything that was connected with traditional femininity from dispositions and practices. This cultural misogyny reproduced masculinity as an antinomy to femininity and created distance with reference to gender-ambiguous social fields: "Every guy, you too, has to know how to drill the holes in a wall, repair a car, those basic things (. . .). If God permits and I'll have a son, I'm going to try to teach him not to be a wimp" [M_1_R].

Modified Traditional Masculinity

Despite opposition by the miners, the slow closing of the mines has become a new reality. This process has taken on various dynamics and scale, but it has, above all, shattered a sense of security and stability that miners have built upon a faith in the political agency of their trade unions and protests as well as their own knowledge of local coal deposits and the technical standards of the mines. "Well, sure, people were unhappy with this situation because everyone had counted on that he has seniority and just has to add into that retirement pension" [M_2_B].

Traditional masculinity was threatened. Fixed, routine strategies for action-taking ceased to be effective while modifications of the habitus structures were not always subjectively possible. Access to career jobs was no longer a certainty and unemployment became the greatest danger. Laid off from liquidated mines, in accordance with gender logic, the miners simply moved to other mining installations. That, however, involved the necessity of leaving one's local milieu; it also required mobility as well as an openness to new relations and experiences. For instance, "Somewhere there, at a different mine, but far away and you have to learn everything, and that isn't so easy (. . .) When you work in one place for 15 years, you know all roads. But when you for to another [mine], you have to learn everything anew, all the ways in and out, know how to act" [M_2_B].

Yet relocation of miners to other mines also meant a need to vacate positions held by men who were already entitled to retirement benefits or at least preretirement leaves. A consequence in the mining labor market was the letting go of men in the prime of their life (40 year-olds) who now had to face a career deactivation and thus a redefinition of their masculinity. Friendships and neighborly ties were broken and the communal nature of the local community was diminished. A collectivistic orientation was slowly being replaced by an individualistic one; a post-Fordian economy formulated expectations that were impossible to fulfill under the dispositions which constituted traditional masculinity.

The pressures of internally-directed self-development, individual agency, and (sounding like a bon mot) the slogan that "every man carves his own fate" [M_1_R], channeled a search for a normative masculinity in the resources and directives which were the most effective in a free-market economy. The miners were encouraged by relatively substantial "golden parachutes" to definitively quit

their career, leave the mines completely, and enter the open employment market. But, "They gave people a laughable 50 thousand złoty (. . .). People who had never had more than 10 thousand in hand (. . .) thought they had won the lottery. Right away he was buying a new car, a fur coats for his wife, computers and bikes for the kids. And soon, bit by bit they had to pawn everything (. . .). More than one splurged on women, alcohol, drugs, taxis, brothels (. . .). There are lots of them. Some of them tried their luck at business, but most of them have failed. And so they hurt these people" [M_1_R].

Modern Masculinity

Those who remained in the mining industry (resisting the pressures of the post-Fordian economy and the restructuring politics) have become participants in a transformation of the work ethos and a shaping of new guidelines and resources for masculinity. Technology had increased the professional requirements (hence the increased number of individuals with a university degree), but it had also liberated masculinity from the forced, destructive exploitation of the carnal *hexis*: "The pickaxe, spade—those were the miner's tools. Today it's a machine, today a longwall coal-cutter moves, cuts, and loads at the same time" [M_4_B]. Intentional and responsible management with respect for the value of human life and health have become more important in the organization of labor: "Everything now has changed, now you think (...). People think about themselves, their work and safety. Everyone wants to come home" [M_2_R]. The earlier sense of a working-class community, collective work, and crew solidarity have been replaced by individualism, competition, and self-reliance. Work as a source of income has become more significant, whereas different social functions of this kind of work have become peripheral: "I have certain pay, I have a permanent job, payday always on the same date, and steady working hours. Not unsteady, so that you work from 6 am to 6 pm or maybe until 8 pm" [M_1_R].

Modern masculinity has rendered the habitus boundaries more flexible not only in the work field but also in that of the home. Expectations in the latter field have shed their previously sharp preclusion of masculinity. The segregation of men from domestic life has been softened as their involvement is redirected from the masculine activities at work toward family life: "Nowadays, everyone has his own home and own family. People don't meet so often after work, don't go out for a beer because everyone drives to work, so people meet less often (...)." [M_9_R]. Modern masculinity leaves symbolic and economic power behind while entering into the gender logic valuing (co)responsibility for caretaking of family members (e.g., children or disabled adults). More to the point, the majority of tasks and functions at home have cast off gender distinctions, such as "cooking, window washing, and housecleaning" [K_3_R].

Summary

The reflections drawn from this research study do not comprise an exhaustive description of the action strategies which are modifying the structures of the gender habitus. Neither is this a comprehensive analysis of the increased effectiveness of the new male and female habitus in a dynamically changing reality. The text at hand serves as a starting point—an attempt to sort and categorize the subjective, but recurring experiences of the inhabitants of specific post-mining communities at a specific point in time. Under the conditions of a restructuring of the economic system and labor market, the essence of femininity and masculinity is changing in this region. The (re)defining is embodied in the everyday micro-practices of men and women which illustrate how the previous framework is no longer operational under the new social circumstances. There is potential for individual self-location in the newly shaping gender habitus in response to objective, external forces which used to determine location.

With all of the above taken under consideration, we can draw three primary conclusions. In the first order, reproduction of the femininity and masculinity habitus that was founded upon the traditional paradigm now faces resistance as the work field transforms and evolves toward a post-Fordian economy. In turn, modern femininity and masculinity are influenced by economic and cultural capital and are negotiating an exchange value. The conversion of gender habitus affords access to economic capital because it allows monetary earnings under the new socio-economic circumstances within the new social structures. The value of education as cultural capital is changing and thus, too, is the education field. Moreover, a "new" value manifests itself in the household field in the form of relationships and guidelines deprived of gender distinctions. Therefore, out of the whole cultural universe of gender possibilities, it is modern femininity and masculinity which possess the operating capital that enables effective actions today.

Secondly, various aspects in the actions performed by women and men (or, more broadly, social practices and their justifications) have not annulled the androcentric principles of a gender order. Yet those power of those principles to shape a gender logic has become more diversified. A symbolic, negative factor has meant a separation of women from men (Bourdieu 2001, p. 111), but this is characteristic of the traditional or the modified traditional femininity and masculinity habitus. In the latter, modified version, femininity is indeed represented in the field of labor, but, in the post-working-class milieu, women are gainfully employed in the areas traditionally associated with family and household duties (e.g., gastronomy, cleaning, caretaking, nursing, education, etc.). furthermore, such employment is justified is primarily as counteracting an economic decline of the family.

Thirdly and finally, economic and cultural inequality also take place within femininity as a gender category. This pertains to both the traditional as well as modern habitus in the fields of work and education (Bourdieu 2001, p. 112). Articulation of a habitus will depend (among other things) upon age, education, fertility, etc. Still, the changing, altered, or reconstructed variants of masculinity and

femininity all coexist as both potential and real options offered by the local cultural world.

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Part III

Silesian Women's Situated Identity and the Question of Subjectivity: The Power of the Past and Promise of the Future

Barbara Markowska

> *Social reality is lived social relations, our most important political construction, a world-changing fiction (Haraway, 1991, p. 149).*

Abstract In Silesia, the issue of gender identity transformations is an important one. It is related, on the one hand, to the specific *myth* of the Silesian woman, and, on the other, to a radical socio-economic change. The chapter analyzes elements of this cultural image as a reference point for the subjectivity of Silesians with regard to their personal origin. Illustrated herein are the unique cultural capital and cultural competences transmitted in the family as well as attitudes toward regional identity (*Silesianness*) and tradition. I ponder how familial capital determines women's perceptions of social change and the role of women in that process. The main analytical purpose here is to detect the temporal patterns of a female subjectivity situated in a specific context: between the traditional, industrial world of Silesian mining and the postindustrial trends of global climate change, between the near past and the unknown future.

Introduction

The region of Upper Silesia is characterized by great cultural diversity, resulting from the coexistence of many national and ethnic minorities. Thus, the sense of regional distinctiveness is unusually strong and complex which is further related to a reflective self-awareness connected with a higher level of civilizational development (Szczepański & Janeczek, 2006; Siwek, 2017). One of the basic determinants of the social and cultural identity of the region's inhabitants has been the extremely

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intensive industrialization (as of the mid-nineteenth century), the development of a specific industrial monoculture (mining and metallurgy), and a deep-seated work ethic (Hoffmann, 2013). In the context of the specific distinctiveness of Silesia, the question of cultural identification is still an important factor for women living in the region when empowering their gender subjectivity. In the face of the changes taking place, this identification can be interpreted as a confirmation of belonging to a traditional universe of values. At the same time, claims of gendered self-confirmation might be interpreted as a panacea against an uprooting that is characteristic of the post-traditional (global) society in which traditional local communities collapse (Featherstone et al., 1995; Putnam, 2000).

This study is based on in-depth interviews (IDIs) conducted in 2016–2017 with a group of female NGO activists of various ages (about 20 women between the ages of 20 and 60). All of the interviewed women live and work in the Silesian voivodeship. The interviewees came from different families—not only anchored in mining and not always from Silesia. Different family backgrounds turned out to be decisive in strategies of identity-building and patterns of subjectivity. What the women had in common was a middle-class belonging (secondary or higher education, professional activity, etc.) and strong social commitment. This last feature was central because it gave rise to the question of their peculiar subjectivity and attitudes toward the social change taking place in this region. That is why I invoke in the title the concept of *situated identity* associated with the tradition of symbolic interactionism (Alexander & Lauderdale, 1977) and using it metaphorically. On the one hand, I refer to Seyla Benhabib's book about *situating the self* (1992) in which she questioned the political model of liberalism and communicative norms. On the other hand, I refer to the feminist poststructuralist perspective that gendered the experience of environment as a manifestation of *situated knowledges* shaped by the many intersecting dimensions of identity—gender, race, class, ethnicity, and age, among others (Haraway, 1988; Haenn & Wilk, 2005).

In the case study at hand, the respondents were queried about the social consequences of the climate crisis (Gier & Mercier, 2006; Klein, 2014). The analysis below emphasizes the impact of sociocultural identity on attitudes toward change. I show how different types of family background and cultural capital parlay into distinctive competencies: active or passive relations to tradition, a subjective perception of time, and a universe of values. Firstly, I describe the interplay between tradition and the traditional image of these women vis-à-vis their expressed demands for modernization. Subsequently, I differentiate the main strategies for establishing a situated identity. Here "situated" indicates an identity between social perception (who am I?) and subjective demand (who I would like to be?). Hence, the analysis of the subjectivity will be outlined within the three temporal patterns in which these social actors find legitimization for their activism: the past (the domain of tradition), the present (daily routine and environment), and the future (a vision of progress and development). The primary purpose of this chapter is to demonstrate that the main factor responsible for the trajectory of a specific situated identity and the temporal pattern of subjectivity is the cultural capital of the interviewee (Bourdieu, 1986; Bukowska et al., 2013; Markowska, 2018). In other words, I consider how the origin

and degree of social embeddedness can influence a woman's self-perception in a changeable social and cultural environment.

The Historical and Cultural Landscape

> In the traditions of 'Western' science and politics—the tradition of racist, male-dominant capitalism; the tradition of progress; the tradition of the appropriation of nature as resource for the productions of culture; the tradition of reproduction of the self from the reflections of the other—the relation between organism and machine has been a border war. The stakes in the border war have been the territories of production, reproduction, and imagination (Haraway, 1991, p. 150).

During the period of the postwar Polish People's Republic—apart from the increased industrialization and Polonization of Silesia (forced repatriations from the eastern borderlands after World War II)—various efforts were made to integrate this area with the rest of Poland (Bjork et al., 2016; Karch, 2018). The public sphere was saturated with Polish national culture thanks to institutions such as schools, media, and community centers. However, the cultivation of ethnically or nationally different traditions (including the Silesian dialect, rituals, and cuisine) took place in private spaces—especially in large, multigenerational families and neighboring communities. The memory of these processes lives on today: "For some time, the Silesians remained underground, locked themselves in enclaves and even watched over marriages, so there was no exchange between the newcomers and the Silesians. But mixing is inevitable" (r9).

Similar to the rest of Poland, the Silesian hierarchy of values has been dominated for years by the family whose basic roles include ensuring existential security and maintaining very strong emotional bonds (Titkow & Duch, 2004). But a specific Silesian cultural quality remains the work ethic. This is confirmed by one respondent's salient auto-characterization: "we have such a custom in Silesia, we speak little, we do a lot" (r9). Another interviewee emphasizes that, in Poland, there is a positive image of Silesians in terms of their diligence, family, and commitment to the local community:

> The Silesians were said to be so open and sociable. Anyway, I was delighted when I first came to the Nikiszowiec district (...). We were talking about the fact that these people were taking their tables outside. The laundry, feasting, singing and chats were done out in the open. Nobody closed the doors to apartments at all, so life there looked completely different. In fact, the men were working in the mines and the women looked after the children. And those people knew each other... They were really one big family. So, it all looked completely different (r1).

One of the strongest symbolic components of the regional identity is the mining culture understood as a multigenerational profession, passed from grandfather to father and son. In the recent past, this profession was imbued with social (and political) prestige—strengthened because of the key role a miner's work played in Polish modernization. This process was closely connected to an influx of people

from central Poland, culturally foreign, and with regards to whom the locals felt a clear distance: "They don't care about the environment, they don't feel that it's their own. They live in these prefabricated concrete apartment blocks because generally those were built for them, for the newcomers" (r18). During the period of real socialism, the attention of the authorities encompassed the whole mining family which was provided with very good living conditions compared to the rest of Polish society. In effect, as my respondents emphasized, usually a miner's wife did not need to work. There have been many families where the wife stayed at home, taking care of the house and children, while the husband worked and brought home the bacon.

During a transformation period after 1989, the Polish government decided to start restructuring the hard coal mining industry in Poland due to its low profitability and poor competitiveness in the global economic market. Another reason was the excessively high environmental costs, such as pollution or permanent damage to the landscape. A restructuring of the coal industry started in 1993 and continues until today in a totally different context. The EU energy policy is pushing the Polish authorities to quickly introduce green energy and permanently close mines due to the climate crisis (Angus, 2016; Beck, 2016). This longstanding process has significantly affected the social structure of the region of Upper Silesia and resulted in the impoverishment of mining families, the decline of mining profession prestige, a work ethos crisis, and distinct changes in the model by which a typical Silesian family has functioned. As a result, the social perception of women has changed, especially in the younger generation:

> Certainly, a typical Silesian woman used to be a housewife, taking care of children, cooking, washing, and cleaning. And now a typical Silesian woman has one or two children who go to school or kindergarten and she herself works (r6).

One of the cultural consequences brought about by the transformation after 1989 is the revival of regional identity—in this case, Silesian neo-tribalism. Key in the struggle for Silesian regional identity are efforts to recognize the Silesian vernacular as a regional language (and not a dialect) as well as the political and economic activities of the Silesian Autonomy Movement [*Ruch Autonomii Śląskiej*, RAŚ] (Nijakowski, 2004). This aspiration for autonomy may indicate the emergence of a new type of development capital based on a liquid and inclusive local, regional identity whose strength comes from changes in the political context (decentralization of the country, accession to the EU, etc.) and the process of globalization which is triggering a parallel switch toward that which is local (Klekotko, 2012; Orlewski, 2019). One of the interviewees summed this up well:

> Here, however, on the one hand, we are very open to novelties, but, on the other hand, we stick to this tradition and it's a kind of anchor, and it's ours, you see? And that makes us separate, that makes us different, makes us unique. Contrary to appearances, we are more European than the Poles are… (r9).

Global processes are, therefore, accompanied by a specific reconstruction of the cumulative values of the regional identity—values that are the cornerstone for the symbolic universe of Upper Silesia. Peripherality and traditionalism, characteristic of a cultural borderland, are what connects the proverbial red shutters of *familoki*

[working class, terrace houses] with the shafts of abandoned mines which are being gradually transformed from temples of labor into temples of consumption (Silesia City Center) or modern cultural institutions (Silesian Museum). The above-mentioned components shape the characteristic cultural landscape of the region out of multidimensional, historically rooted contrasts. This renders Silesia as an extremely rich mosaic of elements that have developed at the junction of agrarian (traditional, family clan) and industrial cultures.

"Situated" Subjectivity: Between Tradition and Modernization

> The international women's movements have constructed "women's experience", as well as uncovered or discovered this crucial collective object. [...] Liberation rests on the construction of the consciousness, the imaginative apprehension, of oppression, and so of possibility. [...] This is a struggle over life and death, but the boundary between science fiction and social reality is an optical illusion (Haraway, 1991, p. 149)

Globalization processes affect local communities and transform their social values. In the case of Silesia, globalization means ecological consciousness which constrains traditional ways of being. How are women's experiences and gender situated under this pressure? There are two main spheres of patriarchy that have been empowering modern industrial capitalism: the private and public spheres. The former is rooted in the household domain as the main site of women's oppression; the latter is linked to communal spaces such as the workplace and the state (Walby, 1997). Nonetheless, in the region of Silesia, the situation is quite exceptional: one can say that matriarchy dominates in the private sphere, whereas patriarchy is official in the public one. The archetypal Silesian woman is engrained in a symbolic order combining three different roles: the hard-working housewife, the strong and strict mother, and the subaltern wife. As my respondents explained, the position of a wife is lower in the traditional family than the position of a mother, the head of the whole clan. Interestingly, recent research has shown that the generation of young women aims for emancipation in both spheres, in private and work life (Żak, 2013). However, this does not mean they reject the mythos of Silesian women as such. On the contrary, it is often a source of their female and/or feminist identity.

It is a well-known fact that various forms of tradition and traditionalism are still relevant in the globalizing society (Appadurai, 1996; Swadźba, 2011). Moreover, the patriarchal system is not an ahistorical structure, but rather a system changing in history, resonating with the dynamics of capitalist production. The return to certain traditions can be treated as a way of dealing with a new economic reality, violent changes, or an identity crisis. It might also reflect the threat of fundamentalism (Castells, 2010; Reid, 2013). In this sense, the world of tradition and the modern world interact in mutual tension: it is not unusual that something new can only be experienced and perceived in a traditional framework. Generally speaking, tradition

is always a collective experience and is, therefore, an essential component of sociocultural identity, even in post-traditional societies (Giddens, 1994).

According to Giddens (1994), there are three different meanings of tradition. We can treat it as (1) a system of recognized values and practices of everyday life, (2) a traditionalism (an externally imposed routine), and (3) an invention used as a remedy against the mechanisms causing individual uprooting. All these meanings coexist in everyday practices because traditional customs usually change over time, although some elements remain blurred. During my interviews, I also used the concept of tradition in three analytical aspects which correspond to Giddens' categories: the functional, objective, and subjective (Shils, 1981). The first of these focuses on activities (practices) passed down from generation to generation (culturally transmitted). The second emphasizes the material dimension in the form of physical, cultural heritage (e.g., family memorabilia, architecture, memorial sites, etc.) which is, nevertheless, external and superficial with reference to the subject. The third and final aspect concerns the attitude of individuals toward the past—an attitude that may be positive, negative, or ambivalent based upon the selection of elements that constitute an integral part of reflective self-design. In this case, and fundamental for my analysis, tradition is understood as a set of various relevant and meaningful elements of the past from which a person chooses what is truly important for him/her. Paradoxically, the emancipatory and subjective function of tradition is to serve as a tool that helps individuals to integrate and shape their experience, establishing a linkage with the past and providing sense in a world filled with a multitude of meanings (Hobsbawn & Ranger, 1983).

As mentioned above, a set of cultural stereotypes about women, traditional family, and gender roles in this region established a specific myth about the Silesian woman. What is interesting is that women invoke this myth in quite different ways. Furthermore, the way in which this myth is used and the purpose for which it is used can be seen as a peculiar interplay between tradition and everyday routine on the one hand, and an impulse of individual (or collective) emancipation on the other. At the most basic level, these are the ceremonies and practices of daily life that create a specific microcosm of the family, enabling its integration: "We always have dinner at half past five. I wait for my husband with dinner because for me it's extremely important to have a meal together at least once a day. No one demands it, but, for me, it brings the family together, so I introduced it. We always eat dinner together" (r9). Similarly, an important element of ordinary life in Silesia is the very actively cultivated celebration of holy days and other family occasions (e.g., birthdays, baptisms, communions, etc.). This beautiful performance of tradition is described by an interlocutor who comes from a small town, from a multigenerational mining family:

> Christmas Eve is very traditional and always prepared by my grandmother. It was a very traditional event. Every year there would be the same dishes in the same order. Grandma died four years ago, and then me and my mother took over the preparation. The first two Christmas Eves were exactly the same as Grandmother's; it was somehow impossible for us to walk away from it. Two years ago, and last year's Christmas Eve was kind of... the same dishes are still there, but there are also some new ones, or we change this and that, but still

> there are some dishes that should be there at exactly the right time. (...) I wouldn't say that something is slackening somewhere, because it's still well preserved (r19).

As can be seen, due to the dynamics of social change, the attitude toward the past (ritualized practices) is very complex. This attitude can be selective in its nature or subtly modified. It can also make a person reflect thoroughly on various elements of tradition arranged in a multitude of configurations. All of this reinforces an identity undergoing a process of construction that sidelines elements perceived as negative, unwanted, or oppressive. This is especially the case with the traditional approach to the role of women in Silesian culture (i.e., cult reverence of women, the perceived guardian of hearth and home) overlaid by the usual division of roles in a typical mining family. Emerging in the course of this investigation was a series of responses that concerned a positive, strong female image in a seemingly patriarchal family: "Above all, there has always been this woman worship here. They've been given great respect, so we must make it clear to ourselves that it's always been the case that the mother and grandmother were very greatly respected individuals" (r7).

Conventionally, it was women who made decisions about the family, including its budget. They also acted as the primary guardians of tradition:

> There are strong women in Silesia. They have usually been in charge of the money for centuries. They decided about various things. They were also, one could say, opinion makers. But they also preserved Polishness, in the sense that, through these choirs and orchestras, there was both this Silesian and Polish singing. And they also cultivated customs, that is by washing windows and decorating them every month. The cultivation of different types of customs (r10).

Overall, the image of Silesian women is ambiguous. There is, on the one hand, the very strong positive image of the elderly Ślązaczka, perceived as the head of the clan, the opinion maker, and the authority in domestic and local affairs which seems to indicate a sort of matriarchy in the private sphere. On the other hand, as a negative reference point, there is the image of the woman cooped up at home, not working professionally, alienated from social life, and for whom the most important value is keeping things in order (empty ritualism) rather than caring for the good of the family or the children's development.

> I feel as if there was a kind of museum inside me, someplace where I come from and what I love. And I have those antiques around the dining room, but, at the same time, I'm not detached from reality. No. I'm open and active, and I create something else on the basis of my background. And if a person is completely empty inside, I don't know if they can create anything (r4).

At another level, there is the coal-mining tradition or, more broadly, an industrial tradition treated as part of the cultural heritage: "We're not really ashamed of our origin—that's why in the coat of arms of our city there is this heap of coal. (...) We grew up on it, it's our tradition, our heritage, and we don't deny it, so it is important to help these people and develop these post-mining sites" (r1). Notably, at the level of collective consciousness, there is a strong imperative to maintain and develop Silesian identity because it is a source of meaningful values. However, in a much more modern light, "I see a certain return to the Silesian tradition which for some

time was pushed back. People in general, for example, as far as the Silesian language is concerned, well... nobody spoke Silesian. But even if someone didn't speak Silesian, they were proud of it" (r5). As we see, the local language is treated as a real resource, treasured also in an economic sense.

Yet this is accompanied by a much wider phenomenon, nascent with global trends: the commercialization and commodification of a cultural essence (e.g., "Silesianness"). It is an important trend for the younger generation living in Silesian agglomerations—mainly in Katowice, a regional capital recently dubbed "green-city":

> A trendiness for Silesian products... you can see that it's this generation, probably people around thirty. They're probably the most fascinated by it, they're proud of it, they talk about it, and they're coming back to the Silesian tradition and showing that Silesia is well worth a visit because we have something to be proud of. This is how I see it: that the pride in being from here is growing (r5).

Evident is the function of a new tradition stemming from the so-called participatory lifestyle. That lifestyle, under the conditions of modern individualism, entails an openness to experience and a sovereignty of the biographical perspective from official versions of history. The modern individual has the possibility to dialogue with the past and shape her or his own biography in order to achieve a sense of fitting within the social environment. Contemporary traditions become a point of reference for interpretation and the principle for understanding one's past. It is necessary to individualize the content of an identity and sometimes even create it anew. Thus, the individual gains control over the present and can influence the future. Moreover, the past is reinterpreted symbolically, and the most effective version is adopted.

Herein this pertains to the very concrete practices of restoring the memory of the role of women in the political history of Silesia and their (non)presence in the public sphere. This is how one of the interviewees recollects the public appearance of young feminist activists in the Silesian Parliament:

> Tradition was overflowing... I think that such events will (...) be in great demand in general. I mean, women will be looking for places where they can find their identity again, raise their self-esteem, also professionally again, go higher (r3).

This passage illustrates a certain process by which female subjectivity was awakened on a more collective and political level. This can be described concisely as a transition from "I" to "we" whereby "we" means women from Silesia (not necessarily by bloodlines). Yet the switch from "I" to "we" is followed by a changed perspective—from the particular to a global one (which here means a symbolic representation of the region (Bourdieu, 1991), or just being responsible for the region). In the next subchapter, I present the main strategies of building this gendered and politically situated identity.

To Be or Not to Be... a Silesian

I was born in Silesia, so, I'm Silesian (r4).

In *Fractured Identities,* Harriet Bradley (2016) described the difference between a passive identity associated with some potentiality and an active one that is associated with negative or positive gender experiences. The latter may be expressed in various types of activity such as Women's Aid or community work. What is constitutive here is that this activity is outside the home. Therefore, in the transformation analyzed here, the thread of Silesian regional identity is treated as a vehicle for political commitment. There is one reason why regional belonging turned out to be the crucial factor in the activation of the populace: the residents of today's Silesia actually represent a mix of autochthons and different layers of the postwar incomers (i.e., mainly from the lost Eastern Borderlands or central Poland). Yet, with neither a common (gathering or reuniting) identity nor reference to a single physical space and cultural sphere, no activity would be possible in the social environment. Thus, it is being Silesian that legitimizes social activities. However, the memory of the past (including experiences pertaining to identity) is, in many cases, an area of ambivalence for some of our respondents. In other words, questions about the family environment of our interviewees allowed us to determine their primary group belongings, cultural capital, and position in the social structure. A family background rooted in Silesia—or lack thereof—comprised a factor influencing the life trajectory of the surveyed women. This factor shaped their attitude toward their own activities as well as toward their perception of social change over the last two decades.

The narratives collected were characterized by different degrees of detail—from very accurate stories reaching back to past generations to more vague utterances formulated as if from a distant standpoint. Some interviewees gave us insight into what could be referred to as discomfiting information which revealed a number of their experiences from childhood and youth. These recounted experiences pointed sometimes to social and cultural isolation: misunderstanding of the dialect, vocabulary, or codes characteristic of an autochthonous population. Sometimes, to the contrary, the experiences indicated a respondent's belonging to the dominant group which, during the transformation period, suddenly suffered an uprooting as the mining industry began to collapse: more active members of incoming families started to move back to their "home" regions or to emigrate abroad in search of work. The most relevant moment in these stories about their origin was a moment of clear identification with Silesian identity. Consequently, different types of answers were amassed, reflecting a multitude of possible configurations of how to deal with this tension between two questions: "who am I?" (the question of identity) and "who would I like to be?" (the question of subjectivity). The overlapping of these two questions leads us to the next important and strictly political issue: *who can I be in a credible or recognized way?* This is, in fact, a matter of situating identity and subjectivity in a specific socio-political context.

Mapping the received answers, I distinguished seven main *strategies for establishing Silesian identity*. What is "strategy" in this context? To explain this, a distinction between strategy and tactics might be helpful. According to Michel de Certeau: "strategy postulates a place that can be delimited as its own and serve as the base from which relations with an exteriority composed of targets or threats . . . can be managed" (1984, p. 36). If you are homeless or excluded from the social space or community, you can use only tactics which constitute an *art of the weak* and "a calculated action determined by the absence of a proper locus" (1984, p. 37). In my typology tactics also comprise one of the strategies characteristics of a subject who needs to survive and creates a living space in the space of the Other. Worth adding is that each strategy impacts the final effect of the situated identity. The seven identity strategies detected among the interviewees are as follows:

1. *Genealogical reference*

> I know the history of my ancestors because I learned a lot about it. After my grandmother's death—she used to tell me many stories—I discovered photographs in which I had all my female ancestors back to the sixth generation, one after another. And I knew their history back to the fifth generation. (...) I know exactly what my roots are and who these women were and what they did. However, looking at what I'm like and.... I can see that I'm very similar to my grandmother. She was such a rebel. Even though many of these stereotypical roles she took on in her life and—according to tradition—she did it properly not differently, there was a lot of rebellion in her, and this rebellion has developed in me to a very large extent. And now I function a little differently (r4).

2. *Sense of distinctiveness*

> What does it mean to be Silesian? It means to respect the place where you live. Respect people connected with it. To feel the uniqueness, but not alienation, because we're not alienated—you can feel the uniqueness of the fact that you have your own roots, that you have your own tradition, that you have your own behavior, that you know who you are (r9).

3. *Identification with traditional values*

> For a few years now I've been able to say that I'm a Silesian. I'm coming to accept this at a late age, and it's precisely because I'm here and I appreciate more and more the different values that have survived in some places, which I think are worth cultivating (r18).

4. *Identification with the region at the political level*

> I said in the census that I was a Silesian because I was upset by the president of Law and Justice [*Prawo i Sprawiedliwość*] when he said that we [Silesians] were camouflaged Germans (r3).

5. *Affective commitment to the language and landscape*

> To be a Silesian means to be a person who speaks with a strange accent, a hard one, but, above all, very good Polish. And I think that identifying oneself not so much with the dialect or with some such cultural and folk elements, but with this land in general, as some kind of special potential (r17).

6. *Emotional relationship with a specific place and closer people*

> I'm more connected with these houses, even some particular ones, you know—with buildings, neighborhoods (r11); I'm connected with my family and the place where I live—this certainly is important (r8).

7. *Persistent involvement in community work*

> I got a medal, for me these medals are of no importance, but I'm not a Silesian, am I? I've been coming here, and I fell in love with the region. In fact, I feel like a Silesian and I act like one from the bottom of my heart. So, when I found myself standing in the Marble Room and the highest officials came and pinned the medals on me... You know, I cried like a baby. I said: "God, this is my place on earth" (r13).

As we see, from a personal point of view a disposition toward genealogy and family roots or even territory may be a useful way by which to create goals, make decisions, and achieve aims. These strategies enable an individual to find his or her place on Earth and to establish an emotional relationship with the social milieu. Another stratagem connects strong and visible identity with social commitment and/or political involvement. Interestingly enough, we can order these auto-identification answers to the "to be or not to be" questions on a scale from the strongest to the weakest. Crucial criteria would be the possession of bloodlines ancestry and a physical embeddedness in the Silesian cultural landscape—meaning (in the eyes of my respondents) language and cuisine in the first order, followed by way of life.

The next level of analysis reveals the importance of historic and symbolic boundaries between two adjacent regions: Silesia and the Dąbrowa Coal Basin. As one interviewee explained, the two are "eternally in a struggle, dating back to the Partitions...when here was the Prussian partition, over there it was the Russian partition. *Hanysy* [a local nickname] stands for the aboriginal inhabitants of Silesia, while *Gorole* for Dąbrowa Coal Basin. And that's the way it is" (r2). Nowadays, however, both regions belong to a single administrative province—the Silesian Voivodeship—and hence, from an external point of view, all the inhabitants are simply Silesians. The symbolic struggle is not only historically rooted and politically antagonized but is based on cultural distinctions. The difference lies in the stereotypical image of women from the Dąbrowa Coal Basin: these women always worked on par with men, were not locked up in their homes, and hence did not devote as much time to maintaining cleanliness and order (chores typical of Silesian women). Further, this distinction bears additional implications. From the Silesian perspective,

the Dąbrowa Coal Basin is a metonym for all that is *not* Silesian; it represents the rest of Poland—especially Warsaw, the capital and symbol of the centralized, national government. Yet, in the eyes of Dąbrowa Coal Basin inhabitants, the image of Warsaw is positive. This division is handed down through generations and maintained in peer groups (e.g., school classes), local communities, and subcultures (e.g., local football team supporters). Arising several times in the interviews were indicators that symbolic differences are immediately made manifest when politically or socially significant actions are taken. We met with a single significant exception: one of the interviewees, coming from a family strongly connected with the Dąbrowa Coal Region, stated that she is part of a network of women, all in high positions, that functions across the divides. Thus, she claimed that "There is no such thing as animosities between Silesian women and those from the Dąbrowa Coal Region. There is no such thing" (r16). Her declaration seems to be a kind of performative act and signals the symbolic power of female actors.

To summarize, being socially active for many years makes it possible for one to become a full-fledged, recognized member of the imagined "we" community. As the previous fieldwork study has shown, one of the most important ways for inhabitants to gain higher status within a multicultural and multiethnic environment is to actively work for the community (Bukowska et al., 2013). Drawing on Bourdieu's theoretical framework (1986) to develop further subtypes of cultural capital, we called this mechanism for the establishment of strong (but quite arbitrary) ties *civic capital*. Key here is that somebody's taking the initiative and striving to be 'useful' could be noticed; that person could be recognized by others as part of the whole, the imagined community. Thus, the above-mentioned example shows that "ethnic boundaries" are liquid, arbitrarily established, and surmountable. Recollecting Bradley's differentiation we can say that all our respondents gained an active identity. To put it more precisely, all are in the long and complex process of transformation from the strong, reflective "I" embedded in the local environment (e.g., family, work, local organization, etc.) to the political "we" represented the regional female identity (Bourdieu, 1991).

Time-Pattern of Subjectivity: Positioning Toward the Change

The final element in this inquiry is the perception of time in the context of ecological and social change (Adam, 1996). Time and space are constitutive for a social worldview. Norbert Elias (1993, p. 7), in his classic essay On Time, discovered the connections between a social structure with an indispensable but also an inescapable network of temporal definitions, and a personality structure with a very acute and disciplined sensitivity to time. This means that, besides the everyday routines measured by clock time and the calendar year, there are certain additional dimensions of time that strongly influence subjectivity. Cultural time spans three

dimensions—past, present, and future—which seem to be a key factor determining social commitment. Analogically, Margaret Mead (1970) divided societies into three types: post-figurative (focused on the past); co-figurative (living in the present) and pre-figurative (concentrating on the future in which the youngest generation will prevail).

Assuming that the spanning of time and space is not only consequential for a social organization but also for subjectivity, we present three types of identity construction. The description generalizes select examples that reveal how family origin influences one's position toward social change. In other words, I strive to grasp three different strategies for building strong subjectivity patterns rooted in ontological security and an internal demand for action legitimacy. The key factor is an "anchoring" in different dimensions of time—past, present, and future. Each translates into a different type of empowerment, understood as a sense of control over reality. The differences between these attitudes deal primarily with how much perceived room there is for possible/desirable influence and what the limits of responsibility for our surroundings are.

Position A. The Past: Full Rootedness in the Local (Family) Tradition Grants a Strong Sense of Agency

In this position origin and heritage are never obliterated or hidden: they are always a source of pride. As one of the interviewees asserted: "I know where my roots are. My roots are very deep here. (...) There's that feeling that everyone should always know where their place is and shouldn't be ashamed of their own views—they should express those views" (r9). A reference to strong rootedness implies a sense of being in one's own place. That sense leads, in turn, to a sense of security and the strength to reformulate one's life—to break down a framework while preserving coherence. Furthermore, it is as if ancestral spirits legitimize someone's anchorage in a particular territory, allowing him or her to act: "I'm here all the time. I create something new, I do different things, but I have that foundation—I have that feeling that I'm standing firmly on the ground, on that soil that begat me" (r4). The attitude toward one's past and that of one's family is, from a research point of view, one of the most critical factors determining the degree of one's contemporary engagement and perception of the future. Here tradition is treated as a necessary context, a key to understanding and interpreting one's own life. Simultaneously, that tradition is mediated by the institutional framework of modernity, thus its direct pressure is limited. Moreover, in this context, some elements of tradition can serve as the impetus for a process of subjective emancipation.

Position B. The Present: A Lack of Rootedness in the Local Tradition Limits Access to Many Dimensions of the Social Reality

In this case, we deal with a completely different existential situation: the actor comes from an entirely non-native family. She shows interest only in the immediate environment and lives in a microcosm family devoid of the regional association. The interviewee admits that she is strongly bonded with her family—more precisely, with the family as a group of individuals and their everyday rituals. From the perspective of this meaningful microcosmos, the rest of here surrounding remains a neutral space. As she confesses: "There are only places that are special to me, important to me, that I visit, but this doesn't mean an identity" (r11). Moreover, it seems that this kind of subjectivity is in no need of a general reference point for the description of one's own lifeworld. Although living in the Dąbrowa Coal Basin and working in Silesia, this respondent does not notice any relevant divisions in her everyday life. "For the whole of my life, I've been only vaguely aware of this cultural division along the lines of Silesia/the Dąbrowa Coal Basin" (r11). Divisions and differentiations crucial for position A are scarcely seen from the viewpoint of position B. "Clean air," as a result of industry transformation is much more vital than a distinction between Dąbrowa Coal Basin and Silesia or even more than the fact of mines and steelworks being closed down. On the one hand, the consequence of this position is an alienation, both from many dimensions of social life and (participation in) history. On the other, a strong awareness of the lack of roots opens the woman up to the present—to people, places, streets, and houses today. All these become central and close because they are a part of her everyday life.

Position C. The Future: A Lack of Rootedness in the Local Tradition Lends the Possibility of a Supra-regional Identity

The third example is of a person from a family that is completely non-Silesian, but which passes down family traditions from generation to generation. Revealed by the research is the strong agency of a person seemingly unrooted in the surrounding environment and distanced from specific, local Silesian problems. This case introduces yet another perspective on the entire region. Such a viewpoint allows for a more objective attitude that extends beyond the local level; it easily overlooks antagonisms and blurs all boundaries, perceived rather as obstacles in thinking, development, and communication. In a position focused on a vision of the future, the feeling of being "connected with the region" (r2) is accompanied by a broader reference to being European.

The three temporally oriented types embody the link between one's origin and one's identity—current, styled, or experienced. The positions shed light on how an individual can respond to conditions either conducive or limiting the transformation

of the family capital into social bridging capital. In other words, these identified, ideal types reveal a link between an actor's relationship with reality is affected by her (or his) embeddedness in a vision of the future, focus on the present, or source of empowerment stemming from a past legacy.

Conclusion: The Re-imagined Female Community

Since the term *gender* is one of the most politically active concepts in the social sciences, we cannot ignore the gender perspective in social identity analysis (McNay, 2000; Epstein, 2007). Still, implementation of this perspective brings some difficulties as no such stable subject as "Women" exists (Butler, 1990, p. 1). In this text, I have attempted to juxtapose the collective, cultural female stereotypes with the individual perspective. The way in which that perspective is expressed in a narrative bears two important aspects. The first concerns self-identifications based on one's origin; the second—equally important—is the moment of reflexive rooting in some kind of collective "we" (here meaning women in general and/or Silesian female inhabitants). This moment of auto-affirmation is one of the most essential strategies for building a coherent and rational image of a world in which one's actions become a carrier of certain values—one legitimizing reality on the basis of reasoning—*what I do makes sense... because I know/believe that such actions make sense*. This mental formula is a right exemplification of the claim that "narrative agency, understood as an individual's most basic capacity for sense-making, is primary both to individual identity formation and to collective political action" (Lucas, 2017, p. 124).

This is what I call the situated identity. It is strictly connected with *situated knowledges* and the time pattern of subjectivity. My purpose was to demonstrate that universalism, properly conceived, is compatible with a view of the self as culturally embedded and socially constituted. This is the effect of many processes but, in this case, I examine how women's identity is reshaping in the context of tensions between strong cultural tradition and the processes of modernization and decarbonization. In recent years we observe the meaning of family and the inner circle of everyday life is diminishing. New factors have become more significant: social and global powers as well as the political impact of climate change lead to a deep and transgenerational social transformation. One can say that the place of women in this process is decisive as mothers, family managers, and creators of the meaning of life. However, to be a strong individual one needs to be a part of a community. As a consequence, the women interviewed had to refer to the real or imagined community of women in their attempts to construct subjectivity. Clearly, the process of global social change requires the enactment of a new transgenerational community of active Silesians, linking the past with a future legitimizing their social commitment. In an unstable world, some kind of imagined tradition is politically relevant and necessary for the continuity of social life.

The question of origin is essential to preserving one's identity. The family seems to be the most important transmission belt to hand cultural patterns down to the next generation. These patterns are rooted in the configuration of values and what is transferred depends upon the type of family. Specific values, worldviews, or motivations to act are derived either from a positive or negative reference point tethered to space and time. In the creation and enhancement of subjectivity, the role of community is pivotal: it may serve as an emplacement and source of power. In terms of analysis, the relationship between a subject and a community may be depicted as a matrix of the two intersecting axes: place and time. The results of my research reveal a collection of seven strategies along the first axis—all representing a search for a good place to live as a metaphor for one's "right" identity. Along the second axis is a set of three subject positions, representing three-time patterns. Treating the latter axis as an orientation point, one may assign strategies 1–7 to position A, 4–7 to B, and 4 with 7 to C. This means that, in position A, the subject is focused on the past and employs all possible strategies for identity-building (e.g., genealogical reference, sense of distinctiveness, etc.); position B, concentrated on the present, is limited to fewer strategies without those relating to genealogy and ethnicity; and, finally, position C relies on foresight and thus uses tactics such as identification with the idea of the region in political representation and with social activism.

In summary, a factor that strengthens and enables a quick and easy transition from 'I' to 'we' is a strong ethnic identification and rootedness in the past (position A). An appropriately cultivated attitude toward the traditions and history of one's family endows one with a sense of strength and the legitimacy to represent the interests of the whole community. At the same time, such an attitude serves to emphasize the community's distinctiveness, lending clarity, and coherence to one's activities embedded within a robust symbolic framework. The lack of such rootedness and a local identity schema leads to an individualistic attitude that can only create dispersed ties with various elements of the social reality; the locally rooted self is the only point of coherence (position B). Such an attitude can also be dubbed *vernacular patriotism* on a microscale, clearly connected with the here and now. Another variation of this attitude is an attempt, resulting from a rootlessness, to inscribe oneself within a broader identity (e.g., Polish or European) which erases borders and separations as unnecessary ballast; this identity "anchors" itself in the general vision of changes (position C). The mechanism legitimizing action in such a case is a focus on projects which concern not only changes in one's own life but also those which pertain to the systemic change and the struggle for a better future, one that can belong to everyone. In this way, the weakest situated identity is transformed into a powerful political subject who concentrates on the entirety of mankind and whose actions empower future generations.

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Green and Black Silesia: Environmental Awareness of Women in a Coal Mining Region

Katarzyna Iwińska

Abstract This chapter aims to present the attitudes, beliefs, and opinions on environmental issues (ecology) and energy transition through the views of women living in the mining region. Based on qualitative interviews and participatory research with Silesian women, I tackle the issue of environmental and ecological awareness using Giddens' concepts of discursive and practical consciousness (and unconscious motives/cognition). For the purpose of this study, I define ecology broadly and use it for all issues related to the protection of natural resources and the environment. Meanwhile, the topic of energy is mainly shown in the context of changes in the region. The findings are presented using "women's voices" in order to offer some ecological feminist viewpoints and shed light on the dilemmas between modern and postmodern views on ecology. This, I believe, can provide a broader picture, helping us to understand the societal challenges and cultural changes in the region.

Introduction

"Our house is on fire," repeats Greta Thunberg, the Swedish activist who has recently become an 18-year-old icon of teenagers fighting for environmental protection. Despite diverse opinions among the general public regarding her actions, the coverage of her school strike and further meetings with decision-makers have raised public awareness of the profound problem of climate change. The activity undertaken by Greta as well as other youngsters and activists around the world, opened up new reflections and discussions about the condition of the environment and the way we, human beings, can make a difference. The reality of the Anthropocene has shifted from the dominance of academic discourse to the narratives of people living in vulnerable places and regions (Lidskog & Waterton, 2016). The climate crisis issue has also reached the population of Upper Silesia, the region with the highest coal production in Poland, which is obliged to undergo enormous adjustments due to

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the decarbonization aims of Europe. Although climate change still seems to be considered a vague and abstract problem for the majority of people in Poland, it has already started to resonate within some groups in society.

Among local Silesian groups, the proposed solutions and opinions regarding climate responsibility are diverse. It so happens that environmental degradation has become a new factor of social division: the rapid industrialization and then rapid deindustrialization have affected economic and class issues (capital and work) in carbon-driven labor markets (Vaughan & Nordenstam, 1991). Additionally, this situation has influenced the consciousness and identity of the inhabitants, specifically the understanding of the role of tradition as well as gender-related roles and habits (Giddens, 1984). Some researchers have shown that the turn towards nature and the environment is perceived as less important by males than by females (Mohai, 1997; Momsen, 2000; Xiao & McCright, 2012). Although women are more concerned about environmental risks and changes than men (Bord & O'Connor, 1997), gender differences in environmental activism lead to counterintuitive results: ironically, the rates of environmental activism among women are substantially lower than among men (Mohai, 1992; Goldsmith et al., 2013). Yet, women are also expected to be more aware of environmental problems than men due to their caretaking tasks and pronounced future time perspective (Bussey & Bandura, 1999; Eisler & Eisler, 1994; Eisler et al., 2003). Moreover, the awareness of class and gender is crucial when it comes to environmental issues within the ecofeminist paradigm. This unique, interdisciplinary thinking on the fundamental interconnectedness of all forms of life, along with resistance against the oppression of nonhuman species (Warren & Wells-Howe, 1994; Gaard, 1993), has opened an opportunity to study women within the environmental changes that are driven mostly by men. Although ecofeminism has already received a fair amount of criticism (Sargisson, 2001; Moore, 2008; Alaimo, 2008), revisiting this paradigm in the context of energy transition in Poland might cast new light and offer a reimagination of the cultural context of Europe's decarbonization.

What distinguishes ecofeminism scholarship from other feminist perspectives is the claim that structurally rooted patriarchal dominance over women (and other social groups) is connected with the exploitation of the planet. The gravity of the problem—the increasing intrusion of civilization into nature—is mainly linked to the dominant role of capitalist petro-, oil-, and gas masculinism in the global industry (Daggett, 2018). The role left for women, therefore, is to rebuild the "woman-nature" connection by taking care of families, kids, pets, gardens, and households. On the one hand, some ecofeminists claim that theirs is a perspective complementary to deep ecology, which tends to take a holistic view of nature and humanity together (Mathews, 1994). On the other hand, ecofeminism tends to portray nature as a "family of beings" with distinct individuals (men and women) and species that need to respect each other within the rules of "the house" (the world). In other words, ecofeminism can also be seen as environmentally concerned feminism with multiple variations, stages of transition and waves that have adapted to historical movements and ideological positions (Mellor, 1997; MacGregor, 2017). The question that arises is whether the perspective of women in Silesia can also be viewed through the lens of ecofeminism.

In this work, I reconstruct narratives on the themes of the environment and energy based on data gathered during field research in 2016–2018.[1] The researchers conducted 40 qualitative interviews with women activists and women from coalminer families (i.e., directly associated with a group of workers in the mines) from the urban agglomeration of Katowice in the region of Polish Silesia. All interviews were transcribed and coded; found herein will be select quotes (with anonymized numbering) which more generally represent a given point of view. The reason for this procedure is to create a space in which women are allowed to speak for themselves. However, informal conversations which emerged during the participant observation research have neither been coded nor used, although they did influence my interpretations and our understanding of the phenomena at hand.

Environmental Protection and the Perception of Change

Beck et al. (1994) have described the social stages of the transition from premodernity through modernity to the next phase. Subsequently dubbed "reflexive modernization," this latest stage is characterized by constant modification and the adaptation of social activities to new knowledge (e.g., scientific, innovative). The risk society is not an option that can be approved or rejected by political debate (Beck et al., 1994). It is assumed that this new chapter of modernity is responding to the effects of the risk society, which is itself an unavoidable configuration in the transformation of the industrial society. Reflexive modernization has provided the foundations for the new, eco-modernist approach which could remedy the unforeseen side effects of the traditional, first phase of modernity; it could also fulfill those promises of modernity which have remained thus far unfulfilled. People who see the new risks are either organizing themselves to combine organized irresponsibility or performing a new state of denial towards democracy and decision-makers (Beck, 1992, 1997). This also entails the systematic inclusion of scientific and specialistic, but also politically conditioned, information into the institutional and social decision-making process in the field of energy and environmental protection (or, more broadly, climate change).

Global and civilizational transformations represent the point of reference for the current situation in Poland. More specifically, we refer to a geographical region which—for two centuries—was subjected to intensive industrialization on the basis of mining and heavy industry. That process, lasting until the end of the twentieth century, remained blind to air pollution and environmental abuse. In this well-established carbon patriarchy, the system was also blind to women's perceptions, their understandings, views, and struggles within this framework; families were certainly a priority, but the men were supposed to be the breadwinners. Our first

[1]The project titled "Women as agents of change," founded by the H. Boell Stiftung, was conducted by Collegium Civitas between 2016 and 2018.

attempts to find female-only eco-activists failed. It turned out that NGOs oriented towards environmental protection were few and far between in the Katowice agglomeration: women activists did focus on many diverse, local, and social matters but not on the environment. We finally found some groups who—although they did not call themselves "eco-activists"—agreed to talk about their activism and their lives. Then, by the snowball method, we reached other women who were either involved in NGOs or came from miner families.

During our free-flowing conversations as well as structured interviews, the topics of energy and environmental protection were not easily initiated. Threads related to these issues had to be introduced slowly and carefully when we talked about general changes in the region or everyday life; our interviewees needed to be gradually prepared for questions about the environment and mining.[2] Interviews with coalminer wives focused entirely on the local situation, so exploring their perspective on climate change or national energy policy was extremely difficult (and sometimes impossible). None of these topics were taken up spontaneously by the participants: neither environmental protection nor ecology was among the issues that these women discussed freely and willingly. Since, according to Giddens (1991), the transformation of people's awareness comes about as a result of easy access to information, I presume that our interviews also stimulated respondent reflection. In the process of answering our queries, women spontaneously expressed their positions about the new information thus acquired as well as relevant themes:

- Is there any connection between environmental protection and mining?
- Hmm … that's a good question! Well, you can't reconcile them, but you know … Someday, someone will say (…), once there were only mines everywhere, it was full of dust everywhere, that's how it was, dust. You know, the only good thing they did was to shut them down. I'll tell you honestly, these coal stoves, because (…) if they burned only coal, it would be OK, but you know what they put in there? Plastic, all rubbish, shoes, you don't see it (P35).

Reflexivity is a way of using stimuli to shape one's future functioning, but it also involves constant referencing of one's actions to the situational context. When queried further, female residents of the Upper Silesian agglomeration pointed out that since the process of mine-closing began, Silesia and its environment have changed a lot. The most pronounced change—and the one most frequently mentioned in our conversations—is of a "coloristic" nature: Silesia is no longer "black" (dirty and smoky) but is becoming ever "greener" (clean and transparent). Many people mentioned greenery, trees, and the value of the post-industrial wastelands, which, even if unregulated, have developed enough to bear some vegetation and improve the esthetic appearance and character of the region's cities. As one woman noticed, "Silesia, which was perceived as smoky, charred and so on, (…) I don't remember what this percentage is at all—I wouldn't want to give you the wrong

[2]For the purposes of this study, we used the word "ecology" (*ekologia* in Polish), but also applied are environmental protection understood broadly along with other issues connected with the perception and protection of nature. The subject of energy transition was most often included in the narrower context of changes taking place in Silesia.

impression here—but it's somewhere around 60–70%, there are green areas" (P1). Nonetheless, the most significant change concerned cleanliness in the sense of the absence of dirt (dust, smog, etc.). This change entails, above all, better air quality compared to what it was in the past when the number of active mines, coking plants and steel mills was higher. This is the most commonly mentioned benefit of restructuring in the region (i.e., the smaller number of functioning mines and industrial plants).

As regards public discourse, in the eyes of our interviewees, ecological themes are still absent therein: "generally, in the media in general, and so on, there is little talk of environmental protection in Silesia" (P5). Environmental activities in the region are not considered worth debating; this matter is not seen as a priority. Increasingly, however, the issue of air quality is becoming important in Katowice and other cities of Upper Silesia. This is manifested in some respondents' greater boldness in tackling the topic of pollution. Silesian women do notice how the nature and complexity of this issue are intertwined: better air quality is associated, among others, with the process of mine decommissioning, which, in turn, heralds the end of the economic foundations of the region. The result is that it is easy to demonstrate the relationship between good air quality and the social costs of restructuring the coal mining industry. One of the respondents puts it bluntly: "What is better for us? The air or the money?" (P15).

Most of the research participants are aware of the effects of closing smelter plants or other industrial facilities, but they are also particularly sensitive to the broader social consequences of limited employment opportunities in these sectors. The trauma associated with job loss lingers long, not only among those directly affected but also among the silent witnesses. Naturally, pragmatic financial aspects determine the life quality. Therefore, a question put forth about the quandary of choosing between the environment and air quality or work and economic security will not elicit unambiguous answers. Especially in Upper Silesia, the true dilemma behind this choice is fully revealed. Notable is a lack of knowledge on the one hand or a belief that a consensual solution, bringing people together, is possible on the other. When I was inquiring about environmental protection, a few miners' wives were surprised by a purported linking of the topic to coal: again, they began to ponder the relationship only during the interview itself. Some women implied that "coal is fine" and that the problem lies elsewhere (e.g., burning rubbish at home as in the earlier-cited response). In contrast, women with no connection to the mines, mostly with a higher education, were more eager to talk about environmental benefits such as air quality, improved coal quality or greenery. They reflect on the positive aspects of change: "Certainly the will to transform this city of mines into a city of gardens was such an initiative (...), a sign that people care for the public space, with flower beds being arranged or plants being planted around noise barriers" (P8).

Caring about public space, overall aesthetics, and orderly surroundings are the positively perceived local changes, mostly accepted as phenomena that are independent of the everyday activities undertaken by ordinary people. The changes just imperceptibly "happen," often as a result of politics and introduced by some "top-down" authority. Most women appreciate constructive transformations, but

there is rarely a sense of agency in the cocreation of such change. The exceptions are women activists who are involved in their local communities and are thinking less of the environment in general but more of the common good with respect to shared spaces.

Yet this group of respondents distinguishes itself in its thinking about themselves within the global world. They often speak about self-development, integrity, and the pursuit of self-centered goals. On the one hand, these interviewees see each other in the local context (very often, living in Silesia is their own choice, a thought-out decision to stay); on the other hand, these women call attention to their actions and to the global consequences. They demonstrate intense subjectivity and a sense of agency: "I don't want this world to get worse, more and more destroyed, contaminated. And it seems to me that I have an impact, that when I begin caring about it, this'll somehow add to the larger effect" (P5).

Based on the number of NGOs and the activists we had the opportunity to meet, it can be stated that there are few women in Silesia who could be called environmentalists with a consciousness of their agency in this field. However, all women pay much attention to caring for their immediate surroundings and closer milieus. The narratives of the women we interviewed are filled with references to greenery; these women's understanding of environmental protection was most often associated precisely with what had been transformed around them.[3]

Green Silesia: Discursive and Practical Environmental Awareness

Environmental awareness can be broadly defined as an attitude regarding the environmental consequences of human behavior. It is understood as knowledge, views, and ideas about the role of the natural environment in the life of every human being, as well as a predisposition to react to environmental issues in a particular manner (Culiberg & Rojšek, 2008, p. 132). We focused our interviews on opinions declared by women about the environment; key, too, were our observations in the field, acknowledging that awareness includes both cognitive and affective components (Takala, 1991). Ecological awareness thus understood emerged in the conversations, displayed in both discursive and practical consciousness (Giddens, 1984). Discursive consciousness means the ability to have one's say about social conditions and, above all, the conditions within which one's actions are taken. Such agency made itself evident in the women's narratives, their associations with environmental actions, and their daily choices. For instance, "I think that, first of all, keeping nature

[3]It is worth mentioning that many of our interviews took place during the summer when Katowice itself, but also the entire metro area, was covered in lush late spring/early summer foliage. It was against this green scenery that we were asking our interlocutors what they think about environmental protection, what they know about it, and why it matters to them.

as it is, in the most unchanged state we found it in, because we shouldn't change it. We live in these times, so the point is to limit the damage to nature as much as possible, that is to coexist with the environment, with the current environment" (P9).

The respondents' discursive ecological consciousness was manifested in two ways—one more holistic and the other more specific. On the one hand, it is exhibited as a sense of responsibility and the conviction that each individual can have an impact on the global environment and should therefore make changes in daily routines. On the other hand, such an awareness simply surfaces in the ways they perform cleaning tasks, care for the family diet, and use environmental resources sparingly. Women activists pay more attention to the global consequences of actions, self-development, the connection between the individual and nature, and, more broadly, relations with other people and with the world. These women also mention deep ecology as a philosophy bearing influence on them and inspiring them to work on themselves. As one interlocutor elucidated,

> Environmental protection is most commonly associated with such a life (...), with products, let's say, with the least negative impact on the environment. So for me, environmental protection is, for example, caring about waste segregation. For me, environmental protection is not about mindlessly destroying nature. Nutrition too, when it comes to ... consumption of products, the least processed, the least artificial and so on. Taking care of such nutrition. Well here, too, when it comes to using stoves, furnaces and so on, it seems to me that here we have a lot of problems, all the time—that people are not aware of this and do not live in an environmental way (P5).

These women perceive their own everyday activities in their microcosm as part of a broad global system, linking it to a sense of responsibility for the environment on a broader, global scale. Furthermore, several respondents revealed a more specific explanation for environmental-friendly engagement: their own connections with the surroundings and the natural environment. As one interviewee put it,

> Actually, when taking care of the environment, we look after ourselves. Because what we put into the soil or out into the air is what returns to us in the form of food, even the plants we eat, the meat we have from animals that ate the grass earlier, which will have been sprinkled with rain. So it's worth the effort to make sure that the air that brings the rain, that it should be clean. This is a natural cycle. By taking care of the earth, we take care of ourselves, in fact (P6).

Another woman declared that "In schools and kindergartens, I disseminate knowledge because environmental awareness means health, and health is a field of knowledge" (P13). Noticeable is a strong belief in interdependence between individual actions and a larger system. However, emphasis may be placed on different sides of this correlation: "I co-create the system" vs. "the system co-creates me." This explains the limits of some behavioral changes by women who focus their activities on health (and/or food).

Nevertheless, the multitude of choices among expert knowledge sources and expert systems in the sphere of health care or environmental conservation does not make it easy to understand the issues or choose future solutions. As a result, our respondents repeatedly pointed to a remote familiarity: "I haven't formed any opinion on the subject. I've never been interested in it, so I've never done anything

in this department myself, like some awareness-raising actions against global warming. No. So I've never looked closer into the topic" (P6).

In the absence of knowledge about the environment, in light of eroding trust in the reliability of data, and surrounded by an information chaos, women still try to assess the situation based on the most stable of premises: the interests and/or needs of their own families (economic or health-related). For example, "I very often save water because it is also part of environmental protection. . . and also of the economy. And as a single mother, being economical is the main thing; I sort my waste" (P36).

All this shows that ecological awareness has only recently begun to emerge in Poland. Meanwhile, although people do not know exactly why they take particular actions, they nevertheless (at least partially) relate their daily efforts to environmental protection. It is the process by which acts become routinized (and subconscious) that reveals an additional dimension of the eco-phenomenon developing in this modern industrialized region.

If discursive consciousness entails reflective speaking (e.g., about energy or environmental protection), then practical consciousness translates into behaviors and ways of acting. They are not divergent concepts, and the boundaries between them are often obliterated. Discursiveness and reflexivity both depend on the quality of the person's socialization, just as practical consciousness is a function of experience and (societal) practical knowledge.

Practical consciousness is an inseparable component of the everyday social practices of a given community. It is associated with the routinization of activities that are treated intuitively, instinctively, and customarily. Giddens (1984) stressed the importance of practical consciousness (A "hidden" facet of the everyday social practices of a given community) for ontological security. The actions, perception, knowledge, and/or ignorance of subjects reveal their opinions and judgments about a social situation. The acting subject accepts the existence of practical knowledge, uses it in a routinized manner, and, by reproducing it habitually, reproduces social patterns.

Many of the activities described by our interlocutors did not stem from the ecological ground, but still befit this system of thinking. Waste sorting is becoming increasingly common (not only in Silesia) and is seen as a matter of course. This state of affairs is a consequence of educational activities—both in educational institutions and special events (e.g., Earth Day, Green Week, Christmas fairs, etc.)—held over the past few years by the region and throughout Poland. It seems (also based on interviews) that keeping everything in order has always been part of Silesian culture, and women have no doubt that waste management is a form of cleaning.

In addition, the respondents repeatedly pointed to the inseparability of private economic issues and public environmental protection. Silesians are well-known for being economical and efficient—hence women often refer to financial arguments prompting them to engage in environmental actions. For instance, activities such as saving water, caring about detergents or using less electricity were all financially driven. In addition, the habit of reducing waste and recycling all garbage thoroughly is the materialization of a belief in the efficiency of reusage. A newer trend—mainly

the privilege of wealthier groups in society—involves the conscious choice to buy bio- or eco-friendly (organic) food. Furthermore, a return to preparing healthy, traditional, homemade compotes and cakes or picking garden fruit is a practice renewed among environmentally aware women. These simple, traditional activities are now starting trend again in contemporary societies, but this also pertains to transportation. Increasingly, albeit mostly younger, active women perceive cycling as a seasonal environment-friendly activity: "Biking in Katowice is very well developed, just as it used to be in the past. And when it comes to bicycle paths, it can be said that they fought here, or rather we fought to have them created, because there are places where to bike, there are some forests in the surrounding area" (P10).

Women activists also organize or participate in protests against tree logging. They believe that thanks to trees and parks in the city, the problems of poor air quality and smog can be overcome locally. Senior women take care of community gardens, and activists cooperate in planting trees and greenery. Practical eco-consciousness reveals itself in the conversations with our respondents as a way to balance economic thriftiness and convenience, introduce modern, new trends alongside traditional home practices, as well as strive for values related to environmental protection. However, top priority tends to be given to personal interests and caring for the comfort of the family; some priority is attached to a "green" lifestyle, although within the confines of one's own comfort and routine. The main problem—i.e., smog which is a consequence of both burning coal in outdated heating systems as well as the continued extraction of coal—is a topic that goes unmentioned or is simply unwelcome.

Along with recurrent statements concerning the practice of waste burning, there were also cases (though less common) of broader narratives invoking the contentious issue of coal burning in the region. Some women labeled this a "widespread lack of awareness" about heating, including the use of coal waste (sludge and fleet) as a fuel. That points to all the greater a need for information and education campaigns as well as multidirectional systemic policies like those already enacted by municipal institutions. Whereas educational programs on the topics of coal and smog are beginning to be implemented, such a curriculum tends to be targeted at children and run by various nongovernmental organizations in which women activists work. One such case is illustrated in this account:

> We do it through drama, that is, [the children] are having fun. For example, there is a wind dragon, a coal dragon, a dragon of the sun, and they paint them later. We tell them why, what they're responsible for, we show them pictures (...) they know very little about this subject because these are small children, but—as it were—we're telling them about coal, where it came from, and that we're running out of it, and that it causes negative effects, and that the wind will always be there, like water and that the sun, right? And that it makes sense to use it and why. Well, that's basically how we show it (P2).

Most women, therefore, do notice the problem of air pollution in the region. However, even if some are cautious about saying anything "against coal," there is a growing awareness. Identified is a need to acquire knowledge, a desire to mobilize against coal extraction, and a growing understanding that something needs to be changed. Perhaps this is the nascent stage of energy consciousness.

Black Silesia: Coal as a Polish Taboo

While it is a catchphrase that articulates a certain stereotype, "Black Silesia" also expresses a well-known link between the history of the region and coal. In the Upper Silesian region, coal is associated with prestige and labor—and even though the number of miners is in decline, this professional group remains a special "working class elite" in the region. The mining sector has provided many jobs since the 1950s, and the high status of the occupation (and of the entire sector) has been consistently propagated and sustained by the authorities. This has left its mark on social values as well as on the perception of coal. Therefore, after many decades, this fossil fuel still symbolizes something more than just an energy resource.

Mines, coal, and miners have been inseparable (economically, politically, and socioculturally) for generations. After World War II, the position of this "national trinity" was reinforced by communist policies: in 1971, Poland ranked fifth in the world and third in Europe (after the Soviet Union and the United Kingdom) in terms of hard coal extraction. Meanwhile, the global transformations of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries shattered that trinity, both economically and politically. The only part left standing is the cultural framework built upon the great "black gold." The decline of coal extraction is still an emblematic topic of discussion for regional as well as national experts and local inhabitants. It remains of key importance for Silesia in the literal sense: our interlocutors felt that their region was unique thanks to the coal deposits. Moreover, a coal mine is viewed as a source of intergenerational bonds: "our mother-mine was like a guardian" (P4).

Hence, just as the interviewees were very cautious and hesitant in expressing their views about environmental issues handled (albeit chaotically) by "experts," these women were equally reluctant to discuss coal directly as an energy resource. Their responses manifested a notion that this topic was too difficult and complex, that it should rather be left to (male?) specialists: "Well, I always believe in professionals. If experts say that there's coal and it's worth putting some more money into it, because maybe there is something. . . for which this coal would be useful, then let's do it, because it's natural, one of our few natural riches" (P31).

Active and engaged women (e.g., NGO leaders) tended to declare the avoiding of coal usage in their own households. They themselves either had central heating or could afford other solutions but also did not see another, better energy source as a potential substitute in the region. They referred to stories known from their neighborhood about the social costs of mine closures and the economic reasons for maintaining coal heating. Aware of their superior social and economic position, these women seemed to impose self-censorship in conversations on coal and the mining community. Even if coal itself was assessed negatively, its application was seen as fully comprehensible: "I'm from a generation that used to be told how many things could be done with coal" (P17). After all, this energy source is significantly cheaper and, in a sense, a lesser or necessary evil. This social perception of coal is an important factor in shaping the region's energy and environmental awareness.

Such a consciousness is the result of internalized, culturally-rooted norms: "Yes, I feel that it's [coal] an element of my culture" (P20). In this context, the respondents referred to a mining culture in which most customs and traditions are still cultivated by the group of people who built the success of the region in the past. That elite has always felt it had a mission to make Silesian identity as viable as it used to be. Even for those who do not come from mining families or from Silesia, but just live in the region, coal is the foundation of the local identity and should be defended as such. While this defense did not manifest itself directly, it was evident that Silesians find it difficult to imagine their homeland's existence without coal; this resource is crucial both economically in terms of work and socially in terms of status.

Apart from the locally built culture, which guarantees the security and survival of Silesian identity, coal is also a national asset. Polish coal is, above all, steeped with patriotic values. This feeling is manifested through a clear distinction between "our coal" (domestic and thus more valued) and "foreign coal" (imported and thus worse):

> They even import it from Ukraine and China, but it's not always good. It burns badly, there's a lot of dust and... For example, my mother has been using it now—I don't know where it came from, because they bought it from that warehouse, but possibly from Ukraine. Anyway, they had to clean the chimney twice last season (P30).

Thus, energy sovereignty is also tackled here. Especially by women from the mining community, "our natural coal" was referred to as a source of strength and political capital on a national, Polish scale. The significance of Polish coal as a factor shaping energy awareness is clear: coal guarantees the (energy) independence of the country. Therefore, continued mining is worthwhile, especially with improvements in the efficiency of the process. The tabooization (associated in part with tradition and Silesianness) of the topic of coal in this region is linked to the national energy strategy of the present and strengthened by the governmental narratives of the past.

Polish Energy Strategy and a (Just) Energy Transition

To understand the significance of coal in Silesian society, the macro context must be employed. While presenting the issue of mine closures, the responses of all female interviewees tended to eventually take on a strongly pronounced, macropolitical tone: policies (especially those of the national government) and business surfaced. The trade-offs and many various stakeholders involved are obvious for the community as well as for local decision-makers. "Mining doesn't mean miners anymore. It's a powerful trade sector. Really powerful. I mean the people who trade, they're the ones who set the prices of coal, not the miners. And I mean the people who supply the mining industry with stuff—from helmet lights to working clothes and catering" (P39).

Apart from the mining elites, there is also the game of interparty politics. This is criticized mainly by women activists who are aware that many interest groups use energy issues to further their own interests and maintain the *status quo*. The activists,

however, do not fight against the system, but they do know how it works. In turn, miners' wives disclosed negative attitudes towards the energy policy pursued by the government: "It's not like our regional administration can have a say. All decisions are made in Warsaw" (P15).

Women from mining communities demonstrated a disrespectful but slightly resigned attitude towards the ruling elites. In the eyes of Silesian women, the process of decarbonization in Poland is an image of chaos, political disunity, and the total incompetence of decision-makers. However, this critical attitude towards ministry officials runs parallel with an apprehension about the numerous governmental reforms introduced over the last 20 years. From a global perspective, our respondents were rather critical of systemic aid measures implemented to help miners deal with transformational changes. The dominant tone of those statements was clear: retraining courses and financial compensation did not fulfill their intended function. Some interviewees even believe that these measures were counterproductive for families who had been living stable lives on a good single income earned by men working for a mining company for years. The work ethos and the need for high monthly wages are key values for miners; when mines are closed, it is difficult to find an equally attractive new job:

> Because if someone was professionally active, for like thirty years, and then suddenly he has to go out and tend to his garden and rest every day, that's a social problem, isn't it? These people couldn't always mentally deal with it, so they could be more susceptible to some kind of addiction or some other kind of situation, right? And there was also that widely known social problem related to the fact that these miners took early retirement (P12).

Moreover, women from miner families pointed out that financial or early retirement benefits do not necessarily mean the end of employment. Miners retire, but many of them are willing to take up jobs and seek additional income in the same sector. Very often, they are hired with lower wages in a different mining company, so the change is mostly financial. The underlying meaning of a fair and just energy transition from this point of view is actually to delay or even freeze (avoid) it.

The female activists among our interlocutors expressed a hope that the dusk of the coal age was near. Nevertheless, the search for coal substitutes seems to have been handed over to decision-makers and experts: the respondents are unable to offer their own alternatives for the region. Some were aware that renewable energy sources are expensive and time-consuming, but could not point to any other ideas. One activist in a grassroots movement (Local Smog Alert) claimed that there are possibilities to eliminate coal and bring people benefits from new solutions—yet all women from Local Smog Alerts claimed that categorical rejection of coal would be counterproductive in Silesia. A higher sense of environmental awareness enables activists to assess the negative impact of coal combustion and the side effects of the mining industry on the quality of the natural environment. Such activists pursue a conscious policy and strategic actions based on knowledge of the social environment in which they work. Thus, their actions are aimed at raising public awareness of the consequences of coal use, especially for heating. Voices favoring renewables have been a rare exception among others that have expressed hope for new discoveries, some

modern "transformation" of coal, more efficient practices or innovative ideas for the use of yet other energy sources.

Both women from outside the sector and those from within it stressed an awareness that a certain era is coming to an end; they spoke about the complexity of mining restructuring processes. Despite the differences in the narratives of the two groups, the respondents noticed a multitude of contexts: historical, cultural, political, economic, and social. Sometimes it seemed that they lacked the courage or a sense of competence to talk about specific cases or issues that require energy knowledge; most nonetheless tried to depict the changes in a broader perspective, not only from a narrow, private one. Our interlocutors clearly emphasized the lines of division between "us" and "them." The former referred to the immediate environment and local community of vulnerable miners and their cohabitants. The latter referred to outsiders coming from the ruling elite and the male-dominant technocratic sphere.

Interestingly, few women mentioned trade unions—their role and influence on the country's energy policy, and/or the rights and privileges of miners. This is a peculiar taboo. Terse utterances, silence, or sometimes only hints instead of replies revealed a latent conflict among the people living in Silesia. This was expressed directly by one woman from a miner's family: "Those who don't work in mining are angry with those who do work in mining for those unrealistic needs and other expectations. (...) I agree with that—I'm a former miner's wife and sister and all—but still, I must objectively say that it's unfair; it's just sick" (P36).

Thus, the conflict is hidden, though confrontations between the two groups do arise. Still, despite the critical attitude towards past actions taken in the field of energy policy, many conversations were filled with great hope for new, smart solutions for miners, a social group no longer so privileged. For instance, "I think that coal—if our engineering and technical staff could somehow think of what to do with it—modernize mining, the burning of coal, and even its packaging to make buying easier—I think that perhaps it wouldn't be so dirty... And, in the meantime, this industry could continue to exist" (P4).

However, the respondents pin these hopes on sound decisions made at a higher level by wise (expert, male) politicians who, although perpetually criticized, still have well-established power and in-depth knowledge of the region and the needs of its inhabitants. The immediate conclusion that has emerged from these narratives is the general absence of a sense of agency and full responsibility—not only for climate change (which is too abstract) but also for local pollution especially related to coal-based energy generation. This topic is left to decision-makers; the perspective of Silesian women on the subject is difficult to establish: decarbonization is a specialized, complex topic still reserved for males. In contrast, there is a group of female activists that has emerged in local communities and, with little human capital, has organized local grassroots movements (environmentalist, feminist, and activist women) to educate and work on pro-environmental social change. Their perception differs from that of miner families, so these women also perform educational activities trying to be accepted by a region dominated by carbon patriarchy and modern industrial hierarchy.

Our House Is on Fire: Ecological Feminism Revisited?

This chapter has aimed to reconceptualize women's narratives about the state of the environment, ecological practices, and energy transition towards decarbonization. "Our house is on fire" is a quote that metaphorically illustrates the importance of taking care of one's homestead (the "private" sphere). Women see this as their responsibility and execute agency through guardianship over the house and family. Domestic tasks and activities are conceptualized as a single unit that is defined in contrast to the "public" sphere of a career, business, and politics. As "private," housework is therefore not considered "fully" feministic.

Based on the findings of our study I state that women in Silesia are very much concerned about the health impact and consequences of air pollution; females are not, however, so visible in grassroots, environmental movements, and campaigns against smog and air pollution. Both the activists and the miners' wives who were interviewed are aware of the regional conundrum affecting Silesians: on the one hand, local residents want to have better living standards and a healthy environment, while, on the other hand, they want to protect their local identity by preserving the *status quo*. The latter entails the silent acceptance of employment in the coal industry. Since a number of the mines have been closed, the remaining ones who still offer stable positions and wages to miners are seen as the last chance for "life as usual."

Yet, the topics of air pollution and the carbon footprint are heavily publicized, making an increasing number of people worried. The problem of pollution is always explained here as a complex matter that needs to be tackled in the context of the region and its history. The female activists perceive the convolutedness of the Silesian transition; they acknowledge the current processes in the modernized world, and they understand the Anthropocene as well as (to some extent) the *Capitalocene* (Moore, 2016). They work within their private spheres, but also strategically tackle pro-environmental drives in the public sphere—albeit with limited agency in a local community. In contrast, coalminer wives are less oriented towards environmental protection; they prioritize economic choices and view the environment as a resource to be utilized in a traditional manner (the way it has always been). Their behaviors are pro-environmental, mostly in the field of their households: gardening, homemade food, saving water/energy. These are the routines that have sustained their families and Silesian culture.

Thus, the socio-economic transformation locally reflects contemporary modernity and global decarbonization shifts as experienced in the microcosm of Silesian women in Poland. The new middle and working classes here are in the process of what is nationally promised to be a just and fair energy transition locally. The inhabitants of Silesia recognize the ambiguities in the change. On the one hand, there is a common trust in technology and technocracy that assures growth in production and the continuous use of natural resources. Some miners' wives directly spoke of a desire for new experts or decision-makers who would implement innovative means of coal extraction without introducing de-escalation concepts. On the

other hand, there is an action-oriented group of women who are aware of environmental problems which need to be solved; these women use their soft power to bring about the change around them (Blühdorn, 2017; Seippel, 2000, 2002; Giddens, 2009).

Hence the paradigm of ecological feminism is used somewhat paradoxically herein: the local women would not call themselves feminists, ecologists or environmental activists.[4] This is due to the stigmatization of all these terms: these are pejorative labels associated with certain groups in Poland as a whole. Still, within their microworlds, Silesian women have been accustomed to being independent and responsible for all the family members. The women of this region maintain power within the household while also adapting to the new conditions of climate change (and quite an abstract crisis situation) in the future. Most of their actions directed towards the local community are far away from politicized topics of the energy transition.

Their engagement in the public sphere is infrequent and limited by traditional patterns. Therefore, the ecological feminism of Silesian women is performed in soft and latent mode, but it is progressing.[5] Clear is that this is an awakening movement that, at the moment, seems diverse and disunited in its various activities, but inspires women to raise ecological (feminist) viewpoints within the region. And since ecofeminism encompasses various standpoints (Warren, 1997), it should also include the caring stance natural for Silesian mothers and household managers—even if pro-environmental behavior on behalf of the local community is located within the private rather than public sphere. As MacGregor (2004, p. 58) puts it, "men may care about children and environments," but women are socialized (socially required) to care for men; thus, through daily caretaking practices and values, women express more concern than men about health and subsistence. In a culture of petro-masculinity, men are still mostly perceived as breadwinners, so they will put money and power above life in order to hold their ground (Mies & Shiva, 1993, p. 304; Salleh, 1997).

To reiterate this differently, the ecofeminism of Silesian women is visible rather in the private and microsphere. It is in the process of becoming more visible and class-oriented—something which can be explained by the different trajectories of women from the mining community and the women activists. The inequality of females is acknowledged by both groups, but the environmental awareness of Silesian women is growing. That consciousness is confirmed in a nice metaphor used by one of our interlocutors: "environmental protection is one of multiple emerging rivulets that will merge into a more stable trend in the future, growing into an even stronger movement in Poland" (P18).

[4]It is likely that this may have changed since the last interviews were conducted in 2018.

[5]Worth mentioning is that the situation might have also been influenced by the COP 24 summit, held in Katowice in December 2018. This international meeting opened up opportunities for new NGOs and environmental campaigns which could motivate more people to undertake pro-environmental actions (Abrahamse et al., 2005).

Conclusion

In Silesia, the feminine perception of changes in the field of environmental protection and energy issues is set against the regional backdrop. Especially key are two aspects: the weaknesses of ecological awareness and the strengths of the coal tradition in the region. The respondents' energy awareness is permeated with the values of the region, and, as a consequence, environmentalism cannot be freely discussed. Women are very cautious about discussing any issues related to energy in their region. However, when talking about specific localities in the Katowice agglomeration, the issue of health and problems resulting from coal heating recurs in conversations. At such moments, women express more negative opinions about air pollution and smog prevention. There seems to be a cognitive dissonance which they need to overcome, but the process is challenging and constrained by locally internalized norms and regional contexts.

Most often, women from families of miners deny the impact those mines have on the environment and link negative phenomena primarily with natural or socioeconomic factors. Their attitude, in turn, unveils a strong identification with the region as their home—everything is just fine (or at least not worse than at their neighbors'). Polish coal is not seen as a fossil fuel, but as a national asset—a resource with political capital, socially inscribed, and reproduced in the form of myths or even taboos. First and foremost, the inhabitants' attachment to coal is primarily economically based: employment in the mining industry and inexpensive heating. In this sense, coal feeds Silesians, and especially women from mining families feebly tried to defend it. After the experiences of the first restructuring waves, there has also been a more widespread fear of how Silesian society would cope with the emergence of newly impoverished districts. The fear of (energy-)poverty and the lack of a welfare system (in addition to a lack of trust in a just transition) are the main constraints against the future development of ecological feminism in Poland.

This tradition of petro-masculinity in the region provides Silesian women with ontological security, and this is why change is challenging and needs more time to take effect. There are three main reasons for this set of circumstances. First is the normative tabooization of mine closures which comprises a traumatic subject associated with multiple social costs. Our interlocutors were reluctant to talk about coal because of a social sensitivity, knowledge of local history, and cognizance of family tragedies (albeit usually not from firsthand experience). Second is a low discursive environmental and energy awareness: women bluntly declared a lack of knowledge about proven information and technical solutions. Only the few interviewees who were well informed and educated about the energy sector were open to presenting their assessments and opinions on energy policy. The third and final reason is gender: women consider heating, energy, and complex mining issues to be specialized, technical, complex, and politically determined topics that are "owned" by male experts. Women, therefore, preferred to evade making specific evaluations and declarations on these matters.

The paradox of environmental awareness in Silesia draws attention to women activists who struggle with the culture, structure, and history of their region. The hegemony of masculinity alongside with feminine caretaking of family and tradition gives women space for eco-friendly engagement—but only in the realm under their responsibility. The patriarchal attachment to coal is also amplified by the fact that it provides a sense of security. This pertains not only to the strictly economic but also to the cultural and existential spheres; this is also akin to Giddens' ontological security as it connects to the daily routine (so called "normal life"). Some women's practical, ecological consciousness is revealed through their activities in the field of consumption, waste segregation, and (especially among the younger generation and well-educated women) a new, active, and healthy (eco) lifestyle that they choose. Ecological feminism is thus slowly rising among selected groups of women in Silesia. Their grassroots movements, however, call for a need for more widespread environmental education regionally in Silesia as well as nationally in Poland.

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Heated Attachments to Coal: Everyday Industrial Breadwinning Petro-Masculinity and Domestic Heating in the Silesian Home

Irma Kinga Allen

> A potem i tak bez gruby żyć nie umieją. Słyszołech o takim, co na penzyi dziennie schodził do piwnicy i tam siedział. Aże szychta minęła. Bele ćmok był, bele wągla powąchać, niech nawet takiego na kupce, do palenio.
> *'And then, in any case, they can't live without the coal mine. I heard of this guy, on his pension, he'd go down to the basement everyday and just sit there. Until a shift passed. Just so that there was darkness, just so he could smell coal, even that kind of coal on a pile for burning'.*
> *W. Bauer,* Pora Chudych Myszy *(in Wilczek, 2018, p. 229. Translation by author.)*

Abstract In Upper Silesia, domestic heating is a heated topic. This is because it is the leading contributor to extreme air pollution levels. Coal of assorted qualities is combusted in over 70% of the country's 5.5 million single-family households for heating, often in 'primitive' boilers or stoves that do not fulfil any environmental standards. Accordingly, 33 out of 50 of the most air-polluted towns in Europe are found in Poland; fourteen in Upper Silesia. Efforts to solve the crisis have focused on incentivizing rational household-level technical and behavioural changes. Yet, results have been slow and largely unsuccessful. This chapter argues that the role of historically and culturally sedimented gendered subjectivities have been overlooked in understanding this phenomenon. In Silesian intergenerational coal-mining families, coal-based home heating is traditionally the responsibility of the male breadwinner. In turn, embodying its dirty work has long been a primary route for attaining domestic masculinity, securing its patriarchal authority and integrity and acceptably expressing its familial love and care. Drawing together Cara Daggett's concept 'petro-masculinity' with Martin Hultman and Paul Pulé's notion of 'industrial/breadwinning masculinities', denial of smog discourse and attachment

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to coal in the home is thus proposed as an attempt to hold onto dwindling resources for achieving a Silesian, working-class variation of hegemonic *industrial breadwinning petro-masculinity* precisely at a time when such positionality is increasingly feared to be marginalized. Holding onto coal can be understood as holding onto a sense of self that is ontologically at risk, itself resonating with far-right, fossil-fuelled, anti-ecological, masculinist populism.

Introduction

Domestic heating is a heated topic in Upper Silesia. This is because it is the leading contributor to high levels of localized air pollution, or smog, increasingly understood by concerned actors as an urgent public health crisis. 33 out of 50 of the most air-polluted towns in Europe are located in Poland, causing more than 45,000 premature deaths per year (Nabrdalik & Santora, 2018). Yet this burden is also unevenly distributed nationally, with Upper Silesia home to 14 such towns—nine of them ranked in the top 15 dirtiest (Polski Alarm Smogowy, 2019a). Indeed, from October to April, known colloquially as the 'heating season', a thick layer of smog regularly blankets the Upper Silesian air. World Health Organization (WHO) norms on particulate matter, or PM10, are exceeded in some cases for over one hundred days per year, when the maximum advisable limit is set at 35 (Polski Alarm Smogowy, 2019a). The issue stems not from the fact that the industrial region's coal is burnt in distant power plants to generate 80% of the nation's electricity needs, but that it is used as a fuel in the more intimate space of the home for heating.[1] It is here, in around 70% of Poland's 5.5 million single-family households where more than 10 million tonnes of coal in its various derivations are annually combusted, most often in 'primitive' boilers or stoves that do not fulfil any environmental standards,[2] thus releasing 88% of all smog-inducing 'low stack emissions'[3] (Łukaszewski, 2018, pp. 488–489). Around 80% of these stoves are of the

[1]Whereas Upper Silesia was designated an 'ecological catastrophe zone' in the 1980s because of its intense pollution linked to socialist-era forced industrialization, today, as the Speaker of the Silesian Sejm at the local hearing on the adopted regional 'Anti Smog Resolution' in April 2017 commented, it is not industry that is 'poisoning us – today, we are poisoning each other'! (From fieldnotes recorded in the Sejm on 07/04/2017).

[2]On 1 January 2020, for the first time, obligatory emissions standards were applied to the sale of new appliances through a new EU Ecodesign directive. Up until such time, no mandatory standards had been in place. Thus of the 200,000 or so coal stoves annually sold in Poland in previous years, around 70% have been of this inefficient variety, locking households in to a highly polluting form of heating for a further 10–20 years (Polski Alarm Smogowy, 2019b).

[3]The remaining 12% comes from: transport (c. 6%), industry (c. 2%), and inter alia agriculture & waste management (c. 4%). (Łukaszewski, 2018, p. 489). Central heating in Poland is responsible for around half of all emitted PM10 particles and 84% of cancerous benzo[a]pyrene (Śląski Biznes, 2019).

'hand-fed' variety; the cheapest on the market that can be loaded with any kind of fuel (Stala-Szlugaj, 2017, p. 103), resulting in a further reported widespread (illegal) practice of using domestic waste, including plastics, as a source of additional cheap heat. In Upper Silesia, it is estimated that around 700,000 of these least-efficient appliances, known pejoratively as '*kopciuchy*', from '*kopci*', 'to belt out smoke', are installed in local dwellings (Stala-Szlugaj, 2017, p. 103). Combined, private home-heating choices in the winter months poison the shared public space of the air, creating a toxic atmosphere, both literally and metaphorically.

So far, efforts by both civil society movement Polish Smog Alert[4] and policymakers to 'fix' the air pollution crisis, enshrined in the regional Anti-Smog Resolution adopted in April 2017, have focused on raising awareness of the issue to instigate rational technical and behavioural changes, additionally incentivized by social pressure, (limited) public subsidies, and bans on, and fines for, use of lowest quality coal types.[5] Unlike in Kraków, where the burning of coal has been totally banned to cope with its own record-breaking smog problem,[6] in the coal-mining heartland of Silesia, such an approach is as yet regionally taboo.[7] Thus through a combination of carrots and sticks, but most often through appeal to voluntary choice, residents are encouraged to switch energy sources (most popularly to gas), avoid burning illegal fuels, upgrade boilers/stoves to more efficient varieties, and insulate homes[8] so as not to 'poison their neighbours', as the campaign slogan of choice puts it.[9] Yet, as numerous studies have demonstrated in other geographic contexts, particularly in relation to climate change (Norgaard, 2011) but also air pollution (Hine et al., 2007; Reeve et al., 2013), such an approach to behavioural change often

[4]The Polish Smog Alert (*Polski Alarm Smogowy*) civil society movement was established in 2012 initially in Krakow. Since then it has grown to encompass 40 local chapters across the country; 13 of these in Upper Silesia. See: www.polskialarmsmogowy.pl

[5]The Silesian Anti-Smog Resolution that came into existence on seventh April 2017 placed a ban on the burning of so-called 'junk' coals—namely brown coal, *flot* (coal flotation concentrate) and *muł* (coal slurry), that were previously widely available on the Silesian market and its environs. The latter are known to be coal processing waste products. They have the consistency of icing sugar and contain high levels of water, sulphur, ash and chlorine, as well as heavy metals, including mercury. They were thus both the cheapest and most polluting types of coal.

[6]Ten other locales in Poland are demanding the same (Storch, 2019).

[7]This, however, is changing. It has been the approach favoured, for example by the maverick Rybnicki Alarm Smogowy (2019), located in the most polluted town in Silesia, that has tended to utilize legal measures to hold the government to account for its poor track record on environmental protections related to air pollution, including through EU mechanisms. Speaking to the group's leaders, they told me that having zero ties to the coal industry themselves, they could not care less if they broke local taboos. In fact, they took joy in doing so. For them, citizens' human rights to health and a good quality environment is far more important.

[8]Residential dwellings comprise around 67% of Poland's building stock. More than 70% of detached single-family houses (the predominant variety of dwelling), 50% of which were built before 1980, have no or inadequate levels of thermal insulation. Only 1% of all houses in Poland are considered energy efficient. (Buildings Performance Institute Europe, 2017)

[9]See the campaign website *Nie Truj Sąsiada* ('Don't Poison Your Neighbour') http://nietrujsasiada.pl/

does not take into account the embedded social and cultural patterns that shape identities and their everyday practices, including heating, thus preventing desired shifts.[10] Indeed, in actuality, such rationalized and information-reliant approaches have achieved slow results.

Since the implementation of the regional Clean Air Programme in September 2018, to the frustration of the Polish Smog Alert, who conducted an assessment of progress in December 2019, only 35,000 orders for stove exchanges had been placed, realizing only 1% of necessary ambitions if air quality is to meet acceptable norms (Śląski Biznes, 2019). At this tempo, they warned, residents would be condemned to decades more such winters, significantly risking citizens' long-term health and undermining wellbeing and quality of life (Polski Alarm Smogowy, 2019c). Yet, as I discovered, many other residents, particularly older working-class males connected to the industry, fiercely contest incursions into what they perceive as their private lives and passionately defend coal, arguing that in a region known for its industrial heritage, air pollution has 'always been here' and so is a non-issue (See Hine et al., 2007; Reeve et al., 2013, p. 204 for a similar 'rhetoric of resistance' by residents in relation to use of wood-burning stoves in Australia).[11] Such a perspective resonates with that of the far-right populist government under Law and Justice (*Prawo i Sprawiedliwość*), which also has been slow to take air pollution seriously and was partly popular for actively defending the coal industry at the time.[12] Why might residents, particularly here older coal-mining men, stubbornly cling to coal in the household domain despite mounting evidence of the health costs? How does this intersect with far-right, fossil-fuelled, anti-ecological, masculinist populist politics?

[10]Indeed, for decades, research has demonstrated that increased environmental knowledge and awareness does not necessarily lead to pro-environmental behaviours, since this overlooks affective, non-cognitive bases for decision-making (Hine et al., 2007, p. 27). Furthermore, having direct sensory experience of environmental pollution does not necessarily lead to its rejection, for experience of that pollution itself is socially constructed, while other competing social norms (here for example the validity of masculinities) may be more personally important (Petersen, 2008, p. 6).

[11]For this reason, many, particularly those connected to the coal mine industry whose livelihoods are perceived as at stake, see 'smog' as a 'witch-hunt (*nagonka*) against coal' or a conspiracy theory—invented by shadowy EU (aka often German) business interests set out to destroy Polish coal.

[12]In September 2020, under the combined economic pressures of milder winters, cheaper coal and electricity imports from abroad, increased carbon pricing and an increasingly hostile investment atmosphere with regards to coal, as well as the unforeseen devastating impacts of covid on the local and global economy, the Polish governmnet, having just secured a second term for its President Andrzej Duda in the June elections that year, announced an unanticipated planned phased closure of remaining coal mines—with the last to close in 2049. It seemed that pragmatic concerns had now trumped ideological ones. This came with renewed commitment to tackle air pollution, yet its intense effects were noted to contribute to the high numbers of covid cases in Silesia—a third of all the country's reported cases (Platform for coal regions in transition, 2020). The problem and its challenges remain.

Of course, in a national context where rates of energy poverty are some of the highest in Europe (Bouzarovski & Herrero, 2017, p. 24),[13] particularly among pensioners (Lewandowski et al., 2018), structural and economic causes are a core part of this story. Coal is often the cheapest energy source available (in terms of cost per Gigajoule) (Piłat, 2015), while inefficient heating installations are also the most affordable.[14] Regional disincentives to switch include the fact that the c.100,000 individuals still employed in the coal mining industry receive an annual eight-tonne coal allowance as part of benefits.[15] In addition, mass access to other energy infrastructures, primarily the gas network, is highly uneven and restricted, leading to so-called 'white stains'.[16] Yet these factors, though of crucial importance, do not fully explain home-heating choices, which are imbricated with broader social and affective attachments and meanings (Petersen, 2008). What are wider investments at stake in the shift away from coal-based home-heating technologies in this context in a region culturally dominated by the fuel?

This chapter is based on anonymized empirical data from a year's ethnographic fieldwork, involving participant observation and interviews, conducted for my PhD

[13]Energy poverty is predominantly a postsocialist phenomenon yet a relatively new, and under-utilized, concept in the Central and Eastern European region. Structural energy access inequalities between western and eastern Europe have been dubbed an 'energy core-periphery divide' (Bouzarovski & Herrero, 2017, p. 23).

[14]A '*kopciuch*', for example sells for between 1000 and 1500zl whereas a 'class 5' (highest efficiency) 'eco' furnace sells for anything from 7000zl and above. This is in the context of median monthly earnings of 2350zl after tax and where around 60% of households have no savings whatsoever (Fejfer, 2017).

[15]For those who do not use coal at home, for example those who are connected to gas, or who live in the socialist-era high-rise apartment blocks formerly built by the mines that are connected to coal-fired-power-plant central heating, they will often sell their *deputat,* or allowance*,* on to transfer it into a cash bonus. This type of coal (*orzech*—'nut'), sells for upwards of 600zl (roughly 135 EUR) a tonne (the price fluctuates with the market). Up until 2017, retired miners were also eligible for this benefit for life, but this 'privilege' was cut.

[16]In 2011, only 52% of Poland's population had access to a gas network, and only 20% of those that utilized this access did so for purposes of heating; in Silesia, access covered 61% of inhabitants (Kaliski et al., 2011). By 2018, the national access was around 60%, with government-backed plans to increase access to 90% by 2022 (Ministerstwo Aktywów Państwowych, 2018). (In Upper Silesia, the reach of the gas network is limited, however, by underground risks posed by widespread 'mining damages' and subsidence caused by centuries of exploitation.) Presently, thus, gas accounts for only 8% of national heat generation, the same for renewables (Wojdyga & Chorzelski, 2017, p. 108). Gas is more expensive than state-subsidized coal due to historically high prices charged by Putin's Russia to the region, particularly Poland (Mikulska, 2018). The comparative costs of coal and gas, however, at the individual household level are a much contested topic in the region—dependent also on questions concerning technological efficiency of appliances, home insulation, and costs of installation. But, according to Eurostat data, in 2019, gas prices in Poland were some of the cheapest in the European Union in terms of unit cost per kWh, yet when converted into Purchasing Power Standard, it stood as one of the most expensive, with only five other EU countries paying more (Forsal.pl, 2019). In January 2020, according to analysis commissioned by the development ministry, household energy prices in Poland in general were indeed one of the highest in the EU—on average, for example 19% higher than neighbouring Germany and 20% higher than the Czech Republic—and set to rise up to 12% in 2020 alone (Warsaw Business Journal, 2020).

in 2017 in a minescape in Upper Silesia with coal miners and their families, as well as residents concerned about air pollution. It argues that in order to make sense of and grapple with the reluctance exhibited by many citizens, especially retired male coal miners, in accepting the concept of smog and, in particular, shifting domestic heating practices away from coal, greater attention needs to be paid to gender, namely historically and culturally regionally-tied 'hegemonic masculinity' (Connell, 1993; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005) and its entwined relationship with coal in the domestic sphere. In Silesian intergenerational mining families, home heating structurally oriented around coal is traditionally the responsibility of the male breadwinner or head of household. While it is not only men who 'do' heating, it is breadwinning masculinity that is held responsible for its necessary provision, practices, and knowledge domain, in turn affirming the attainment of that gendered identity and its self-worth through the doing (West & Zimmerman, 1987). Indeed, doing coal-based heating's dirty work has long been a primary route for attaining domestic breadwinning masculinity, securing its patriarchic authority and dignity as well as acceptably expressing its familial love and care. Encroaching trends towards post-traditionalism and ecological identities, however, increasingly threaten such sedimented arrangements. Combining Cara Daggett's concept of 'petro-masculinity', and Hultman and Pulé's notion of 'industrial/breadwinning masculinities', which conceptualize masculinized fossil-fuelled attachments and their ecological resistances in productive ways, refusal of smog and a stubborn attachment to coal in the home is thus proposed as an attempt to hold onto dwindling resources for attaining a regional, Silesian, working-class variation of '*industrial breadwinning petro-masculinities*', precisely at a time when those most embodiedly invested in its gendered order fearfully feel that their place in the world-at-large, including within the home, is increasingly insecure, economically, socially and culturally. Holding onto coal can thereby be understood as holding onto one of the last remaining resources for attaining a sense of self that is ontologically at risk (Giddens, 1991), avoiding the discomforts of the shame that comes with a feeling of becoming irrelevant and unmoored. In this way, the inertia of the petrocultural *status quo*. (Wilson et al., 2017) can be linked to sunk gendered subjectivity costs and its (in)dignities within broader strucutures of neoliberal economic precarity. This is particularly pertinent in the context of an empowered far-right, fossil-fuelled, anti-ecological masculinist populism whose sentiments often resonate with the industrial male working-class (Ost, 2018). Specifically, this chapter focuses on retired coal miners (over the age of 45[17]) who most explicitly embody the former socialist era's breadwinning petro-masculine values and habitus and who find themselves struggling to hold on to their previous identity as productive, worthy, and capable

[17]Working as a coal miner comes with the 'privilege' of being able to retire with a full state pension after 25 years of registered work below ground. This means that in theory, one could start working at 21 (the legal age today to begin work below ground) and be ready to retire already at the age of 46. Due to early-retirement plans through industry restructuring that has occurred since the 1990s, many miners have been retiring as young as 45 (Ganowski, 2007, p. 82). The latest retirement age is in any case 55.

members of their immediate family, community and society-at-large as they have left work and spend more time in the home. Coal-based heating becomes a scarce identity-affirming, and community-connecting, resource and ballast in a hyper-individualized, gender-disorientating and economically fluid world.

In the remainder of this chapter I will first outline the theoretical and conceptual lenses which I deploy to make sense of Silesian gendered attachments to coal—namely 'breadwinning petro-masculinity' and its historic relation to coal-based domestic heating. I then outline the sociocultural context of the ongoing decline of industrial breadwinning petro-masculinities in the region, before introducing an ethnographic encounter with a retiree's coal-mining family and their single-family household to illustrate how breadwinning petro-masculinity and coal-based home heating are entwined in practice. Lastly, I conclude the chapter by highlighting the intersections between industrial breadwinning petro-masculinity and far-right fossil-fuelled masculinist populism in Poland, also reflecting on how women's rising voices in the anti-smog debate in Silesia are revealing their previously obscured entanglements.

Industrial Breadwinning Petro-Masculinity: Coal's Historic Enrolment in Patriarchal Domestic Authorities and Affections

In her pioneering article on the intersections of gender, energy, anti-ecological resistance and far-right authoritarianism, grasped in her term 'petro-masculinity', Cara Daggett (2018, p. 27) identifies that '[i]f people cling so tenaciously to fossil fuels... it is because fossil fuels also secure cultural meaning and political subjectivities'. They 'contribute to making identities', particularly (white) masculinities and their entangled 'oil-soaked and coal-dusted' historic patriarchal privileges (Daggett, 2018, pp. 25, 27–28). Focusing on the example of the US, Daggett explores the ways in which (white) masculine attachments to fossil fuels coincide with authoritarian desires and a rejection of both feminist and climate politics. Since achieving American hegemonic masculinity has been historically reliant on fossil fuel (here oil) consumption and its work, gendered resistance to ecological modes of being and doing are explained in the context of masculinities' increasing fragility and vulnerability in the face of both growing 'gender and climate trouble' (Daggett, 2018, p. 29) that existentially threatens the petro-industry and its associated practices and ontologies. Indeed, Daggett (2018, p. 33) poses 'petro-masculinity' that seeks to double down on fossil fuel use as reactionary, arising in response to a threatened sense of a diminished self that feels the need to therefore 'inflate, exaggerate or otherwise distort... traditional masculinity'. It is thus a kind of combustible 'hypermasculinity'; violent, aggressive, tough and pumped up with testosterone, ultimately manifested in Donald Trump's climate-denying, pro-fossil fuel, fascistic politics. Such gendered entanglements thus pose significant 'risks for post-carbon

energy politics', yet have been understudied, particularly within the domain of energy research (Daggett, 2018, p. 25, 28).

As Daggett (2018, p. 29) herself points out, 'petro-masculinities' (plural), however, have multiple and culturally specific variations. In the postsocialist context of Silesia, I propose a regional variant of working-class, industrial petro-masculinity not as necessarily hypermasculine, aggressive, distorted, or exaggerated, but as fearfully reflexive; that is, increasingly self-aware of its existential entanglement with coal as a deeply embodied phenomenon, therefore stubborn and defensive in its ontological vulnerability in contexts of abrupt postindustrializing economic and cultural uprooting. With *petro*-etymologically emerging from the Greek petros (stone) and petra (rock), I argue that Daggett's concept of '*petro*'-masculinities can be expanded to help particularly elucidate the way that fossil fuel materialities ('oil-soaked and coal-dusted') come to matter in how its masculinities are generated. In Silesia, coal's petro-materialities down the mine—dirty, heavy, hard, potentially explosive, and subterranean—have historically contributed to co-constructing hegemonic working-class masculine embodiment and its ideals such as toughness, hardiness, physical strength, and endurance (Slutskaya et al., 2016; Thiel, 2007). Through coal's 'dirty work' (Ashforth & Kreiner, 2014; Simpson et al., 2012; Simpson & Simpson, 2018; Slutskaya et al., 2016; Thiel, 2007), in fact, the very basis of gendered class experience and positionality in industrial society have been constituted. In the home, coal's materialities were also experienced as heavy, dirty, smelly, requiring technical skill and know-how (defended as part of the masculine realm) to light and keep alight, while retaining sociomaterial connection to homosocial worlds. This generated gendered 'scripts' (Offenberger and Nentwich 2009, p. 87; 2010; 2013) or 'affordances' (Weszkalnys & Richardson, 2014, p. 19) that have co-constituted Silesian working-class industrial petro-masculinities and domestic heating as historic partners in grime. In turn, the payoffs for labour's petro-masculine embodiment have been the privileges that are enshrined within the hegemonic socio-economic gendered division of labour (Hanlon, 2012; Thébaud, 2010) that emerged with the industrial, coal-based order.

'Breadwinning' as the heteronormative family ideal linked to ideas of biological essentialism, came to ascendancy in Europe, including in Silesia, with capitalist coal-based industrialization in the nineteenth century (Morgan, 2005, p. 169; Odoj, 2019). It became the 'archetypal industrial male identity' (Broughton & Walton, 2006, p. 2) and its primary patriarchal, working-class reward.[18] In the traditional Silesian family model, in return for his dirty and dangerous labour at the nearby coal mine or steelworks, the male head of household earned a family wage, which was his primary familial responsibility. In turn, his wife remained at home, taking care of the unpaid labour of '*kinder, kuche and kirche*', or children, the kitchen and church (Odoj, 2019, p. 32). While the wage was obligatorily handed to the wife as the household '*gospodarz*', or manager/host, the male held overall patriarchal authority,

[18]Underpinning widespread understandings of gendered identities to this day, breadwinning is core to hegemonic masculinity in diverse cultural contexts (Thébaud, 2010, p. 334).

and the woman was financially dependent. The industrial ideology of breadwinning and its organization of social life through a strict public/private divide, combined with Catholicism that reified essentialist notions of gender, arguably made coal mining and its difficult and dangerous labours possible. Indeed, as Urszula Swadźba (2014) writes, from the nineteenth century onwards, work, family and religion, structured through the breadwinning model, developed as the three intertwined and core Silesian values that enabled coal as a way of life to function. Work underpinned family life, while family life, in the distinctly separated realm of the home, made the burdens of that labour bearable. Religion in turn turned work and family into something sacred so that all three values mutually strengthened one another and bestowed meaning and heightened significance to mining's toils (See Wilczek, 2018 on coal's relation with religion in Silesia). St. Barbara, the patron saint of miners, offered labourers protection at work, while Silesian housewives did so in the spiritually reviving household, they kept spotlessly clean as dirty mine labour's distinct moral counterpart. Keeping women at home and faith in God can thus be understood as mining's long-standing psychological-emotional ballasts, while having authority in the house made up for being subordinated at work (Hanlon, 2012, p. 110). Petro-masculinity was structurally rewarded with breadwinning's benefits.

Although Daggett (2018, p. 36) defines having a breadwinning job as 'the essential emblem of modern masculinity' she does not link it directly to her notion of petro-masculinity—how the former structures and renders meaningful the latter through its hegemonic ideals and privileges. Neither does she highlight its explicit relation to class, where particularly for working-class males who are literally 'at the coal face', their embodied subjectivities are most intimately tied to the petro-materialities of fossil fuels and its historic compensatory breadwinning gendered 'regime' (Broughton & Walton, 2006, p. 10). Martin Hultman and Paul Pulé (2018), on the other hand, explicitly designate the hegemonic masculinity tied to fossil fuels 'industrial/breadwinner masculinities', implicating its 'white male effect' in forms of climate change denialism and fossil fuel addiction. For them, industrial male elites and working-class fossil fuel labourers are conjoined in mutually reinforcing and universal gendered attachments that generate privileges and entitlements that accrues to these distinct socio-economic masculinities in complicit ways through the industrial breadwinnng model. Yet, too, aggregating such diverse class interests together serves to overlook inherent tensions, frictions and particularities, as much as power imbalances, between stratified masculinities, particularly in cross-cultural and historical contexts. Thus in this chapter I draw on, and bring together, both Daggett's (2018) and Hultman and Pulé's (2018) concepts to refer to a specifically Silesian *industrial breadwinning petro-masculinity*, designating gender, class and coal's materialities as mutually entangled.

Indeed the saying 'coal is our bread' reveals all in this regard. Coal was the God-given resource that granted life, built Silesia and created Silesians (primarily the working classes, who *were* predominantly Silesian). Embedded within a strong Catholic heritage, the symbolic union of coal as bread transmuted the substance into a spiritually elevated and moral sustenance. Furthermore, coal as bread

highlighted the ways it materialized the very petro-embodiment of its people. Thus coal was 'bread' in more ways than one. Indeed, crucially, 'bread'-winning was not only about bringing home a wage, but also fuel to keep the home fires burning too. As part of the social contract between industry and worker, a '*deputat*', or annual coal allowance, has been part of the Silesian welfare benefits of working in coal since the late nineteenth/early twentieth century, pre-dating the socialist state. Under the People's Republic of Poland (*Polska Rzeczpospolita Ludowa—PRL*), such provisions, however, took on a special symbolic significance, becoming part of the national mythology of the elevated working-class hero rebuilding and modernizing Poland and being looked after by the Party state. This was particularly true within coal mining, where dirty work below ground was held up as the quintessential masculine and socialist labour, and as a result, earnings were almost double the national average (Odoj, 2019, p. 40); its main draw for thousands who moved down to find work in the Silesian 'El Dorado' (Mrozowicki, 2011, p. 27). Taking coal home was additional material evidence of, and direct reward for, his petro-masculine labour and the tangible umbilical cord that bonded home, industry, national economy and masculine work tightly together, tying domestic breadwinning security (home heating and cooking) to national security (coal mining). Silesian coal was 'our' coal in an intimate sense, strengthening its material integration into everyday life.

Beyond work, however, the home itself and its domestic labours, as Bowlby et al. (1997, p. 343) note, have been a central site for the production and reproduction of industrial gendered identities, including breadwinning petro-masculinities and their fossil-fuelled attachments in the domestic sphere. Since gendered identities are always 'something evoked, created and sustained day-by-day' (Thompson & Walker, 1989, p. 865), rather than something congealed or given, patriarchy and masculinities within the domestic space can be understood as a 'product of men's investments in social practices' (Hanlon, 2012, p. 8). In Silesia, coal-based heating is deeply imbricated with the notion of 'doing gender' (Morgan, 2005). For, as stated earlier, domestic heating, particularly with coal, is considered part of masculine breadwinning duties.[19] Yet this has not always been the case. Up until the end of the nineteenth century, most Silesian homes limited heating to one room only—the kitchen, where most family activity was centred, a practice that continues in rural Polish areas to this day. Thus heating was bound up with cooking while lighting and feeding the stove were collective family duties, not rigidly delineated by gender. During industrialization, coal stoves were gradually introduced into homes in urban areas (Nowakowski, 2011). Heating units were removed from the family living area into designated boiler rooms or basements—inscribing a spatialized gender binary into the use of the technology as masculine 'facility management' rather than what would become the feminized aesthetics of 'home making' (Offenberger &

[19]Looking after heating is most often ascribed to men in other cultural contexts too due to the hegemonic symbolic-ideological association of fire (Pyne, 2001) and 'technology' (Offenberger & Nentwich, 2010, p. 9) with masculinity.

Nentwich, 2010, p. 2). The ideological binary of dirt and cleanliness was central to this. Thus, with its gritty, dust-generating materiality, coal-based domestic heating became a primary masculine responsibility, and with it, masculine authority in the home was symbolically and materially bolstered. In turn, coal and heating technologies were enrolled in constructing women and children as breadwinner dependents.

Thus not only by having a breadwinning job but also by maintaining control of coal-based domestic heating, men marked out their territory and domain for which they held authority and were responsible for providing for. To this day, in a number of multi-generational households I spent time in, the most senior male (the grandparents' generation) would 'hand over' responsibility for coal-based heating to his son or son-in-law upon reaching an age where it became too physically burdensome, thereby handing over authority within the household in a symbolic gesture of masculine domestic power-transfer. I witnessed how being able to heat one's home to desirable degrees of comfort became an affirmation of industrial petro-masculine breadwinning success and accomplishment. It was the thermo-materialization of the breadwinning '*dobrobyt*' (prosperity) of the household and afforded petro-masculine attainment through the performance of specialized skills, knowledge, and practical expertise linked to coal mine work. What is important to recognize, however, is that it was not only breadwinning petro-masculine authority and dignity that was at stake, but also its historically acceptable channels for expressing its familial love, care, and affections too.

Whereas both Daggett (2018) and Hultman and Pulé (2018) conceptualize petro-masculinity and industrial/breadwinning masculinity respectively as, in the main, violent and aggressive, and in hard opposition to softer feminized notions of care or compassion, ethnographic encounters in Silesia reveal that breadwinning petro-masculinity can more ambiguously move through curious kinds of fossil love and affections too. As Hanlon (2012, p. 109) writes, and as I too discovered, by many men, breadwinning, as a kind of paternal duty and moral imperative, is typically understood as constituting masculine care for loved ones.[20] *Breadwinning care* puts practical tasks and accomplishments associated with the values of protecting, providing, and securing at the heart of masculine-centred domestic labours of 'caring'. Providing heating is central to this notion, crucial for the very survival of the household's members in a geographic context such as Poland, where winters can be harsh and deep. Indeed, under the socialist regime, in recognition of this responsibility, the *deputat,* coal allowance, demonstrated the paternalistic care of the state for its (male) workers, enabling, in turn, the paternalistic care of one's family. Breadwinning petro-masculine authority as well as its patriarchal forms of love

[20]Masculinities and care are not usually theorized together. In fact, defining breadwinning as care is controversial within debates about what constitutes care (Hanlon, 2012, p. 35), because feminists have rightly long pointed out that domestic care work has been the unpaid and un-recognized domain of women, while men are traditionally most often understood as on the receiving end of such care. Yet, desires to express care need to be understood as also part and parcel of masculine negotiation of affective attachments that give life security, meaning and sense (Hanlon, 2012, p. 35), even as they require critical engagement.

and care were enabled and institutionalized by such a regime. To achieve desired ecological shifts, then, both deeply historically entrenched breadwinning petro-masculine privileges as well as breadwinning petro-masculine love and care and its forms of socially acceptable expression require reorientation and reimagining (Hooks, 2004). This requires in part ensuring affordable energy access that might relieve the need for doubled-down petro-masculinities as well as socially integrating working-class male retirees in new constructive ways.

Breadwinning petro-masculinity thus refers to ways that masculine self-worth, drawing on its ideals of authority, dignity, *and* care or affection (Hanlon, 2012), has historically been sought through coal's material affordances and associated practices, without which, the privileges, powers, but also the *very purpose and relevance* of such a subjectivity or personhood is called into question, thus raising the spectre of shame experienced as a kind of annihilation. This is particularly so in the context of industrial breadwinning petro-masculinity's material and symbolic decline, the losses of which are experienced as existentially often acutely painful, particularly in contexts with few secure identity-affirming alternatives. As the next section will outline, breadwinning as an everyday working-class familial arrangement that was historically underpinned by particularly the industrial coal-based order is most forcefully being undermined and broken apart in the post-industrializing context of economic neoliberalization, combined with growing feminist movements, and ecological rejection of fossil fuels. This entails far-reaching implications for gendered subjectivities, particularly working-class petro-masculine kinds, for whom the fungibility of such embodied investments is most restrained and for whom the peeling away of breadwinning's privileges in such an unstable context leaves the residual classed embodiment of petro-masculinity lacking existential ground. In such a vacuum far-right masculinist populist politics finds recruits, while clinging to coal becomes an ontological survival strategy for those whose sense of industrial breadwinning petro-masculine integrity and self-understanding feel most at risk. This is most pertinent for older, retired working-class miners, those whom this chapter is most concerned with, who have lived memories of, and who embody, the socialist regime, when industrial breadwinning petro-masculinity was both ideal and reality, and who find themselves losing their status as productive working males and accosted by the alien expectations of newer masculinities that must mould themselves around postindustrial, neoliberal flexibility. Coal and coal stoves are drawn into their struggles for relevance and security, as I will illustrate.

Industrial Breadwinning Petro-Masculinity's Instability and Decline

From the nineteenth century all the way through the socialist period, working-class industrial breadwinning petro-masculinity remained the dominant gender regime. This was despite the fact that the PRL ideologically promoted gender equity in the

labour market, with many women joining the worlds of work, including within mining. Yet, it, too, never questioned nor troubled the biological essentialism of expectations regarding feminine duties within the home (Ashwin & Lytkina, 2004, p. 192; Novikova, 2012, pp. 96–97; Jarska, 2019).[21] Coal mining families particularly upheld deeply entrenched gendered traditions, while Silesians particularly resisted women's incursion into mining worlds (Fidelis, 2010). Indeed, up until the 1990s, 75% of coal miner wives remained in the sphere of unpaid domestic labour (Szczepański in Klimczak-Ziółek, 2011, p. 32). In turn, particularly Silesian coal miners maintained industrial breadwinning petro-masculinity as core to their identity and sense of dignity. Dirty work afforded patriarchal powers, constrained of course by class positionality—both in the public and private spheres.

Nevertheless, the postsocialist transition was a process of reasserting traditional gender roles as a reaction against perceived kinds of 'imposed' social changes that the socialist system had wrought that were considered 'un-Polish', such as any ideas of gender equity that *had* filtered through. The socialist state, acting as paternal 'surrogate father' (Novikova, 2012, p. 97), was felt to have somewhat usurped the man's ability to 'realize his masculinity' (Lapidus in Novikova, 2012, p. 97), resulting in a neo-conservative backlash following its demise. The resurgent traditionalist 'gender imperative', backed by the Catholic Church, dominated postsocialist Polish political discourse and practice for the ensuing decades (Lapidus in Novikova, 2012, p. 97), a process Gillian Pascall and Jane Lewis (in Novikova, 2012, p. 100) term 'retraditionalization'. Women 'returned to the household' in large numbers (Occhipinti, 1996; Pine, 2002), being the first to suffer from mass unemployment, while a pro-natalist, pro-breadwinning ideology was promulgated by a generally ascendant 'postsocialist masculinism' (Watson, 1993) that championed patriarchy vocally once more.

However, paradoxically, just as patriarchic-nationalist ideals of breadwinning were on the symbolic rise (Novikova, 2012, p. 98), the material means to attain this ideal became increasingly beyond reach (Mazierska, 2003, 2008). In Upper Silesia in particular, postsocialism ushered in the arrival of mass unemployment through the rapid closure of industry. In coal mining alone, around half of all active mines closed, resulting in a fall of employment in the sector from around 400,000 to 100,000 today. This was accompanied by the relative decline in and stagnancy of wages; the slashing of welfare benefits and state support (including the ending of provision of core services such as housing and energy); the neoliberalization of labour towards more flexible, mobile, and competitive workers; the increased feminization of labour in the move towards a service sector economy; and the rise of consumer opportunities that have rendered incomes weaker in purchasing power on a globalized market. Thus, with the removal of state assistance, while men were

[21] According to historical research conducted by Natalia Jarska (2019), women could be, and were, breadwinners during the socialist regime, but their labour was valued differently and they were never equal to male ones. Their waged work was perceived as secondary and was evaluated in the context of family.

increasingly expected to fulfil breadwinning duties by 'protecting' their families from the insecurities, uncertainties, and instabilities unleashed by the maelstrom of postsocialist transition, their ability to do so was drastically curtailed. Breadwinning was hit hard, while mortality and alcoholism rates for men soared and life expectancy plummeted (McKee & Shkolnikov, 2001). At the same time, such economic changes meant that after an initial retrenchment, women started to find their way in the new capitalist workplace with greater ease. Since the global financial crisis in 2008, when 'masculinized' industries were hit hardest by unemployment (Chustecka, 2010, p. 87), this trend has only intensified posing contradictory pressures on men.

For despite these seismic shifts, as in numerous other national contexts (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Hanlon, 2012, p. 109; Morgan, 2005, p. 169; Thébaud, 2010, pp. 334–335), as a 'hegemonic masculine' ideal, breadwinning, is still a 'master discourse' (Hanlon, 2012, p. 24) against which masculinities are measured. In Poland, and particularly in Silesia, where coal-mining life retains this as a sociocultural norm, a general sense of masculine pride and prestige associated with being the financial authority of the household remains culturally dominant (Bell & Pustułka, 2017, p. 131). As a result, the growing discrepancy between what is ideal and real has generated intense 'gender role stress' (Kazmierczak, 2010), linked to the broader trend of a 'masculinity in crisis' (Clare, 2001; Horrocks, 1994). At the same time, these changes have forced a re-consideration of gender roles (Klimczak-Ziółek, 2014, p. 170), including the relevance of breadwinning petro-masculinities both at work and at home. But such threats to relative privilege do not come, of course, without growing reflexivity, resistance, nostalgia, or even backlash, particularly when expectations upon their ability to provide personal, family and societal security remain paradoxically high.

Indeed, one of the many laments about postsocialist change in the coal-mining community was regarding the material and wider symbolic decline of the traditional 'breadwinner' family model that has accompanied integration into Europe (Odoj, 2019, p. 32).[22] The frustration, shame or strain of not being able to 'live up to' (Hanlon, 2012, p. 9) this model, while being expected to, were often palpable (see Ashwin & Lytkina, 2004; Kideckel, 2008; Mazierska, 2008; Novikova, 2012, p. 101; Tereškinas, 2009 for similar accounts elsewhere). In fact, in comparison with socialist times, when a family wage offered plenty, this inability was a sign of coal-mining's economic and symbolic decline and degradation (Odoj, 2019, p. 39) and its political mistreatment. Now the dual-earner model was increasingly common, but rather than delivering increased wealth, it simply was reported to enable the family to stay afloat, almost but not quite achieving a certain standard of living that was considered 'normal' (Klimczak-Ziółek, 2011, pp. 40–41), or on a par with 'European levels'—what any decent, self-respecting job should provide. The fact

[22]This shift has been noted in many regional and cultural contexts globally too (Bell & York, 2010; Broughton & Walton, 2006; Walker & Roberts, 2018) as a response to far-reaching changes in labour regimes.

that numerous women now '*have*' to work for families to achieve a shot at this approximation to the desired quality of Western-style life was considered not a sign of progress by many men, and also women, but of a world out of kilter, with 'the family' impacted most.[23] Numerous miners lamented to me that this left women 'less free'—less free to be the mothers and wives that they are destined and desire to be and so unable to fulfil their womanhood. Instead, they were now burdened with the toil of the world of work, risking shame for the man who often felt belittled, or at least bewildered, by this state of affairs.[24] At the same time, wifely incomes were always secondary or supplementary, never the core household security on which the family depended. This remained the masculine breadwinner responsibility—a source of both pride and stress.

Not only are women at work and increasingly favoured by the flexibilized, service-oriented job market, but younger male coal miners have been forced out of necessity to take up a greater share of domestic labour as a strategy for coping too (see Klimczak-Ziółek, 2014, pp. 170–172). Traditionally a male Silesian coal miner was as far removed from domestic duties as possible (Odoj, 2019, p. 32). Since he toiled all day below ground, he was not to be troubled by the petty concerns of the home, a place for him to rest and recuperate physically and spiritually. The Soviet man in general was also mostly 'estranged' from home and 'weakly integrated' into the family, a trend that Ashwin and Lytkina (2004, p. 193), in the context of post-Soviet Russia, have called 'domestic marginalization'. Today, the rise of women's expectations in so-called 'caring' (Elliott, 2016) or 'nurturing' (Hanlon, 2012) masculinities or so-called 'new fatherhood' (Novikova, 2012; Pustułka et al., 2015) is opening up space for a reconceptualization of masculine identities, and younger male miners were navigating such terrain with mixed feelings, yet were far more comfortable, with for example 'helping' in the home by cooking or taking care of the children than their older counterparts. Resources for attaining their masculine self-worth, particularly breadwinning care and love, were thus much more diversified, not only through new kinds of parenting but also including additional opportunities opened up through capitalist consumption (such as cars, mobile

[23]In everyday life, my research revealed that couples resentfully perceived that they had less time for one another, less time for their children (particularly mothers), and the increased rate of social atomization, divorces, and 'family breakdown' were often blamed on women having to work (see Klimczak-Ziółek, 2011, p. 40).

[24]Whereas some younger miners were very happy that their wives worked—there was often a sense of 'allowing' them to do so, even if wives themselves might laugh at such a thought. Women in turn had an ambivalent position. A number of miner's wives were 'not allowed' to work by their husband, but clearly longed to, for the sake of achieving some relative autonomy, independence and social connectivity outside of the household sphere (see the later ethnographic story for an example). Their weaker private and public authority, however, meant they were unable to effectively protest. Others were very happily 'allowed' to work by their husbands, or did so with his consent, reflecting shifts in norms and aspirations. Others still were resentful that they, too, had to work to make ends meet. This highlights how women can often be complicit in their own subordination in return for the payoffs of perceived security and protection, a strategy Deniz Kandiyoti (1988) has called 'bargaining with patriarchy'.

phones, technological gadgets, etc.) (see Morris, 2016, pp. 189–211 for the link between, for example car ownership and masculinity in an industrial town in postsocialist Russia). Taking on a more flexible and negotiable approach to gender roles in the home, however, has not challenged the overarching binary symbolic division which remains. In Poland, domestic labour is decidedly still considered women's work. Indeed, more than 90% of women and men today believe that childcare, for example is primarily the role of the woman (Chustecka, 2010, p. 89). This is because entrenched norms of hegemonic masculinity make male ownership of domestic labour, including care-work, culturally fraught, with risks of a perceived sense of emasculation, which in turn risks the family. Thus this new gendered alignment is constantly alive with anxiety. The risk of emasculation is particularly true for older, retired miners for whom such 'modern' arrangements are alien.

It is in this context of ambivalence that a Catholic, pro-natalist, patriarchic far-right government under Law and Justice, concerned with falling fertility rates, emigration, and liberal Europeanization, especially through the polluting Western norms of 'gender ideology' (aka feminist-informed thinking), has increased paternalistic rhetoric and elevated motherhood to the status of honourable national duty once more, retrenching the long-standing 'Mother Pole' stereotype and attempting to re-solidify the binary. Gender anxiety reveals gender trouble, including an 'underlying fear of the social fragility of masculinity', as well as a shared sense among men attracted to such rhetoric of 'having personally fallen short' of the hegemonic masculine ideal yet seeking to reassert its clarity to be able to keep striving for its promised secure affirmations (Daggett, 2018, pp. 35–36).

It is not only breadwinning that has declined in postindustrializing times, however, but also the value and prestige associated with doing 'dirty work' (Ashforth & Kreiner, 2014; Simpson et al., 2012; Simpson & Simpson, 2018), and thus the value of embodied investments into its working-class petro-masculinity. Whereas under socialism, getting dirty down the coal pit was a means through which to earn and live well, gain respect, and fulfil ideals of manly work, today, the symbolic capital of industry and working-class petro-masculinity has also taken a harsh blow, where particularly male workers, formerly the bedrock of national modernization efforts, went from 'heroes' to 'villains' practically overnight (see Kalb, 2014; Keskula, 2012; Kideckel, 2008; Morris, 2016 for similar stories in Poland and elsewhere in the postsocialist sphere). In the postsocialist transition to capitalism, they were to be now widely understood as a ball-and-chain preventing Polish progress towards market 'normality'. In popular culture, western 'hegemonic masculinity', based on the ideal of the global businessman, itself predicated on patriarchy, was now held up as desirable instead. With the ascendancy of 'virtual, clean, and value adding' (Bolton and Houlian in Simpson et al., 2016, p. 6) office and suit-and-tie jobs, as much as assembly-line manufacturing over-and-above industrial labour, cultural capital has gained greater value. Thus the physical capital of industrial workers has become less relevant in an increasingly post-industrial, service-oriented economy, and so conventional norms and values related to working-class petro-masculine prestige, such as muscular strength, have also become societally marginalized

together with those people who embody them (Broughton & Walton, 2006; Kideckel, 2004; Mrozowicki, 2011, p. 138; Odoj, 2019, p. 41). Thus doing 'dirty work' today for dwindling reward is less coveted by the young, who aspire to cleaner living as a middle-class aspiration. As a result, 'young people don't want to work in mining anymore', I was often told, while those who did work at the mine increasingly sought out affirmation of gendered dignity through the market rather than workplace. Consumption rather than production was the new terrain for the social affirmation of gendered personhood.

These changes affecting industrial breadwinning petro-masculinities' capital had repercussions in the home regarding domestic heating choices too. Whereas younger miners living in single-family households, who had more aspirational lifestyle goals, would consistently tell me how they longed to switch to gas instead of coal if they could afford it because it enabled the 'modern' ideals of 'comfort, cleanliness and convenience' (Shove, 2003), freeing up newly precious time for the pursuit of family or leisure activities, and enabling reminders of work to remain at the mine (see Jalas & Rinkinen, 2016, p. 44 on the modern pattern of separating work and leisure), older, retired miners, who were more time rich, and were more used to the working-class, socialist-idolized ideal of 'dirty work' as intrinsic to self-worth, were often much more attached to their coal stoves and less interested in gas. Toughened in their dirt-dusted embodiment, in fact connected to coal's dirt, was often where they felt most at home. Thus using it as a home-heating fuel posed more gain than bother. While such participants usually explained this by recourse to economic explanations, it was also clear in practice that gas did not afford the same possibility of demonstrating productive labour in the home. Whereas coal-heating requires a lot of visible, grubby, time-consuming physical labour, as well as technical knowledge and skill, to light and maintain, by nature, when installed, gas heating is simply controlled by the flick of a switch. For many, this is its precise appeal, the hallmark of a more 'modern' way of living, where infrastructure becomes increasingly invisibilized (Kaika, 2004; Plumwood, 2008; Tuvikene et al., 2019, p. 3). Its more neutral gendered scripts, however, are thus far less amenable to supporting the fulfilment of industrial breadwinning petro-masculinity in the home. This is most pertinent for those who feel most attached to this gendered subjectivity while left with fewer resources for achieving its ideal as a socially marginalized group—retirees.

Whereas far lower life expectancy in the past and heavier work conditions meant that a 'retired' miner was basically physically 'spent' by this time, in today's world, where coal work is safer when life expectancy has markedly increased once more (Śniadek & Zajadacz, 2010), and when the law enables workers to retire after 25 years work below ground, becoming economically inactive at such a relatively young age comes with its own challenges, particularly to breadwinning petro-masculinities, so imbricated as they are with notions of hard work. As a result, whereas in the past, miners longed to retire, today, retiring for some, as it draws closer, is considered something to apprehend. In contemporary literary fiction featuring mining, this is the dominant theme (Wilczek, 2018, p. 229). Indeed, Maria Lipok-Bierwiaczonek (in Odoj, 2019, p. 39) believes that this early kind of retirement (as early as 45) poses still young and strong men with the problem of free

time; some choose alcohol to pass it, others, hobbies, like fishing. Yet very often, in practice, this means that many retired miners continue to work in mining, but for the private sub-contracting firms at a reduced wage, or find other kinds of work, such as car park attending, security personnel, or coal delivery driving, to keep them economically engaged and boost their pension income. Many set up their own firms connected to the mining industry as a way to continue utilizing their networks and knowledge.[25] Yet the number of working hours is drastically reduced. Instead, they find themselves spending more time in the home they previously had more of a transactional and oblique relation with.

Since the breadwinner model posits male contribution to the household primarily through the role of an active provider, with the lapse into a more passive engagement with work when receiving one's pension, together with the increased amount of time he now spends in the home from which he has long been estranged, the patriarchal position of the male requires different opportunities for performative assertion. With limited possible outlets to secure a domestic sense of dignity and self-worth that shores up how he knows himself best, the coal stove and its domestic heating 'work', I found, was often a core resource. This was particularly so for men who were marginalized in other means of attaining gendered self-worth in retirement, for example through hobbies or an active social life. Domestic heating with coal can therefore be understood as a 'hegemonic practice' (Hanlon, 2012, p. 28) that offered increasingly scarce opportunity to shore up claims to the attainment of hegemonic industrial breadwinning petro-masculine ideals within the household for those with scarce other means to do so. In this way, men try to hold onto their own relevance, and fear of relinquishing coal-based domestic heating is partly connected to fear of losing what remaining authority and respect traditional breadwinning masculinity is able to command within the home and wider society today. This is precisely at a time when such ideals, and therefore their subjectivities, are perceived to be threatened, as the wider decline of the industrial breadwinning model and the simultaneous broader reassertion of a highly masculinized nationalist populist politics reveals.

In the next section I will focus on an ethnographic account of a retired coal miner and his single-family household to demonstrate the ways coal-based home heating and masculine subjectivity, through the performance of breadwinning values of providing, protecting, and provisioning via the petro-masculine embodiment of dirty work, are entwined in practice.

[25]For younger miners, this is irksome because it seems to disprove to the public the notion that miners deserve to retire early after 25 years, implying that they are still fit and willing to work, thus threatening this remaining 'privilege' with precarity. Retired miners are also perceived as 'taking jobs' from younger workers, and comments such as 'here comes death' or 'watch out for the granddad' are common as intentionally disparaging insults directed at such workers below ground. They are thus marginalized at work, and simultaneously marginalized at home.

Labours of Dignity and Care: Coal, Coal Stoves, and Protecting Industrial Breadwinning Petro-Masculine Self-Worth

Stefan was 48 when we met through a trade union social gathering connected to the mine. I hit it off with him and his family and began regular visits to their household. He had taken one of the early-retirement packages on offer in the last round of coal mine restructurings and finished working at the mine a few years ago. He had been married to Basia for 23 years, and, together with their two teenage daughters, they lived in a large single-family household that they built themselves (as is frequently the case in the coal-mining community) in a semi-rural peripheral neighbourhood. Theirs was a very traditional division of domestic labour, and therefore their story, though particular, reveals cultural and social patterns that are relevant for illuminating broader Silesian industrial breadwinning petro-masculinity and its attachments to coal within the home.

Stefan was the kind of traditional working-class Silesian man whose large hands were so heavily ingrained with dirt that they were no longer possible to wash completely clean (Zandy, 2004). Coal was engrained into his very embodiment—large, heavy-set, stocky, and always smeared somewhere with its black dust. Petro-masculinity was his habitus, verifying the moral values of hard labour that underpinned his integrity. He told me he missed his job at the mine in some ways, for he no longer saw people so often, but he was mostly happy to never have to go down below again. After all, being able to retire after 25 years of work is one of the main draws of mine work. Instead, to supplement his pension, which was now the securest household income, and remain economically and physically active at least to a degree, he, like others he knew, had started his own firm delivering coal to households in a big blue pick-up truck he kept parked out in the yard. Paid work and a sense of self were thoroughly fused for Stefan, who told me 'you have to do something'! The notion of being unproductive was an alien one. One of the attractions of living '*na wsi*' (in the countryside), rather than in one of the socialist-era high-rise apartment blocks dominating the urban centres, was that opportunities for keeping occupied increase. Friends of his kept pigeons, or bees, in retirement, but he wasn't interested in such things, and for now, he had his truck and was often out on the road. As a result, he was usually always wearing a ragged t-shirt and tracksuit bottoms to carry out his tasks—whether driving, lifting, carrying, or moving coal around, outside or within the home.

In turn, and as she frequently reminded me, Basia, Stefan's wife, looked after the entire household herself—meaning the cooking, cleaning, washing, ironing, shopping, and also looking after the children, including their health and education. During the many visits I paid, she was constantly active, never seeming to pause for a moment with her chores. Most of our time together we spent in the kitchen, where she told me she probably labours at least four hours a day. It was important to her for her family to have home-cooked, healthy meals. With chickens, and a large vegetable plot and orchard in the garden that she also tended to, she had access to

such 'healthy' food, meaning 'natural' or organic (no chemicals), on her doorstep—another way she also tried to save money in the household budget she looked after. She recognized with a sigh that as breadwinner, Stefan had always brought in the income, but it was one of her biggest sorrows that her husband did not 'help' her more around the home. She would see other husbands today doing it, but his generation was just like that. He would not allow her to have a paid job, because he considered it to be harmful to the family, but she thought he just did not want her to have more autonomy. So instead, she was a '*domowa kura*'—a house chicken, and sometimes, she confided, she felt she might go crazy. The strain in their marriage was obvious —but without her own income, divorce did not seem feasible. Her Catholic faith made such a notion unpalatable in any case. Nevertheless, she seemed to long for a more emotionally intimate and equal partnership—a contemporary demand on Stefan that he was unable to fulfil or offer. His masculine identity had not been socialized in this manner. At the same time, social change had meant, however, that bringing home the bacon was no longer sufficient to guarantee the respect that was once his due. This was even more so during retirement, when, even though he was bringing in income through his pension payments, he was no longer spending long productive hours at the mine.

Like many others in his position (Świtała-Trybek, 2010), Stefan found retiring a confusing adjustment. His body clock for a start ran havoc. He spent his entire working life doing night shifts, and so when he stopped going to work, it took him a long time to switch to more regular daylight hours. In the summertime, he would sometimes spend an entire night out in the blow-up swimming pool because he could not sleep. When he was not picking up or delivering coal, a job which took up around 3–4 hours a day, but was intermittent, he was unused to being around the house, a space that was decidedly Basia's expert and capable domain. It was true that I did not often see him spending time inside the dwelling zone of the house, except for the occasional 'retreat to the sofa' (Ashwin & Lytkina, 2004, p. 19). His large frame and scruffy look always seemed incongruous with the cleanliness, order, and pastel-coloured and flower-patterned decoration that Basia had favoured within the home. Such an incongruity was a symptom of what Ashwin and Lytkina (ibid, p. 202) have called the post-Soviet man's 'weak integration into the household'. Instead, when he was not in the living room watching telly, Basia confirmed, and I observed, that the basement was where he spent most of his time. Time in the basement was spent sometimes drinking, but was mostly justified by tinkering away, adjusting, experimenting, and tending to the coal stove.

Down in the basement was where the old-fashioned coal stove was located, where it belonged—out of the way and hidden so that its dirt and smell did not get into the house above. Feminine and masculine spatial spheres in the home were thus symbolically delineated mainly by where dirt and disorder were 'allowed' and not allowed (see also Offenberger & Nentwich, 2009, 2010 on gendered spatial orders and home heating). Connected to a central heating system, the basement was also of course the most logical place to locate a stove, with gravity and pumps doing the work. It was kept in a dedicated boiler room that Stefan himself had constructed, and lighting, maintaining, organizing, and fuelling it were his primary domestic duties. A

small window from the boiler room opened out onto the driveway, and it was through here that Stefan would haul the heavy fuel, roughly six tonnes of coal a winter, into the house with a spade; a common Silesian arrangement that was again usually the role of the male breadwinner. Doing this type of work generated and involved a lot of dirt and dust. Indeed, explanations for why it was a man's job to look after the coal stove centred on the fact that it is 'dirty work', and so not suitable for women. In many ways this was represented as a chivalrous gesture—protecting the feminine from being soiled. It was also a mark of honour—indeed, a woman's domestic work should be respected—that is why upon entering the hallway of a Silesia home, one should always remove one's outdoor shoes. Such remarks from Stefan told me that he valued Basia's labour, but did not know quite how to communicate this—except by, paradoxically, staying away. In turn, Basia would leave 'his' spaces to him.

Sometimes, Stefan told me, he would go downstairs to the basement and just hang out there in the cool and darkness. A reminder of mine work, and a space that affirmed his masculine capability rather than impotence, the basement, around the coal stove, was where he felt most comfortable. Unlike the garage spaces in Jeremy Morris's (2016, pp. 87–102) ethnography of a postsocialist industrial Russian town that is the reserve of male sociality and solidarity organized around practical activity, the domestic basement, like the garden shed in Anglophone culture, was here a preserve of lone-range masculine individual retreat from the world. Disappearing to the basement seemed to be part of a coping mechanism for in a family in which he was all-too-aware that his role was minimal and that he failed to live up to newer expectations. I often sensed that he would wish to play a bigger role in his children's upbringing but, having spent most of his life with attention focused on work, lacked the confidence to feel he had something to offer in this domain. He therefore clung to what he knew. The coal stove became both escape and the materialization of what he *could* offer—breadwinning petro-masculine skill, authority, and care. In turn it offered to secure a positive sense of himself. How so?

Combusting coal gave a sense of satisfaction and accomplishment. Lighting the fire is, in Silesian dialect (a historic fusion of Polish, German and Czech), known as '*hajcowania*', from the German root word for 'heat', *heizen,* while a coal miner is colloquially often referred to as a *'hajer',* revealing the symbolic-discursive cultural connection between them (and referring to the historic method of exploitation involving explosives). *Hajcowanie* is specifically correlated with a flame or fire, thus the process of combustion as a skill is key. Often I would be privy to conversations between male heads of households discussing their specific technique or method for *hajcowanie*—or exclaiming how hard they had to *hajcowac* the previous night to keep the house warm. Even though wives were proud to state they were also able to match this skill and would frequently contribute to maintaining the stove (and Basia no less), the social practice of *hajcowanie* was decisively a Silesian masculine terrain, while *hajcowanie*-talk was a means through which men bonded and exchanged social esteem through demonstrations of technical expertise.

Hajcowanie also connected masculine labour, skill and knowledge to homosocial worlds in another sense. Working with coal within the home, particularly for retired coal miners who no longer participated in coal-mining life, was the means through which memories of mining and being a valuable part of this broader sociocultural landscape, was kept alive. When spending time with Stefan by the coal stove (something he was initially reluctant for me to do because I am female and I sensed he felt uncomfortable with me in this masculine-reserved space), he would often recount his memories of working below ground and told me with a laugh, 'Now I just transfer coal from one pile to another. This is the only time I get to touch coal now'! Through coal's touch, along with his job as its deliverer to other households, Stefan was still connected into coal's sociomaterial world—its circulation and flow between mine and household and between stove and home. A bond he was unwilling to relinquish because his sense of a capable, worthy, and valuable personhood was so imbricated with it. While vocally, he explained that they could not afford gas, through spending time with him in this way, I could see there was more than finances at stake. Stefan and the coal stove supported one another.

Through taking care of domestic heating, Stefan not only asserted his authority as household patriarch but also got to feel that he contributed to taking care of his family and their home, too. By protecting and providing, he sought to capture a limited channel of domestic self-respect and family and social respect and appreciation. Generating a 'comfortable' home in the winter months—one in which warmth creates a pleasing atmosphere and positive social relations—Stefan was able to materially demonstrate his capabilities as much as familial love through 'thermal accomplishment' (Vannini & Taggart, 2014, p. 68). Because it was a labour—requiring numerous visits to the basement, as many as five to six a day, involving shovelling coal, tending the fire, disposing of waste ash, and getting dirty—tending to the coal stove was a physical effort that acted as an acceptable masculine carrier for love's affections or duties. Heating became a 'labour of love' (Jalas & Rinkinen, 2016, p. 55). Generating this heat was about assuring comfort, but also about achieving '*zgoda*'—or harmonious familial relations. A house that was over- or under-heated might generate tensions and frictions, while a house that was evenly and desirably heated throughout could create an atmosphere of possible relaxation and agreeableness. In this sense, the monitoring of heat also carried the weight of generating the domestic holding space or envelope—either of comfort or discomfort, of positive marital and familial relations or strained. In this way, tending to the stove was, in Stefan's case, a way for him to make an attempt at smoothing tensions over in the house, while at the same time providing an opportunity to hide away from facing them. 'I do my bit down here', he tells me 'and the girls don't bother me'! Producing comfort was also relevant for breadwinning petro-masculine care of guests, where having a warm home was part of local rules of hospitality. If one expected guests, the house was prepared through planned extra-*hajcowanie*, and entering a thoroughly heated home was part of experiencing the family's material standing and generosity—literally, a warm welcome.

Further, Stefan's role as coal stove manager put him in the breadwinning position of domestic security keeper. As a sociocultural value, being energy independent and

not reliant on distant (even if nearby) power plants were important to many particularly retired coal-mining men I spoke with. In some senses, this was a legacy of being a post-war generation, in which tales of deprivation and insecurity from occupying forces and invasions were part and parcel of a Silesian upbringing. The sense that another war or invasion could be impending was never completely banished from the local imaginary—particularly, at that time, from Russia. In that case, having heating technology and knowledge of how to use, maintain, and repair it, that was detached from a distant energy grid seemed prudent (see Petersen, 2008, pp. 14–16, for how the value of autonomy, self-determination, and freedom was similarly important for off-grid wood-burning home-heating choices in Denmark). This also reflected a postsocialist decline in trust in the state and concomitant desire for self-reliance.[26] At times, having a coal stove was not the only form of domestic energy in the house. Sometimes, households would also be equipped with 'back up' boilers—run on, for example gas tanks or oil. Hybrid heating models were also possible—where solar panels were used for electricity but coal stoves for heating. Technical modalities were patched together and mixed to suit the domestic desires, particularly of the male taking care of things. Yet coal was considered most dependable—linked to its long-standing sociomaterial historic role in the region, something that had never failed even as wars, borders, regimes, governments had constantly come and gone, or shifted—it had remained underfoot. Another reason gas was sometimes rejected was because of its long-standing association with explosions at the mines—the very word 'gas' held traumatic connotations of both coal mine disasters and nearby Auschwitz too, and I was often told that having gas in the house could be dangerous—a ticking time bomb. Coal was felt to be safer and more reliable—because it was more controllable, tangible, and familiar. Thus home heating with coal was embedded in industrial breadwinning petro-masculine notions of providing security and protecting the home (and homeland), values that coal was felt to embody. At the same time, by choosing coal's heat and stove technology that demanded it, breadwinning males could retain their skills, knowledge, and experience within the four walls of the home while supporting the industry that employed them and made such skills relevant too.

The topic of smog was not a regular conversation in this household. When it did come up it was often accompanied by hazy talk of uncertain causes and strange changes brought on by 'modernity'. General health was, however, a key topic. For Stefan and Basia's two daughters both had allergies, and one had asthma. Since this lay in Basia's caring domain, she ensured that everyday, each of them took their medication and carried out an 'inhalation' through a machine she bought online that pumped out saline vapour. More and more people were getting ill these days, she told me. She was not the only person to mention so. Like many others, she was not sure why. She knew many people blamed the coal mines and the smog, but the mines

[26] A general postsocialist shift in heating provision from a 'centralised infrastructural regime to an individual and fragmented system has led to a definite loss of trust in the state', find Tuvikene et al. (2019, p. 1).

have always been here, and these illnesses, like cancer, diabetes, asthma, allergies, were new. They came with 'civilization'—meaning Westernization. It was all the chemicals in food these days and all the stuff they put into the atmosphere. Such explanations I heard frequently. When I asked Stefan about it, he shrugged, and also said that he thought that '*They*', shadowy, powerful actors, were poisoning the earth. Coal, on the other hand, was good and clean (After all, it was Silesian soil made morally pure through masculine labour) and if air pollution was anything to do with these illnesses, everybody would be dead here by now. In the 1990s, Silesia was declared an 'ecological catastrophe zone' due to the toxic fallouts of Soviet industrialization. Yet people still lived here—we lived here, he and others would laugh. Historic regional structural environmental injustices and exploitations had left a potent legacy of hardened embodied hegemonic petro-masculinities, where exposure to dirt and pollution was often shrugged off, and where safe toxins were delineated by what was 'Ours' and 'Not ours', not necessarily by material composition. 'Smog' was not a discourse that had much purchase here, and Stefan's word was usually the last on such matters.

As I prepared to leave my fieldwork site, however, Stefan and Basia were discussing upgrading their coal stove to the new class five efficiency variety. Theirs was having some ongoing technical issues, and according to the new Anti-Smog Resolution law, all households would have to upgrade by 2027 anyway. This would change the labour of coal-heating from being manually fed to automatic—reducing the amount of work associated with it, so that one would no longer have to tend to the stove so often. Stefan had the ultimate say on this decision, and together with his brother, they decided to instal the new variety of stove. Despite the reduced amount of work linked to the appliance, Stefan was excited about its new digital temperature-setting functions and that he could experiment with overcoming the restrictions on the kinds of fuels you were technically allowed to put in—limited to '*ekogroszek*', or pea-coal, that was of a certain parameter and size, and came in bags not piles. He was already trying to see if he could mill down the coal he had already bought and use it anyway. The stove would still occupy him with tinkering and maintenance, perhaps less often, while coal would still need to be purchased and delivered. Yet still, down in the basement, it verified his domain in the home as industrial breadwinning petro-masculine authority and carer.

As this ethnographic account has attempted to illustrate, coal, coal stoves, and embodiment of working-class Silesian industrial breadwinning petro-masculinity are closely entwined. Long-standing investments into their entangled class-based and gendered subjectivities influence home-heating choices, attachment to coal, and the denial also of air pollution's relevance, slowing down an ecological transition towards clean air. In this way, this chapter has argued that paying ethnographic attention to locally tied gendered regimes, specifically hegemonic industrial breadwinning petro-masculinity, offers fresh insight into making sense of the locally-lived, root causes behind smog that are usually overlooked. Yet as is increasingly being acknowledged in the rise of emerging research fields, such as the environmental and energy humanities, ecological and energy-based issues are not purely scientific, technical nor rational-behavioural concerns, but deeply cultural, social,

ethical, affective and emotional matters (Boyer & Szeman, 2014; Rose et al., 2012). As we seek to move towards fossil fuel-free futures, those gendered identities and subjectivities with most to lose may harden against and resist such change, especially since they threaten their integrity with shame. Far-right anti-ecological, masculinist populism is one possible home for such grievances, whether through tacit or active support.

Conclusion: Anti-Ecological, Industrial Petro-Masculinist Populism to the Rescue

The far-right populist party Law and Justice came to power in Poland in October 2015 with an outright majority. Though many miners I spoke to and spent time with declared themselves apolitical and uninterested in 'Politics', there was often vocal support for their policies and much tacit resonance with their worldview and values, even if not explicitly linked to the Party. Indeed, the industrial, particularly male, working-class were a key (though of course not only) constituent (Ost, 2018).[27] Part of this appeal is that breadwinning petro-masculinity and PiS are in strong alignment. In relation to smog, and in deliberately direct contravention to European environmental policy, Law and Justice were, at the time of my fieldwork in 2017, noted for actively downplaying the issue and refusing its public health urgency (Moura, 2018).[28] Their pro-Polish coal and anti-EU, anti-ecological platform (including regarding climate change[29]) were a key part of this reticence. Under pressure from civil society and media, however, the Party has since announced fourteen smog-tackling actions[30] (Wantuch, 2019), yet notably had not broken with coal, to the frustration of many smog activists. Instead, they have long envisioned Silesia becoming a centre for innovation around 'clean coal' technologies (Kuchler & Bridge, 2018; TVPInfo, 2018). In addition to this pro-coal stance, their 500+ pro-natal family welfare allowance, their Catholic 'traditional family values',

[27]The statistically greater appeal of far-right populist parties across Europe and America to particularly (white) male supporters has been noted by numerous studies (Coffé, 2018; Graff et al., 2019; Spierings & Zaslove, 2017; Stockemer et al., 2018).

[28]In January 2017, when 'smog' as a topic for public debate exploded, Polish Health Minister Konstanty Radziwił, controversially described smog as a 'theoretical threat'—blaming national health problems on 'real' concerns like smoking instead (Wantuch, 2019). Additionally, the now-deceased Jan Szyszko, the then pro-coal Environment Minister, was quoted in the media as blaming smog on dust blowing in from the Sahara (Wajrak, 2017), on 'natural' dusts from soils and vegetation (Karasińska, 2017), and on citizens burning non-Polish coal (Kaczmarczyk, 2017) (which PiS had promised to stop importing. They have since failed to live up to this promise).

[29]Law and Justice are noted for their climate skepticism (Żuk & Szulecki, 2020)—a trend common to far-right populist parties (Andreas Malm and the Zetkin Collective, 2021; Forchtner, 2019; Forchtner et al., 2018; Lockwood, 2018).

[30]However, by 2020, of those promises, only one has so far been achieved: standards for coal furnaces.

their rejection of EU-imposed 'gender ideology', and their respect for (male) 'Polish workers' and their hard labours[31] serve, in part, as a rescue operation for industrial breadwinning petro-masculinities under threat. As Daggett (2018) found in the USA, and as Hultman and Pulé (2018) discovered in Europe, masculinities, anti-environmentalism, and fossil fuel attachment go hand in hand, contributing to the rise of far-right populist politics that champions and boosts such entanglements. In this chapter I have attempted to show how such gendered dynamics manifest through not purely a discursive, but an embodied, relation to coal in the everyday environments of the home. With increasingly fearful reflexivity in response to encroaching post-traditional and ecological norms in contexts of economic precarity, the clinging on to industrial breadwinning petro-masculinities works to re-entrench their dominance, generating friction against ecologically just futures. Current approaches towards tackling smog fail to factor in or analyze the role that regional, class-entangled, gendered identities at the micro-level, set against broader socio-economic trends, play in their failure or success.

Revealing such entanglements, while women (and children's) bodies are represented as particularly vulnerable to smog's health consequences within campaign literature, they have thus far been under-represented in the public debate about smog - reflected in the fact that almost all of the 13 Silesian chapters of the Polish Smog Alert active at the time of my fieldwork were set up and led by men. This also reflects how women tend to have little authority and say over home heating choices in the traditional Silesian household, like that of Stefan and Basia's, while being excluded from the public domain. Yet, since she is traditionally responsible for the health and wellbeing of the (domestic and national) household's members—particularly its children—I found that women, less embodiedly connected to coal, were more likely to be concerned about air pollution and its possible negative health consequences (such as asthma and lung conditions), even as they felt disempowered to act on a bigger public stage and uncertain about what to believe in a restricted zone of possibility.[32] For smog discourse indeed posed risks for the masculine industry

[31]For example in October 2018, Law and Justice party President, Jarosław Kaczyński, visited Silesia to lay out a plan for the region with coal at its heart. He stated that in Silesia 'There is a great tradition of work, in industry, mining, but not only in mining, hard, physical work. This was needed, is needed and will be needed. I would like to say that we respect this work very much, we bow our heads to it' (TVPInfo, 2018).

[32]Michael Edelstein (2002, p. 577) in researching contamination in built environments found that 'Women are also more likely to respond to potential contamination, in part because they are more likely to be engaged in child care and in part because they are less likely to be associated with a polluting industry.' At the same time women tend to predominate in grassroots activism—comprising some 70% of activists studied at local level. Likewise, more recently, females have been found to have higher risk perception to wide range of environmental hazards, including climate change (Luís et al., 2018, p. 78) Kari Norgaard (2012, p. 83) also points to the under-researched phenomenon that in the global North, men tend to have a higher carbon footprint than women. In part a result of such trends, climate skepticism and denial have been linked to the maintenance of (white) male privilege and a heteropatriarchal order (Anshelm & Hultman, 2014; Norgaard, 2012, p. 83).

that husbands were often so closely involved with. Yet, the active presence of women in this discussion *is* beginning to stir, particularly in direct challenge to coal's dominance, with reactions highlighting much about gender's relation to smog, industrial petro-masculinities, and its political entanglements in the region. This challenge, however, is not coming from within the mining community, but from without.

In December 2019, as PM2.5 levels reached 999 μg/m^3 (parts per million), and PM10 over 750 μg/m^3, recognizing the lack of women's involvement in local issues in general, the newly-established Women's Council in the Upper Silesian town of Rybnik (*Rybnicka Rada Kobiet*), (the most air-polluted in the region), set up in large part to take action on smog, appealed to the town council with an unprecedented proposal to carry out a local ban on solid fuels—including coal. Such a proposal—the first of its kind in the region—was considered 'radical'. Indeed, for the Women's Council, the 2017 Silesian Anti-Smog Resolution with its timeline for upgrading stoves and thermo-modernizing homes extending to 2027 was far too slow and not radical *enough*. Fearing for their own and their children's health in the interim, they wanted change—and *now*. Holding a meeting on 16th December in Rybnik Town Council, a decision among councillors on the postulate was unable to be made, however, because the meeting did not reach quorate. Notably absent were almost all councillors from the Law and Justice Party, bar one, who remained silent throughout and left halfway through (Furmanowicz, 2019).

Following up from this, the group petitioned the town council to commission an independent expert local review of the 2017 Silesian Anti-Smog Resolution, to ascertain whether its programme for action would effectively deliver the promised improvements in air quality to permissible standards or whether more stringent action was required, as they feared. On the 19 December, 2019, the Women's Council received the reply from the town's President's office that no such review would be undertaken since it was too early to do so and that any more restrictive action must be undertaken with insightful economic and social analysis in order to ensure the most just resolution. The President's office was confident that the Clean Air Programme would deliver improvements in air quality for PM2.5 and PM10, but admitted that for benzo[a]pyrene, acceptable norms might still not be met—yet *significant improvements* will have occurred.[33] The women were appalled at this attitude that they felt prioritized coal above the lives of citizens. They also felt that it was a typically masculine belittling of women's concerns. Members of the group informed me that they had been consistently laughed at in meetings, talked down to, and condescended by local councillors and industry representatives—overwhelmingly male.[34] As a 'bunch of women' they were considered by some to be irrelevant

[33]From letter received by Rybnik Women's Council dated 19 December 2019 and signed by Janusz Koper, the Deputy President of Rybnik, and which was shared with me by the group.

[34]On 20 January 2020, on hearing an impassioned speech from the Rybnik Women's Council in a meeting in the Silesian Sejm on the topic, Law and Justice Councillor Zbigniew Przedpełski asked whether they would also be hearing from representatives from the 'Rybnik Men's Council', and since not, whether this should be considered gendered discrimination (Nowiny.rybnik.pl, 2020).

or hysterical (Nowiny.rybnik.pl, 2020)—a classic charge made at previous female ecological activists, from Rachel Carson to Erin Brockovich.

Speaking to local Radio90.fm (2019) prior to the response, Joanna Bulandra, one of the group's spokeswomen, had defended their call for radical action, saying 'Everybody has talked about the economic factor—that it's too expensive, that we can't afford it, but less attention has been paid to the health costs. These are alarming, because, quite simply, we are dying. Women are also worried about their men, because they seem to look at this data in a very non-urgent, non-radical way, and think that we still have time'. In this statement, Bulandra highlights the intersections of gender, energy, domestic heating and air pollution in revealing ways. Women are perceived to 'care' about health and see smog as an urgent issue; men, not so. Such difference between 'male' and 'female' approaches to air pollution were often explained (by these activists too) by reference to biologically essentialist notions of gender, with women represented as more intrinsically ecological because of their 'softer', more sensitive 'nature', and thus their feminized values of care and nurture linked to their domestic role in child-rearing, while men, as more intrinsically tough, stoical and hard-headed so less worried about the body's vulnerability to smog. Yet, this overlooks the way gendered identities should be understood as outcomes of practical and performative engagements with environments, technologies and material things also in classed contexts of economic positionality. Gender requires props with which to demonstrate itself and accrue gendered self-worth and status. Without those props and the hegemonic arrangements that underpins them, its strength weakens significantly generating intense ontological insecurity in times of broader precarity as we have seen. Breadwinning industrial petro-masculinity and its embodied investments in coal-based home-heating technologies lurks behind reticence to part ways, yet remains as yet under-articulated as a key factor contributing to the ongoing problem of smog. This chapter has sought to contribute to its excavation, highlighting simultaneously how PiS's style of populism works most expicitly to capture and heal these anxieties through promising to stabilize this order with its smog-denying, traditionalist, masculinist and pro-industry appeals, and its silencing and contempt of women who challenge this too.[35]

[35]Such contempt has been most explicitly noted by PiS's extreme anti-women's rights policies. In October 2016, the 'Black Protest' (*Czarny Protest*) saw tens of thousands of women and their supporters dressed in black taking to the streets in a mass national public strike against the Church-baked proposal to enforce a total ban on abortion (including in cases of foetal abnormalities, incest and rape) in a country with already severely-restricted abortion rights. This action, which resulted in the PiS government backing down at the time, sparked a global wave of feminist organising, including the emergence of the social movement Polish Women's Strike (*Polski Strajk Kobiet*). (See Bogumila Hall (2019)). In October 2020, defying coronavirus restrictions, mass protest swept the country once again led by Polish Women's Strike, as PiS used covid as a cover to successfully push this law through Parliament.

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Katarzyna Iwińska and Xymena Bukowska

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