Edited by
Urszula Markowska-Manista
Justyna Pilarska

An Introspective Approach to Women's Intercultural Fieldwork

Female researchers' narrations based on their intercultural experiences from the field

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PREFACE

The concept of the book emerged in the field amidst female struggles with challenging research situations, at difficult moments when physical exhaustion and mental doubts prevailed over the passion of academia and during the omnipresent grapple with reality so inherent to field research. This edited volume offers a collection of female researchers' narrations based on their intercultural experiences in the field, entailing various events and undertakings reported firsthand. These are also narrations emerging from intuition, instinct, feelings and peculiar individual, female reflexive praxis.

The contributors to this volume share their numerous reflections and discussions born from experiences gathered during field work and academic activities. These experiences and reflections focus on (and have their source in) female struggles with difficult research situations which stem from the particular subject of studies, problematic situations faced by female researchers, and limitations imposed on a person by one's own body and mind. The present publication addresses the multitude of challenges faced in a researcher's reality: times of physical exhaustion or numerous doubts, mental and physical limitations confronted with the passion for research, and research assumptions in confrontation with reality. Their discussions are grounded in cultural, pedagogical, psychological and sociological research theories.

This edited volume consists of six chapters prepared by female researchers belonging to various university worlds and representing various disciplines of science. The authors are diversified with regard to research interests, age, academic output, experience in the field, and conduct their field studies in both close and distant corners of the world.

Each of these six chapters stands as an independent publication. Nevertheless, they simultaneously form a complimentary landscape of female experiences in research and other academic activities. They unveil the challenges faced by female researchers, also pointing to the strengths and values of female outlook on the researched reality.

The texts included in the present publication are an invitation to reflect on the perspectives, hardships and strengths of femininity in science.

We hope that this monograph will be of use for female and male practitioners and researchers in the areas explored and at the same time constitute a valuable source of knowledge and inspiration for further research in the intercultural field.

The editors

Field: Berlin–Warszawa, September 2016

INTRODUCTION

An Introspective Approach to Women's Intercultural Fieldwork

Female researchers' narrations based on their intercultural experiences from the field

> Life is not easy for any of us. But what of that?
> We must have perseverance and above all confidence in ourselves.
> We must believe that we are gifted for something and that this thing must be attained.
>
> Marie Sklodowska-Curie

Nothing is predictable in the field…The field relates to places and spaces of gathering experience, it is the association and co-participation in other people's lives, also those culturally alien, or the Other, to use Bernhard Waldenfels' rhetoric. Being in the field is a process, a series of events participation in which is a source of knowledge, new experiences, dilemmas and problems. Yet, it simultaneously entails a sense of uncertainty at every hour of the day, accompanied by an awareness of the fact that after the experiences of everyday life among the researched groups and communities, nothing will ever be the same…

For many female researchers representing various disciplines, the reality of research in the field reflects the constant 'unknown', dilemmas, challenges and struggles with oneself. On a different level, it involves a struggle with, on the one hand, theories and research assumptions, and on the other hand,

with a multidimensional space of the place in which they remain searching for answers to their research questions. Being a researcher in a culturally diverse field also involves learning various levels of communication and reactions to messages in the worlds examined, which are frequently incongruent and non-parallel to the everyday worlds in which the researchers have been raised, educated and in which they function. Yet, the researched communities are not solely "sources of data" or "study subjects". Knowledge generated in the course of such female examinations is based on the worldview of persons subject to, and co-producing, these studies and findings. An informal, open social process of exchanging knowledge, ideas and information as an integral part of the everyday life reality of particular groups is expressed through the commonly shared status of a female researcher and the participants, who are co-producers of this knowledge. Finally, it is a process of building relations with the environment of the researched and coping with cultural, religious, social, environmental, climatic, political and other conditions.

It is in female field research – in case of single researchers, research outsiders and researchers who carry out interdisciplinary team projects in which men are at the forefront – that we encounter borderline situations, experiences which are often discounted in publications and concealed from the readers. Frequently, this curtain of silence obscures the motivation behind undertaking research, its accomplishment and experiences which altogether influence the choice of each of the researcher's path of own field explorations. At times, they also determine one's professional life and, to a large degree, private life too.

We encouraged female field researchers to open their notebooks filled with field notes, referring to places, situations, those researched, and the process of investigations, to look back, to reach for academic theories which place their research in niche fields of exploration and weave individual academic narrations. These narrations involve their studies conducted in the field: the splendour and shadows of conducting field research in environments which are close or distant, both in terms of geography, mentality and culture.

Introduction to the structure and chapters of the book

This edited volume consists of six chapters prepared by female researchers belonging to various university worlds and disciplines of science, diversified with regard to research interests, age, academic output and struggles in field work.

The articles reflect their varied and diverse research pursuits and the multitude of their individual interests which have led them to undertake studies in closer as well as more distant territories. In their narrations, the female researchers focus on a number of issues related to their intercultural experience in the field.

The texts demonstrate the dynamics and uniqueness of the experienced situations as well as the unpredictability of events in female field research. They reveal the researchers' everyday lives in which time and spatial border between private life and academic-research work has been distorted. Hence, they expose the "dichotomy of "life" and "work" which […] is perplexed by the experience of field work" (Leibing A., McLean A., "Learn to Value Your Shadow!" An Introduction to the Margins of Fieldwork. In: McLean, Athena, Annette Leibing, (eds.), The Shadow Side of Fieldwork: Exploring the Blurred Borders between Ethnography and Life." Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing (2007) p.XII).

In her contribution, ***An ethnographic study about women – The female researcher's experience***, **Anna Odrowąż-Coates** addresses selected issues related to the challenges of conducting research as a female researcher in an "alien" sociocultural reality. Her study of women in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia serves as a starting point for considerations about intercultural themes, such as personal difficulties faced during field research and the impact which various stages of field research have on the self of the researcher. The paper also provides an introduction to and discussion on the concept of herstory (as opposed to history) and auto-ethnography as the theoretical foundations of her reflections.

In her essay ***If I were Chechen, I would be a feminist…***, **Agnieszka Gutkowska** recounts her experiences with Chechen migrants and refugees in Poland (working as a proxy in their pleas for refugee status) which allowed her to gain first-hand knowledge of their culture, values and norms of behaviour.

This knowledge was later used in her academic research among the community. The studies centred on the situations of conflict of norms and the boundary line of compromise. The author writes, inter alia, about the dilemmas faced by a female researcher when conducting research among members of a culture whose values are distinct from her own. She also addressed the difficulty of remaining objective and "indifferent" as a scholar studying a community which she became close to through her initial professional and personal involvement as a lawyer.

In the chapter ***"A Scattered Mosaic of Records and Reminiscences": Ženi Lebl's War Odyssey in Her Personal Writings***, **Katarzyna Taczyńska** carries out an in-depth analysis of the autobiographical prose (published in 1990) of a Serbian Jewish scholar and writer, Ženi Lebl. Lebl's memories constitute a record of her individual microhistory, set in the context of macronarration of the so-called "great history". The aim of the text is to bring the forgotten voice of the author out from oblivion along with her "invisible testimonies" (Ubertowska, 2009) about World War II and Goli otok prison camp, as well as to attempt to capture and present a holistic, women-specific memory and narration of the past.

In her article ***A study of women with disabilities - the emancipatory perspective***, **Agnieszka Wołowicz-Ruszkowska** addresses an important issue of how a researcher's worldview can impact the direction of research. The author focuses on the subject of exclusion of women with intellectual disabilities from both feminist research and disability studies. Disability studies treat disability as a state which erases gender and draws all attention to the lack of ability. Based on her own research experience, the author describes the search for a research strategy that would be able to intersect both categories: gender and disability.

In the text ***The dilemmas and passions in intercultural field research – a female pedagogue's ethnographic notes,*** **Urszula Markowska-Manista** presents the theoretical and the practical aspects of female field research. The Author refers to her experience of field explorations conducted in Central Africa, the Horn of Africa and the South Caucasus. She places the subject of female field research between the category of a passion for research and academia and a range of dilemmas, challenges and costs connected with being a female researcher in distant territories in communities which are highly diversified in terms of culture and social structure.

Stemming from her 15 years of conditioning research in the field, **Justyna Pilarska's** article ***Culturally sensitive research - on theory and some good examples*** provides an overview of approaches employed in research conducted in culturally diverse backgrounds. Making her own (female) methodological experiences a point of departure, the author highlights cultural sensitivity as a prerequisite to a researcher's work in cross-cultural contexts, indicating perspectives which a researcher must take under consideration in order to conduct a study which does not objectify the researched and leaves space for local nuances while accepting the strength of diversity. The overview is followed by a discussion of several research designs serving as examples of best practice.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This publication owes much to the advice and suggestions of many people encountered in the field (our subjective experiences) and scholars. We would like to express our gratitude to female authors and female colleagues from our universities, our co-workers: Aleksandra Niedźwiedzka-Wardak as well as translators: Justyna Pilarska, Aleksandra Borzecka and Alexis M. von Zielinski for their content-related support.

Our sincere thanks also goes to all female authors of particular articles collected in the present volume. Each text included in this book is unique, offers not only academic analyses but also reveals fragments and scraps of the researchers' lives. It is a collection of personal accounts from the "field" which serves to lift the curtain on what lies in the background (cf. Douglas, 1999, pp. 3–5).

Anna Odrowąż-Coates*

An ethnographic study about women – The female researcher's experience

Introduction

The paper is based on the autobiographical experience of a female academic from Poland, during a long-term research carried out in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (2010–2012). Sensitive intercultural ethnographic issues are explored together with 'gateways' used to overcome the practical difficulties of field work in this socio-cultural space. The author studies her own personal experiences retrospectively through the use of 'herstory'. The personal difficulties and psychological effects are placed in the centre of the discussion when considering the prolonged interplay with the research situation proceeding, during and following the data collection process, as well as during its further analysis. The paper unveils the long-term effects of field work on the deconstruction and reconstruction of 'self' (the female researcher), which is somewhat underestimated and frequently absent from the field work accounts by social researchers.

The paper consists of five sections. The first is an introductory presentation of the methodological grounding of this paper in herstory and auto-ethnography. The second is a discussion about the personal experiences of a female researcher immersed in an unknown cultural sphere for a prolonged period of time, and discusses the struggles and small victories achieved while being grounded in the field research methodology. The third section contains a critical reflection on the difficulties and 'healing' properties of post research data analysis. The penultimate section details an account of the process of breaking

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with the field, by finding an appropriate theoretical frame in which to place the empirical data. Finally, the paper closes with a discussion about regaining the ability to move on, and to fully and truly leave a complete process of a field study, that includes: preparation, data collection, data analysis, theoretical framing and the sharing of the final findings.

Herstory and auto-ethnography

Herstory is a relatively new method of recounting stories based on the biographies and experiences of women within a modern scientific discourse increasingly affected by an unconcealed female perspective (Ashby, Ohrn, 1995; Kelchner, 2004). Although prefix 'his' in the word 'history' was not a possessive adjective (as it would have been: 'his story'), according to some feminist writers, it emphasizes the connection between writing history from the androcentric perspective, dominated by male actors and narrators, who for centuries, due to a male-oriented social structure, monopolized history and made it male-focused (c.f. Looser, 2000). Deconstructing contemporary history and analysing it from a female perspective, emphasizing the role of women, or telling it from a woman's point of view, is a form of early feminist revisionism (Davis, 1971). It can also be classed as a trend in modern social sciences to place more female characters in the making of history and to go beyond the obvious few: Greek poet Sappho (570 BC), Cleopatra (69–30 BC) ruler of Egypt, or Russian leader Catherine the Great (1729–1796) and widen the visibility of female characters in the history books. It is disquieting to note that only a few female characters are listed amongst the fifty most influential thinkers on Education (Palmer, 2001): Susan Isaac, Simone Weil, Maxine Greene, Margaret Donaldson, Jane Rolan Martin, Nel Noddings and Linda Darling-Hammond; although it has been proven that it is women who still spend more time with their children (Parke, 1996; Thébaud 2010, GEI indicators[1]) and that there is a significant prevalence of women amongst teachers[2]. So why is it that only seven are mentioned? Further-

[1] GEI indicators can be found here: http://www.socialwatch.org/taxonomy/term/527 and http://www.bbc.com/news/world-34808717.

[2] c.f. http://www.telegraph.co.uk/education/educationnews/9849976/Teaching-in-primary-schools-still-seen-as-a-womans-job.html.

more, herstory is not only about archives and mementos from the past[3]. Herstory happens all the time in many areas of activity, both socially and professionally, which were previously not freely available to women before the twentieth century. If one looks at the first female anthropologists, who were pioneers in being female leaders of ethnographic expeditions, such as Margaret Mead (who studied the Arapesh, Mundugumor and Tchambuli tribes, which widened the modern perspective on gender roles), or Elsie Clews Parsons, who studied the native American tribes of Arizona and Mexico, expanding understanding of religiosity, conventionality and social rules, one looks at ground-breaking discoveries that without the women and their courage and scientific curiosity would not have happened. Their expeditions and prolonged immersion in the field became revolutionary gateways for future female researchers, revealing new areas for enquiry, not visible to their predecessors, who due to cultural restrictions were not able to access the female sphere.

It is fair to say that the gender of a researcher has great significance in research situations and this has been extensively discussed in Perks and Thomson's (2006) collection of papers dedicated to the field research methodology of oral history. In her paper entitled *Issues of cross-cultural interviewing* (2006, pp. 166–176), Susan K. Berton argues that her Japanese female respondents were more open and not scared of judgment when speaking to a cultural outsider, who had no significance within their own circles. Being honest and open with a cultural stranger did not pose any danger of gossip, stigmatization or 'loss of face' within their own community (Ibidem). What is more, an ensuing personal approach such as autobiography and auto-ethnography, became a safe way to achieve scientific honesty (Odrowaz-Coates, 2014, pp. 45–56, 2015a, pp. 96–97), where the perspective of the writer, researcher and emotionally involved participant observer are combined within one person making it clear to the readers and allowing them to identify the world view, the intersectional

[3] Herstory penetrates many different areas of science, including for instance biology: Patricia Adair Gowaty, *What is sexual selection and the short herstory of female trait variation, Behavioral Ecology 22 (6) 2011, 1146–1147* and Ringler E., Ringler M., Jehle R.H. dl W (2012), *The Female Perspective of Mating in A. femoralis, a Territorial Frog with Paternal Care – A Spatial and Genetic Analysis*. PLoS ONE 7(6): e40237. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0040237 or Martin Reichard, Steven C. Le Combert, Carl Smith, Sneaking from a female perspective, *Animal Behavior*, *2007, 74,* 679e688, doi:10.1016/j.anbehav.2007.03.005.

positioning and the personal bias of the auto-ethnographer, to make their own judgment about the possible points of view and personal challenges behind the findings. In consequence, on one hand this makes the field research more transparent and more open to interpretation. On the other hand, it puts the researchers in the centre of their study, as designers, executors and narrators in their field research. The researcher is no longer anonymous and hidden behind the scenes, but is fully engaged with the field, with the data collection process, the interpretation of empirical findings and their subsequent analysis. This creates greater opportunities to reach as deep as possible into the core of observed practices, to explore the hidden meanings and values present in everyday life situations (cf. Anderson, 2006, pp. 373–395). Moreover, the researcher has an excellent opportunity to engage not only with their own findings but also with the overall research process, its difficulties, flaws and the controversies that may occur. It opens the field up to reveal cultural relativism and discovers vulnerabilities of all social actors involved in the research situation.

The consciousness of the researcher and the consciousness of the researched, interact with one another to create a new conjoint perspective on social reality, promoting hybrids of meaning (cf. Spry, 2001, pp. 706–732), enriched and negotiated by multiple narrators, who unwittingly work together to explore the symbolic field. This configuration dissolves the initial cultural boundaries between the researcher and the researched, promoting higher level of reciprocity in the process of study. In practicing this form of auto-ethnography the researchers have managed to blur the borders between self and the objects of their study (cf. Clough, 2000, pp. 278–291; Chang, 2007; Reed-Danahay, 1997) to the benefit of the future 'consumers' and critics of their work. The intersections of gender and ethnicity were both predominant factors in the data collection process. The gender difference between the researcher and the researched might in some cases, pose a significant obstruction for the successful data collection procedure (cf. Gurney, 1985; Katila, Meriläinen, 1999). Therefore being a member of the same sex is not exclusively advantageous in gender segregated settings, such as traditional Islamic states, but also in much wider contexts. Some white researchers question the influence of researcher's ethnicity, when exploring different ethnic communities (Edwards, 1990; Phillips, 1987), which will be discussed next in regards to this particular case.

In the two-year long study of women in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA), the researcher and the researched interacted on a daily basis, engaging in everyday life situations. These included not only observations but also ad-hoc conversations and in-depth discussions about the situation of women in KSA. The interviews were focused around their own individual experiences, which they were more willing to share with another female, rather than with a male. More importantly in this particular case, if the researcher were male it would be impossible to speak directly to Saudi women, making a successful data collection process completely impossible. The researcher herself has also experienced, on daily basis, what it feels like to be a woman who lives in KSA. The ethnic difference between the researcher and the researched had significant consequences, giving her enhanced freedom to cross cultural boundaries and ask often uncomfortable questions. Being aware of the critical voices about focusing on the experiences of white researchers during studies of ethnic 'others', which may lead to the silencing and marginalization of the researched groups (Blair, 1995, pp. 248–261), the researcher used field notes to register the voices of Saudi female respondents. It should be noted that women taking part in the study claimed that they did not feel judged; probably because the researcher posed no threat, as she had no significance in terms of involvement in the normal social control mechanisms and lacked in 'wasta' (understood as a social influence, based on birth and affluent connections) in the country's social structure. Therefore the women felt more at ease discussing private or controversial matters and were more open than they would have been with a member of their own community (cf. Burton, 2006, op. cit.). It had a significant impact on the access to information and the honesty of the research participants. Similar accounts can be found in cross-cultural research abroad:

> *The women I interviewed appeared to feel comfortable with me despite the fact that we did not have shared experiences in terms of ethnicity, religion or profession. No doubt my gender was an important factor which helped facilitate the research process* (Egharevba, 2001, p. 234).

The above quote comes from a British female researcher of African origin, who carried out interviews with South Asian respondents. Being a female was a condition *sine qua non* in the Saudi field study in order to be able to talk directly

to local women and to arrange individual private meetings with them. There was also a level of curiosity amongst interviewees about life outside the Kingdom or culturally forbidden practices, which was beneficial and enabled the researcher to meet with a wide range of women from different casts and social classes. In fact, the obvious cultural difference, in not wearing a head scarf *('hijab')* or a veil *('niquab'),* served as an interesting tool to attract local women in their mission to help the unsuspecting individual to blend in with the crowd. Women often approached the author to show empathy with the 'stranger', who did not know what a woman should wear in public. Others had good intentions that went far beyond simple fashion sense. They were often seriously worried about the researcher's salvation and hoped to show her the path to become a good, god-fearing Sunni Muslim woman, who in consequence would be given access to paradise. There were some women who believed firmly in the anti-western propaganda stereotypes about a complete lack of morals and the outrageous exploitation of women in the West, 'who are forced to work outside their homes', 'engage sexually with any man on their way' and 'frequently become porn stars or prostitutes' (paraphrasing the shared beliefs of the researched women). They felt sorry for the Western woman and were curious about what they considered to be their terrible fate in life. This was another way to meet random strangers in town, who in consequence became future interviewees. The willingness to learn English was yet another "door opener" as many women were keen to practice conversational English. Finding gate keepers who would arrange access for the researcher to their wider family, was a key to the successful diversification of age and intersectional positioning of the interviewees. Bedouin women were the hardest group to reach, as they lived in traditional settings in the desert. They rarely spoke any English and were hard to engage with, without an interpreter. The researcher had to rely on younger women from their tribe to translate for her, which was far from ideal as the internal group exposure factor might have affected what was said. It may be one of the reasons why they were the smallest group of interviewed women, who yet turned out to be the most welcoming, engaging and talkative. They also honoured the 'strange Western guest' at desert parties and picnics by having her sit with the older, most respected women and importantly, to eat first. Being a woman was indeed highly favourable for the research of women and came with many privileges, yet the struggles and the problems that being a woman entails have been placed in the main focus of this paper.

At the verge of sanity. Personal accounts of difficulties in the pro-longed field research

Case studies (Yin, 1994) and ethnographic studies (Malinowski, 1944) both come under a wider frame of 'field research'. They also share the same set of methods used for data collection: observation, interviews, analysis of documents and of existing data sets (Tellis, 1997). However, case studies can be descriptive, explanatory or instrumental and include single or multiple cases (Stake, 2005). Case studies are outwardly looking to document a phenomenon within a closed system, whilst ethnographic studies are more inward looking (Rosen 1991), embedding the researcher within the research space and turning them into a 'perfect spy' (cf. Cohen et al., 2003) to find hidden rituals, rules and to gain a profound understanding of cultural codes. To become a 'perfect spy' one must adjust to the explored field and deconstruct themselves accordingly with the new set of rules and customs that will mean closer access to the core of the social practices being investigated.

The process of transformation starts early on. Being a woman, one is expected to enter Saudi soil dressed according to the local customs. One must wear an *abaya* (an all-covering loose black dress) and preferably a head scarf. One should not look directly into men's eyes as it may be read as sexual provocation. One should speak quietly and avoid mixed company in public. One must be able to prove that any male companion is a member of her close family or a husband to avoid imprisonment by the religious police (*mutawa*). Women should not be seen or heard as loud or overenthusiastic behaviour in public is met with reprimand. Punishing looks, spitting towards the woman with disgust or even a verbal rebuke may take place, particularly in the more conservative parts of the Kingdom. Women, even mothers, the elderly or highly educated, professional females, suddenly become completely dependent on their male guardians. Men vacating the airplane, who might have been involved in conversations with the woman before entering Saudi territory, suddenly cease to notice her existence and the process of transformation must begin. This moment fits in well within the Goffmanian self-mortification concept (Goffman, 1971, p. 35, 47, 49), where a new role obscures who one truly is and forces one to put on a social mask. For the researcher, this mask may at first itch uncomfortably, bruise or even burn, yet it is necessary to be worn if one

wishes to be welcomed in the researched field and to do well. One must accept that the process of adaptation and assimilation will take place reconstructing one's behaviour and social appearance. Prolonged wearing of the accepted social mask may lead to the embracement of a new set of customs or beliefs and it may even lead to permanent changes in some character traits and to a stronger identification with the new, more culturally sensitive self.

Participation with the 'natives' to examine their routine practices in their own social setting is an important way to become familiar with the native point of view of the social event one witnesses or takes part in. Malinowski (1922, p. 24) makes the argument that the researcher, as an outsider to his research community, remains unaware at the beginning of his research process of the context and intrinsic meaning of the act performed by people of the examined community. The immersion in practice and meaning can only be achieved through a long-term participation by the field researcher. Participation in everyday life situations provides opportunities for the researcher to collect rich details surrounding raw data related to social interactions, surroundings and events, through their observation in a natural setting. With this method, the researcher may obtain accounts of situations in the participants' own words, which gives the researcher access to the concepts that the subjects are used to in everyday life (cf. Burgess, 1984). Face-to-face interchange with those who have witnessed the reality can help to uncover all the details of the information related to history and the dynamics of that reality (cf. Denzin, 1970). It provides learning opportunities in the field and opens up possibilities for encountering an "unexpected phenomenon that may be more significant than anything the fieldworker could have foreseen" (Whyte, 1984, p. 27).

During field studies, some situations can be so unexpected and puzzling that they may have an unsettling effect for the researcher's mind. Others may be so unrealistic, unbelievable or unusual that the researcher may wonder if they were even worth recording or mentioning, as people who did not experience them might not even believe they really occurred. There is also guilt to be considered. Seeing that someone is subjected to unfair treatment, that they suffer, that they are exploited, may probably lead to a natural human reaction to provide comfort and to look for help. This may go beyond the researcher's agency and capacity, leaving them with conflicting emotions of guilt and sadness for the unfortunate

individuals they cannot help. Another trigger for a sense of 'culpability' may be related to the usage of someone's personal accounts, when they open up and start to talk truthfully and fully about their lives. This is actually healthy for the research work, as it leads to more responsible management of notes and records, more careful choice of subjects and triggers important ethical questions that should be posed to ensure that field research materials can be utilized effectively. Some basic questions to be asked are: can it be quoted directly? How can it be used without harming the informant? Will it be fair to reveal details that shed unfavourable light on the researched community? There are various ways to address these significant problems. Here are just a few, listed consecutively: ensuring the complete anonymity of the interviewees, making sure that individual cases are shown and placed in a set frame of time and space, without generalizations or talking about the whole community.

To engage willing participants who are aware of the data collection process is preferable, but unfortunately it is not always possible or sensible. It may be particularly impractical if one believes that by revealing the research aims, one would either antagonize respondents or make them give politically correct or dishonest answers. One may even place oneself in danger of being expelled from the country, not to mention even worse scenarios. Some researchers may abandon their field in such circumstances, due to the conflicting pressures of maintaining high ethical standards and gaining first-hand information. Others will look for ways to overcome these issues, find ways in which to compromise and aim to explore fields that are obscured or almost impossible to penetrate for an outsider. The drive to gain knowledge of inaccessible groups is very strong, but the ethical struggle remains with the researchers, not only during the research process, but also a considerable time after the completion of their assignment. Not all are able to continue their research 'incognito' and break under pressure to be fully transparent.

Being a hidden observer is a difficult situation to be in. Probably one of the most famous cases of such research conduct was reported and explained by William Foote White (1943) in his ethnographic study of an impoverished and crime-ridden area of Boston *Street Corner Society: The Social Structure of an Italian Slum*. How to be honest and be yourself when you cannot reveal the real purpose of your engagement with the researched field? Some may find it equally difficult to not be overexcited about their findings and having no one to share it

with, may make them unintentionally reveal their discoveries with the indigenous people, putting themselves in a compromising situation, and in some cases considerable risk. This risk may not only be for the researcher but also for the collected research materials, which could be removed from them and destroyed if they show data which would compromise the State-controlled social system.

A good resource of information about the emotional challenges faced by the field researchers may be found in Lee-Treweek and Linkogle's book: *Danger in the field* (2000). One of the challenges lies within the social nature of the researcher and their need to share observations, worries and stories, to off-load and work through the difficult situations (cf. Gilbert, 2000). Discussion with potential participants of the research is out of the question, as it may compromise the anonymity of the individuals involved, and impede further data collection. Ethnographic diary entries may be in a way cathartic for the researchers, allowing them to poor out their emotions in a written form. In the author's experience, sharing some of the field notes and discussing some of the situations with an external audience of confidants outside of the research environment served well as an emotional valve, letting off steam. It also allowed the author to read again the work that she has written and look critically at the content of her emails, often identifying and then being able to remove her own emotional charge. In a state controlled community, the anonymity of the interviewees is of paramount importance (cf. Wiles et al., 2008). Revealing too many details or leaving the real names of subjects in printed works may not only cause them to be reprimanded or ostracized, but may even cause the death of the women in question. Collected data therefore becomes a heavy weight to carry for a researcher[4]. In the instance of the research in KSA, eliminating the photographs that reveal women's faces from the researcher's archives was almost heart-breaking, as it would have been a highly interesting material for

[4] For more information about ethics in field research cf.: Israel, M., Hay, I. (2006). *Research Ethics for Social Scientists*. London: Sage; Power R, Harkinson S. (1993), Accessing hidden populations: the use of indigenous interviewers. In: p. Aggleton, p. Davies, G. Hart, editors. *Aids: facing the second decade.* London: Falmer Press; pp. 109–117 and Morrow, Virginia, Boddy, Janet and Lamb, Rowena (2014) *The ethics of secondary data analysis: learning from the experience of sharing qualitative data from young people and their families in an international study of childhood poverty.* Working Paper. National Centre for Research Methods, Southampton 2014, available at: http://sro.sussex.ac.uk/49123/.

visual analysis. However, the risk for women in the pictures was considered too high for their faces to be shown.

Since the researcher is immersed in the vivid, everyday life of the 'other' culture during the time of the study, there is little opportunity for the researcher to fully disengage from it, even when retreating back to the Western compound (Odrowaz-Coates, 2015b). Constantly looking for sources of information, such as local newspapers in English or local channels on TV, means that the research continues, even when the researcher is away from the live informants. Other Westerners discussing their everyday life experiences within the compound walls and beyond, keep the information flow alive at all times. It is difficult to switch the 'research oriented' mind off and go into a 'down' mode, which would allow the researcher to ignore what is said and what takes place. Trying to reorganize notes taken during interviews, organizing one's thoughts and typing them up on the computer to make new entries for the ethnographic diary, makes one re-live the earlier situations and conversations, as if they were repeating over and over in one's head. Moreover, making sudden connections, finding clues to possible answers to pressing questions, feeling that some of the interviewees might have been trying to tell one something between the lines... fill the researcher's mind with constant engagement with the field she has been trying to explore. The thinking process is not free of worry. Questions come to mind: 'Did I get this right?', 'Were they honest with me?', 'What would they gain from saying this or that?', 'Were they trying to impress or shock?', 'How should I capture the emotions accompanying the cultural exchanges during 'in vivo' situations?', 'Have I forgotten to write all the details down?', 'Do I remember what the interviewee was wearing and is this of any significance?'. It is also apparent that some of the discoveries can be quite disturbing. If one comes across a victim of injustice, of violence or of poverty, one may feel uneasy and may not be able to stop thinking about ways in which to provide comfort or practical help for the misfortunate individual. Such emotional involvement makes the researcher feel alive, alert and fully engaged with the research process. Overall, this is a positive situation for a successful, deep study, but it is not clear what negative effects it may have on the researcher's wellbeing. A level of resistance and situational detachment is necessary in order not to burn the amicable bridges that have been arduously

built with the locals, and to remain rational. Some areas of research can be very sensitive. For example, women opening up and talking about their sexuality, or their marital life in the bedroom. This level of conversation requires a considerable amount of trust, which becomes a pressing issue if one cannot be honest about the study. Sometimes it indicates desperation amongst women to find a non-judgmental confidant. Is it sufficient that their accounts remain fully anonymous in the notes and further writings or should one just dispose of this material as being too personal and too controversial? If one does, one loses a lot of precious information, if one does not, it may feel rather awkward. These decisions put ongoing psychological pressure on the researcher when in the field and once the research is complete (Becker, 1964, pp. 267–284).

With the best of intentions, the author of this article attempted on a number of occasions to reveal the truth about her scientific interests to a few of the 'locals' that she had a good relationship with. The first time this happened was with a local family during a meal with the male hosts. On hearing the truth about her intentions, the conversation immediately dropped into a defensive and unpleasant mode, where the hosts, unprovoked, started to tell the researcher that her study had no place in their perfect society, where women were protected and treated like precious diamonds. There was nothing to see or hear here, they claimed, as women are perfectly happy and under great care. The one-sided conversation led to an increase in aggression, which was overcome with a 'white lie', by saying that the research is actually about female pilots. At the time of the research, there was only one female pilot of Saudi origin in the country, so the conversation calmed down and suspicion was alleviated. However, from this point onwards, contact with this particular family's female side became restricted and difficult. At the initial stage of the study, one of the middle class women, when told she might be helpful in obtaining information about women for scientific purposes, warned the researcher that she should never discuss her plans with anyone or may face immediate deportation, or even a worse fate. Suddenly it became very difficult to balance the sense of ethical integrity with the sense of scientific inquisitiveness. Countless nights were spent on reading existing research materials on the role and purpose of hidden observers in hard to reach or hard to infiltrate communities, where not only the results would be meaningless (turning interviews into no more than PR statements) but

the researcher's life and wellbeing might be at risk, if discovered. This was not a safe research environment for a beginner or an emotionally fragile individual. For all researchers in this position, the decision to carry on with the project must be taken carefully and allowed to mature by cautiously balancing and managing the risks and the opportunities.

Being a part of the researched community for a prolonged period of time enables true immersion in the field. If given enough time, a researcher may overcome the initial fears or prejudice that often come with the insertion into an unknown cultural space. It gives the researcher the necessary time to adjust and to 'fit in', or even to temporarily acculturate to the researched culture. This means of course some level of change in behaviour in everyday life strategies or even in self-presentation. This implies an accompanying change of the self-image. It is often particularly difficult to be a member of a disadvantaged group, having the status of an 'infidel', of an ethnic 'other' and sharing the common female experience in a male dominated social structure, as it removes the researcher from a position of power. It may lead to a deconstruction of the self (the female researcher) and reconstruction of the self (the female researcher in a new, unknown cultural sphere) under new circumstances. It can be quite tempting to seek some form of retribution in application of the Western-oriented bias. Overcoming such bias becomes increasingly difficult when regularly faced with hardship and compromising experiences. However, this negative effect may be overcome by two important factors, both related to temporarility. If there is enough time to go by through the adjustment phases successfully, the bias may be surpassed and put to one side. Aiming to get to the core of events, actions and motivations of people becomes the key source and main purpose of scientific enquiry.

Furthermore, if time is left between the field research and the desk analysis of field research materials, it allows one to come back to the subject with some distance, with composed 'self' and a calm head. The researcher becomes somewhat disengaged from the situations previously experienced, and at the same time is able to give them a deeper meaning and understanding that a complete outsider would have been able to give in their place. The analysis phase will be discussed in more detail in a further part of this paper, so now it is time to return back to the field and back to the new, revised role within the researched community. In this case the role of a non-Muslim woman in Saudi

Arabia, who decided to carry out field research incognito, to gain first-hand information about the situation of women, children and ethnic minorities in Saudi Arabia.

After a while, one becomes accustomed to the new role (as a hidden observer), the role taken on when outside the compound gates. The residents of the compound were aware that they were being observed and questioned the purpose behind the scientific studies. All became willing participants of the research process. For the compound residents, the process broke the mundane reality of the total institution that they were in (cf. Odrowaz-Coates, 2015b). It cannot be said the same for the local population, not aware that they were under the scrutiny of social theory and methodology. There were some curious Saudi women, who thought that the researcher might be a journalist due to the constant note taking when in town and due to the questions that she asked at any given opportunity. A desire to meet the unknown, to interact with the 'other' was strong enough to overcome the suspicion. For others, the motivation to convince the foreigner to change their religion and see the light of Sunni Islam was also helpful. Young children with blond hair were sometimes the trigger of interest and interaction with local women. Traditional hospitality was also a good ice-breaker, not to mention the excitement of meeting a western woman, who due to stereotypes and myths, was perceived as oppressed by western men, sexually deviant, promiscuous and dirty. There was hope for some saucy stories and a fascination with the everyday freedoms of the west, where women work and drive cars. Conversational English was also a tool to engage in meaningful dialogues. Women wanted to practice their English, which had increased in popularity with access to foreign TV and the introduction of English teaching in public schools.

It is not easy to break with the field and with personal emotions that accompanied certain situations, it requires time. It may even be advisable to put one's work aside for a few months, take a break and to look at it through a new lens and with a fresh mind. Emotions trap the free flow of thought and one becomes a prisoner of limited interpretative zones, instead of opening oneself up for a new, wider and critical understanding of the past events and data. Certain situations can have a traumatizing effect for a prolonged time. An example of such a critical event would be when previously unknown individuals (all men, but sometimes using female representatives to negotiate the price and avoid direct

contact), would follow the researcher in town and offer to buy her one-year old son. The fact that one of these people followed her all over the town and repeatedly asked questions such as: 'what does your husband do? is he important? does he have a lot of *wasta*? Is he a Saudi man?' resulted in author of this paper staying inside the compound walls with the children for three months. She only went out at night with two other wives and a private driver, in order not to expose the children to any form of danger. This type of incident is often met with incredulity by the western people, but it did indeed happen. Being 'trapped' behind a small, western compound's walls is also not healthy for the personal wellbeing. Filling one's time with pointless exercise, walking around the same roads and houses over and over again in an effort to kill time and fill the day can make one feel enclosed and imprisoned. The difficulties of living in the compound, that were indeed more harsh for women, were described in the article entitled: *A gated community as a soft and gendered total institution* (Odrowąż-Coates, 2015b), where many similarities between Goffmanian total institutions and western gated compounds in Saudi Arabia are to be outlined:

- *In total institutions, all aspects of life are conducted in the same place and under the same central authority* (Goffman, 1971 [1961], p. 17). Everything happens within the compound walls, under the company rules.
- *Daily activities are carried on in the immediate company of a large group of others, all of whom are treated alike and required to do the same thing together* (Ibidem). For instance on a shuttle to work, shuttle to shop, during group sports, group eating, group swimming, group lounging, group drinking, group walking.
- *The day's activities are tightly scheduled, with one activity leading at prearranged time into the next, the whole sequence of activities being imposed from above by a system of explicit formal rulings and a body of officials* (Ibidem). Compound life is run by timetables and all activities are either planned and provided or at least encouraged by the officials.
- *The enforced activities are brought together into a single rational plan purportedly designed to fulfil the official aims of the institution* (Ibidem). This keeps the Western entities out of the public sphere, protecting people on both sides of the wall from what is considered a 'threatening' cultural exchange.

These characteristics are found in places other than total institutions and in the case of this compound, a similar pattern is observed. Here, compound individuals are treated collectively and carry out the day's activities in the immediate company of a group of similar others (Ibidem). For a member of a liberal western society, the sudden entrapment within a totalitarian state (Sunni Islamic Monarchy based on Sharia law) and being limited to the total institution within such a state, is difficult to embrace.

Several unsettling events revolved around the author's personal feeling of safety, which was compromised by the continuous terrorist threat. Whether it was real or not, it was real to the residents. At the neighbouring, male only compound, an armed man arrived at the gates and asked the guards if they would let him in as he wished to kill westerners. The man was arrested and one's own compound went on alert, with no one being allowed in or out for some considerable time. Due to persistent threat of terrorism, compound residents received training in safety procedures, how to find a safe location and lock oneself in behind a metal door. Wives had also been trained in the use of a special button on the bus, which they were to press if they came under attack or if the bus simply broke down, so that the local military could locate the wives' bus immediately and respond as quickly as possible. The continued high level of security in Saudi Arabia derives from the tragic events of the terrorist attacks against 3 western compounds in Riyadh (12 May 2003), the massacre of foreign workers in Al-Khobar (29 May 2004) and ongoing smaller incidents of terrorist attacks. Local events fuelled the feeling of a real external threat to the westerners. The author experienced this when her compound was frequently locked-down and put on alert due to increased security measures caused by other incident. Sirens would alert people to lock themselves in their secure areas and not to come out. In one particular case, the alert was caused by the shooting of a man who drove through the gates of a nearby military base without stopping, and this only added to the sense of fear. Later, in 2012, the arrests of eight terrorists who were plotting attacks in Riyadh and Jeddah, kept the threat real (Arab News 2012). The security measures justified the need for individuals to report their plans of travel to the local police authority. However, one was never sure if the police could be trusted, so this rule was rarely followed by compound residents.

Reading about the harsh punishments of Sharia law and living beside it every day was also quite disturbing. Being a grown up, a fairly independent

woman, a mother and a professional, the researcher would feel humiliated and upset when being told to cover her hair or her face by the religious police (*mutawa*) when shopping in a local town. Other western women felt the same and often discussed this issue. Reliance on a private driver, a husband or the single daily bus for wives was a necessity for the author as women were not and still are not allowed to drive (2016). Not being able to seek medical treatment outside of the compound for oneself or one's children without a husband's presence was unsettling due to the author's husband spending considerable time away from the compound on business travel to other cities or abroad. The fact that one needs an exit visa to leave KSA added to the feeling of being trapped.

Other unsettling events took place during the research period. A Saudi woman was hit by a car and the African driver of the wives' bus became immediately under suspicion of hitting her by the sheer fact that the western women on the bus made him stop to help (Odrowaz-Coates, 2015a, pp. 216–218). The researcher's visit to a hidden 'beauty parlour' (such places are usually not overtly advertised) revealed new angles to the lives of women in KSA, the health risks (unsterile instruments) and the dehumanizing treatment of foreign staff due to the uncontrolled and unregulated nature of these establishments (Ibidem, pp. 220–223). The situation of an old Bedouin lady fainting at a shopping mall during Ramadan raised some negative emotions, because of the woman's insistence to observe the Ramadan fast, despite suffering from diabetes and her rejection of assistance due to the fear of being discovered out of the home by her husband (Ibidem, p. 180).

Several women-only universities in the Kingdom were approached to help in finding academic papers on the situation of women in KSA. Of those that replied, their responses consisted of ideologically influenced papers dedicated to heaping praise on how wonderful the situation for women was. The researcher felt that she could not find a way to overcome the wall of political correctness present at the state funded facilities.

Talking to third country nationals (maids) and finding out about cases of abuse was shocking and unsettling. The researcher felt unable to help these less fortunate souls. Meeting women begging for money and finding out that they were Saudi nationals, not African illegal immigrants, as the public maintained, was also a dramatic eye opener.

Listening to the life stories of these people was emotionally challenging, as the researcher felt she was unable to help them in any adequate way. Moreover, they were not expecting help from 'infidels' and for some unknown reason they felt they can offload their emotional ballast and in desperation cross the taboo lines. Their voices and the look in their eyes remained with the author for a very long time. Even now recalling she can see them again and is able to re-live the casual interview situation again.

Throughout her stay in KSA she often had a feeling of a lost agency and desired to terminate her stay prematurely. The author was very lucky to have a supportive husband and children with her. Without them and their assistance, the author would not have been able to tolerate two years in Saudi Arabia. It should be said that it may be too difficult for a single female researcher to carry out a similar study even if she were lucky enough to arrange an entry visa. The cases above are not exhaustive but include some of the more severe examples of personal struggle, those which the author had considerable difficulty describing in this paper. Other difficulties faced during the research period were less upsetting and therefore she feels more comfortable sharing them openly here. There were cases when random strangers in a supermarket would pick up the children and hug them and kiss them. Is this a cultural issue? The author's favourite story is about picnics in the desert, where everyone eats from one large plate, placed in the centre of the group. Usually the most important people eat first, the elders and the guests, the most respected mothers, young unmarried women and the children, then the servants. The author was lucky to be treated well, as a welcomed 'd' missing guest and given the opportunity to eat first with the older women, who would take pity on her and throw pieces of lamb or goat to her, thinking she would not know how to rip the meat of the bone with her bare hands. It was quite an awkward experience as she is not fond of meat and quite satisfied with the rice, that the goat was served on. This was not a badly intended act by the hosts but a positive gesture towards the author and her wellbeing. Usually, after a while a host would turn up with a plastic dessert spoon just for the author to eat with. Perhaps she looked pathetic in the eyes of the locals, hesitant to scoop up the rice with her fingers. Another ridiculous event took place in a hospital in Taif, where one of the children needed immunization. The two year old son of the researcher was rather bored of waiting and quite noisy and active, so one of the nurses, out

of the best intentions, offered to give him a sleeping injection, so his mother could relax and not have to chase him around. It was not a joke and was rather shocking. Also, both children had occasional difficulties in recognizing who is who in elevators and crowded places, because at the level of their eyes, all dresses (*abayas*) were the same and with most women's faces hidden, it often occurred that they would grab an unknown woman and hug her, mistaking them for their mother. During everyday life situations this researcher had little control over the events that took place around her and having a young family with her, as much as it may be practical for family life and access to the respondents, is not ideal for keeping emotions aside.

It cannot be stressed enough that field research is not an easy task. Things often do not go as planned. Researchers studying people, may expect to deal with a high emotional charge from them and will also have to deal with their own emotional ballast during and after the interactions. Donald Thomas Campbell writes poignantly, that:

> *the subjective impression of the many participants and observers of the social experiment acquire a relevance equal to that of the computer output. If... the qualitative impressions are markedly at variance with the computer output, the validity of the latter should be suspected fully as much as the validity of the former, in particular, an attempt should be made to understand the source of the discrepancy* (Campbell, Boruch, 1975, p. 199).

This quote, although intended as a critical thought about quasi experiments, can be extended to all sorts of field research that happens 'in vivo' with live people. It shows how difficult it is to handle the cause and effect that may be created spontaneously by the researcher without even knowing. This can make field research difficult and one may become tangled in the web of personal and situational conditioning. Moreover, it may turn out that the selected method of enquiry becomes impossible to apply successfully in the changing situations and intersectional social ambient. A carefully pre-planned and cautiously executed plan to employ grounded theory, turned out to be futile and caused an unexpected need to change the main research method (Odrowaz-Coates, 2015a, pp. 71–80, 92–93). This can be quite unsettling when the researcher is already engaged with the field and

committed to the method initially chosen. As it turns out, field work requires a high degree of flexibility and creativity to not give up and to not waste the preliminary set of data collected. Changing the lens of enquiry from grounded theory to ethnography and auto-ethnography, required much deliberation and constant worry if this method would be able to overcome the obstacles met by grounded theory methodology when confronted with the Saudi social matrix. In fact, during field study 'in vivo' researchers cannot ever be a hundred percent sure that they are following the correct procedure or that they will be able to fully embrace the rules invented by theoreticians from the safety and clarity of their desks. Field research in practice goes beyond the laboratory, it is more out of control than any theory can prepare for and it is also more unpredictable, as it often depends on human emotions and actions. This makes field research extremely appealing to scientists who prefer the excitement of the unknown to the safety of their desk at home. It can be a positive break from the routine of desk research and didactics, bringing social theories to life and conjoining theory with practice. It may also reveal flaws in theory and the impracticalities of methodological models when confronted with the reality of the social realm. Field research is essential to bring the science out of the laboratory and in return, to bring the real world back into the office. In *The Interpretation of Cultures,* a distinguished anthropologist and ethnographer supports the idea that search for meaning is critical and therefore hands on field research is much desired:

> *man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun... I take culture to be those webs, and the analysis of it to be therefore not an experimental science in search of law but an interpretative one in search of meaning. It is explication I am after…* (Geertz, 1973, pp. 4–5).

Field research, brings scholars close to researched communities and grants them a deeper understanding of people in their 'little social world' (Ocejo, 2012, p. 18), which is particularly practical when alternative methods of data collection fail. William F.Whyte (1943) through a field study, explores how youthful local identities produce adult social configurations in later life, whether offending or otherwise. Amongst renowned field research that reflects this statement one may find Howard Gans's *(1962)* study of Boston work-

ing-class Americans of Italian decent and their reactions to urban displacement, Philippe Bourgois' (1995) study of children's lives alongside crack dealers in East Harlem area of New York and Richard Lloyd's description of nightlife as a business and a social arena at Chicago Wicker Park's neighbourhood[5]. The notion of internecine territorial conflict resonates in later works by Suttles (1968) and throughout the later corpus of American ethnographic gang studies (Decker and Van Winkle, 1996), where revealing one's identity as a researcher would mean a death sentence or serious disfiguration from a brutal attack. When looking at the use of field research in educational studies, Wolcott (1973) comes to mind, as he invents an ingenious research plan where Head Teachers play a central role as field researchers and ethno-autobiographers, sharing their experiences and observations as participant observers of everyday school situations. Barrie Thorne (1993) is also of interest as she spent 8 months and then a further 3 months of ongoing field research observations at two schools in US, where she noted all interactions in the class, in the corridors, at the playground and at lunch, to identify any gender differences and to see how they interplay in children's lives. Gender differences in the educational process were also explored by R. King (1979), when he researched pre-school children and managed to blend in so well, he almost became a part of the school equipment in the children's perception, due to his pro-longed presence in the class and complete lack of interaction with the children observed. The list of meaningful field research will not be exhausted even if one adds another significant field study, that shows how ethnography can be used to analyse institutions and the ideology of heritage (Bazin, Selim, 2006). The volume of the worthwhile field studies speaks for itself. Field research is a well-grounded, scientifically sound way of exploring people's lives, their everyday practices, motivations and desires, all internal and external control mechanisms, rituals and beliefs. The variety of tools used for data collection and the direct access to the first-hand information give this method of study a significant privilege of building a complex and intersectional picture of social realm, explained and understood by those involved on the inside.

[5] Other renowned American field studies include Mary Patillo's analysis of class conflicts among African-American residents of that city's South Side and Gina M Perez's multi-sited research about transnational lives and identities between Chicago's Humboldt Park neighborhood and the outskirts of San Juan, Puerto Rico.

Leaving the field behind. The healing properties of post-research analysis

The author felt quite exhausted after her five-year engagement with the researched field and eager to close this phase of her professional experience. In fact she made a promise to herself that this must be the final paper related to Saudi Arabia and that she would not come back to the field again in any shape or form. The application of a variety of theories and interpretative frames led to the publication of multiple works, which may have created the impression that the field became a form of obsession, calling the author back for more and more engagement. Every paper opened new questions and areas of exploration imprisoning the researcher's mind. She is aware that she had experienced a profound cultural shock (cf. Oberg, 1960), which lasted throughout the whole experience, albeit varying in intensity. This is not to say that she has ever perceived cultural differences encountered in the field as exotic and she has by far tried to avoid falling under Edward W. Said's (1978) definition of orientalism in any aspect of her study. Twelve months of preparatory research, reading about Saudi culture and customs, and looking for autobiographical accounts of women who lived in Saudi Arabia in various circumstances, did not, however, protect the author from experiencing cultural shock when actually living on a daily basis within the specific culture of KSA. Reading about the violation of human rights in KSA and actually witnessing them are two distant entities. Finding that human rights abuses are being justified by certain religious interpretations of holy texts and therefore legitimized and automatically supported by the majority was difficult to come to terms with. It was a positive motivator to purchase several copies of these holy texts and plow through them in a search for the truth about their content and their possible meaning. Local people were keen to guide and explain the nuances in the texts and convincingly maintained that any confusion derives from poor translation from the original Arabic into other languages and that the original version is the only true and correct, unchangeable and divine word of Allah. Locals would often use the numbers of US executions in conversations to compare them with much smaller number of executions in KSA in an attempt to prove that their society is 'superior'. Any references to human rights, no matter how universal they are, may cause some to criticize the whole data collection pro-

cess as tainted with a post-colonial[6] white feminist supremacy drive. Nothing can be further from the truth. The author often speculates that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia might be the new colonizer, one which colonizes by the dissemination of the Wahhabi interpretation of the Quran and the funding of multiple mosques and madrasas around the world (cf. Prokop, 2006). It is worth noting that the author was born in communist Poland. Her personal history differs from those who claim the right to brand other researchers with a post-colonial stigma. Poland has never possessed any colonies and did not engage in the slave trade. The country has also repeatedly been a victim of invasions and the loss of territory, the shape of which has changed many times over the last millennium. After a short period of independence between the two World Wars, Poland fell under the occupation of Nazi forces and then after the war, under the Soviet Union's dictatorship. Freedom is a very meaningful and precious value for Polish people, who still remember repressions, shortages in food supplies and a lack of freedom of speech. In addition, the author's personal family history is one with a very long history of freedom fighting. One may ask: what is a freedom 'enthusiast' doing entering a research field placed under a totalitarian regime? The appreciation of freedom makes the author driven to discover the reasons behind social injustice and human pain. She wished to give a voice to the subjugated strata of Saudi society, to the indigenous women. She wanted to pour these voices onto paper and liberate their personal agency. To her surprise, it turned out that the Saudi women that she talked to, in the majority, were fully involved in the process of cultural reproduction, legitimizing and reinforcing oppressing practices. They declared to be happy and fulfilled, satisfied with what is available to them and capable of developing their own methods of dealing with the issues. They often wanted to justify difficult and limiting cultural practices as favourable towards them in the long run. They found positives in what western women perceived as negatives and were very convincing. The less fortunate few experienced how the social system disadvantages women, those who either rebel against it, or are simply unlucky with their family and marital relations. Either way, being a woman in Saudi Arabia is not easy and is not the same for everyone. The

[6] On post-colonial studies see: Bhabha, Homi K. (1991). *"Race", time and the revision of modernity*. *Oxford Literary Review*,1–2, pp. 193–219 and Bhambra, Gurminder K. (2014). *Connected sociologies*, London: Bloomsbury.

female experience is diversified by age, ethnicity, religion, social status and individual family orientation. When speculating on what effect one may cause by stimulating thoughts of 'freedom' in the interviewed women and encouraging them to reflect on their situation, the pedagogical thoughts of Paulo Freire may seem apt:

> *The pedagogy of the oppressed [is] a pedagogy which must be forged with, not* ***for*** *the oppressed (by the individuals or [groups of] people)in the incessant struggle to regain their humanity. This pedagogy makes oppression and its causes objects of reflection by the oppressed, and* ***from that reflection will come liberation*** (Freire, 1982, p. 25).

Freire took the position of a critical cultural educator, who would encourage teachers and other intellectuals to struggle against the dominant cultural values that one is inadvertently immersed in and that one automatically follows and observes, to reveal and understand their political and socio-cultural purpose. Without doubt, by being in KSA, the researcher shared a disadvantaged, female position in the researched cultural field and therefore experienced in person what the limitations placed on women entail in practice. Yet her position was far more favourable than that of women with cruel male guardians, the ones impoverished, uneducated and those who out of poverty in their own countries came to Saudi to serve. Their experiences are a testimony that the systematic distribution of power based on gender division, can be a sad and dangerous one for those who lack influence and find themselves in the lower social stratum. Writing this paper the author asked herself: where is the actual end of playing the compromised self, assimilated in the research field? Is it when one finalizes one's own empirical research? Is it enough to regain all components of who one was before the engagement with the field, when one leaves the field behind and go back home? Perhaps the initial separation from the field serves only as the purpose for self-reconstruction, but does not imply a complete break away from the field. This will have to be worked through in countless hours of analysis and reflexive practice. Another reference to Goffman's asylums (1961) – although it was intended to be applied to total institutions *per se* and not to a wider milieu of KSA, feels appropriate

to be discussed in this place. Goffman writes about the adjustment and secondary adjustment. These phases of reorganization of the concept of self and the assimilation and reconstructions of the new adjusted self when entering the research field is comparable to breaking with passed roles and the identity of asylum patients when entering the total institution, when their transition to a perfect inmate begins. Transition is needed once again when leaving the field behind, to rebuild the previous self on the final departure. But is it fully possible to come back to what you were after these new, different experiences which are inscribed in one's memory? It is suspected that a deconstruction and reconstruction of self both do not bring the original self back, they form a hybrid self, where parts of the old and new identity negotiate their space within one person to build a post research concept of the self. This is a disturbing and difficult process of transition. One may even find that they struggle to fit in, once back into their 'normal' life routines. The self-mortification that takes place during the initial stages of engagement with the field may resonate in the reverse transition when one leaves the research field and such a process is absolutely necessary to efficiently gather data from an unknown cultural space.

Clyde Kluckhohn (1985) defines culture as a total way of life that through social legacy of the group equips individuals with a behavioural matrix. Therefore an outsider of the group does not possess instant understanding of this cultural map and requires a long-term immersion to be included and introduced to the full social meaning of the societal phenomenon. During field research, through the day-to-day situations, one sometimes finds something profoundly hidden from the public view that stays beyond the surface of discussions. A good example of such hidden content may be found in the article by Jarman, Blackburn and Racko (2012), who show quite opposite findings to what would be expected from the title of their paper: *The Dimensions of Occupational Gender Segregation in Industrial Countries*. One normally expects that women would be in a disadvantageous position in the labour market. However, they argue that although men are indeed the highest earners, women as a group are better off in terms of stratification, where "women's occupations are healthier, permit greater access to higher status networks, and involve working with better educated people than men's occupations" (Jarman, Blackburn, Racko, 2012, p. 1015). Consequently, the author found that further desk analysis of the research data collected

during the field study enabled her to discover new connections and theoretical models that were not clear from the start. They emerged in the later stage of research, in the safety of the home. Looking retrospectively, the author finds that her initial 'fresh' analysis and findings were somewhat superficial on the theoretical front and heavily charged with emotional ballast and that this triggered a level of unintended partiality. The experiences were so surreal, that they were more like accounts from a distant journey put neatly together to astonish people who were not privileged enough to experience these particular field research situations. They were real, they were accurate and they were unspoiled by theoretical framing. In fact, the experiences may be utilized for further desk analysis and used in the same way as raw materials, i.e. field notes, ethnographic journal, interview scripts; serving as second hand material. In social sciences there is certainly an open space for raw resources, however it is the theoretical grounding that gives researchers credibility and weight. Looking for connections with existing theories and applying the right theoretical matrix to the findings is what makes the research complete and creditable.

Showing one's findings to a wide range of people requires a degree of bravery and patience, as each single one of them will have a different and often conflicting opinion of what one has done during their field study and this opens the researcher up for criticism. As it turns out, it is the best thing that may happen. Critical questions enrich one's perception of the methodology, collected materials and the results of their study. Meeting critical thinkers will enable one to seek answers to their questions and to either adjust or defend one's original stand point in a more refined manner. Writing some preliminary papers is helpful too, as reviewers will not be deliberately harsh to cause hurt, but to protect one from publishing something not scientifically sound or too premature. The more one writes, the more one discusses, the more comments one receives, all better for the advancement of the framework. Being afraid of sharing findings with the world may stop one from giving the research a full and thorough consideration and the finest tuning it deserves. One should be eager to share their expertise and experience with a wider scientific community, through exposing existing findings and discussing possible ways of further analysis.

Reading through field notes and entries in the ethnographic diary triggers a range of memories, but they fade away slowly month by month, year by

year. On one hand this forces researchers to rely on their notes and interview transcripts, and on the other hand, allows them to separate the work from deep emotions and subconscious biases. Researchers are also able to identify where their biases are visible within the collated data sets. Such awareness leads to greater honesty and transparency, giving the field researcher tools for a more critical approach to their own work.

Looking from the perspective of the time that passed between the data collection and the data interpretation, the author feels that during the empirical study her scientific lens of interpretation was somewhat blurred by everyday experiences and the intensity of interactions with the local people, who she was determined to talk to and to get to know better. She was also overwhelmed by the testimonies and stories of the women she met. She felt under the pressure of reciprocity towards her interlocutors and sometimes engaged in activities that she felt were time wasting and pointless just to 'pay off' her debt. On other occasions she chose to participate in uncomfortable activities just to thicken the field immersion and widen the pool of information sources. These instances were frustrating at times not only for the author, but also for the rest of her family. Watching adult women play hopscotch as the highlight of a party is rather uninteresting. Being unable to spend time with one's husband due to gender segregation during a party, felt completely unfulfilling, defeating the point of going out 'together' and helpful comments from well-intending locals like: 'yes, families will spend time together' meant that the wife can be together with the family (read: children). The constant flow of colourful events obstructed the possibility to interpret the data in full on the spot, or even to record events in full. There simply was never enough time as normal life frequently got in the way. The two years of field research were fruitful and fulfilling despite the difficulties encountered on daily basis and the fact that time did not permit deep analysis of the data. It took three years to finalize the analytical process after the empirical study was completed. It was only recently that the author has been able to free herself from the feeling of still being involved in the field, still being in Saudi Arabia and still dealing with what she perceived at the time to be a restrictive and punitive social system.

Sensitive intercultural ethnographic issues were explored on a daily basis and the researcher constantly thought of finding 'gateways' to overcome the practical difficulties of field work in this very particular socio-cultural space.

There was very little room at the time of empirical study left for retrospection, self-reflexivity, critical approach to self and the researched field. This space was regained after coming back to the 'previous' life and safety of the desk at home. Nevertheless, new worries placed limitations on what can be revealed and shared with the rest of the world. Being deemed a cultural outsider put the author in a very difficult situation due to the sensitivity of religious issues and due to the very personal accounts of some of the women that were met. A balance had to be reached to explore necessary information, whilst withholding some of the more sensitive and controversial materials. It can be perceived as a self-censorship but one must be aware of some extremist radicalized movements present in the twenty-first century, that could view such scientific writings as a direct attack on religion, however unintended and not true this claim might be. This would endanger the author and her family. Awareness of this issue causes an internal battle to strike a balance between honesty and evidence, and with what is absolutely necessary to disclose and what is not. Such dilemmas are not healthy for the researchers and their freedom of speech. In turn, one should consider deeply and carefully if any of one's findings may be harmful to any minorities included in the research or to individuals, whose stories were intentionally depersonalized. To the advantage of the anonymity of respondents, multiple works were published in Polish, making it even more difficult to find and identify who the interlocutors were.

When looking back, one cannot be sure if they would ever be able to endure the same field research effort again. It was certainly the most significant field research study in the author's academic career so far and the most profound research experience during and after the data collection process. Therefore, the author is extremely grateful to all involved in making her stay in KSA possible and allowing her to enter their socio-cultural world.

Nevertheless, to some extent it was a frightening experience and it is forever engraved on the researcher's personality and her post-research reconstruction of self. She has never felt so humble, so frail and so exposed in any other research situation. She has also never felt so judged, misjudged and scrutinized by the scientific community afterwards. These pressures surely added to her grey hair count but they also inspired an accelerated advancement and recuperated scientific confidence. The prolonged interplay with the research situation during the data analysis, allowed the researcher to see the data from

different angles and different points of view through the voices of indigenous women, women from the developing countries' and western women, giving the raw data a triangulation of perspectives and making the author more moderate and balanced in her judgments. The ethno-autobiographical approach was helpful in overcoming the issues of ethnic bias and making the data collection process more transparent. It also moved the weight from solid positivist data sets into softer and more interpretative, more personalized approach, as characterized by herstory methodology.

Time to move on

If one takes into the account that so far the world of science has been affected by male bias (Lerner, 1979), it naturally calls for more gender balanced studies. There is an overall predisposition in existence to make an assumption that a researcher is more likely to be a man (Bernstein, Russo, 1974). The positivist point of view, which was 'male oriented', that science should be objective (value free), is actually against the declarations, socially subjective and value-laden, but this happens to be obscured instead of being acknowledged. A feminist approach would be to reveal the value and the bias matrix behind the research and the researcher. Moreover, in the past there was a tendency to study more men than women and then to generalize the results onto women. Pedagogical example could be found in Kohlberg's work (1969), which led to the creation of a theory of human moral development based on a study of 84 boys.

It also turns out that research carried out by female scholars still faces some form of glass ceiling in the global dissemination of knowledge (cf. Sabatier, 2010; Aksnes et al., 2011), therefore it is of paramount importance for greater equality in science, to open science up for more female experiences and for more of herstories. Researching the accounts of women recorded by female scholars may be one of the paths to advance their academic standing. The emotional struggles that accompany difficult field research situations should not be underestimated and should be widely discussed to give confidence and provide tools for dealing with the accompanying personal trauma, no matter how severe or mild it may seem. It may be possible that some will find reassurance

and consolation in shared experiences, so it is beneficial to recount one's own personal struggles in the field, with the field and reworking the field after the departure. Some topics may be more traumatizing than others (Januszewska, 2010; Rittner, Roth, 2016). Isolation from familiar customs and the safety of one's home for long periods of time can be difficult for family ties and the wellbeing of the researchers, yet it is their passion for knowledge that provides the drive to take such challenges on.

It has been a good three years since the completion of the KSA based field research and it is only recently that one has been able to leave the past events and people met during the data collection behind, to get them 'out of one's mind' and 'out of the system'. It has taken such a long period of time to disengage from being a part of the research and living it out on regular basis. During the time of desk analysis it still felt like the researcher was emerged in KSA. The experiences recalled felt very fresh, alive and ongoing. Looking at the collected data from different analytical perspectives, applying a range of matching social theories and working out what should be a more universal truth, together with pressing questions from fellow scholars, allowed one to work with the data and to work the whole research process through. It has felt like a necessary measure, when being in direct contact with the field for a prolonged time. It is a completely different experience to do meta-analysis on someone else's data sets, as the emotional involvement and profound understanding of sensitive nuances is absent from the post data collection analysis. Not to say that it is of lower value, it is simply not the same. During the analysis of one's own data, every particle of information that the field researcher acquired in person, comes back to life as if it were still happening in the present and triggers additional information, smells, noise, view or certain emotions in the researcher's memory. These would be absent if a person analysing the data had not been involved in the collection process. It must be said with full honesty that with time the memories slowly vanish and become stored in a deeper layer of the consciousness, which is a positive and somewhat liberating property of one's fragile humanity. Disturbing situations and tensions disperse, becoming no more than a bad dream, while personal worries and situational bias is either dispersed or rationalized and understood. This is the final phase of the complete break with the field. Physical separation from the field is not sufficient to achieve this cathartic state of mind. This is a phase

of a deep relief, when one feels that the research field was fully explored and no more could be possibly found or added in their further study or academic writing. Enriched through this long-term profound engagement the researcher may feel ready to look for new research subjects and ready to move on.

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Agnieszka Gutkowska*

If I were Chechen, I would be a feminist…

It has long been discussed whether a researcher who decides to become involved with the problems of the examined remains credible as a scholar, or not. This discussion (especially concerning the so called *action antropology*) has covered numerous aspects, such as the difference between an anthropologist-observer, a neutral eye that only watches the events, and an anthropologist-witness, who belongs to one of the parties involved in the events (Scheper-Hughes, 1995). Many claim that an anthropologist who speaks for the community she/he researches is no longer a scientist, because they judge who is right in a conflict instead of just analysing it (Kellett, 2009). There are those, however, who speak of anthropology of support as an obvious and ethical way of practicing this science (Ibidem). The thoughts presented below are about over a dozen years I have dedicated to the widely understood subject of migration and multiculturalism, both as a witness and an observer.

The distinction marked herein is a good illustration of two types of anthropological studies: etic and emic studies. Those two basic approaches to research differ in the perspective of the studies (studying a culture "from the outside" *contra* studying it "form the inside"), the researcher's engagement (scientific distance *contra* researcher's empathy), and the aim of the study (analysis of the behavioural sphere *contra* analysis of the mental sphere) (Zielińska-Pękał, 2014). The differentiation between etic and emic was first made by the American linguist Kenneth Lee Pike in order to distinguish two different analytical procedures used in studying language and culture (Krawczak, 2007). Etic anal-

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yses are performed "from the outside", based on transcultural concepts that are characteristic of the researcher (thus, understood in the "Western" way), while emic analyses are based on concepts particular to the culture being researched (Walczak, 2013). This distinction became an inspiration for the British philosopher Gilbert Ryle, the author of the concept of "thick description", as opposed to the so-called thin description. While the latter is a simple recording of an event, the aim of thick description is to discover the event's meaning. In his famous example of two blinking boys, Ryle explains that using thin description, the researcher sees a boy making the same movement (blinking) every time (Kempny, Nowicka, 2005). Only by using thick description is it possible to discover a different meaning of the movement: in the first case the blinking was just a tic, while in the second it had a very important communicative function. The distinction was transferred to anthropology by Clifford Geertz, who explained it in his essay "*Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture*" (Ibidem). As an explanation of Ryle's example, Geertz clarifies that a blink may also be a parody of the first boy's tic, a tedious practice of a young comedian, or a gesture to trick someone. Thus, he believes that anthropology should not focus on presenting facts and searching for objective rules of their functioning (thin description), but rather on grasping the cultural context in which the fact took place, and on interpreting its sense and meaning. He stresses the fact that it is thick description that treats culture as a context in which actions gain a specific meaning; and as a scientific perspective it focuses mostly on analysing actions undertaken by members of the culture and the meanings they attribute to those actions under given circumstances. Geertz believes that a correct interpretation of the analysed events can only be performed by someone who is not only a researcher, but also a participant of said events. Only such a person can penetrate the situation and relations and understand the cultural nuances and their meanings (thick description).

While cultural anthropology uses the term "thick description", cognitive anthropology talks about emic (or indigenous) research. Literature, especially regarding research in culturally diverse environments, sometimes postulates conducting such research from the above mentioned perspective as it allows for a much better understanding of the cultural phenomena one witnesses – thanks to, for example, the lack of arbitrary assumptions about what is to be the subject of this observation (Pilarska, 2015). Thus, the etic perspective is one

of an objective observer, who knows what they wish to study; and due to that begins their research with certain assumptions, carries it out while maintaining scientific distance, and uses concepts proper to their own culture. Indigenous research, in turn, is carried out by a person who may not be a member of the given society, but who certainly enters it. A researcher is no longer an observer of a culture, but in some way becomes its participant. This is well illustrated by the suggestion of living in the households of the persons being studied instead of a hotel during the course of research (Ibidem). It seems that the permanent, virtually natural presence of the researcher or even their participating presence in everyday events gives them a much better chance of observing natural behaviours of group members and forming deeper relations within the group. Due to that, relying on the help of an interpreter is completely against the idea of such research (Ibidem). The key element is the conceptual framework the researcher uses within the indigenous strategy – those are not the concepts from their culture, but concepts and meanings proper to the members of the culture being researched. The aim of the observation, i.e. grasping the context (instead of just noting facts) requires using the language of the group.

It is worth noting that Kenneth Pike himself did not treat the distinction between emic and etic research as dichotomous, as he believed that etic analysis is an introduction that provides conceptual framework for emic analysis (Krawczak, 2007; Walczak, 2013). Modern anthropology also suggest a "third way" that combines the etic approach as a first stage of research, followed and continued by emic research (Cheung, van de Vijver, Leong, 2011). It seems that the following text describing my experience as a researcher of the environment of Chechen refugees in Poland (an environment culturally different from my own) shows the value of combining these two approaches. What is interesting, however, is that in my case the order of approaches was reversed.

Presently, as a researcher, I no longer function within the culture I research (mostly due to my own decision to give up that role); I am however convinced that what I observed as a person inside that group (emic approach) helps me conduct my etic research. The ability to understand the symbolic or the context of certain actions is the effect of personal experience that can only be gained by a person who participates in the group's life, not by one who just researches it. Researchers who use the indigenous approach can face accusations that excessive emotional involvement puts them at risk of lacking researcher's objectivity. But it seems that

if the analysis of data collected that way is performed after a certain period of time and with an awareness of danger, it is enough to minimize the risk, i.e. to maintain the necessary distance while appreciating the depth of the material collected by using the method and personal experience (cf. Zielińska-Pękał, 2014). Another threat of research conducted from the indigenous (emic) perspective seems to be more relevant. I am convinced that the lack of distance towards the persons and events researched, i.e. the strong emotional involvement mentioned before, creates a very real risk of not only professional, but also psychological burnout of the researcher. As I explain below, for me, the perspective of a person who became a participant (and not just an observer) of the life of Chechen community was too exhausting. It may seem like a paradox, but the same things I had discovered using the emic strategy became the reason why I stopped being able to use this method anymore. I had a unique chance to experience and touch certain things in this community thanks to being emotionally involved (adapting an indigenous perspective). Those things, however, were so remote from what I, being raised in European culture, deemed acceptable, that I could not use the indigenous approach any longer. Literature states that adapting the emic strategy is not synonymous with becoming a member of a group (Walczak, 2013). However, I doubt whether carrying out this strategy as a construct based on local categories without deep involvement (which is always risky for the researcher) can truly succeed.

I started research on multiculturalism and the presence of culturally different individuals in Poland in 2010. My experiences however cannot be understood without going back to the year 2001, when, as a student at the Law Clinic operating at the Faculty of Law of the University of Warsaw[1], I first came into contact with foreigners living in Poland and I entered their worlds – both the one they left in their homelands and the one they functioned within in Poland. It was at the Clinic where I took my first steps both as a practicing lawyer and a lawyer specializing in the wide scope of migration law[2]. Thus, when I started my career, I had already worked with refugees and migrants (mainly from The North Caucasus) for over nine years, mostly as a proxy in

[1] It is a students' legal counselling centre, in which students, supervised by their teachers, give legal counsel to persons in difficult financial situation.

[2] In 2005 with a group of friends we founded Stowarzyszenie Interwencji Prawnej (Association for Legal Intervention, SIP), where a section for foreigners was active since the very beginning. I coordinated it until I left the organization in 2010.

their pleas for obtaining a refugee status, but not only. Quite frequently, the foreigners needed help in solving everyday problems regarding contact with doctors, schools, family assistance, social services, employment or further stages of legalization of their stays (e.g. obtaining permanent residence card or citizenship). My work at the Clinic quickly became more interesting, and, above all, more important than regular academic classes. I am convinced that the key reason for that was the way of functioning and the problems tackled by the section for refugees, in which I worked. Working there was special, as it required from me to immediately enter the world of those who received my help. Unlike the students who met their Polish clients during official working hours at the university, the students from the section for refugees would go to the centres where the candidates seeking refugee status lived. It has almost been 15 years, and I still remember the atmosphere and even the smell of the corridors in the first refugee centre I visited. It was situated in Łuków, where I met "my" first Chechens. It is necessary to remember that during the fall of 2001, the so called Second Chechen War was still taking place, an active Chechen guerrilla was present in the mountain republic, and the Russian army and mercenaries were committing war crimes and ethnic cleansing on civilians. The people we represented in their refugee proceedings in Polish courts were victims or witnesses of those crimes, or, best case scenario, they had experienced wartime trauma. They told their stories, their terrible recollections and sometimes showed films or pictures documenting those terrifying crimes to their proxies – to us, twenty-something-year-old law students. The setting such as the centre and the trauma of those people made it very hard to talk to them solely on a "professional" level. To me, then, "professional" meant nothing else than "indifferent", and neither my heart nor my brain were able to accept it. There were two kinds of consequences of such an approach.

On the one hand, during those nine years as a "Chechen lawyer" I managed to gain the trust of many people, made a few friends, and witnessed their everyday problems and joys. In a most unprofessional way I hosted, sometimes for long periods of time, Chechen women and families; I listened to family stories and romantic secrets, danced at Chechen weddings and parties, cried for family members killed at war, and was happy for the children born in Poland. My phone would ring for almost 24 hours a day and, for years, the pleas of my Chechen friends (and strangers) actually came before those of my own family. I am still

a guest of honour in many a Chechen home and it is not only a result of the traditional hospitality of the region. Despite the fact that most of the Chechens I met then have left Poland and now live in Germany, France, Belgium, Austria, Norway, Sweden and many other countries all over the world, I am still in touch with many of them. They treated me like one of their own and many of them still see me that way. There were some persons among the Chechen diaspora who were ill-disposed towards me, and my friends always warned me about them.

Secondly, I was in the very heart of events than happened in the lives of my Chechen friends, acquaintances, and clients. I had a unique opportunity to learn about the Chechen mentality, which I sometimes found virtually impossible to understand; about their reasons for making important life decisions and final choices. I found many elements of the Chechen identity to be intriguing and alluring. Parts of it seemed quaint and were like elements of folklore to me, such as Chechen wedding customs, in which the bride's family does not participate and during which the bride herself stands silent and beautiful. Sometimes the knowledge of the Chechen tradition and mentality, so different from the Polish mindset, was hard to bear. The transition from the role of a lawyer and counsellor to that of a confidant was a way to learn about the real Chechen identity, but the price I paid was losing the safe distance and living the problems of others as if they were my own – and, since there were so many, I lived them with incredible intensity.

Those problems were very varied. They included "practical" difficulties resulting from living in a foreign country, adapting to it, communicating in a foreign language, medical and financial troubles, and more delicate issues stemming from cultural differences between the guests – Chechens, and the hosts – Poles. This can be illustrated with the case of a Chechen who called for an ambulance for his pregnant wife, but was unable to say that the woman was with child. This is because his friend was listening to the phone call and it is considered improper to publically speak about matters as intimate as pregnancy – even at the cost of putting the woman's and child's lives in danger. The man's explanation that the wife had abdominal pain caused his call to be considered less urgent than others and it was only when the social worker who was taking care of the family explained that the woman was pregnant that the ambulance came immediately.

The following story was much more tragic: a young married couple who, due to traditional norms, decided on an illegal abortion, despite the fact than they both wanted the baby to be born. However, they considered it impossible

for the woman to spend the pregnancy in hospital, as the doctors suggested, because that would mean that the man would have had to stay alone with their children at the refugee centre. That in turn would mean that he would have had to cook, do the laundry and clean, i.e. perform all the tasks traditionally done by women. He would then cease to be a man in the eyes of the other Chechens and would lose their respect, and the loss of honour would influence his whole family. It was not that the man did not want to do all that, because he used to help his wife on a daily basis – but no one could know about it.

I also remember one evening in the kitchen at the home of one of my Chechen friends, during which the woman, eight months pregnant and after many hours of exhausting travel, was serving her husband and children instead of being served by them. I remember how loving a marriage they were, and what shocked me was that both of them found this arrangement completely natural.

Another time, I found it impossible to understand the dilemma of a Chechen whose family was in serious financial trouble, but who was hesitant to accept a well-paid job as a caretaker. His responsibilities would include cleaning the stairwell, mopping the stairs, dusting the window sills and so on – responsibilities which, from the Chechen point of view, are humiliating for a man. What I found the most surprising was that the person who fiercely tried to convince him not to take the job was his sister. When he finally became a caretaker, the sister, whenever she could, would come and do the "cleaning" part of work for him, because she felt bad that her brother had to do "such things"[3]. The whole family would go out of their way to prevent the other Chechens from learning what job the man was doing.

Neither did I understand why an elderly Chechen woman felt bad living with her daughter and son-in-law, until I learned that the tradition requires the aging parents to live with their son (if they have numerous sons, with the youngest one). In her case it was impossible, because her youngest son perished in one of the Russian "filtration camps" (*de facto* concentration camps) in Mozdok during the First Chechen War, despite her efforts to save him. When the situation in Chechnya forced the family to leave, the second son stayed in the Caucasus to search for his brother. Thus, the mother was forced to violate the Chechen

[3] It was perfectly explained by p. Prochazkova in the book *The Aluminium Queen. The Russian – Chechen War through the eyes of women*, 2003.

tradition, although she never felt justified in doing so. Each of those stories that I lived together with their protagonists was absolutely exhausting.

It should not be forgotten that during all that time I acted as a proxy in tens[4] of cases assisting refugee status claims, both before administrative authorities and in court, most of which did not end successfully. While it was possible to "get used to" the ready-made negative decisions of the Office for Repatriation and Foreigners (presently called Office for Foreigners) and the Refugee Board, it was much more difficult to deal with cases where, as a lawyer, I was aware of the absurdity of the administration's arguments and of my own powerlessness. I have also experienced what might be the worst for a lawyer, a sense of "the powerlessness of the law", a conviction that, despite being absolutely right, there is no legal way to obtain what you need. It turned out to be necessary to seek help from the media to speak out about the most controversial decisions, like finding a young Chechen widow guilty of war crimes – "crimes" that were limited to feeding and caring for her husband and his subordinates, members of a guerrilla, when they came down from the mountains for a brief rest.

As a consequence of experiencing such powerful emotions I needed to relax. I needed to pause; I needed to cut myself off from the environment in which I had spent a few years. A break was necessary – to rest, to gain perspective, and to think about what I had experienced, what I had seen, about what surprised me and what I disagreed with.

Quite soon I felt the need to return to this environment that I had grown fond of; to return, but in a safer way. Scientific research and analysis seemed to be that safer way. I felt, and I am still quite convinced that my previous experiences – as varied as they had been – have given me additional abilities. Abilities that are not available for those who deal with cultural research from a theoretical point of view, who have certainly read a lot, but have not had the opportunity to experience the things they read about in real life. A person who managed to enter a community has a better chance to understand cultural nuances, and to ask more accurate questions, to verify the honesty of answers obtained during interviews, and even to "manipulate" the interlocutor: such a person knows what to say and how to say it

[4] In most cases, the fate of whole families was decided during one case, which meant the need to participate in different procedures both with the husband (who was usually the applicant), with the wife and sometimes with the teenage children.

to win the interlocutor's trust and to persuade them to give more honest answers (granted that "a better chance" is not tantamount to instant success).

Could it be said that I started researching Chechen culture emically and eventually decided to use the etic approach, enriched, however, with the knowledge gained during the first, emic stage? What is certain is that my work as a researcher began in a completely unplanned manner, since my first contacts with refugees from northern Caucasus were not a part of cultural research, but consisted of providing legal support. Since I did not enter the Chechen community with a scientific goal, I did not strive to learn about their culture or observe them closely, and I certainly did not seek to conduct a scientific analysis of the behaviours, situations, relations, and motivation of the individuals I had contact with. I provoked nothing, asked about nothing; I had no stimulating influence on the natural rhythm of life within the community. I am convinced that thanks to that I had an opportunity (quite rare for a researcher) to witness real life – with no embellishment, concealment nor agitation which may appear in the presence of a researcher. The afterthoughts I naturally had were aimed at better understanding the group, and through that, helping it better in my work as a lawyer. In time, I began noticing the scientific value of those unusual observations and experiences. Due to the aforementioned results, the rules of my contact with the Chechen community and, consequently, the perspective of my research had to change. I am however convinced that the knowledge and the experience (and the mistakes I made) from the period of using the emic strategy support my research from the etic perspective. I use the benefits of this method without being limited by its drawbacks, especially the limited conceptual framework or missing the cultural context of certain events and utterances. On the other hand, my previous experience allows me to enjoy the benefits of the emic research perspective instantly and without difficulty whenever such a need arises, e.g. during field research (however, I only reach a certain level that is safe for me).

My legal and criminological research interests in multiculturalism revolve around the borders of compromise in a situation of conflict of norms. They are about the influence of cultural rules that governed a person's socialization on that person's behaviour in a new environment, an environment in which they function as refugees or migrants, and which is based on different cultural and legal norms – often contradictory to those internalized by the person. I have frequently observed this conflict between what a person has been raised in and what

they feel attached to – even if sometimes they feel limited by it – and what they find in the country to which they have emigrated. I have also witnessed various decisions made by foreigners and various rationalizations of these decisions. As I have mentioned before, as a lawyer and proxy I have often found them hard to understand, they surprised me and caused my disagreement. I have experienced the same as a scholar. I am an independent woman born and raised in the European civilization; human dignity has superior value for me and I am guided by human rights. During my interviews, I have often encountered situations or stories which proved that what is an obvious value for me constitutes a worthless whim or is even considered wrong in the group I have researched. My previous experiences, however, allow me to keep the necessary distance. There is little that can surprise me, and even if it happens, I experience no extreme emotions like shock, outrage or protest. I am aware of what I might encounter during interviews and I am prepared for it. It seems to be particularly important while researching very different cultures, since one might encounter traditions or rules that are shocking from the point of view of the researcher's tradition, culture or law. Such knowledge makes it possible to keep the conversation flowing and to hide any emotions that could discourage or dishearten the interlocutor. An example of such a case is the story of a tragic death of a child who fell into a well in the yard in plain view of the mother who could not intervene in any way due to the presence of her husband's relatives[5].

[5] The excerpts below come from A. Gutowska (2016). Konformizm i nonkonformizm w społeczeństwie rzeczywiście wielokulturowym – zagadnienia teoretyczne i empiryczne. *Archiwum Kryminologii*, XXXVIII, p. 385. *We have this rule, if I'm in the street and my mother-in-law or my husband's brother are next to me, and my child is crying in the next room, I cannot go in there and see why he is crying. Maybe something's happened to him, maybe something has fallen over him, it doesn't matter, I cannot.*

Even if he is in danger?

Even so. We had this story. Those people had a well in the yard. The wife was doing something outside, and her husband, his half-brothers and her father-in-law were fixing a roof. The child was playing by the well and she couldn't go and take the child, because the in-law and the husband's brothers were watching. And so it happened that the child fell into the well and died. Some said that she should have gone and taken the child, so they said in the mosque, go and take the child, despite the in-law being there. But there are those who say "no, just no".

And no one said she was a bad mother, they say she was a good Chechen, following the rules?

Yes, no one had a grudge, because she acted according to the rules, though the child died. (...) If you did the wrong thing in such a situation, your mother-in-law could take you to your mother and say that you don't know how to behave, tell her to teach you, say they don't need you, tell her to take you back. Your husband could divorce you, shout at you, hit you: "You have no respect for my mother, you have no respect for my father, my brother".

Knowing about a practice does not mean accepting it, but scientific research is not a moment to act upon the knowledge gained. A scientist's goal is to recreate the reality of the researched group as truthfully as possible, to recreate its rules, traditions, customs and laws. To evaluate them is secondary and, although of course the author can do it while describing the research, one should refrain from judgement while conducting the research itself. One has to be prepared that the readers may use the material collected by him or her to come to conclusions different than his or her own. It is however not a researcher's task to form the reader's opinions, but to present the source material in a true and fair way. If the material was professionally prepared, it can be used to form a reader's own opinion, not necessarily coincident with the view of the investigator.

I believe that the closer the researcher is to the life of the community being investigated, the harder it is to keep a cool judgment and professional approach. First of all, it is difficult to keep a professional distance in the face of adversities and tragedies the migrants (or, even more, refugees) face and that are observed by the researcher, if one is involved in the life of his or her research subjects. There is a risk that being professional may be tantamount to being indifferent[6]. It is difficult to remain scientific towards people one knows personally, and when confronted with the problems they are facing. The will to help others often becomes more important than achieving some professional goal. I have experienced it personally, when one of the women I was helping was being forced by her family to return to Chechnya. She was torn between disobedience and the feeling of responsibility, reinforced by the impending consequences of having her children taken away and being ostracized by her relatives[7].

[6] Those were the feelings of American soldiers in Afghanistan who were ordered not to react to the *bacha bazi*, a custom of the Afghan officers which consisted in sexual abuse of boys. Not everyone was able to ignore the custom and accept the order, which sometimes resulted in being discharged from the army.

[7] "Madina did not want to go back. She decided to fight for her life, trying to push away the moment of final confrontation with her sister-in-law. Thanks to different legal procedures, Madina's and the girls' stay in Poland was prolonged by two years. But one day, it was impossible to wait any longer. Madina faced a choice (…) she knew the consequences of her decision perfectly well. She was supposed to measure the value of living in accordance with her own dreams and expectations (she simply wanted to be a good Muslim, living according to the *adat*, but having an independent life in a country of her choosing) against the value of lives of her parents and siblings, who remained in her home town in Chechnya and who would be forever scorned for their daughter's and sister's disobedience; the lives of Liana and Fatima, who would have a hard time to live as daughters of such

Secondly, being engaged in a community causes a risk of losing objectivity. I am talking about situations when a researcher stops acting the role of a professional and begins to think and act like an actual member of the researched group. Professor Philip Zimbardo's famous prison experiment, conducted in the basement of Stanford University, can serve as a perfect example. Zimbardo recreated the conditions of an actual prison as an experiment and employed meticulously selected men as "convicts" and "prison guards". On the second day of the experiment, when he heard about a planned prison break, Zimbardo switched from a psychology professor into the role of a warden and wanted to stop the "prisoners" at all costs. He was unable to notice and objectively asses the process of escalation of violence that happened in the fictional penitentiary. It was a stern reaction of his PhD student that made him distance himself from the role of a participant (whom he became unexpectedly even for himself) and helped him return to being an observer and a scientist (Zimbardo, 2007). It is a perfect example of how becoming a part of a community causes a serious risk of experiencing a distorted perception of events and an unacceptable change in the way of thinking – even if one is a renowned specialist. If such a thing occurs, we can no longer speak of scientific research and its results, as we should rather speak of experiences and emotions – which, however, do not fulfil the criteria for scientific work.

I can still remember my way of thinking after reading Wojciech Jagielski's book "Towers of Stone: The Battle of Wills in Chechnya" (Jagielski, 2011), which describes a fragment of Chechnya's modern history in a thrilling, and yet objective and truthful way. The truth of that story lies in presenting the mentality, the values, the way of thinking of the mountain people of Nokchi (as the Chechens call themselves) with no embellishment or omissions. Back then I thought that for someone who has never met any Chechens, never entered

a mother, and her own life – because as long as her daughters weren't independent, she would be facing the threat that her husband's relatives and even members of her own family might take the girls away from her. Madina also knew that the way home would be closed at least until her daughters' marriages. She was a very wise woman and she knew that if she wanted to live in a culture governed by certain rules, she could not break these rules. A different decision would force her to leave her society and start her life anew with new rules, but outside the group. Not everyone can decide to do that. Eventually Madina obeyed her late husband's family's decision and returned to Chechnya". Quote from: A. Gutkowska (2013). *Kulturowa przemoc ze względu na płeć. Przypadek zabójstw na tle honoru.* Archiwum Kryminologii, tom XXXV, pp. 151–152.

into their tragic history and modernity and never had a chance to experience any good on their part, such an image of those people can be hard to understand, if not downright repulsive. I thought that this wonderful reporter, whom I have always admired and respected deeply, was simply wrong this time. I had no doubt that he presented the reality exactly the way it was, but in doing so, he caused more harm than good to the "Chechen cause", which was, then, the sense of my life. It seemed to me that in that particular moment in the fates of the Chechen refugees in Poland and the Chechen guerrillas in the Caucasus, it was wrong to point to the elements of mentality that, despite being true, would remain hard to understand, alien and unacceptable for a Pole. It posed a risk that Chechens, who had for centuries been fighting our common enemy, would lose the liking and the support they had among Poles. I was wrong and I experienced the consequences of my mistake quite painfully. I had a chance to find out that not all Chechens are righteous and honest, and that the tragic situation of the nation, despite being mostly the effect of geopolitical situation, is further complicated by divisions and conflicts among clans which are very much alive among the Chechen community. What I found the hardest to accept was what seems to be the most obvious: that the Chechen mentality and the centuries-old rules are very different from Polish ones and that will not be changed: neither by actual similarities nor by single persons who have the courage to face the elements of their culture that they consider oppressive. This experience reminded me, as a human being, that only "the truth can set us free", and as a lawyer and scientist, that "only the truth is interesting". Only knowing this rule am I able to conduct research in an objective and professional manner – which may sometimes be considered "cold". It is however very hard – if possible at all – to accept it if one is part of the researched community.

I am convinced that, in order to build a multicultural society, it is extremely important to truthfully present the cultural identity of the immigrants, and to point out which elements of mentality and cultural differences will never be accepted, since they are contrary to the order which is in force in Poland. Only this will allow foreigners to make an informed decision about the final destination of their emigration and will protect host communities against clashing the idealized concept of refugees with the imperfect reality – and against the strong resentment created by such a clash. My feelings after those years of idealized involvement in the Chechen cause and the problems of Chechens in Europe

can be summarized as discouragement, disappointment and reluctance. Those feelings were not real either, as they were just an extreme defensive reaction to the earlier, very strong commitment. However, they are very likely to appear, and such feelings do not let one conduct reliable scientific research.

This surely would not have happened had I limited myself to being just a legal proxy. On the other hand, if I had limited myself to this role, the fate of the Chechen nation would have never become mine, I would have had no chance to feel the Chechen mentality and to experience (instead of just reading about) how Chechens understand honour, which is what they value the most. This knowledge and experience are priceless for a researcher. I am sure, however, that it can only be used properly when one distances oneself from a community and puts some distance between themselves and the reality being researched. Analysis and evaluations can be objective only when they are not about the world the researcher belongs to. The rule that no one can be the judge in their own case also applies to scientific research. It is natural and human for everyone to need a safe haven, where one can regain the balance lost as a result of giving others legal or psychological help or gaining knowledge during interviews and observations. It is not possible when the private and professional realities are the same.

There is also a third danger linked to researching and describing realities that one is part of. It mostly concerns persons from a group that share their community's secrets with the outside world, but also happens to people who are actively involved in the community's everyday problems. I am talking about situations when a person from outside the community, whom the group trusts greatly and who, in consequence, is being let into certain nuances and secrets, remains faithful to his or her scientific responsibilities and presents the reality as it is. Such a person shows not only the strengths, but also the weaknesses of such a community, the beautiful traditions and those that, form the researcher's and his or her society's point of view, cause rejection and condemnation. Such a person is often treated like a traitor. That was the reaction experienced by Bronisława Wajs (Papusza) and Jerzy Ficowski, who, based on his conversations with Papusza and observation of everyday life in a gypsy camp, published the book "Cyganie Polscy" ("Polish Gypsies"). Another person who was accused of not understanding reality was one of Polish researchers who was close to some of the Chechen immigrants in Poland and who wrote a master's about the

cultural identity of Chechen refugees in Poland[8]. I also know cases of research about particular groups of foreigners being published under a false name, precisely in order not to lose the trust of the members of a given community, not to be accused of treason and not to put oneself in danger when the deepest secrets are disclosed. The dilemma whether to publish the full version of one's research and risk being accused of breaching the community's trust, or to omit certain elements and risk compromising the reliability and integrity of the research, surely does not make a researcher's work any easier. Such a dilemma is present even after limiting or severing private ties to the community, but is much more intense when the researcher maintains personal relations with the whole community or some of its members.

My work as a lawyer and scholar researching multiculturalism often took place in an environment that defines the role and rights of women differently from the western values. However, I wish to stress that being a woman has never made my work or research more difficult. On the contrary, I was often told directly that as a woman I can rely on all kinds of help, just like a sister could. Despite the rule (initially very surprising to me) that women eat their meals at separate tables only after they finish serving food to men, I was often invited to eat with men, which on the one hand expressed the traditional hospitality towards a guest, and on the other – honest appreciation of me personally. Another memorable situation took place after I had spent a few days and nights in the hospital, with adults and children who had suffered in a car accident. Holding the body of a new-born boy, a relative who died in his mother's womb due to trauma suffered in the accident, one of the Chechens said that I could always count on every kind of help from him, and were it necessary, he "would kill for me". I considered these words to be the greatest compliment, and I took them very seriously.

In all of these situations, the fact that I am a woman was less relevant than the fact that I am a lawyer who performs her duties well, and a person truly involved in providing the Chechens with all the help they needed. I am also convinced that the respect I was treated with, being a woman, was partially due to the fact that I was a woman from outside the Chechen community. Although I learned to prepare Chechen dishes, I knew some Chechen words

[8] I am withholding the name of that person on purpose.

and expressions, and even somehow wore a headscarf tied the Chechen way, I was not a Chechen woman. That was why Chechens let themselves behave around me in a way that was completely normal in the European tradition, but completely unthinkable in the Chechen tradition and in contact with Chechen women. I am absolutely sure that if I were Nokchi woman, my behaviour, perfectly fine for a Pole, would be perceived as improper, especially as it violated the rules of female-male interactions. The fact that I was dedicated to helping the Chechens would become irrelevant. It would only be important that my different behaviours, acceptable from the Polish point view, were considered inappropriate by Chechen norms.

A very similar process happens to non-Chechen women (or more broadly, non-Muslim women) who enter Chechen families by marriage and who, in order to function well in the community, are supposed to accept the husband's cultural rules, to a large degree forgetting about their own. It is another danger resulting from becoming too involved in the life of the community one is observing. A complete blending into the group means the need to comply with the rules and face the consequences of breaking them. It is particularly important in case of women, whose social status in their community of origin is often radically different from their position in the community they enter.

In my work as a scholar researching multiculturalism – not as much as a woman, rather as a representative of the western civilization – the most difficult thing was to accept the fact that the worlds I come from and the one my interlocutors (so kind and helpful) live in will be extremely difficult to reconcile on a daily basis. Almost every interview has reassured me that multiculturalism based on such different cultures, with value systems that are so divergent, might actually mean living in communities **next to** each other, not really **with** each other. One may thus hope for mutual enrichment of holiday traditions, of celebrations of important family events (like weddings or births), of fashion and cuisine; but not on the key level, the level of accepting the fundamental values of both groups as equal – as they are sometimes contradictory. Within a multicultural society, the groups may beautifully and peacefully celebrate their differences in secondary subjects, but it is not possible with regard to core values. This is what Stanley Fish probably meant when he wrote about boutique multiculturalism (Fish, 1997). Accepting different values would, sooner or later, lead to dividing the society into different com-

munities and turning the country into a conglomerate of cultural enclaves with their own axiological systems and norms based on it, enclaves that live next to each other, not with each other. The risk of such a scenario is also real with the Polish and the Chechen culture, the latter of which remains close to my heart, but where many issues are so different that they provide a field for potential conflict. Worse still, those differences often include matters fundamental for both cultures, like honour, masculinity, femininity, the role of women in the society, and freedom of individuals. Ironically, presenting those conclusions to people from the western world is a challenge for me as a scholar, because it seems that my interlocutors find these conclusions obvious.

A strictly feminine point of view of my research (although European men also know it all too well) is the problem of dealing with stories of very difficult and complicated fates of women who have been raised in the Chechen cultural circle. Most dramas are about the relationship between a mother and a child. Chechen norms are very direct and strict in this matter: a child always "belongs" to the father and his family. Even if the father is dead or does not care about the children, it is not the mother who is the caretaker, but the father's relatives. This means that the father or his relatives have the last say in every issue regarding the child. Thus, if in case of a divorce (or becoming a widow and remarrying) a mother decides to fight for the child, she breaks one of the fundamental rules that define the Chechen identity[9]. Often the choice between the child and the norms she was raised in is tragic and every decision bears dramatic consequences. Another reappearing motif which shows the internal conflict of Chechen women is the reaction to the violence their husbands inflict upon them or their children. Informing the police about such violence is treated as ruining the family, and mostly as treason and a dishonourable act, not just for the woman, but for her relatives. My interlocutors, regardless of gender and personal experiences, all say the same thing: "if a wife told the police anything against her husband, that would be terrible! Her family would be against her. Such problems should be solved in the family". Many scholars and practitioners claim that a woman can ask for her family's help, but the only solution – if the situation does not improve – is to return to her parents' house.

[9] Such a dramatic choice and its consequences are presented in the book by M. Akhmadova Khadijah, Notes of a Death Girl(title of the Polish edition: "Musiałam umrzeć").

Such a choice, however, means leaving the children with the father or his family. Thus, women usually do not leave. It is difficult to remain indifferent in face of situations that are impossible to understand from the western culture's point of view, and tragic decisions of women that become understandable after many years of observing the cultural norms of the group.

This is why only as a distanced scholar am I able to concentrate on collecting data, learning about cultural nuances and observing the changes both in individual mentalities and in national values. It is easier, because due to my previous inclusion in the community and its culture I do not only know a lot, but, what is sometimes more important, I feel a lot. Honest academic work would be impossible, however, if I remained engaged in the life of the community. Then I would not be able to observe, I would have to act. And, God forbid, I would have to become a feminist…

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Katarzyna Taczyńska*

"A Scattered Mosaic of Records and Reminiscences": Ženi Lebl's War Odyssey in Her Personal Writings**

Introduction

Her flat is said to have looked like a "home laboratory" ("kućna laboratorija") (Ristović, 2013, p. 35) filled with books, among which she enthusiastically kept working. Serving both as an office and an archive, her flat, besides the plethora of books, also housed a variety of other documents, brochures and maps. This undoubtedly must have made an extraordinary impression (Kaspi, 2013, p. 95). Her friends stress that Ženi Lebl (1927–2009), depicted in the present article, was a real industrious powerhouse, inspiring by example. She continuously encouraged and motivated others to act, willingly sharing her scientific discoveries and materials (Kaspi, 2013, pp. 93–94).

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Lacking a humanist education which would have provided her with research tools, she was a self-taught historian, who independently gathered knowledge and formulated her working method. Her vast knowledge and experience, which astounded academics who treated her as their equal in discussions at conferences, compensated for flaws in her methodology (Ristović, 2013, pp. 36–37). Working as if she was the head of a research institute, her studies never stopped and the end of one project was viewed by her as an opportune time to plan another (Čigoja, 2013, p. 53). She studied problems, analysed texts, translated and created both journalistic and artistic works, including poetry.[2] Since 1954 she permanently resided in Israel, but frequently travelled to acquire research material. She lived as if in suspension between Israel and Yugoslavia, in a world of broken pieces which she tried to arrange into a mosaic history. The instinct to migrate, both in a topographical and symbolic sense (Koch, 2000, pp. 52–53), accompanied her through all her life. This constant intellectual search and endeavours to expand the experiences of a multicultural migrant (Braidotti, 2009, p. 23) earned her the title of "a nomadic intellectual" ("nomadski intelektualac", an epithet coined by Svetlana Slapšak, see Slapšak, 2013, p. 34). She was always happy to talk about her research projects, such as the need to investigate issues of antisemitism in Goli otok prison camp. However, she realized that she would not be able to fulfil all her plans, so she revealed them to others, encouraging them to finish these projects (Singer, 2013, pp. 44–46). She had excellent memory and was famous for her colourful, detail-filled stories and her recitations of childhood poems (Katan Ben-Cion, 2013, p. 104). Her extraordinary energy, cordiality, kindness, youthful smile and eyes brimming with life made it easy for her to connect with people (Knežević, 2013, p. 55; Ristović, 2013, p. 35).

For several years I have felt the need to pursue a more in-depth reflection on the autobiographical writings of Ženi Lebl. I first encountered the

[2] The published books include (dates in parentheses refer to the first edition of a given book): 1) autobiographical texts: *Dnevnik jedne Judite* (1990), *Ljubičica bela. Vic dug dve i po godine* (1990), *Odjednom drukčija, odjednom druga* (2008); 2) history books: *Plima i slom* (1986), *Jevreji u Pirotu* (1990), *Jevrejske knjige štampane u Beogradu* 1837–1905 (1990), *Jerusalimski muftija* (1993), *Jevreji iz Jugoslavije – ratni vojni zarobljenici u Nemačkoj* (1995), *Haj Amin and Berlin* (1996), *Pitom shona, pitom acheret* (1998), *Etmol, hayom* (1999), *Do "konačnog rešenja" – Jevreji u Beogradu 1521–1942* (2001), *Do "konačnog rešenja" – Jevreji u Srbiji* (2002), *Da se ne zaboravi* (2008). Ženi Lebl also translated Israeli authors into Serbo-Croatian (see Ženi, 2013, pp. 114–115), and worked with 16th and 17th-century documents in Hebrew and Ladino (Ristović, 2013, p. 36).

work of the writer, a renowned scholar specializing in the history of Jews from the region of former Yugoslavia (Палавестра, 1998, p. 154; Ћулибрк, 2011, p. 91; Ivanković, 2009, p. 9),[3] through reading her memoirs (published in 1990) from prisons and camps she was sent to in 1949, after Yugoslavia had been expelled from the Cominform (see e.g. Banac, 1990; Stojanović, 1991; Kosić, 2009). Reading the book *Ljubičica bela. Vic dug dve i po godine* [*The White Violet: A Joke That Stretched for Two and a Half Years*] was an intense experience for me and motivated me to focus my research interests on the issue of prison camps. The taboo nature of this topic, the marginalization of women's experiences and the lack of any historical, literary or cultural studies into prison camps of the past – they all influenced my need to learn about one of the darker chapters of the history of post-war Yugoslavia.[4]

The memories of other people close to Ženi Lebl, reveal that for everyone fortunate enough to meet the author personally, or who encountered her through her writings, the meeting was extraordinary. Lebl had an uncommonly warm and energetic personality despite fate dealing her a tough hand. A past heavily marked by violence did not destroy her vitality and a reticence to express herself was overcome by an internal compulsion to write in order to give testimony to and share her experiences.

Let us have a brief look at the turbulent life of Ženi Lebl. Born in 1927 in Aleksinac, the writer always recalled the first years of her childhood as ones filled with tenderness, beauty and kindness for the Lebl family – father Leon, mother Ana and elder brother Aleksandar – which they spent first in Aleksinac, and then in Belgrade, where they moved when Ženi was five years old. Their situation changed dramatically during World War II, at first symbolically through a number of anti-Semitic regulations making everyday existence diffi-

[3] Works on the history of Jews by Ženi Lebl received 26 awards in competitions organized by the Union of Serbian Jewish Communities (Savez jevrejskih opština Srbije). The competition was first organized in 1954 on the initiative of the President of the Union of Yugoslavian Jewish Communities (Savez jevrejskih opština Jugoslavije). The first award was given in 1955 (see Albahari). After Ženi Lebl's death the award was named in her honour – the Ženi Lebl Award (Nagrada "Ženi Lebl").

[4] The issue of Goli otok prison camp was the topic of my doctoral thesis *Obraz Goli otok w serbskim dyskursie literackim i historycznym końca XX i początku XXI wieku* [*The Portrait of Goli otok Prison Camp in Serbian Literary and Historical Discourse at the End of the 20th and the Beginning of the 21st Century*], written under the supervision of Prof. Jolanta Sujecka and defended in 2014 at Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń.

cult. An important event, foretelling the trouble brewing, was the introduction of the *Numerus clausus* rule in 1940, which made it difficult for Aleksandar to enrol in university.[5] At that time her father was sent to military field training. Ženi in turn, influenced by an older school friend Ružica Vasikić, became a member of the Young Communist League of Yugoslavia (SKOJ – *Savez komunističke omladine Jugoslavije*). When the war broke out in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia in 1941, the family were forced to fight for survival. Her father was arrested and sent to an Oflag in Germany, while in Belgrade the rights of Jews became drastically restricted, which in turn exacerbated significantly the situation of the Lebl family. Convinced that war primarily affects menfolk, Ana Lebl strove to send her son abroad. As Aleksandar was escaping to the Italian-administered territory aided by his newly acquired identity papers, in Belgrade a German order forced Jews to report to Staro Sajmište camp on the left bank of the river Sava.[6] Guided by an unusual premonition, fourteen-year-old Ženi decided to run away to Sajmište the night before the exodus. She would learn only much later that all the Jews who had reported at the camp were murdered in gas vans (Serbian: *dušegupka*, German: *Gaswagen*). Ženi managed to escape to Niš, where she came under the protection of Jelena Glavaški, her teacher from Aleksinac kindergarten. Glavaški helped her obtain new identity papers under the name of Jovanka Lazić, and then both women began cooperating with the guerilla movement – they ran an illegal leaflet-printing operation in the attic of a private house and distributed the materials. When one of the members betrayed the group, both women were arrested in February 1943.[7] As a Jew hiding behind Serbian identity, Ženi was first sent for her activities to a camp in Austrian New City (Wiener Neustadt),

[5] On the introduction of this law in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia (the case of Croatia) see Lengel-Krizman, 2006, pp. 1007–1012.

[6] On the camp history see *Mesta stradanja*… 2013, pp. 176–207; Алмули, 2010, pp. 27–29 and the documentary film *Sajmište – istorija jednog logora* [*Sajmište – The History of a Camp*] directed by Marko Popović and Srđan Mitrović (2009), in which Ženi Lebl is one of the interviewees. The history of Jews during World War II is described in a study by Branislav Božović (see Божовић, 2012).

[7] Jelena Glavaški was executed by a firing squad in 1944. On 3 September 1987 the Yad Vashem Institute recognized her as Righteous Among the Nations based on the testimony of Ženi Lebl. Today a street in Niš is named after her; see *Teachers Who Rescued Jews During the Holocaust: Jelena Glavaški, Serbia*. About an exhibition presenting Glavaški's life, see *Lokalna istorija – Jelena Glavaški, Pravednik među narodima*, 2012.

and then – probably in April or May 1944 (Ivković, 2013, p. 16, note 2) – to a labour camp in Berlin, where she worked in a metalworking factory. From there she was moved to a Gestapo prison but despite being sentenced to death, in the end she was freed in April 1945 and returned to Belgrade.

Returning to normal life was no easy task, but a determined Ženi dredged up reserves of strength bolstered by the fact that her father and brother survived the war and also returned to Belgrade. Filled by a belief in a new social order and free of prison camps and torture, Ženi – who kept her war name – Jovanka Lebl – decided to continue her education and to actively participate in the building of a new Yugoslavia. In 1947 she took part in a contest organized by the *Politika* newspaper and began working at their editorial office. However, a joke about Josip Broz Tito which she had heard from a colleague and unwisely repeated to her co-workers, became the reason behind her arrest and spell in a re-education camp. She was detained from 28 April 1949 to October 1951 and due to the living conditions in the camp and the way the prisoners were maltreated, she later viewed this time as one of the most traumatic experiences of her life. After returning to Belgrade she was ostracized as a Cominform member, ultimately leading to her decision to leave the country in 1954.

In Israel she was faced with starting a new life afresh. Her war and camp experiences had shaped her into a strong, enduring and brave woman with her own internal survival strategy. As an immigrant she learned Hebrew, worked and studied. She worked in a variety of jobs, finally settling on the profession of a radiology technician.[8] Later, in 1964, she began working as a lecturer in a school for young technicians. This stability soon made it possible for her to research the history of Jews in Yugoslavia and until the end of her days she remained uncommonly active, dying in Tel Aviv on 20 October 2009.

The periods of interest in the part women played in Yugoslavian history were interspersed with times when their presence in the country's past was swept under the rug. It is the role of both male and female scholars to demand that women's texts be taken into account both in the literary canon (see Koch, 2007) and in the education process through the inclusion of women's activity in history coursebooks (see *Sjećanja žena žrtava*…, 2009). For a long time, the issue of

[8] In an interview given to Dragoslav Simić in 1989, Lebl explained how difficult it was for the Yugoslavian elites to come to Israel. Many of them – doctors, lawyers, engineers – were unable to work in their professions as they did not know the language; see Simić, 2010.

women's (lack of) presence in historical accounts remained beyond the scope of the official discourse in the former Yugoslavia. In Svetlana Slapšak's critical opinion, the history of the region perceived from a woman's point of view reveals the largest gaps in contemporary gender studies (Slapšak, 2009, p. 290). The need to include the female perspective in the research on former Yugoslavia's history has been expressed with growing explicitness not only in the studies focusing on the events related to World War II (see *Sjećanja žena žrtava*…, 2009; Jambrešić-Kirin, Senjković, 2010; Pantelić, 2011) and communist prison camps (see Jamrešić-Kirin, 2010; Гарања Радованац, 2011; Taczyńska, 2014c, 2014d, 2015), but also on the more recent ones, concerning e.g. the civil war of the 1990s (see Jambrešić-Kirin, 2008). However, research texts (including historical literary and cultural studies) are still scarce, requiring completion, expansion and comparative analysis, both synchronic and diachronic.

According to Gerda Lerner, one of the most promising – and most challenging – spheres of studies on women's history are their biographies (Lerner, 1988). Yet in the case of the former Yugoslavian countries, women's biographical texts still need to be discovered in the archives and in the hiding places in homes[9] and to be moved from fringe footnotes to the centre of historical narration (*The Challenge of Feminist Biography*, 1992, p. 7), as quite frequently they function as marginal annotations in historical analyses. Besides, even published women's texts wait for a long time before drawing researchers' attention. This can be exemplified by Ženi Lebl's autobiographical works. The main aim of my work is to bring to light Lebl's forgotten voice, her "invisible testimonies" (Ubertowska, 2009, pp. 214–226), which represent the personal experiences of this important scholar and function on the margins of humanist reflection. Furthermore, my article is an attempt to capture and present the distinctive features of female narration and its various forms. I treat the autobiographical texts by Ženi Lebl, both published in 1990 – *Dnevnik jedne Judite* [*Diary of a Judith*] (see Lebl, 1990a)[10] and the previously mentioned *Ljubičica bela* – as significant "herstorical" sources (see Ubertowska, 2015, pp. 7–24).

In her famous essay *Camp as a Metaphor*, Serbian writer Marija Knežević bitterly reflected that the moment when one is faced with complete helpless-

[9] Milka Žicina kept the manuscript relating her stay in the Glavnjača prison and Stolac camp under a false bottom in a kitchen cupboard; see Taczyńska, 2014a, p. 276.

[10] The book uses copies of authentic advertisements. The illustrator was Geršon Apfel.

ness when having to try to describe war, is worse than war itself (Knežević, 1997, p. 15). Ryszard Kapuściński wrote that literature is far from perfect, and its value is measured by approximation, that is, by the ability to "get close to" (cf. Dominiak, 1997, p. 24). Considering their sometimes symbolic, hidden dimension, I nevertheless treat the personal writings of Ženi Lebl (cf. Leociak, 1997, p. 15) as "a space for giving testimony and not for creating representations" (Niziołek, 2013, pp. 32–33). These writings describe two horrifying events in the Yugoslavian history – World War II with particular emphasis on the Shoah and the isolation of political opponents of the Yugoslavian government after 1948. At the same time they constitute a record of Lebl's life, a description of the most important and the most dramatic experiences, closely connected with the political situation in the country; experiences which for many years have been neglected in historical analyses and treated superficially. It seems that such lengthy exclusion of private history might have been a direct impulse which made Lebl undertake the research on the history of Jews in Yugoslavia. One of the hopes born from broadly understood feminist research is the possibility to "write women's history". It does not mean rewriting the whole history anew, but rather giving women back their proper position of subjects in history (Elior, 2014, p. 36). Thus, in my work I want to draw attention to the "inconspicuous texts" (cf. Strzelczyk, 2009)[11] by Ženi Lebl, which bring a new quality to the conventionally understood story of the past.

"I will write when I can, not when I would like": the occupation of Belgrade

The first of the discussed texts, *Dnevnik jedne Judite*, is a collection of reports told in the form of a diary, presenting the fate of one family in Belgrade from 24 March to 11 December 1941. The author of the notes is the eponymous "certain Judith", a wife and mother, who describes the struggles of her loved ones in occupied Belgrade during World War II. Initially, the collected entries are regularly jotted down on a daily basis, but later – due to the difficulties of the war – at longer intervals ("I can't write to you every day. Please

[11] See also *Twórczość niepozorna*, 2015.

don't resent this. I will write when I can, not when I would like" Lebl, 1990a, p. 43[12]). They can be treated as a microscopic form of history and a subjective record of one Jewish family's experience against the backdrop of the co-called greater history, from which it is possible to decode a system of values and meanings held by the depicted community, and their personal interpretation of events (Domańska, 2005, p. 273).

The diary begins when Judith's husband is sent, probably for a month, to military field training. Her notes are directed at her husband, tenderly addressed as "Loni my love" (Lebl, 1990a, p. 17) or "dear Loni" (Ibidem, p. 23).[13] As contact between the spouses will undoubtedly be limited or – even if it is not – then military censorship may intervene to make free exchange impossible, the woman decides to record the changes in their country and write down her thoughts in a notebook, which she intends to give to her husband upon his return. It dawns on Judith that the socio-political situation is rapidly changing ("Euphoria is gone and now all people are like taut strings waiting as it were for tomorrow's war to knock on our door too", Ibidem, p. 32[14]). If she cannot share her fears with her husband, she wants to feel his presence and closeness at least symbolically: "It's hard for me that I can't share my thoughts with you" (Ibidem, p. 23)[15], "[…] how I wish you were now with us. Or that at least I knew where you are" (Ibidem, p. 61).[16] With time, Loni's absence stretches until the outbreak of war in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia changes it into captivity. The diary then becomes not only a report for her husband, but above all, the means to gain perspective, a "mental oasis" and a mosaic of "scattered notes and reminiscences" (Ibidem, p. 43), which offers a momentary chance to catch one's breath. Writing and reading literature offer Judith a sanctuary, which does not allow her to give in to despair and abandon hope, and which props her up, enabling her to support her family: "Books have become my only friends. I don't have any new, I re-read the old ones, looking for new

[12] "Ne mogu da nastavim da ti pišem svakodnevno. Nemoj mi zameriti. Pisaću kad mogu, ne kad hoću".

[13] "Loni mili moj", "Dragi Loni".

[14] "Prošla je euforija, i sad su svi kao zategnute strune, kao da nešto iščekuju, kao da će sutra rat da zakuca i na naša vrata".

[15] "Teško mi je što ne mogu da podelim misli s tobom".

[16] "[…] toliko bih volela da si sad pored nas. Ili da bar znam gde si".

meaning in them or in myself. I turn the boring pages just like people turn their eyes from us" (Ibidem, p. 101).[17] Increasingly frightened with each passing day by the worsening situation in the country and disappointed by the people around her, who make it clear to her that they do not want to deal with a Jewess in their midst, Judith finds that writing the diary permits her to create a minimal space of freedom for herself where she can articulate the emotions she normally hides from her children (Ibidem, p. 43). The last entry appears on the day when she receives a personal summons to report to Sajmište camp. Judith, unsure of what she will face in the ghetto and what the living conditions will be, decides to give the diary to her neighbour Dari for safekeeping.

In the introduction to *Dnevnik*… Ženi Lebl, the real author of the text, who can be described as a "mediator between the past and the present" (Domańska, 2005, pp. 274–275), confesses that the name of Judith is a cover name for her mother Ana Lebl. Being one of the victims of the German extermination policy, Ana – like many other people – lost her life in a gas van. It is to her and to all those victims of ethnic cleansing who were deprived of even a symbolic tomb that Ženi Lebl dedicates her book (Lebl, 1990a, p. 5). The diary thus becomes a particular form of memorial or a place of memory (see *Les lieux de memoire*, 1984–1992), which influences the process of interpreting the future. The anonymity and heroism of the victims, who like Ženi Lebl's mother fought during the war for the survival of their families, were meaningfully represented by the phrase "one Judith", which refers to the Biblical story of Judith and the history of the Israeli town of Bethulia. The town was besieged by an Assyrian army and suffered a heavy death toll and famine in its wake. When the defenders started contemplating surrender, help was offered by beautiful Judith. The woman went to the enemy camp, seduced the Assyrian general Holofernes and killed him. Having lost their leader, the soldiers withdrew and Judith became a heroine among her people (*The Book of Judith*, 1990, pp. 467–470). In the introduction to the diary, Ženi Lebl also stresses that her text, created less than 50 years after the tragic demise of the Jewish community in Serbia, is an expression of protest against all public attempts to deny the disaster that was meted out to the Jews in Yugoslavia (see Ђулибрк, 2011, pp. 83–104). From this perspective it seems

[17] "Knjige su mi ostale skoro jedini prijatelji. Nemam novih, čitam stare ponovo, tražim novi smisao u njima ili u meni. Okrećem nezanimljive stranice, kao što ljudi okreću od nas svoje poglede".

that Ženi Lebl, who devoted many years of her life to fighting to maintain the memory of Yogoslavian Jews, can also be considered as a symbolic Judith. Consciously and consistently, till the end of her days, Lebl worked as an independent researcher documenting the richness of the history and culture of Yugoslavian Jews, despite the hostile socio-political climate prevailing at the time.

Besides other reasons to choose this medium, the diary lends itself as a literary form used to describe events as it is particularly appropriate for recording current events in chronological order (Głowiński, 2002, p. 118). Additional information on how Lebl's diary came into being can be found in the 1998 autobiographical collection of memories by Ženi Lebl *Pitom shona, pitom acheret* (*Suddenly Different, Suddenly Another*, Serbian 2008 edition – *Odjednom drukčija, odjednom druga*). In a sense, in this collection the author expands chronologically on her memories from the time of World War II. In this way Lebl wants to confirm the authenticity of the events originally recorded in *Dnevnik*… What is more, among these memories the reader can find information that the author's mother did in fact keep a diary during the occupation of Belgrade that she wanted to give to her husband (Lebl, 2008, p. 47). Ženi recollects that writing offered her mother a kind of sanctuary. The mother tried very hard to keep her violent emotions in check and, in her daughter's opinion, when these pent-up emotions needed to be released, she reached for a pen. Ženi was of the opinion that sometimes the transmission of her mother's thoughts to paper was no longer about writing down events for her father, but more about her mother calming her own thoughts, rationalizing her difficult situation, thinking over and discussing – even if only in internal dialogue mode – what to do and how to cope with everyday life that kept changing dramatically: "In reality Mom was writing to Dad, but it seemed to me that it was more like she was conducting a dialogue with herself" (Ibidem, p. 47).[18] Ženi also communicates that after receiving the summons to Sajmište, her mother handed the diary over to a neighbour, Lepša Dimitrijević, accompanied by a letter to her husband. Before the handover of the letter, the mother asked her daughter to read it. In *Odjednom drukčija*… Ženi tries to recreate the letter's content. Her memories and imagination create an unusual testi-

[18] "U stvari, Mama je pisala Tati, ali sam ja imala utisak da je ona više vodila dialog sa samom sobom".

mony – "a trustworthy symbolic-aesthetic archive" (Kłańska, 2015, p. 15), which constitutes an intimate record of her feelings of fear, pain and disappointment, but also her unflagging belief that the war would be over and the family would reunite. Products of artistic and literary imagination representing the experiences of Shoah victims are frequently preferred over more historical documentation, as the former are able to awaken empathy and convey the emotions involved. In describing the process of imagination in the context of women's memory of Shoah, a process in which one is forced to exceed one's perceptional habits and expand one's current frameworks of meanings to discover new areas of experience, Dorota Głowacka introduces the concept of "compassionate imagination" (cf. Głowacka, 2015, pp. 163–178). This term seems an excellent reflection of the strategy applied by Ženi Lebl to describe the reality of occupation from her mother's perspective. Lebl decided to abandon a reportage style in favour of literary rendering of the memory of traumatic events. Furthermore, by symbolically giving voice to her mother, the author removed herself to the margins. Despite the fact that it is she who is actually conveying the memory, its conveyance through an intermediary does not lower the authentic value of the testimony. It should be mentioned that Ana Lebl believed until the end that Sajmište camp would be just a place of temporary stay, and that in her new surroundings she would be able to continue keeping the diary; this is why she decided to take a blank notebook to the camp (Lebl, 2008, pp. 99–100). When Ženi returned to Belgrade after the end of the war, she tried to regain contact with her neighbour and retrieve her mother's notes. As it turned out, Lepša Dimitrijević died in the bombing of Belgrade in 1944, and the diary vanished without a trace (Ibidem, p. 179).[19]

In the history of Serbian literature, a diary is one of the dominant genres in women's prose. According to Magdalena Koch, "next to a letter, a diary is the second important medium of intimist prose" among modernist writers (Koch,

[19] It is worth mentioning that the history of Serbian literature has a similar case of reconstructing notes from memory and these in turn becoming the basis of a literary work. It was a modified 1919 epistolary novel *Kaluđer iz Rusije* [*A Monk from Russia*] by Milica Janković. This novel was created using the correspondence of the main female character with a monk, reconstructed from memories. When the heroine fell ill – apparently terminally – she burned all the letters. She did not want anybody to have access to her intimate thoughts after her death. When she unexpectedly recovered, she decided to use these "cremated" letters as the building blocks of her tale. See Koch, 2007, p. 148.

2007, p. 158). Furthermore, as an autobiographical form, a diary is commonly considered to be characteristic of female authors' expression (cf. e.g. Ritz, 2000, p. 49). However, as noted by Aleksandra Ubertowska, in reference to the conclusions of Marlene Heinemann from her research on the literature of the Holocaust, it was only the war and the resulting internal compulsion to write down testimonies that allowed women to break the cultural prohibition of publishing autobiographical texts. Earlier "[…] according to Western European bourgeois cultural norms, the autobiography as a published book was not really a form of expression open to women as it involved exposing one's I, with particular exhibitionism" (Ubertowska, 2009, p. 224). The growth in the number of published personal documents by women in the war and post-war periods is an effect of the degradation of egocentrism as a feature of autobiographic writing. In this case, one can speak about the influence of women's social role making their own I subordinate to the needs of other people (Ibidem, pp. 224–225).

Judith from Ženi Lebl's *Dnevnik*... is on the one hand primarily a wife and mother for whom family and motherhood are a social *sacrum* (Brzóstowicz, 1998, p. 10). She devotes a lot of space in her diary to describing the trials and tribulations of particular family members, amplified by the war. Female territory is a space in which a social role is fulfilled and in which female experience traditionally took place (Dąbrowska, 2004, p. 31). The reader thus finds about the difficulties encountered by her son Miško at the beginning of his studies after the introduction of the *Numerus clausus* rule. The regulations that followed forced him to work for the German occupiers, often in life-threatening circumstances such as those after an ammunition explosion in the Smederevo fort on 5 June 1941, when the death toll was approximately 2500. The visibly deteriorating situation for the men makes the mother – as I have already noted in the introduction – see no other option but to decide to have her son provided with false identity papers and to send him abroad: "He is smart, so let him cope on his own. He is young, so let him earn his piece of bread. He was afraid that something would happen to us when he escaped. It was my role to convince him to take this step and enable him to get false papers. May God help him!" (Lebl, 1990a, p. 108).[20]

[20] "Pametan je, pa neka se snađe. Mlad je, pa neka zaradi svoju koru hleba. Bojao se da će se nama nešto dogoditi ako on pobegne. Moje je bilo da ga nagovorim na taj korak i omogućim mu da dobije lažne papire. Neka mu je Bog u pomoći!".

With a certain surprise, Judith also describes the process of transformation she is observing in her teenage daughter Rašela, who is changing from a little girl to a young woman, which makes the mother happy but also justifiably worried. Rašela is maturing and becoming a person garnering the interest of boys, who start appearing in her company, and can help in difficult times, for example with obtaining food. Yet what is much more surprising is the internal transformation which takes place within the daughter, who not only becomes politically involved and sneaks out to the meetings of young communists, but also publicly and openly vents her opinions during anti-Semitic persecutions, defending the good name of the Lebl family: "I am more scared by this unexpected change in Rašela, by this outpouring of words and proud, dignified posture […]" (Ibidem, p. 58),[21] "The process of breaking the chain of human anger and stupidity has begun in her the process of forming this young being over the abyss and twilight of humanity" (Lebl, 1990a, p. 61).[22] Rašela does not let her mother wash the Star of David somebody has chalked on the entrance gate to their home, and when they are asked to leave a shop, she cheekily retorts to the shop assistant: "Did you sell these bones and offal to us for a good price? I haven't heard that you were one of the philanthropists who help orphans..." (Ibidem, p. 74).[23] Almost before the words are out of her mouth her mother leads her outside. Another time, when accosted in the street, she angrily, without mincing her words, shouts out her feelings to a childhood friend when the latter does not accept an invitation to Rašela's home: "Haven't you noticed that we are made from the same material, you Arians and we Jews, made from blood, meat and soul… do you hear: from soul too!" (Ibidem, p. 58).[24] The mother notices that all such incidents make the daughter feel even more alienated[25], causing deep hurt, which

[21] "Više se bojim tog iznenadnog preokreta kod Rašele, onog izliva reči i ponosnog, dostojanstvenog držanja […]".

[22] "Počeo je kod nje proces kidanja lanaca ljudske zlobe i gluposti, proces uzdizanja tog mladog bića iznad ponora i sutona čovečnosti".

[23] "Zar one kosti i creva koje ste nam prodavali za dobre pare? Nisam čula da ste bili među filantropima koji su pomagali sirotinju…"

[24] "Zar nisi primetila da smo od iste sirovine sazdani vi arijevci i mi Jevreji, od krvi i mesa i duše… Čuj: i od duše!".

[25] Rašela recalls like Ženi Lebl that their greatest friend during the occupation of Belgrade was their dog Ledi. She was faithful to the Lebl family and did not leave the house although they tried to chase her away so that she would forage for herself. Ledi was ultimately shot by a Gestapo man when she tried to stop him from entering the house (see Lebl, 1990a, pp. 116–117).

is reflected in the poems the girl writes and which the mother discovers, guided by maternal concern (Ibidem, p. 60). Judith feels that her daughter's behaviour stems from a wish to show support to her mother, yet she realizes that in wartime a carelessly uttered sentence may cause her death. Thus the mother sometimes withdraws, not wanting to offend the daughter as she realizes that this is also very hard for the girl. There are also moments when the daughter's rebellion takes the form of acts of courage, which move Judith especially deeply. When Rašela manages to get bread for the family yet again, the mother is full of admiration: "Look how this girl behaves in a difficult situation: it is a veritable miracle" and jokingly calls her "the minister of foreign affairs" (Ibidem, p. 75).[26]

From the point of view of a female form of narration, the relationship between the spouses described in the diary is the most interesting. The dominant tone of the feelings emerging from Judith's words takes the form of abovementioned tender addresses to her husband and multiple repetitions of sentences revealing her fear concerning his fate, as for a long time there is no news from him. Judith speaks to Loni in her thoughts: "If you read my thoughts and wishes, send a word" (Ibidem, p. 33).[27] Meanwhile, the war starts and there is still no news from the husband. Finally, after two months a brief letter comes informing her that he is alive, healthy and imprisoned in Germany. The whole family breathed a deep sigh of relief. Judith takes it upon herself to do everything in her power to prevent her beloved husband from knowing how difficult their situation in Belgrade is. Although they are hungry themselves,[28] have problems with access to water and former friends have turned away, she does everything to put together a package for her husband: "We have to cope somehow here; we will tighten our belts, but you won't feel it" (Ibidem, p. 73).[29] In letters to him, she consciously softens the descriptions of the conditions they live in, and when she wants to tell him what she really thinks and feels, she reaches for the diary and writes: "I'm writing these sen-

[26] "Kako se ta devojčica ponaša u ovoj teškoj situaciji – to ti je pravo čudo".

[27] "Ako čitaš moje misli i želje – javi se".

[28] Judith notes the moment when horsemeat started to be sold in Belgrade, see Lebl, 1990a, p. 74. The appearance of horsemeat in Poland and the belief held by some people that a horse was a friend and helper prevented some of them from eating this meat. This is described by Aleksandra Zaprutko-Janicka, see Zaprutko-Janicka, 2015, pp. 165–168.

[29] "Moramo nekako da se snađemo, mi ovde; odvajaćemo od usta, ali ti to nećeš osetiti".

tences to maintain a sense of normality. In these rare and general letters to you, instead of describing the real situation I have to make it less harsh, to lie" (Ibidem, p. 101).[30] What is interesting however, is that Judith's notes are not entirely uncritical. In the early parts of the diary, created just after her husband's departure to military training, she tries to express gently that she has not been satisfied with their relationship so far. Before the war, her husband worked outside Belgrade, as the manager of two mines in Milićevi and Brđani, so he spent most of his time away from home. He surfaced in Belgrade only at weekends so that he was not a fully-functioning member of their family life, with Judith somewhat ironically referring to him as a "K.G.", from the words "kao gost" ("like a guest"). The wife clearly realizes that her husband's work is certainly not easy and that he is not happy about staying away for long stretches of time. She still firmly believes that when Loni returns home, a frank talk about this issue and a fresh discussion about his "constant absence" will take place (Lebl, 1990a, pp. 17–18).

The domestic sphere, however, is not the only space visited by Judith in her diary entries. Although she is not an activist in any organizations, she is very knowledgeable about all the social and political changes afoot and tries to keep up to date with them. Her tale interestingly unites concepts traditionally separated in women's history, that of "the private" and "the public". These terminological road signs "[…] help to understand the particulars of this non-continuous – deprived of ordered narration – experience in which women have participated from the earliest days" (Iwasiów, 2008, p. 7). The line clearly demarcating these two spheres is blurred in Judith's diary and it does not follow a stereotypical course. Judith meticulously notes all the changes occurring in Yugoslavia[31] and in the world that are reported by the media. To do this,

[30] "Pišem ove redove da bih ostala normalna. U onim retkim i šturim pismima tebi umesto da pišem o stvarnom stanju stvari, moram da ublažujem, da lažem".

[31] The changes take place not only in the political domain but also in Belgrade as a city, such as the demolition of a bridge on the Sava near Sajmište and the construction of a pontoon bridge (Lebl, 1990a, p. 47). The expressiveness in her descriptions of the bombed Yugoslavian capital may resemble a symbolic series of works *Zamordowane miasto* [*A Murdered City*] by Maria Hiszpańska-Neumann depicting Warsaw after the 1944 uprising (see Maciąg, 2015, pp. 277–288). Judith also quotes information on acts of sabotage (Lebl, 1990a, pp. 88–89) and stories told with disbelief among Belgrade inhabitants, such as the one about a medical student and German agent Egon Sabukošek (Sabukoschek, Lebl, 1990a, pp. 63–67; see also Божовић, 2012, pp. 72–74).

she listens to the radio[32] and follows the papers, reading first the *Politika* and later the propagandist *Novo vreme* and *Obnova*: "They are trying to show that the situation is normalizing, that everything is in order and Radio Belgrade is broadcasting, cinemas are open and there are horse races… Will these representatives of our fourth power have enough courage to look honest people in the eyes?" (Lebl, 1990a, p. 69).[33] She approaches all information critically and thoughtfully,[34] yet right up until the last moment she hopes that German culture will not stoop to mass crime although she has experienced several cases of "human bestiality". She illustrates this with two situations: when she is forced to clean toilets in German flats and offices with her bare hands and to wipe a German soldier's boots with her own scarf. She also saw with her own eyes the Nazis robbing jewellery of their victims or taking pictures of themselves with the bodies of murdered people (Ibidem, p. 51). The diary's aim is to provide information for her husband upon his return, so she also collects press cuttings and announcements of orders issued by the Germans. In addition, in her narration she includes quotations to illustrate her notes: "Let there at least be a record somewhere of what we are experiencing" (Ibidem, p. 69).[35]

Judith's diary is a record of an experience viewed by her daughter from the distance of time. This account reveals a particular kind of testimony in which the changes generated by the war are perceived as historical events, influencing not only the world's geopolitical situation but also the fates of the author and her family. Although the husband's absence is the motivating factor behind Judith's decision to write and has a significant influence on her emotional state, the author focuses on factual representation, primarily of war

[32] The family find about the outbreak of war from the radio. Rašela manages to tune the receiver to Radio London, which aired a broadcast in Serbian on 6 April , preceded by the hymn *Bože pravde* [*God of Justice*] (see Lebl, 1990a, p. 34).

[33] "Trude se da prikažu kako se situacija normalizuje, sve je u redu, radi Radio-Beograd, bioskopi, održavaju se konjske trke… Da li će ovi nasi dični predstavnici sedme sile smeti da pogledaju poštenim ljudima u oči?"

[34] Judith reports with great sorrow on finding the name of Pavle Bihali in a published list. Bihali founded the Nolit publishing house in 1928 and was executed by firing squad on 19th July 1941 (Lebl, 1990a, pp. 83–85). It is worth remembering that it was only after Bihali's recommendation in 1934 that the novel *Kajin put* [*Kaja's Road*] by Milka Žicina was published. Žicina was the future author of accounts from Glavnjača prison and Stolac camp – *Сама* [*Alone*] (Београд: Службени гласник, 2009) and *Sve, sve, sve* [*Everything, Everything, Everything*] (Zagreb: Prosvjeta, 2002).

[35] "Neka bar negde bude zapisano ono što sad doživljavamo".

and how it has transformed her ordinary everyday world by contributing to her loss of stability. The reader's attention is drawn to fragments which display the intellectual and artistic character of the entries through the inclusion of English (Ibidem, p. 96) and French phrases (Ibidem, p. 113) as well as metaphorical comparisons describing the heroine's everyday strife: "Every outing into the city is for me like walking through an «open space», through the field where the winds of fear, doubt, sorrow and loneliness blow" (Ibidem, p. 43).[36]

"Shameful history pages must be written down": a report from Goli otok camp[37]

In *Ljubičica bela* the initiative to report the story belongs from the start to the author, Ženi Lebl, who places herself at the heart of events. We meet Ženi in 1949 as a twenty-something woman who lives in Belgrade and works for the *Politika* magazine. Introducing herself, the heroine reminisces about the period of World War II and the death of her mother and grandmother in death vans. She also recollects the fate of her father – who survived because he was imprisoned in a camp abroad – and the fate of her brother, whom the family were able to send out of Yugoslavia in 1941, later to take up arms in the war of liberation. Ženi survived the turbulent wartime period because – as she writes – she encountered kind people who offered her a helping hand. She hid her Jewish origins, which allowed her to survive deportation to a camp in Germany under the name of Jovanka Lazić.

After the war she starts working for a newspaper. One day the editor's office was entered by two men, who, without any explanation, arrest our heroine and lock her in Glavnjača prison. During the following four months Ženi is interrogated and her interrogators try to force her to admit her guilt. We see Ženi attempting to analyse the events of her life recorded in her memory, but she cannot identify the alleged crimes she is accused of. When she finally learns the reason for her imprisonment, she is incredulous. Slavica Garonja Rado-

[36] "Svaki izlazak u grad osećam kao kretanje po «brisanom prostoru», ledini po kojoj duvaju košave straha, sumnje, tuge i samoće".

[37] "[…] sramne stranice istorije treba da budu zapisane […]", Lebl, 1990b, p. 9.

vanac calls this scene the culmination of the text (Гарања Радованац, 2011, p. 667). Lebl broke the law because, while at work, she repeated a joke she heard from her colleague Vojo Đukić. The joke referred to Marshal Tito: "Yugoslavia received the grand prize at an international flower exhibition as they bred a one-hundred-kilogram white violet" (Lebl, 1990b, p. 15).[38] "Ljubičica bela" means "white violet" and it comes from songs celebrating the marshal, such as *Druže Tito* and *Ljubičice bijela* [*Comrade Tito*, *The White Violet*]. The white violet is an epithet denoting Tito.[39] The colleague who told the joke was working for the state authorities and the apparently accidental meeting with him turned out to be a setup.[40] Unaware of the trap, Lebl repeated the joke when the correct response would have been to report the man who dared joke about the marshal. Without a trial she is branded as an enemy of the nation and sentenced to a year of imprisonment "for slander against the nation and the state" (Lebl, 1990b, p. 58).[41] Paradoxically, as Garonja Radovanac writes, at the moment of her arrest Lebl was: "[…] clearly anti-Stalinist and an exemplary member of Tito's youth party as well as the greatest supporter of the Party's ideas [KPJ, Komunistička partija Jugoslavije, The Communists Party of Yugoslavia]; as she was a [representative] of the youthful employees of *Politika* and one of their most talented journalists, a promising career awaited her" (Гарања Радованац, 2011, p. 666).[42] Ženi is eventually transported to Ramski rit camp, where she works building a canal. Later she is incarcerated in Zabela prison, and finally transported on board a Punat ship onto Sveti Grgur to be later moved to Goli otok. The original sentence of one year imprisonment is ultimately extended into a traumatic two-and-a-half-year-long stay on the islands.

[38] "Jugoslavija je dobila prvu nagradu na međunarodnoj izložbi cveća, jer je odgajila ljubičicu belu od 100 kilograma".

[39] It should be highlighted that this floristic phrase references a particular kind of violet, that is, the white violet. In this case it can both allude to the image of Tito as and elegant man in a white uniform and to the uniqueness of the Marshal's character, as for example in Poland the white violet is on the *Red List of Polish Plants and Funghi*, where it is classified as extinct.

[40] Mihailo Simić informs us that Ženi deeply loved the man who told her the joke and they were considered to be an item (Simić, 2013, p. 67). The writer herself stressed in her report that although Đukić adored her, she was never serious about him (Lebl, 1990b, p. 11).

[41] "Zbog klevete protiv naroda i države".

[42] „[…] изразити антистаљиниста и у правом смислу Титова омладинка и највећи заговорник идеја Партије (КПЈ), а као млади кадар *Политике*, једно од њених најталентованијих новинарских пера, пред којом је стајала велика каријера".

For many years, the issue of Yugoslavian communist prison camps was absent from discussions in Yugoslavian society and abroad. A breakthrough came only in the late 1980s, after the death of Josif Broz Tito, when the memoirs of former inmates presenting their experiences from the camps started to appear.[43] Nonetheless, there is still a lack of studies analysing these literary representations.[44] A significant change in the study of prison camp literature is underway in texts using gender as a starting point, in which women's accounts are analysed with regard to typically female experiences, different from those presented in men's testimonies (cf. Jambrešić-Kirin, 2007, 2009b, 2010, 2014; Гарења Радованац 2011, 2012; Taczyńska, 2014c,d, 2015). Although the narratives of Milka Žicina (*Sve, sve, sve*, 2002; *Sama*, 2009) should be considered to be the first written female prison reports, we must remember that it is the memoirs of Ženi Lebl which are the first published testimony of a former female prisoner (see Taczyńska, 2014c,d).[45]

Ženi Lebl outlines the reasons why she decided to write her memoirs down in *Umesto uvoda* (*Instead the Foreword*) for *Ljubičica…* The author stresses there that the critical factor was the need to give testimony: "[…] I wouldn't write about Glavnjača, Ramski Rit camp, Zabela (VIII pavilon), the two sides of Sveti Grgur island or Goli otok camp, if it was a well-known matter, described, poetized and worked through. But it isn't like that. Hundreds of women who went there and went through these places, are silent and feel fear even today, forty or

[43] The researchers of this topic describe the 1980s as the time of a genuine "flood" (Jasna Dragović-Soso) or "explosion" (Oskar Gruenwald) of critical works and artistic projects about prison camps. See Dragović-Soso, 2004, p. 128; Gruenwald, 1987, p. 519. As for earlier attempts to introduce the topic of prison camps into literature, see Scheffler, 1984, pp. 352–377; Kadić, 1978, pp. 91–106; Kadić, 1988, pp. 238–254; Gruenwald, 1987, pp. 513–528.

[44] It must be mentioned that in 1994 a monograph *Non cogito ergo sum. Arheologija jedne šale* [*Non cogito ergo sum. Archeology of a Joke*] was published in Lublana by a Slovenian anthropologist Božidar Jezernik. The monograph is also known in Poland (see Jezernik, 1994, Polish edition – 2013). It is the first study in which the author provides a detailed description of the reality of life in a prison camp on the basis of numerous memoirs of former inmates, both male and female. However, although Jezernik uses reminiscences, he does not study them as texts, considering them instead to be a source of fact-based material which he uses to recreate the camp structure and the way it operated.

[45] In prison camp discourse, apart from Lebl's text, other memoirs written by women had to wait for a long time to be included in research on the Goli otok prison camp experience.

more years later" (Lebl, 1990b, p. 8).[46] An important factor, motivating women to write their memoirs almost 40 years after leaving the camp, was the need to draw attention to the fact that in communist camps there were not only men but also women. When Lebl became aware of the fact that increasingly often those who were speaking about Goli otok prison camp were not first-hand witnesses but people with merely second-hand knowledge of camp reality, and that nobody even mentioned women's presence in the prison camp, she decided to break the silence (Lebl, 1990b, p. 6). She consciously opposed the prevailing male narrative, which marginalized women's memory of the camps. It is worth mentioning that the direct stimulus and inspiration for creating this text came from Danilo Kiš, who filmed a documentary series *Goli život* [*Naked Life*] in 1989. The protagonists of the documentary are two victims of Yugoslavian camps – Ženi Lebl and Eva Panić-Nahir.[47] Not only is *Goli život* the first documentary focusing mainly on the Goli otok camp but the film also confirmed that women too were prisoners in the camps for those who supported Cominform. It also demanded that women's voices should be added to any analysis regarding Goli otok camp (cf. Taczyńska 2014a,d). Furthermore, Kiš was the person who convinced Ženi to write down her memoirs and publish them in the form of a book. This book was enhanced by the inclusion of documents confirming the facts she presented and a collection of 19 poems created between 1951 and 1954.

Let us look closer at the experiences described by the writer. Admission to the camp, involving a ritual crossing of the threshold of an infernal space, is synonymous with a full dissociation from the world outside as a female prisoner becomes yet another depersonalized cog in the prison machine. Each of the female inmates enters an entirely new world, one organized to carry out a program of dehumanization. Female prisoners are soon exposed to the strictly hierarchical structures in which these prisons are run. The women come under the authority of camp guards. It is the guards who decide the inmates'

[46] "[…] ne bih pisala o Glavnjači, Ramskom Ritu, Zabeli (VIII paviljon), dve strane ostrva Sveti Grgur i Golom otoku da je to stvar znana, opisana, opevana, prežaljena. Ali ona to nije. Stotine žena koje su kroz njih, kroz sva ta mesta, prošle – ćute, osećaju strah i danas, posle četrdeset i više godina".

[47] Totalitarian systems, prison camps and gulags had an important place in the thoughts of Kiš, an eminent Yugoslavian intellectual and writer of Jewish origin. Yet only after a visit to Israel and meeting the former women prisoners of the communist camps – Ženi Lebl and Eva Panić-Nahir – did the author decide to join the discussion regarding Goli otok camp and film a documentary series.

fate, demarcate the borders of their new existence and determine the paradigm of human behaviour. Thus, after experiencing the first shock, one ought to learn this unwritten rulebook of behaviour and fully submit to it. However, the island is also governed by a second hierarchy, one involving the introduction of almost caste-like divisions among the inmates which very quickly become immutable. The women incarcerated on the island are split into three groups: the "band", the "activists" and the "brigade".[48] Each of them is assigned appropriate tasks, and one's assignment to a particular level involves certain privileges – or lack thereof. Initially, one joins the "band". Women from this "rabble" should be boycotted: no one can talk to them and any form of communication is forbidden. The worst tasks are reserved for them, and as for a place to sleep, the "bandits" are allowed to occupy only the floor under the beds. The situation for "activists" – women involved both in their everyday work and in cooperating with the camp authorities – is different. They are permitted to receive better clothes and are afforded the opportunity to sleep on the lower bunks of the beds. The term "cooperating with the authorities" is one which requires further explanation. This cooperation is one of the memories Lebl finds most painful to recall. Prisoners were expected to collaborate with the authorities and report any "disloyal" utterances and events in the camp. If no such situations were forthcoming, then it was expected that they should be provoked so as to unmask hostile attitudes. In practice, as the author writes, continuous mutual suspicions were created and a sense of permanent mistrust among the inmates was rife. It was nearly impossible to find a prisoner who could be trusted and treated as a confidante, as any contact was always burdened by the tension arising from the realization that "If I don't report someone, someone will certainly report me" (Lebl, 1990b, p. 100). Another script was impossible. Breaking prisoner solidarity and convincing them that the path to freedom lay in listening and relaying information was paramount and

[48] In the literature concerning this issue one can find different names for the classes of prisoner and varying numbers as regards the division, yet the basic distinction between those who revised their views and those who were boycotted is always observed. For example, Ivo Banac divides inmates into three groups: the activists, or those who have been reformed (aktivisti [revidirci]), the passivists (pasivci) and the bandits (banditi) – see Banac, 1990, p. 236. Based on the recollections from the prisoner Milka Žicina, Mihailo Lalić splits the arrested into five classes (castes): the centre (centar), the activists (aktiv), the collective (kolektiv), those with postponed status (odloženi stav), and the boycotted (bojkotovani). See Лалић, 2011, p. 6.

is considered by Lebl to be the greatest and simultaneously the saddest triumph of camp authorities (Ibidem, p. 101). Denunciation caused a complete re-evaluation of the primary axiological system that gives people the ability to differentiate between good and evil. In the camp, this situation was turned on its head and the clear division into US and THEM disappeared: "Now "they" are also among us" (Ibidem, p. 79).[49] As a result, the creation of stable emotional bonds between prisoners was rare, and this lack of connectivity quickly led to internal desolation and moral regression.

The last of the mentioned prisoner groups was the "brigade". All women in the camp aspired to be called "brigadists", as this was the only position which made it possible to apply for release and return home. It was also unthinkable to jump any of the steps: each prisoner had to go through each circle of the camp hell while the guards of both genders egged on the women to accuse each other: "All is in your hands. We, through our magnanimity, are offering you a chance" (Lebl, 1990b, p. 106).[50]

Ženi Lebl was among the first group of prisoners to set foot on the island. The primary task awaiting prisoners on their arrival was to build a place to sleep, first for the authorities and then for themselves. As the camp operated in seclusion, outside the social and political system of any of the republics of the Yugoslavian Federation, all necessary tasks had to be done by the prisoners themselves. These ranged from cooking, laying electric wires, cleaning cesspools right through to providing medical help. As the island was basically a rock,[51] the main occupation of the inmates was working in the quarries.[52] Every day prison groups left the camp in the morning for their workplace, where they were employed breaking stones with primitive tools. Construction materials and marble objects were then transported from the island to be sold both in the country itself and abroad. In the commercial register Goli otok was listed as "Velebit" enterprise (Jezernik, 1994, p. 140). Work on the

[49] "Sada je počelo i među nama da bude «onih»".

[50] "Sve zavisi od tebe same. Mi ti pružamo mogućnost, mi smo velikodušni".

[51] The name of the island reflects its rocky nature of naked stone hills devoid of any plant life: Goli otok means Barren/Naked Island (see Marković, 1990, pp. 28–29).

[52] Quarries are probably first mentioned as places of torture and punishment in The *History of the Peloponnesian War* by Thucydides: in 413 BC when an Athenian military force tried to take control of Sicily. The expedition ended in disaster and the Athenian soldiers were sent to quarries. Also see e.g. Денић, 2005, p. 66.

island could also be used as an instrument of torture. Those boycotted were assigned the most exhausting and often the most pointless tasks. The prisoners were forced to perform Sisyphus-like tasks such as carrying stones from one place to another, digging holes and then filling them back in or carrying water to a bottomless barrel. Women who showed even a modicum of rebellious tendencies or behaviour such as expressing support for the Soviet Union were met with immediate reaction. The most drastic example of this mentioned in Ženi Lebl's account is that of Brana Marković, the wife of a mathematics professor, Sima Marković. Marković,one of the first secretaries of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia (1920–1921)[53], was a victim of Stalinist repressions and was sentenced to 10 years of penal servitude in 1939. The date and place of his death remain unknown. His wife did not believe that Stalin had ruthlessly persecuted Yugoslavian communists (Marković, 1987, p. 184). In Lebl's reminiscences she is mentioned as a prisoner who was boycotted and subjected to a variety of punishments for the whole length of her stay in the camp, yet until the bitter end she refused to retract her support for the USSR. She detached herself entirely from her surrounding reality, showing no reaction to the voices of guards or fellow inmates. In the memories, Marković seems to be a unique character who was able to offer compassion and hope by her very demeanour, sometimes even just by a look or a single sentence. This is how Ženi Lebl describes her:

> *The sinner Brana Marković – they say she used to be a professor in the USSR – is now tasked with drawing seawater with a small bucket and carrying it to a barrel without a bottom, which she is to fill! Like in that folk saying about working in vain. The woman goes about her tasks, drawing, carrying, pouring water and then doing it all back again. She does not talk to anyone and you can't read from her face what she thinks or feels. They say "she has lost her marbles". If she's crazy, this work will finish her! But it seems to me that a few times, as if by chance, she looked at me like a human being, with*

[53] In 1935 Marković, fearing repression from the Yugoslavian government, emigrated at the party's behest to the USSR. There he managed to gain significant authority among the revolutionaries as a theoretician specializing in nationality issues and political economy; writing under the pen-name of "Semić". Even Stalin himself argued with his hypotheses.

compassion, not in the way you would expect from a bandit (Lebl, 1990b, pp. 107–108).[54]

An issue that must be analyzed in this article is the matter of awareness of the body, clearly emphasized in Lebl's account. One of the first steps in the multi-staged process of degradation undertaken, which women felt particularly acutely, was the act of depriving them of their subjectivity, carried out by forcing them to don prison "uniforms". Recounting how women were admitted to Ramski rit camp, Ženi Lebl highlights the moment when the prisoners were forced to dress in worn and dirty clothes, poorly fitting their shapes and sizes: "[The women there] were wearing some strange tawny cloth uniforms, and on their legs they had enormous rubber boots. Soon we too received new clothes […]" (Lebl, 1990b, pp. 67–68).[55] Poorly fitting shoes – getting a pair of the correct size was a rarity – caused serious, painful wounds. Agnieszka Nikliborc, who studies the accounts of women from KL Auschwitz-Birkenau, stresses that the necessity of donning prison clothes blurred any distinctions among the women. The inmates were a part of a uniform mass and what used to constitute their identity – profession, social and economic standing – had entirely lost its value (see Nikliborc, 2010, p. 156). The prison garb conspired to deprive women of their uniqueness and individuality. In addition, as was previously the case for example in Nazi camps, clothes carried meaning, stigmatizing the prisoners. In the camps for Cominform members, the clothes one wore clearly indicated whether a given person was still being subjected to boycotting or whether she had already retracted her views. By putting on a prison uniform, a woman's body became unequivocally marked. Notwithstanding the

[54] "Grešnica Brana Marković, vele da je bila profesor u SSSR-u, sad joj je zadatak da zahvata kofom morsku vodu i nosi je do bureta bez dna, koje treba da napuni! Ono što se kaže: iz šupljeg u prazno. Radi žena svoj posao, zahvata, nosi, sipa, pa opet sve nanovo. Ne govori ni sa kim, na licu joj se ne može pročitati šta misli, šta oseća. Kažu da je «s uma sišavša». Ako je stvarno sumanuta, ovaj će je posao dokrajčiti! Meni se ipak čini da me je nekoliko puta, onako u prolazu, pogledala ljudski, sažaljivo, ne onako kako bi trebalo na bandu gledati". After leaving Goli otok camp, Brana Marković was unable to bear the burden of her experiences. She committed suicide on her mother's grave in Belgrade. The story of Brana Marković – her stay in the camp and life after – is also described by Boško Mrđa, see Mpђa, 1995, pp. 6–10.

[55] "[žene] bile su u nekim čudnim uniformama od čoje, tamnomrkim, na nogama su imale ogromne gumene kondure. Uskoro smo i mi dobile nova odela […]".

everyday dangers of prison camp life – women prisoners were permanently reminded of their bodies, which created a significant part of their identity.

In *Ljubičica*… the reader can find many fragments referring to the biological and sexual dimensions of women imprisoned in the camp (see Karwowska, 2009, p. 5). First and foremost, it should be pointed out that in Lebl' account awareness of the body is described as the central problem of functioning in this new reality. Subsequent descriptions show that living in camps, women lost power over their own bodies on a daily basis. The first aspect that characterizes the body is physiology. In Glavnjača, women shared a cell with several other inmates. This state of affairs quickly forced Lebl to divest herself of any sense of shame and relieve herself in full view of others (Lebl, 1990b, p. 55). Living conditions deteriorated further when our heroine worked at a canal construction site, where all day long the women were forced to do drudging work all the while standing knee-deep in water. As a consequence, they had to become accustomed to being continuously attacked by leeches. Also, the water they were wading in was the only "liquid" refreshment available to quench their thirst. To add insult to the injuries being inflicted upon the women was the fact that all of them were forced to work in the ditches all day long without a break, so the canal they were building constituted not only their source of drinkable water but also the place where they relieved themselves. Lebl sums up the described situation with a brief commentary, which returns oftentimes in her account when describing everyday life in prison: "A man can get used to anything" (these words can be heard as a ghastly refrain of camp life in many memoir texts).

Lebl returns to the issues of physiology when she describes her time on the island. The ubiquitous filth initially disgusts all prisoners, and our protagonist recalls her life in Belgrade and reflects on issues related to her bodily functions. She remembers that toilet paper exists, yet for the inmates on the island this remains nothing but a hazy memory; however – as Lebl adds – "We got used to this, like when everyone has eaten garlic and nobody can smell it. And we all here reek" (Ibidem, p. 102).[56] The disastrous sanitary conditions prevailing make it impossible to maintain proper hygiene.

[56] "Privikle smo se već i na to, kao kad se svi najedu belog luka pa ga niko i ne oseća. A mi ovde sve smrdimo".

Thus, the body begins to alter even more markedly with subsequent infections and illnesses leaving permanent, visible and disfiguring marks. Malnourishment also has a dehumanizing influence as it takes away earlier womanly curves. Furthermore, through beatings and working beyond human capacity, they begin to feel as if they are losing their female identity and their sense of "being a woman". In the camp a "spiritual" life hardly exists and conversations are forbidden; thus the body takes on the role of a medium communicating with the world, directly influencing women's actions. Once feelings of de-feminization and reification are awakened, the process is irreversible. It is worth mentioning that this sense of femininity is defined in reference to categories from the outside world, primarily to visual signs of beauty. Lebl mentions several times in her memoir that she had been adored by men, a state she liked because it made her feel attractive. Now she recounts how she is beginning to feel loathing towards her own emaciated and mistreated body. This poignant perception of herself makes her stop perceiving her body as an object of sexual desire. From this perspective, it is interesting to look at the fragment of the memoir in which Ženi Lebl recreates a situation of sexual abuse based on her own experience: "He took me in his arms, delicately laying me down on the bedding and kissing my tear-streaked face and dead fingers. Then, he started pulling off my work uniform […] I feel him, I feel his rapid breath and when he reaches the culmination of pleasure, my hands start to burn" (Lebl, 1990b, p. 86).[57] The woman paradoxically defends herself against suffering and experiencing the forced intercourse on a deeper level by perceiving herself as an asexual being. This is why after having been raped, Lebl just adds laconically: "We are so lucky that we have stopped being womanly creatures […]" (Lebl, 1990b, p. 87).[58] To escape any suffering from this experience seems nigh impossible. As Rhonda Copelon writes: "Every rape is a grave violation of physical and mental integrity" (quoted after Goldenberg, 2007, p. 159). However, Lebl seems not to feel what has just happened, and she limits information about the sexual act to the absolute minimum. She practically dismisses the occurrence by devoting

[57] "Uzeo me je u naručje. Nežno me je položio na postelju i ljubeći mi uplakano lice i mrtve prste počeo da svlači s mene robijašku uniformu. […] Osećam ga, osećam mu ubrzano disanje, i dok on dolazi do kulminacije zadovoljenja, meni počinju da gore ruke".

[58] "Kakva sreća što smo prestale da budemo ženska stvorenja […]".

a mere few sentences to it in the whole text. One might suspect that Lebl speaks about the rape only because she had decided earlier that her account would be honest. She is drawn by a journalistic compulsion to meticulously preserve all events in her story, if possible. Yet, there can be another reason why Lebl devotes so little space to the rape. Texts referring to memories from the Shoah again turn out to be helpful in understanding the author's intentions. Having analysed rich critical bibliography connected with the Shoah, Myrna Goldenberg notices that for a long time, rape and sexuality in general had been considered an insignificant part of history, thus the topic is absent from many studies (Goldenberg, 2007, p. 162). Still, Goldenberg has no doubts that without including fragments outlining the violence perpetrated against women, the presented history will be only a partial picture of war, limited solely to a socially accepted version. Such an approach thus bears the risk of cognitive reductionism towards the issue. Recent years have brought numerous changes in the field of breaking down barriers concerning the wartime fates of women, above all in literature and film, although many stories still require re-interpretation and appropriate analysis.

Perhaps Lebl does not decide to delve deeper into acts of rape because she does not see them as a topic worth reflection. Judging by her writings and the interviews she gave, she probably was unfamiliar with feminist texts dealing with this issue and highlighting its importance. It seems that even if Lebl barely mentions rape as an element of camp reality, the fact that they took place should be noted, as not to do so would diminish the suffering of those raped. In Lebl's case she may not have been able to reflect about these events simply because they were too painful. Writing could have been an act of therapeutic auto-narration enabling her to understand her own life story better. Thus her account would not only be a testimony of her time in the camp, but also a reflective record of her own difficult experiences all contributing to her identity (Czerska, 2011, p. 20). Lebl seems to sense intuitively the importance of the problem, so she includes it in her account. In the text she offers a short comment on acts of rape, saying that to survive, women had to divest themselves of any human-like behaviour. Rape was one of many traumatic experiences she underwent. In this first woman's story to be published and commented upon, she mostly wants to give testimony to those days. What is most important for her is that she survived the hell of the camp.

The story of *Ljubičica*… should be considered in the categories of experiences which were the result of political repressions. Setting the memories of Ženi Lebl in a particular historical situation explains, albeit to a minimal degree, how a number of institutions came to exercise authority over their citizens. As a consequence, in post-war Europe numerous social deviations arose. One of their victims was Lebl, who decides to describe her experiences forty years after these traumatic events unfurled. She chooses the form of a documentary testimony, writing about the camp structure and the factors shaping the reality of life in the camp. She also reflects on the biological and sexual problems faced specifically by female inmates. The situation in the camps resulted in inmates' increased awareness of their bodies. This manifests itself in constantly thinking about protecting it and most frequently about the impossibility of keeping it clean. However, this results in surrounding reality being perceived solely in relation to the needs of the body. Different aspects of the experiences felt leave indelible marks on the body, thus creating an important source of knowledge about mankind.

Conclusion

Jolanta Brach-Czaina has pointed out that reflecting upon the female experience cannot only happen in relation to recording the current artistic output of women, but must also be accompanied by a "reconstruction of the past and an excavation of the phenomena that have been omitted or misinterpreted" (Brach-Czaina, 1997, p. 8). The words of the Polish scholar aptly describe the goal I set for myself in the reflections upon the autobiographical writings of the heroine of this article, Ženi Lebl, whose personal writings had to wait long for proper recognition both from historians and literary scholars. The analysis conducted in this article aimed to demonstrate that *Dnevnik jedne Judite* and *Ljubičica bela* constitute a valuable source of knowledge on the experiences of one of the leading authors and researchers in the female discourse on war and prison camps in Yugoslavia. What my deliberations particularly accentuate is the issue of war and post-war traumas as a significant element of women's identity in Yugoslavia, which calls for discussion and reflection. Reading through the lens of her autobiography, Ženi Lebl appears as a custodian of memory who feels

responsible not only for keeping the memory of tragic past tragic events alive, but also for the way in which this memory is preserved. The personal writings of the author need to be analysed against the background of the particular political situation. Owing to this, the narration becomes on the one hand a tale about the fate of war and post-war Yugoslavia and on the other – the story of the victims in these conflicts, including women. Many years after the dramatic events Ženi Lebl decides to describe her experiences . In the book *Dnevnik jedne Judite*, she writes about the reality of Belgrade under occupation and about family relations, dramatically complicated by the war. In *Ljubičica bela* she recounts the camp structure and the mechanisms governing the reality of the camps. An important issue raised by Lebl is also her reflections on the biological and sexual problems encountered by women prisoners. By describing differing aspects of how body awareness is experienced, the author builds a female perspective of how the body is perceived and thus expresses the particularity of female experiences.

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A study of women with disabilities – the emancipatory perspective

The most interesting social phenomena are generally not readily available to the researcher. The difficulty in accessing them usually stems from a variety of reasons: some research problems may belong to the sphere of hidden phenomena because of their intimacy, some may be perceived as threatening by research participants, some may seem incomprehensible or alien to the researcher because he or she may simply lack a particular type of experience. The need to reach out to the participant's world of meanings is one of the requirements of hermeneutic analysis, which obliges the researcher to carefully and thoroughly interpret the collected data. However, the researcher can never be entirely sure if the interpretation is the description of the world according to the categories which were created by the researcher (*etic*), or whether it is consistent with the patterns of categorization and interpretation adopted in the studied community (*emic*) (Lett, 1990; Morris et al., 1999). If we assume that it is possible for the researcher to approach the world(s) of respondents and to describe it (or them) in the closest and "densest" way, then it is necessary to include the experiences and interpretations of the respondent in the research process. Connecting with the world of the respondent's meanings requires not only certain skills, but also certain methods that can help expose this world.

The importance of the researcher's worldview in the research design was revealed to me through my work in the area of disability studies. As far as the choice of the type of research (especially if we assume that the qualitative and

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quantitative research are only the end points of a continuum rather than contradictory dichotomies) is not a great dilemma, the decision on the selection of perspective is not at all obvious. The issue of the researcher's worldview is usually ignored or merely summed up in the form of a short thoughtless remark. Meanwhile, the research paradigm has a significant impact on the manner and direction of research, and, thus, is worth considering at the very beginning of the research process, i.e. in the planning stage. The choice of paradigm depends on previous experience, on the researcher's philosophical assumptions, and, above all, on the subject of empirical cognition, and consequently, on the type of the studied participants.

In this article I reflect on some of the methodological challenges and discuss how I have thought about and negotiated the questions in the context of my own research. For many years, I have investigated the experiences of women with disabilities. I am currently working on a research project[1] devoted to the experiences of motherhood of women with intellectual disabilities. In the design stage of the research I have become increasingly interested in doing research with "Others", that is, doing research with groups to whom I do not myself belong. I have been concerned when the groups I have been studying with are marginalized in ways that I am not (Traustadóttir, 2001). In doing this research I have asked myself questions such as: Who can do research with whom? In what ways will those I include be like me? In what ways will they be different? Can I represent their views? How can I speak for them without making them Other? Who is the Other? Can my research disrupt *Othering*? Who can tell whose story? Can I only speak for myself? What about issues of power and powerlessness in the relationship between the researcher and the researched? How do I negotiate the relationship between Self and Others? (Carty, 1996; Kitzinger, Wilkinson, 1996; Olivier, 2000; Stone, Priestley, 1996). These questions have been particularly relevant during my current research project. Working with this group of marginalized women, which I do not belong to myself, has raised intense and complex questions about doing research with Others (Traustadóttir, 2001).

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Conducting research on the experiences of women with disabilities in Poland appears to be important for several reasons. Firstly, in recent years there has been an increase in the number of people with disabilities, and one of the features of this growth is the feminization of disability (Ciaputa, Król, Warat, 2014). Secondly, women with disabilities are doubly discriminated, i.e. on the grounds of gender and disability (Dick-Mosher, 2015; Dutta, 2015; Habib, 1995). In Poland, the phenomenon of double discrimination does not derive from the provisions of legal acts, quite the contrary, it results from an absence of such regulations, which in turn leads to consistent exclusion of this social group from legislation and customary rights. Legislative gaps in this area stem from at least two reasons. One of them seems to be the absolute lack of legal reflection on this issue, the second one concerns the social acceptance of an asexual image of women with disabilities. This is also, and perhaps primarily, reflected in the discriminatory norms and cultural patterns passed on from generation to generation, which significantly limits the position of women with disabilities in the social environment (Wołowicz-Ruszkowska, 2016).

Thirdly, women with disabilities are invisible both in the discourse on women's rights, and in the discourse on the rights of persons with disabilities (Arnade, Haefner, 2011; Asch, Rousso, Jefferies, 2001). Disability in the majority of Polish research remains gender neutral, hence it is common to treat people with disabilities as a homogeneous environment. Ignoring gender of the respondents leads to the adoption of assumptions about the irrelevance of gender difference, and it perpetuates the acceptance of beliefs about the similarity of the experiences of women and men (Wołowicz-Ruszkowska, 2013). Meanwhile, the existing international research (e.g. Disability Rights, Gender, and Development; Guide on Violence and Disabled Women; Disability Awareness in Action – Disabled Women), and several Polish studies (Ciaputa, Król, Warat, 2014; Wołowicz-Ruszkowska, 2016) show that in addition to problems common to people with disabilities there are also those that affect exclusively women. These include among others: treating women with disabilities as "sexless" beings, as the "third sex" ("femininity" being reserved for those who do not deviate from socially and culturally accepted norms; taboos regarding sexuality of women with disabilities) (Burns, 2000; Shandra, Chowdhury, 2012), setting social roles which diminish adulthood (i.e. not considering the possibil-

ity of performing other roles than the "eternal child" in the process of upbringing) (Lawler, Begley, Lalor, 2015; Malacrida, 2007, 2009; Mayes, Llewellyn, McConnell, 2011; Shandra, 2009, 2011). The experience of women with disabilities in Poland is often determined by a stereotyped approach, which is strongly anchored in cultural patterns. The most dramatic example of social subjugation and the accumulation of all the negative stereotypes relating to people with disabilities seems to be the social situation of women with intellectual disabilities.

The dominant discourses about women with intellectual disabilities labels them as child-like, asexual people. As a result, women with intellectual disabilities have difficulties being seen as sexual, adult women. Another competing image portrays women with intellectual disabilities as having uncontrollable sexuality, which may result in their having a large number of "defective" children. In Poland there is also a social mechanism undermining the motherhood of women with intellectual disabilities, the conviction about the lack of ability to undertake family and care roles (Wołowicz-Ruszkowska, 2016).

This analysis points to the important role Othering plays in the processes by which dominant groups define themselves. It also emphasises the social construction of gender and the difficulties that marginalized and Othered women have in being accepted as women. Analysing the processes of Othering has made it clear that not all women are women in the same sense. Some women are constructed as defective and are rejected as acceptable "normal" women. They are the Other women.

A small number of scientific studies that would systematically focus on the situation of women with disabilities in Poland comes as a result of the lack of recognition of this issue and customary acceptance of this fact. This, in turn, leads to the lack of an in-depth diagnosis of the situation of women with disabilities in the society, making it difficult to identify and properly define the issues concerning this group. Therefore, despite their preponderance, women with disabilities have become a marginalized "minority".

In order to provide an important basis for the optimal organization of living space for women with disabilities, research should take into account their voices, engage them and aim to gain access to their subjective knowledge (Crawford, Ostrove, 2003; Morris, 1995). The key importance of research including persons with disabilities lies in obtaining knowledge which would

reflect their subjective perception of reality, the meanings they ascribe to it, and its evaluation from the perspective of needs, possibilities and limitations resulting from the disability itself. One of the ways to obtain this goal is through the theoretical perspective which draws on the *gender and disability mainstreaming* approach (Arnade, Haefner, 2011; CERMI, 2007; Garland-Thomson, 2005; Lloyd, 2001).

Gender and disability mainstreaming

One of the priorities of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006), is the inclusion of disability in all aspects of social development (*disability mainstreaming*), and thus also in the area of scientific research. On the other hand, the *gender mainstreaming* strategy, which is recommended by the United Nations and which is binding for all EU countries, enforces the need for the horizontal application of the gender perspective, and also in the event of any action aimed at people with disabilities (Migalska, Król, 2012). The use of mainstreaming models, which are focused exclusively on gender or on disability, has a number of limitations in relation to the situation of women with disabilities. The European Disability Forum representatives have indicated in the Manifesto by Disabled Women in Europe (2011) that this is not only insufficient, but also deepens inequalities between women and men with disabilities on one hand, and between women without disabilities and women with disabilities on the other (CERMI, 2007). The use of a two-pronged approach in research, which adds a particular sensitivity to the situation of women with disabilities, enables an in-depth analysis of their situation and experiences. The differentiation of the analysed categories, which will be applied in this paper, can also undermine the illusion of homogeneity of the category of women and the category of people with disabilities. The social discourse employs a laconic notion of women, in which individuals are seen as a homogenous and internally undifferentiated group. As a result, the discourses which talk about women paradoxically make real women invisible. Another feature, which leads to the mechanism of social categorization, is disability. Defining the theoretical perspective in this way sensitizes researchers to the *intersectional approach*.

Intersectionality

The concept of intersectionality was introduced for the first time in the late 1980's by an American researcher Kimberlé Crenshaw, who applied it in her research on the experiences of black American feminists. It describes the overlap of different social categories, which as a result may reinforce the discrimination of certain groups and individuals (Crenshaw, 2004; Shields, 2008). It is not enough to look at the situation of a woman with disabilities as the sum of her positions as a woman and as a person with disabilities (Arnade, Haefner, 2011). It is necessary to take into account a new perspective (Bowleg, 2008; Cole, 2009), in which both statuses intersect and condition one another, which makes "the image become much more complex, making women with disabilities one of the most disadvantaged population groups, which are exposed not only to the dual but multiple discrimination" (CERMI, 2007, p. 11).

My reflection on the research process takes into account the intersection of gender, understood as a socio-cultural category and disability. These characteristics make up the syndrome of mutually interwoven conditions, which show the multiple social location of this category of persons in society. The use of the intersectional approach allows for a more in-depth analysis of the position of women with disabilities, keeping in mind the complexity of identity and their jigsaw-like character (Titkow, 2007). The overlapping identities form networks of connections and situate people in a binary system, majority *versus* minority, the known *versus* foreign, adequate *versus* different. The greater the number of minority groups an individual belongs to, the greater the chance of experiencing multiple discrimination. It offers a chance to overcome the bipolar way of thinking about identities as a hierarchical disjoint opposition, in which one pole is the norm and the second is the deviation and the problematic state (CERMI, 2007, pp. 31–33). It also emphasizes that people differ in many various ways, which makes it possible to appreciate the difference and include it in a social context, which is not negative or problematic.

It seems that research planned in such way is an opportunity to supplement existing feminist studies with issues concerning women with disabilities. Introducing the category of gender into the research on disability will allow for the analysis of disability as a condition which invalidates and "erases" gender, all the attention being focused on the lack of efficiency (Garland-Thomson, 2005).

The social model of disability

The reference point for my analysis is the social model of disability as defined in the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Disability is described here as an "evolving concept and that disability results from the interaction between persons with impairments and attitudinal and environmental barriers that hinders their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others" (CRPD, 2006). This approach breaks with the previously widespread medical model, in which disability was understood as an individual characteristic, and which looked at the person's "damage" or impairment as both the cause of marginalization and the possibility to counteract it. The social model of disability shifts the focus from the individual narrative situated in the private sphere, into the language of citizenship and civil rights (Burchardt, 2004). Disability, like gender, sexuality, age, ethnicity or class, is the factor that determines the relationship of people with the community in which they live, as well as with the state. It poses questions about the social context in which the citizenship is shaped, who is included in it and who is excluded from it. Therefore, the social model moves the responsibility for the experience of disability from the individual level to the level of society, seeking the causes of disability in the exclusionary organization of the society, making it responsible for creating an "abling" environment that would allow everyone to use their rights on equal terms (VSO, 2006, p. 8).

Society creates a complex set of rules, more or less institutionalized, such as laws or customs that are of a normalizing character. So it is not a person with a disability who is to be the subject of change and adjustment, but the conditions in which they live must be modified and adapted to their requirements, so that they can live in a manner considered normal, dignified and desirable in a given society. Disability is thus a relative feature, resulting primarily from the nature of the interaction between the person and the environment in which they are located and in which they must function. The relativism of disability involves a variable range of occurrence and intensity, with the existing objective ground at the same time (Shakespeare, 2000, 2006). This variation is the result of the rules established by a society that organize the most important spheres of life, and which can expand or reduce the range of the prevalence of disability (Gąciarz, 2015). The thesis that peo-

ple are not disabled, but they are made disabled seems, therefore, justified (Arnade, Haefner, 2011). The society determines, often on the basis of the type of their disability, when and where people with disabilities can access different types of social activities, such as education or work, and when and where they can exercise their social roles (Meekosha, Shuttleworth, Soldatic, 2013). Accessibility standards for public participation seem to be the most exclusive for people with intellectual disabilities.

The adoption of such an understanding of the situation of women with disabilities implies the selection of specific research strategies. An important aspect of the planning stage of the study is in my opinion the approach derived from feminist methodology, which is based on the recognition of the autonomy of subjects, challenging relations of power in the study.

The feminist perspective

The feminist research model encompasses various aspects of the scientific research practice, which aim is to create a theory grounded in the real experiences of women and their language (Lister, 2003). The discussion about feminist research came about as a result of the critique of the hitherto existing methods of conducting studies that did not take into account women's perception of the world. Until now, the world of science has been shaped mainly by men, and as such it has assumed that women's experiences are the same as the experiences of men. As a result, social reality was presented from the point of view of those who have greater access to education and greater participation in the creation of culture. The critique of the existing forms of knowledge refers to the condition in which women were forced to give a meaning to the world through the categories of men. This meant that women were alienated from their experiences because they had to describe and understand them in men's terms. Women's issues, such as motherhood, violence against women, education, domestic and professional spheres have been largely ignored. Research taking into account the feminist point of view is trying to fill this gap by changing the nature of all kinds of knowledge, aiming to restore the value of personal experience and transfer the attention from androcentric perspective towards the construction of the female subject (Brooks, 2007; Chodorow,

1995; Mahoney, Yogvesson, 1992). The role of feminist research also involves the creation of new frames of reference, according to which women's views, their experiences, needs and interests will be accepted as legitimate, and will provide a basis for research and knowledge creation. The gender perspective in science redefines social and cultural categories, expands knowledge about society, allows to see the ambiguity of gender roles and allows to perceive women as an empowered section of the society, not just as one of its functional elements" (Titkow, 2007, p. 29).

Feminist research practice undermines the division of knowledge into local-indigenous, on one hand, and researcher-expert, on the other. It seeks to highlight the subjective experience of women, and it aims to develop a set of concepts that would help avoid the subordination of people who participate in research. It also advocates the use of conscious partiality and proposes a partial identification with the subject of research and resignation from the position of an observer. It suggests amending the relationship in a vertical arrangement between the researcher and the respondent, i.e. "looking down" is replaced by "looking from below". The tendency to treat respondents as objects of knowledge, and at the same time as objects of manipulation, is replaced by a desire to empower the studied individual.

The feminist perspective also questions the hierarchy of knowledge, stressing that the knowledge of respondents is something more than a resource the investigator acquires through the use of techniques and the strength of scientific authority. As the feminist bell hooks notes (2013), people are subjects, not objects of study, and instead of just accepting the definition proposed by the researcher, they have the right to self-define themselves. Their participation can be of two kinds: epistemic and political (Heron, Reason, 2001). In the first case the acquisition of knowledge is emphasized, in the second one the focus is on the political action aimed at improving the situation of marginalized groups, which should lead to their empowerment. The subjects of study become real participants, co-investigators, and the boundary between the researcher and respondent becomes blurred, just as the boundary between the experts and the non-scientific community does.

Participatory paradigm

The participatory paradigm was created as a response to the criticism of the monopolization of knowledge by scientists (Ibidem). The social world can be known only "from the inside", using active and partner-like research relationships aimed at understanding given reality. The role of the researcher in participatory research differs fundamentally from the role the researcher plays in traditional research. The researchers lose their dominant position and the right to monopolize knowledge; instead, they become facilitators supporting a cognitive process (Leeuw, Cameron, Greenwood, 2012). One of the cornerstones of the emancipatory epistemology is that people with disabilities - and not rehabilitation professionals, social workers or researchers – are the true knowers. The empowerment of the researcher – interviewees relationship is based on a specific attitude of the researcher to himself or herself as a human being, to their partner of the interaction (the participant) and to the recognized research problem (the object of study). This approach leads to a different style of doing science, in which the researcher resigns from his or her role as a "more competent" source of knowledge about the world, and becomes "dethroned". The unscientific practical knowledge becomes an equally important resource, one which can be used by all participants in the process. Creating a research relation which implies a horizontal interaction with the subject of research requires some form of negotiation of meanings, which implies confronting the researcher's interpretation of the study with the interpretation of research participants. This way a research situation transforms into a situation of exchange in social competence. Participatory research is not a method, but an approach, a way to create research with the use of both quantitative and qualitative methods (Laws et al., 2013). The main premise of this methodological approach can be formulated as follows: the research practice is a dialogic process in which all the participating sides, by bringing their knowledge and skills, learn from each other – their interaction leads to the emergence of the result of research. Respondents become at the same time local experts and researchers who co-decide together with the scientist about the objectives and methods of the research and the desired outcomes (Reason, Bradbury, 2008). Research participants have a clear impact on the direction of the research process and, as a consequence, they can relate to all its phases (Pushor, 2008).

In the reported study the researcher ceases to be an "objective" observer. By going into the studied process and phenomena together with interviewees, they become a part of the studied "common world", interviewees who experience the studied reality in the most comprehensive way. The "common" world of the researcher and the interviewees is created as a result of specific levelling mechanisms, which one consciously surrenders to, i.e.: the researcher loses the privileged position of a neutral observer "from above" and is trying to find the "common" reality, while the position of their partner (the interviewees) in a research situation is rising. This becomes possible because the interviewees can clearly share their subjective competences and conditions. Thus, the researcher can acquire from the interviewees the knowledge of their "common" reality, and share his or her own knowledge with them. This allows the researcher to develop a personal and partner-like research relationship, in which they cease to perform – also in their own eyes – the role of authority. The clash of two different perspectives, i.e. the perspective of ordinary participants of reality and the perspective of the researcher, would help the researchers exceed their cognitive limitations, and, by doing so, their expertise would undergo a kind of social "verification".

Inclusive research and people with intellectual disability

The issue of who can do research with whom is closely linked to the issue of who can speak for whom. A number of researchers have suggested that we have no right to speak for anyone but ourselves and thus, should not represent Others at all. Researchers should let Others speak for themselves, "maintain a respectful silence, and work to create the social and political conditions which might enable Others to speak (and to be heard) on their own terms" (Kitzinger, Wilkinson, 1996, p. 10). Similarly, bell hooks (1990, p. 151) writes: "I am waiting for them to stop talking about the "Other," to stop even describing how important it is to be able to speak about difference". It is not only what we talk about, but how and why we talk. Often this speech about the "Other" is also a mask, which hides the gaps, absences, that space where our words would be if we were speaking. The principle of the social model of disability "Nothing about us, without us" echoes an emancipatory model that all research about

people with disability should be based on their own interests and conducted by them with the aim of social change *(Barnes, 2003)*. It has been sometimes called a "crisis of representation" which has led some researchers to turn to their own experiences in their sociological writings. A number of feminists and non-feminists have identified problems with the position of speaking only for oneself (Kitzinger, Wilkinson, 1996; Oliver, 2000). Kitzinger and Wilkinson (1996, p. 12) write: "whatever the intentions, the effects of speaking only for ourselves are often the silencing of Others, the erasure of their experience, and the reinscription of power relations". Michelle Fine (1998, p. 151) writes she would not argue that only those 'in the experience' can tell a story of injustice. Fine also points out that "it is surely essentialist to presume that only women can/should 'do' gender, people of colour can/should do race work; only lesbians and gays can should 'do' sexuality; only women in violence can tell the stories of violence" (Fine, 1998, p. 152).

Researchers need to examine the relations between themselves and study participants. Fine (1998) urges us to understand who we are in relation to our participants and the contexts we study. Trying to create a space where interviewees can be heard requires a particular kind of listening. Inclusive research is a research strategy which gives people with intellectual disabilities an opportunity to take on the role of co-researchers, with a varying degree and scope of participation in the decision-making and the execution of the research process (Walmsley, 2001). The issue of inclusive research covers topics essential for the quality of life of people with disabilities, their rehabilitation, education and support in everyday life. It expresses issues that capture the essence of the widely available rights (Parchomiuk, 2014). The key importance of these projects lies, however, in obtaining the knowledge that reflects the subjective perception of reality, in ascribing meaning to reality, and in assessing it from the perspective of the needs, possibilities and limitations arising from t disability as well as from the perception of the multiple barriers that deepen and broaden the impact of disability.

The importance of inclusive research must be considered from different points of view: from the perspective of people with intellectual disabilities and the population which they form, but also from the perspective of people without disabilities. Inclusive research, thanks to the possibility of incorporating a deeper understanding of people with intellectual disabilities, shows

the diversity of the population of people with disabilities (Barton, 2005). This seems vital for overcoming the social myths and stereotypes associated with people with intellectual disabilities, assuming their lack of self-awareness, life goals, orientation in contemporary reality, and the inability to assess the latter. These aspects of research are essential for building the image of people with disabilities as similar in many respects to those without disabilities, with the same needs, expectations and dreams, experiencing similar concerns about their personal life and the social environment in which they function. Inclusive research helps to create a destigmatizing image of intellectual disability, which is an indicator of its social perception.

Inclusive research is sometimes called empowerment research. Empowerment is a process which allows people with disabilities to obtain critical, reflexive self-awareness, that can be described as an ability to make decisions, pass judgments, make right choices and evaluate them from the perspective of personal needs. As Jessica M. Kramer at al. (2011) write, the processes of collecting, analysing and interpreting data may empower people with disabilities though developing the awareness of their own situation and – if it is assessed unfavourably – motivating them to change it.

Training and engaging people with intellectual disabilities as researchers in the research process in line with the main assumptions of emancipatory inclusive research is an innovative idea in Poland. The choice of participatory research as a main method is justified by a proven feasibility of the research goal in relation to people with intellectual disabilities, which was confirmed by an international research team led by Patricia O'Brien (O'Brien, Garcia, and Mac Conkey, 2014). The main assumption of the proposed research procedure is that persons with intellectual disabilities play a key role in the research process. They participate in both data collection and analysis, which involve applying the *in vivo* code to the participants' statements and then identifying topics for in-depth interviews. The engagement of people with intellectual disabilities in the research process permits them to ask vital questions, ensures the adequacy of the data collection methods, and allows for a more comprehensive analysis of the data (O'Brien, McConkey, and Garcia-Iriarte, 2014).

Many individuals with intellectual disabilities struggle with communication, thus the selection of appropriate communication approaches should take into consideration several factors, including the individual's current skills

and communication needs, the individual's ability to use symbols, and the individual's functional limitations. Engaging people with intellectual disability in research process helps to develop questions that are relevant to them, and as a consequence improves the quality and depth of interview responses. This remark underlines the challenges that researchers face in trying to represent individuals who are more severely affected in the disability discourse. As Lloyd and colleagues (2006) point out, "the only way to attempt to truly capture their perspective is to ask the individuals to express it directly" (p. 1388). These authors recommend collecting information regarding the experiences "of individuals with expressive language difficulties, given the strong possibility that they might have problems making their voices heard in everyday life" (p. 1388). The need for qualitative research in population of women with intellectual disabilities is particularly relevant as qualitative research "has much to tell us about the complexity of the disability experience that other types of research do not capture" (O'Day and Killeen, 2002, p. 12).

Grounded theory

For Gilbert (2004) the collection and analysis of data is the most challenging aspect of undertaking research with individuals who have intellectual disabilities. Although researchers have advocated for participatory and emancipatory research projects, there has been little research where individuals with intellectual disabilities have been involved in data analysis (Koenig, 2012; Kramer et al., 2011; Nind, 2008). Walmsley and Johnson (2004) raised concerns regarding the data analysis procedure and they argue that there must be a place for theorizing in qualitative research that is carried out without the involvement of persons with intellectual disabilities. At the same time, researchers must make an effort to make their theoretical findings comprehensible to their participants (Walmsley and Johnson, 2004). Other authors (Coons and Watson, 2013; Tuffrey-Wine and Butler, 2010) contend that it may be possible for researchers with intellectual disabilities to make additional analytical input, however, some extra effort and expenditure for spending time and providing training must be taken into consideration. Other researchers talk about the "added value" (Koenig, 2011, p. 8) of including individuals with

intellectual disabilities in the analysis of qualitative data, because findings can be grounded in interpretations of the individuals' lived experiences.

The methodology of grounded theory is a research and analytical strategy that focuses on generating ideas, hypotheses and theories from empirical data, thus creating hypotheses which take place during the study, and not with the use of the classical deductive method (Charmaz, 2006). The analysis of data at each stage includes the reduction of information, creating the representation and verification of data. The stages repeatedly and simultaneously intertwine. In the research process theoretical categories are modified, taking into account new information obtained in subsequent interviews. The analysis of data from focus groups and narrative interviews led by women with intellectual disabilities is a part of the research procedure, the purpose of which is to discover and describe the phenomenon and its mechanisms. The research problem is interpreted as a theoretical model, encompassing the relations which are socially essential and possible to generalize in the study of a given group.

Recognition of the participants' competence

Inclusive research does not perceive the participants as static, disposable, or passive. It distances itself from the dynamics of the research process and sources of knowledge, where the respondents face ready-made research tools, ergo hypotheses and assumptions, and where they are generally completely deprived of influence on the course of the research process. The model of emancipatory research, through shared experience, assumes the engagement of respondents in some or all stages of the research process (depending on how radical the research model is). In the proposed research model the position of a respondent materializes as a consequence of the recognition of their competence as subjects of their own actions, and determines their activity both in the formulation of research objectives, and in their impact on the course of the research process. However, the actual scope of activity of the respondents very much depends on the research problem and the possibility of articulation that individual respondents possess. Examples from literature suggest that this competence can be extracted more often than researchers generally imagine (O'Brien, McConkey, García-Iriarte, 2014). Inclusive research is a good

example of enforcing participants' competences. A minimum program on this issue should include at least one feedback session with the respondents, in which they should familiarize themselves with the study assumptions or interpretations and conclusions on the subject of investigation. A full version of the model would imply such feedback sessions in a variety (all) of the phases of the studies conducted. It would also aim to genuinely take into consideration the participants' opinions about the subject of research.

The need to include in the research the process of a holistically treated personal experience of reality, as examined by the subject, entails linguistic consequences. The researcher can no longer use only the objective language of the "positivist" sociology, a language which lacks emotional tinge and is devoid of values and the knowledge one gained through non-intellectual learning, if only for the reason that not all of these experiences lend themselves to the strictly discursive description. The postulate of "equality of social competence" of the researcher and the participants includes the social competence of participants and its linguistic manifestations. How to reveal such competence of respondents in the research process, how to protect its authenticity and how to translate it into other languages, including the language of science, becomes, therefore, an important research problem.

Avoiding the imposition of the researcher's conceptual framework on the participant

The inclusion of this demand has forced me to accept the assumption of the need to provide a conceptual framework that would be grounded in the experiences of individuals. The search for *in vivo* codes helped me find analytical categories which were derived from the persons of concern in the study, and enabled me to preserve the meanings attributed by the participants to their beliefs, actions and experiences (Charmaz, 2006). It also allowed to avoid the trap of decontextualization of the proposed solutions, disregarding individual contexts and producing knowledge which is perhaps true but completely irrelevant.

A natural consequence of this search is the replacement of structured tools with an unstructured interview, the inclusion of individuals with intellectual disabilities in the research process, and a communicative validation of study

results. The results of research conducted outside the inclusive paradigm always reflect the experience and expertise of people who are affected by disability. The vast majority of research in this area is planned and conducted by researchers without disabilities, whose interpretation of data can simply differ from reality (Mctavish et al., 2000).

Feminists paved the way in protesting the marginalization of powerless groups in the production of knowledge (Traustadóttir, 2001). Women of colour, lesbians, disabled women, and third world women have recently criticized how white, Western, heterosexual, nondisabled women have portrayed them (Hooks, 1990; Morris, 1991). Writers with disabilities have also protested how nondisabled researchers have portrayed them as weak, sick and tragic (Barnes, Mercer, 1997; Oliver, 1992). Inclusive research, especially research in which people with disabilities take non-standard roles (e.g. co-researchers, consultants, advisors), provides evidence of empowerment and emancipation of people with intellectual disabilities. The role of this type of research goes beyond the cognitive dimension. Research becomes a form of socio-political participation of people with disabilities, a tool to oppose oppression, gain access to the rights enjoyed by all. It is also important for building personal and social identity. In the process of socialization, people with intellectual disabilities adopt a picture of themselves, their disability and a view of the world from other people. As various research shows, people with intellectual disabilities may have a potential that allows them to go beyond the given meanings that describe their disability in negative terms (Ward, 1997). The role of a contemporary researcher who decides to cooperate with them, is to seek and maximize this potential in order to change the social image of people with intellectual disabilities.

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Urszula Markowska-Manista*

The dilemmas and passions in intercultural field research – a female pedagogue's ethnographic notes[1]

Introduction

The catalyst to address this subject came from the following field research experiences (with the use of ethnographic research methodology):

- the realisation of two research projects in Georgia, South Caucasus, 2013–2016 and one research project in Croatia, 2015–2017,
- earlier experiences of employing the methodology of ethnographic research in the field in research projects conducted in Central African Republic, 2004–2012 and the Horn of Africa (Kenya, Somalia), 2010–2013,
- encounters with texts concerning participatory anthropology and developmental anthropology whose authors address the subject of the field and being in the field as well as multiple dimensions of the researcher's involvement,

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[1] The original, shorter version of this text in Polish was presented during the Summer School of Young Pedagogues in Sandomierz and was published in "Zeszyty Naukowe Młodych Pedagogów", Lublin, 2015: U. Markowska-Manista, (2015). *Od Afryki Środkowej do Kaukazu Południowego. Terenowe pasje pedagożki międzykulturowej*, Zeszyty Naukowe Forum Młodych Pedagogów przy Komitecie Nauk Pedagogicznych PAN, zeszyt. 19: "Opowiem wam o swojej pasji: słowem, obrazem, dźwiękiem...". Lublin: Wydawnictwo Academicon.

- encounters with texts by "loner" anthropologists and field research teams, including women, who present the second, difficult and problematic face of "field research".

Another vital incentive came from reading the book: "Constructing the field" edited by Vered Amit as well as articles from the publication "Difficult subjects. Research situations" edited by Inga B. Kuźma (2013). These texts illustrated the struggles and taboos present in multiple dimensions of research conducted in the field, that is, as Kuźma writes, "situations we can encounter when conducting research oriented towards learning about the world through words, thoughts, emotions and perceptions (including their materialization)" (p. 8).

Among the stimuli which prompted me to write about the dilemmas and challenges of female field research lay also my individual experiences from the field, "the traumas and problems of smaller dimensions of others (albeit not all suffering is trauma, this notion is strongly marked and unfortunately, rather trivialized even in academic context)" (Ibidem) which were whispered to me as "the one who came and will leave" (Ibidem). Field researchers fulfil their potential to become confidants, witnesses of dramatic events, trusted individuals who can be told things which cannot be disclosed to anyone in the local community.

The problems and dilemmas also refer to the reality of the field itself, into which the researcher can be drawn, find finding herself incorporated into a peculiar system of manipulations, intragroup machinations and ultimately become their element – frequently not of her own volition and unaware of this fact. The very account of difficult, at times transcendental experiences in the field exposes both the praxis and pragmatics of field exploration.

At first glance, my research seems fundamentally classical – in order to be present in the field (for instance: in Georgia) I must reach it. This, of course, entails travelling and negotiating my way in new conditions, experiencing the environment and living in unfamiliar places (i.e. the diversified living conditions in Georgia, the topographic, climatic, cultural and social differences), use of foreign language and encounters with diverse attitudes towards women travelling solo in the Caucasus. Finally, and at its classical face, this includes participating in practices – the celebrations of everyday life, which differ from the familiar practices of my culture. I have tried to familiarise myself with these practices since 2006.

However, in the majority of the places where I conduct research I actually have the possibility to contact my family via Internet. In general, I have the ability to conduct my investigations employing new communication technologies (Pink, 2000, p. 107), the so-called electronic ethnography.

Throughout my field research, my notes have included entries referring to places, situations and the processes of conducting explorations. They have also addressed the issue of what happens to a researcher investigating the so-called "life stories (over)heard"[2] in the dimensions of:

- emotions and methods of coping with them in the rainforest, the desert, a refugee camp, in villages in national and cultural borderlands, in massive multicultural agglomerations (central Africa and the Horn of Africa),
- expression. In the text "An ethnologist in the labyrinth of cultural meanings. The psychological challenges of field research" Katarzyna E. Kość-Ryżko distinguishes the following levels in the plane of expression: the level of what must be revealed, what must be hidden as well as the level of a researcher's sincerity and spontaneity (2013, p. 22),
- cultural patterns of a field researcher's own behaviour and attitude,
- gender and sexuality as well as particular dangers faced by female field researchers,
- ethics, moral code and cultural relativism.

In the text, by presenting my own research experiences inscribed in the topos of a constant journey, I go beyond strictly theoretical questions. By revisiting memories from childhood and my university days, I unveil my own process of growth in independent activities and attempt to prove that "curiosity is never barren; it springs from our true needs and interests" (Holt, 2007, p. 37). Based on the experiences of field research in the South Caucasus (2013–2016) and Central Africa (2002–2012) – I address in this text not only the elements which are appealing, but also those which are difficult: inconvenient behaviours and life situations in the reality of alien cultures. I will also address prob-

[2] A phrase borrowed from a documentary: "Collection – Life stories (over)heard. Belarus" [audio-video material], by: Fundacja Pogranicze. Subject: "Belarus, A documentary on social life". The term is understood here as representing fortunes- life stories of those studied which researchers listen to during their research.

lems which "desk" – office researchers[3] are frequently unaware of. This is because ethnographic research is "a long-term contact with a particular community, interest in mundane, everyday events as well as extraordinary events; direct or indirect participation in local activities, paying particular attention to the description of local peculiarities, focusing on local perspectives and interpretations of the world" (Dejna, 2012, p. 2).

I will refer to the challenges which a field researcher faces day to day through the course of studies conducted "away from the desk", in multi-ethnic backgrounds, outside the European Union. Last but not least, I will address the subject of the fascinating, albeit difficult adventure of a journey through the multicultural world of cultural centres and national borderlands, foreign-language texts (a bibliophile's passion: books in the languages of minorities, tales and legends of indigenous people – the Ba'Aka[4] in Central Africa, poetry of the Udis in the South Caucasus). Each of these constitutes an important frame and reference in field research in a particular context, space and time of exploration. After all, travel is a means to gain experience and knowledge, while "a journey is a way to learn and become familiar with the world" (Engelking, 2011, p. 62). Hence, the passion to conduct field research in environments which are geographically distant and mentally as well as culturally distinct can be compared to the rush of adrenaline while mountain climbing: a difficult subject, a difficult terrain, uncertainty at every hour. Additionally, this is coupled with the awareness that having experienced the everyday life of the studied groups and communities, one's own life will never be the same…What is more, as history shows "(…) the passion for learning can be stronger than death…"[5]. The experience of passion pushes one further, makes one pursue and investigate and it is best to realise it in action.

[3] I refer to the style of research work based on reading and analysis of texts, including historical texts. This work also has important academic value and is inscribed in the so called "desk or speculative anthropology".

[4] Baka – textes recueillis par Robert Brisson. *Contes des Pygmees Baka,* Dessins: Les enfants Baka, Yaounde, pp. I–III.

[5] R. Tadeusiewicz, *O nauce i naukowcach. Pasja silniejsza niż śmierć.* Accessed October 12, 2016. http://www.gazetakrakowska.pl/artykul/561541,o-nauce-i-naukowcach-pasja-silniejsza-niz-smierc,id,t.html?cookie=1.

The theoretical and practical aspects of female field research

[...] one must be able to speak of what has been left unsaid, yet it is a challenging task, one which can raise concerns that such a story will develop in any possible direction.

Bohdan Cywiński, *Korzenie tożsamości*,
Rzym 1982, pp. 21–22.

Field researchers – both male and female – are an important element, a peculiar component of the research process. This mechanism occurs through: the researcher's (male, female) personal participation in the study, familiarity with the particular area and territory (the topography of a place and its socio-ocultural reality), reflexivity and caution in negotiating one's way in the area where everyday life takes place. Additionally, a skilful, non-discriminatory functioning in a distinct cultural script must transpire. The elements above constitute a common space and field of research that tie the researcher to the researched, who also belong to this field and the co-constructed space.

Each field study is a confrontation with a myriad of relations between people and their cultures, unpredictable communication scenarios, behaviours, encounters and situations which the researchers find disturbing, difficult or unpleasant. At the same time, these situations constitute an intellectual and occasionally moral challenge.

As a rule, field researchers remain hidden to their readers in their body of research. This can be dictated by a fear of exposing oneself in the academic environment. Consider that the dominant view holds that "what is personal ceases to fit into the frames of professionalism" (based on: Goslinga, Frank, 2007, p. XII).

Academic literature provides us with explanations that social reality in field research is constructed in interaction; in action which is a complex product of groups and individuals. However, it is not infrequent that behind the veil of silence and the pages of academic accounts, the researchers' passions, motivation to undertake research and the personal costs of research (psychological, social and physical, resulting, among other things, from gender) remain hidden. The individual experiences (among others, related to the status, gender, age, country of origin or faith) influencing their choice of direction in further

field explorations as a professional path and, to a large extent, private life, are also discounted and remain obscure.

Frequently, in the shadow of academic commentaries, remain the unarticulated and vivid ethnographic accounts of "encounters that were disturbing for the fieldworker and that presented an intellectual and, almost as often, a moral challenge. The accounts are, at first glance, disarmingly singular and incommensurable. We might fear that taken together they have little to say to core issues in anthropology because what the authors find in the shadows is specific to each situation. Yet something important must be at stake here, where intuitively the authors converge so readily on this elusive shadow phenomenon" (Leibing, McLean, 2007 p. 11).

Dagna Dejna indicates that a field researcher [UMM: he, she] "constantly makes analytical choices while deciding what to leave, what to illuminate, what to recount early in the text and what to leave for later, what to link together, what major ideas are important" (Dejna, 2012, p. 3).

I would add that the researcher also makes choices which allow him or her a temporary escape from the memories of difficult experiences and situations, or, on the contrary, their decisions to emphasise these situations reinforce their memories by forcing them to relive the past.

The praxis and the pragmatics of field research are laid bare by the very accounts and the very act of sharing – constructing a message from the field, exposing a "difficult", "problematic", oppressive experience in academic work. This is because the researcher "exists" in the field: one lives, functions with people, is integrated into a range of everyday activities (or is excluded from rituals reserved solely for the community of insiders), participates – either aware or unaware – in the practices of creating and deconstructing relations. What is more, it is in the field that data collection and the limitations connected with it can be experienced with intensity. This is particularly true if we explore subjects connected with the violations of human rights, illness or other stressful, traumatic human experiences.

Another aspect to take into account is gender. As Easterday and Lois observed: "being single females doing field work, we discovered there were research problems related to that status" (1977, p. 334). An illustration: when the research process is conducted by a female researcher in a culturally distinct background where negotiating one's way in the field (a village, a settlement,

a town) and communication in male-female interactions are limited by the rigour of norms and regulations which guarantee the cohesion of the local community and the power of men. In such conditions a female researcher can experience the strength of the status and power of local authorities, men, boys (patriarchal communities) and hierarchisation. She can also experience a strong distance situating women in a designated "female space" or she may even find herself in a unique space created in between these cultural, gender norms; for a researcher represents a different culture and her behaviour differs from local behavioural norms.

Additionally, until recently, many research areas were dominated by men, and field research highlighted male careers and successes. This was connected, among other things, with the specifics of conducting research in the field, i.e. being away from home for extended periods of time, travelling, loneliness, the nature of difficult living and working conditions. Another vital argument for the fact that for many years field research was deemed unsuitable for women was the concept of gender and the sociocultural status of women. In fact, it was only in the 19th century that various areas of research conducted in the field began to open to women. This was aided by the development of international transport and new communication possibilities.[6]

The words, images and sounds of childhood and adolescence as a time of interdisciplinary investigations, interests and the formation of passions

I was raised in times when children could run wherever they wished, with bruised knees, enjoying complete freedom in everyday life. In those times, there was a comparatively unlimited space of upbringing that did not impose rigid frames on a child's functioning in complex systems constructed by adults. It was an upbringing which enabled constant, direct contact with nature. Finally, it was an upbringing for which "nature was a place of archetypal power, learning and challenge" (Louv, 2014, p. 23.) The house, the garden, a carpet hanger, stone steps, open gates to the neighbours' yards, the nearby meadows, woods and grasslands: in this compact environment all these

[6] Based on: Venus in Berghaus. Accessed October 12, 2016. http://soapboxscience.org/?p=993.

elements created conditions to learn through listening, exploring and acting. In this multidimensional space of living, the formation of my passion and the open cognitive horizon was influenced by a number of factors.

The following must be mentioned:

- the images and sounds of nature (the landscapes of the borderland between the Mazovian and Podlesie Regions, the sounds of insects and birds singing),
- carefree upbringing with intergenerational transmission which is increasingly absent today;
- emancipatory upbringing which creates conditions favourable to achieving personal freedom, independence, and which develops such personal qualities – so important for field researchers – as openness, curiosity about the world, courage and mobility,
- words read and sung, developing a child's imagination and allowing one to discover the world through experiencing and experimenting in the environment closest to the child's normal functioning (preparing food from the products of flora and fauna, observation of the sky and the stars, observation of insects and their behaviour, marking geographic directions without a compass, estimating time through observation of the Sun).

When I was a child, rather than fairy-tales, my grandmother would often read travel books to me. These included travellers' and explorers' accounts of their journeys to both the Americas and Africa as well as descriptions of nature and the lives of people from distant cultures. She also told stories about the war of "Poles, Jews, Germans and Russians", about Treblinka, located 8 km from my house, where I would walk with my grandfather listening to memories from the sphere of "difficult knowledge". This knowledge, as Barbara Engelking writes, "can lead to a complete loss of faith in humanity – turn the trust placed in a human being into its mockery" (2011, p. 63). This knowledge does not allow one to fall asleep with a sense of security. During these wonderings we stopped: an old man and a child – under each of the tall chestnut trees growing by the Siedlce bridge. Frame after frame, scenes from WWII were enacted, stories of those who died and were silenced. It was years later – having faced the barriers of learning and understanding the trauma of victims, witnesses and perpetrators as well as the discourse of the local community

and the taboo of wars – that I understood the message. The past persists in the presence, in various forms.

Hence, my pedagogical and anthropological knowledge, so useful in field research, was founded not only on theory, but also experience (including empirical experience) grounded in various activities, encounters and practices. I forged the pain of experiences and the memory of narratives heard in childhood into a peculiar reflexive practice and participation in the everyday lives of those I study: participation which allows one to establish direct communicative relations. It was not an easy task as "field research means living in a different world and learning this world in the process of (the second) enculturation, i.e. the process of subconscious incorporation of local knowledge based on experience" (Hastrup, 1998, p. 6). It is nothing less than constant participatory observation, the construction of a familiar yet alien social reality – here and now, as well as balancing between what is known and unknown, what is normative and taboo. Bronisław Malinowski, who coined the term of "nontransparency" of the researcher in the process of field explorations and aiming at cognition, wrote that:

> "living in the village with no other business but to follow native life, one sees the customs, ceremonies and transactions over and over again, one has examples of their beliefs as they are actually lived through, and the full body and blood of actual native life fills out soon the skeleton of abstract constructions" (Malinowski, 1922, p. 18).

To complete the picture I should return once again to the period of childhood. In the spring and summer months I observed and listened to Jews- Israelis who, travelling in coaches, stopped in front of my Grandparents' house on the way to Treblinka. Adults communicated in various languages, asked questions, leaned over me (a child) – they and their long shadows, and offered sweets. My grandmother, busy with her everyday chores made sure that I would not enter "my vast terrain of everyday explorations" with an empty stomach. I would then leave the family garden, fighting my way through a small lake overgrown with reeds. I would climb over a railway embankment with tracks running between Warsaw and Grodno. I would then walk across the fields and grasslands towards the forest, to the meadows of Bug River, reading a map made of leaves, newspapers and a rope.

The images and sounds of nature helped me imagine what I heard being read from books the day before, what I remembered from tales being whispered, told and sung. I would climb trees, enacting various characters. I would spend hours thinking about how people live in other parts of the world: in the desert, on the steppes, in the rainforest. I would build huts and dugouts, prepare meals from roots, leaves, berries and insects – a child's survival school of the 1990s. I survived. In my eighth-grade primary school, and later on in traditional secondary school, I passed the time reading "The adventures of Tomek Wilmowski" by Alfred Szklarski, watching documentaries from Tony Halik and Elżbieta Dzikowska's journeys, exploring the ethnographic volumes by Kazimierz Moszyński, Jan Czekanowski and Mungo Park, publications by Collin Turnbull, Paul Schebesta and Jean-Pierre Hallet or the Ethnological Works of The Polish Ethnological Society. There was no Internet or access to open electronic sources of knowledge in those times. I thought: I cannot stop with theory; I need to and want to experience what they write about in practice. I wanted to experience what was left (if there was anything left!) after the decades that had passed since their studies. Looking through our European "cultural glasses" I wanted to meet the "great little people", the hunter-gatherers of "dead gaze" who the lone wolf researcher Jacek Olędzki (1999) wrote about. "Why [UMM: then] should we make things less complicated, if we can complicate them even more?"[7] During my studies at the Maria Grzegorzewska University, under the supervision of Dr. Dorota Jankowska, I wrote and presented my first term research project about children's upbringing in a Pygmy Ba'Aka clan in the rainforest of equatorial Africa. I spent the following year enveloped in the strength of the "exotic" written word, intensively reading all available literature devoted to the Pygmies and persisting to pursue my research goal. I then found myself on my first journey to the rainforest of Central African Republic where I saught to verify my project theses and find the answers to research questions. I managed to realise this plan despite the fact that no one believed that a young student would be able to succeed. It was the end of 2001. The strong stereotype of the Pygmies: as "dwarves", "the shortest forest people in the world", mysterious beings arousing fear" – inscribed in the fossilsed knowledge from geography textbooks and the

[7] Citations and translation based on R. Nachirny: G. Levi (2002). On Microhistory. In p. Burke (ed.), New Perspectives on Historical Writing, University Park, p. 110.

imperial rhetoric of conquests, obscured the research facts presented. "It is not surprising […], aboriginal people were usually perceived as inferior relatives, acquaintances from the neighbourhood who need to be elevated to our technological, moral and aesthetic level" (Buliński, 2001, p. 20).

At this point, everything started to change, including me. I held my airline ticket in my hands, underwent a course of tropical medicine (conducted among others by professor Wanda Błeńska) and started to teach myself the *sango* language from notebooks and "Xerox copies" borrowed from a missionary[8]. I began to sense an ever stronger dissonance between cultural relativism and axiological universalism. I immersed myself in the "otherness and richness" of other – both closer and more distant cultures.

By consulting my research plans with experienced practitioners and researchers, I began to realise that in the field I would have to deal with multiple cultural differences which could become the greatest challenge I might face, and at times even an insurmountable barrier in the research process. Hence the importance of preparation to every research expedition connected with the knowledge of the language and customs of the researched community. This includes the topography of the place along with the calendar of festivals and rituals, as well as learning the local terms and understanding local behaviour codes. Another equally crucial aspect was the possibility of adapting my behaviour as a researcher to local norms and customs. By reading literature, communicating with the representatives of communities which I aimed to reach and corresponding with volunteers, employees of NGOs, institutions and missions working in the particular area as well as representatives of minorities living in the communities, I tried to overcome the boundary between the researcher and the difficult environment. This was difficult – due to the "fragile contexts" in which the population lives and the considerable cultural differences at play.

Nevertheless, even in difficult environments (related to climatic conditions, considerable cultural differences and strong social disproportions), learning the local language and immersing oneself in the everyday life of the researched society and its community can, to a large extent, help with overcoming other limitations and problems (Mollinga, 2008, p. 12.)

[8] I would like to thank the missionaries from the African Missions Association (Pol. Stowarzyszenie Misji Afrykańskich SMA) for their support in the realisation of my research in Central Africa in later years.

The field of intercultural research

By 2014, twelve years had passed since I began the conscious construction of my own intercultural research field[9], and since this field had begun to construct me. It made me translocal in a theoretical and ethnographic dimension. It showed me that the home of a researcher who has chosen distant journeys can be, and should be, in various locations and among those studied. What is more, the research – despite its primary focus on pedagogical questions: the nurture and education of children in their everyday world – is and should be inter and transdisciplinary. The development of modern pedagogy requires "cooperation with other disciplines" (Czerpaniak-Walczak, Walczak, 2012, p. 90).

The field predisposes one to go beyond the rigid frames of one discipline and reach for theories which co-construct transdisciplinary knowledge, focused on modern human problems in the face of diverse cultural facts and the problematic co-existence of nations and cultures. This is by no means limited to concerns merely with the familiarity of textbooks on interdisciplinary theories, definitions and basic research methods in the realm of social and humanistic sciences. A factor which is of great importance is that of the researcher's individual experiences, i.e. his or her encounters and relations. This includes the layers between the researcher and the researched in the environment of their everyday lives, as well as the process of research, its consequences and any attempts to describe and interpret research material. This layer hides situations, real people, their surroundings and events. It is the researcher who decides which of the cards of experience in the field he or she will reveal to the reader. However, at times the convoluted situationality and the specifics of the field as well as the strongly personal and intimate contact of a researcher with the "Other" are not so simple to unveil through academic vocabulary and the accepted norms of constructing academic texts.

According to Harry Wolcott, fieldwork is a form of research in which a researcher is personally immersed in ongoing social activities of an individual or a group for study purposes (cf. Wolcott, 2005 p. 4). Thus- as the author claims – a study conducted in the field consists in something more than a labo-

[9] More on the subject of constructing a research field in the publication: V. Amit-Talai (ed.), (2000). Constructing the field. Ethnographic Fieldwork in the Contemporary World, London and New York: Routledge.

rious collection of data. "Whatever constitutes that elusive "more" makes all the difference. It needs to be stated emphatically, for a crucial aspect of fieldwork lies in recognizing when to be unmethodical, when to resist the potentially endless task of accumulating data and to begin searching for underlying patterns, relationships and meanings." (Wolcott, 2005, p. 5). However, the aim of field research – something that Bronisław Malinowski drew attention to – is "to grasp the native's point of view, his relation to life, to realise his vision of his world" (Malinowski, 1922, p. 25) in the intricacies of ceaseless, everyday – in the case of my field – intercultural interactions.

The passion for field research

The passion which I decided to write about is a verification of pedagogical and anthropological theories in the field, among people. It is research conducted from behind a "field desk" – following the steps of field researchers: Bronisław Malinowski, Jacek Olędzki, Józef Obrębski, Kirsten Hastrup, Margaret Mead, Mary Douglas, Georgi Chitaia and many others. Passion for field research is also a journey of the neonomad through foreign language texts which I manage to receive, buy and read in the locations of research. They build an important theoretical frame, constitute a background and reference to a conversation or an interview in field research in a particular context, place, space and time.

The passion for field research lies in performing an analysis of common objects which are important in the everyday lives of those studied and which testify to their distinctness, peculiarity and uniqueness. For them – which they frequently repeat when showing altars, dishes, an old chest of drawers, a prayer book, a dagger – these objects are ordinary, unworthy of attention, imperceptible in the category of research value. It is also an analysis of objects which allow the researcher to survive in difficult conditions – if they are available: water purification tablets, an army stove, a mini flying toilet, a mosquito net, toilet paper or painkillers.

But this passion manifests also in clashes with the difficult reality in which a researcher (a woman) functions and with the problematic situations in which study subjects live. This passion stands in contradiction to the reality of the processes of marginalisation, discrimination, exploitation and poverty

which affect children[10] in their living environments. This reality slaps the face of a sensitive young woman from continental Europe and from the culture of colonialists and neo-colonialists.

Upon returning to her home country, in the familiar space of her own place of residence and work, the female researcher often faces the stereotype of poverty believed to be ubiquitous in African countries. Scarlett Cornelissen writes that Africa is presented as "archetypal otherness" where western tourists can revive their lost bond with nature (2005, p. 779). Hardly anyone will search for articles published in a specialist journal which analyse, to give an example, the roots of problems in the lives of endangered indigenous peoples in the Horn of Africa. For quick and easy access to the most necessary information, the majority will turn to non-academic texts, films and media images. The reality is varied and requires a responsible message and reliable information. This opens space to danger. The prevailing message in media, mission and NGO communication at times distorts the voices, images and representations of children living in drought-affected territories of the Horn of Africa. It also misrepresents manners of functioning in the so-called "fragile contexts", i.e. conflict and war zones. This message employs manipulation by using half-naked or naked, nameless images of children and adults – integrated into the oppressive strategies of appeals for aid and financial support for the projects "for Africa" enacted by NGOs and missions.

When referring to "the pornography of poverty" (CIDA, 1988, p. 7, OXFAM, 2011, p. 50) a key role is played by the practices of shocking the recipients with sunken or swollen bellies, abscesses on the bodies of the impoverished and flies in eye sockets. "Aid" and the research on or diagnoses of needs that accompanies it is exposed as a category imbued with stereotypes. It is a category which deconstructs and colonialises childhood and the everyday life of the child – the beneficiary of aid. What is more, the representations of children suffering from starvation are taken out of context, devoid of any considerations of social, economic or political factors which generate and create poverty in the perspective of time. They also serve as an example

[10] It must be added that my research and academic activity concentrate on the problem of children who are marginalised and discriminated against, those written in the category of children "out of place" in the fragile contexts of their functioning and in the context of education and nurture in culturally diverse backgrounds.

of cultural inadequacy, Eurocentrism and taking the line of least resistance by shocking the recipients with words and images portraying the problems of other people. These are people who not only have to face their difficult reality, but also a wealthier, privileged researcher, journalist, photojournalist, missionary or a humanitarian aid activist all of whom intrude themselves into the lives of those so expolitively portrayed.

Staying and working in the field sharpens perception and predisposes one to insightful observations of how researchers, practitioners, travellers and journalists construct images and identities of children treated as "Other", "Alien" and "Exotic". Experiences from the field allow one to pose new questions about the (un)ethical quality of presenting a naked, ill child from a different continent in a mission poster, or an emaciated, crying baby in the photograph from an NGO leaflet. It is distressing for a sensitive field researcher inasmuch as these types of representations are usually far from evoking associations with marginalisation, discrimination, sexualisation and child pornography, but instead emphasise compassion and colonialisation.

Field researchers do not end their missions upon their return from the field. This is because the question of ethics and dignity of those they study, presented also by others in the familiar cultural circle of researchers, should find its place in the centre of further activities, observations, analyses of available materials and further academic explorations (more on the subject: Jarecka, Markowska-Manista, 2014, pp. 78–98).

The figure of a female researcher – a lonely character from a different cultural circle reaching the place of her research, is equally problematic. We should bear in mind that even before arriving in the location of study, a researcher is categorised, labelled, and inscribed in indigenous categories of thinking and perceiving foreigners. Hence, a researcher becomes a symbol of a better world, a reminder of colonial oppressors and a personification of good or bad memories. During my field research in Central African Republic I was labelled as "a white French girl/woman", a coloniser associated with wealth and power, as CAR is the former colony of Ubangui and Shari. While conducting studies in Dadaab refugee camp, despite the clothing which covered my body and hair, I heard unpleasant epithets from some boys and men, and this situation repeated itself in so called "Little Somalia" – the Eastleigh district in Nairobi – the capital city of Kenya. During my lonely travels in the South

Caucasus, in Georgia, I faced the unfair stereotype of a Slavic woman, predisposed, among other things, by the qualities of her appearance. Thus, being a researcher in the field implies paying close attention to the complexity of "building relations". It is a challenging task, since in the majority of situations and field interactions, a European researcher is perceived as and communicated to by the local people through the prism of postcolonial discourses and unequal relations of power and gender. And yet, one must not forget the positive aspects of intercultural contacts in the field which give strength and faith in the sense of research endeavours and the simple fact of being with people in their everyday lives: "here and now".

The stereotypes of the places in which I conduct research come as another challenge. At times, before departure or after returning from a distant field study my colleagues and clerks ask perversely: "how was your holiday under palm trees?". My "palm trees" and "holidays", the means of transport which I use to travel to different locations do not resemble those which appear in advertisements of "last minute" holidays. What is more, the specifics and properties of these places require a shorter or longer period of adaptation to climate, space-time, tastes, scents and cultural scripts characteristic to particular locations.

The field opens one's eyes and terrifies. It fascinates and captivates. It involves danger to one's life and health. The following in particular come to mind:

- malaria, diarrhoea, worms and other tropical diseases,
- vermin and exposure to being bitten by wild animals,
- limited access to clean drinking water,
- heat and humidity in the rainforest,
- characteristic Caucasian cold in autumn, winter and spring months (in the regions many houses lack window panes, only cold water is available and there is no heating)
- sweltering heat in August in Georgia (temperatures rising to 42, 43 Centigrade outside, while in marshrutkas – a means of transport – the temperature can reach 45 Centigrade).

Looking at field researchers' work or reading their texts, the cost of what they experience in the field is rarely considered. This does not pertain only to diseases and physical threats. One needs to reach deeper, as the field changes a researcher in multiple ways. The limitations of this paper do not allow me to explore the range of challenges, problems and burdens which field research

entails. To name a few: awareness that the experiences of those I study are irretrievably transformed through my explorations, that I describe situations and experiences which move me deeply as a person, and that I feel "at home" everywhere and nowhere. These personal perspectives of a researcher-nomad, a researcher-traveller, the metaphor of the road as the pursuit of the truth, are something extremely important and simultaneously dangerous. These considerations are also connected with posing questions about the boundaries between research life and academic work, and finally private life: do they exist? Is it possible to demarcate the boundary between academic work and privacy while being a field researcher? The questions above still remain unanswered.

During my studies I feel a little like an "outsider". My inquisitive nature, frayed with the positive and negative experiences of intercultural contacts, makes me a young scholar, explorer, researcher – a sceptic, a "non-native" in the environment of a particular studied community and its culture/cultures. At times, difficult situations take place: being suspected of espionage (recording, taking field notes, photographing people[11] and places). At the same time, I try to be open, sensitive and cautious at each stage of field research as the field – as Kirsten Hastrup (2008, p. 70) writes – incorporates the researcher (the ethnographer), and this implies responsibility.

This is because "a researcher who sets off into the field – whether young or experienced – wishing to establish contact with the researched community, has to overcome a number of internal and external barriers, face opposition and their own limitations. It does not happen without psychological costs which are relatively dependant on a subjectively evaluated success. This means that, as a rule, the greater the research success, the higher its price" (Kość-Ryżko, 2013, p. 18).[12]

The passion for field research is an ability to experience successes and failures, disappointments with the world, accept rituals, magic, witchcraft, mystery and wonders which those researched believe in. Passion is negoti-

[11] The respondents and their families as well as memorabilia are photographed with the respondents' consent.

[12] Kość-Ryżko K.E. (2013). Etnolog w labiryncie znaczeń kulturowych. Psychologiczne wyzwania badań terenowych, p. 18 (English version of the title: "An ethnologist in the labyrinth of cultural meanings. The psychological challenges of field research").

ating one's way in a distinct reality, at times a reality that is normatively and customarily conflicting with the reality of the country of origin. Passion for intercultural field research is learning to be a researcher in the reality of postponed meetings and lack of punctuality as, for instance, in the Caucasus time flows in its peculiar pace: "Europeans are punctual, not like in Georgia: *GMT* – Georgian Maybe Time".[13]

The passion which will "give wings" to a researcher from the generation of neonomads

In her article "Pulsating categories as indicators of the map of thinking about education"[14] Joanna Rutkowiak wrote that a pedagogue is a traveller who does not follow a beaten track. Without the passion that "gives wings", a travelling multicultural pedagogue, a field researcher – it is my subjective opinion – would not bear the dynamic and "mobile" nature required of field research in culturally diverse environments. This is because research involves crossing boundaries, experiencing difficult research situations, reading the reality of a place from a number of perspectives and with the drama of situationality. Conducting field research cannot be locked into a template of a research project as the field is uncertain and unpredictable. Aside from the constant planning and attempts to conduct research according to a specific design, fieldwork consists of multiple corrections, delays, moments of breakdown, problems which cannot possibly be predicted. But first and foremost, field research means facing all conceivable surprises. Such research is and should be considered through the multidimensionality of the term "field", as it becomes not only a peculiar space for a researcher's experience, and not only an experience in and of itself – the empirical contact with a particular cultural reality (Kaniowska, 2013, p. 287), but also a temporary "home" of a researcher-neonomad as well as a catalyst for nomadic thinking.

[13] Fragment from an interview, Tbilisi 12 August 2014, within the project BST 2013/14 "The forgotten minorities of Georgia", Institute of Pedagogy, Maria Grzegorzewska University in Warsaw.

[14] "Pulsujące kategorie" jako wyznaczniki mapy odmian myślenia o edukacji. In *Odmiany myślenia o edukacji*, J. Rutkowiak (ed.). (1995). Kraków: Oficyna Wydawnicza IMPULS, pp. 16–24.

Conclusion

> *We are all on a journey, whether we like it or not. No one, for that matter, has asked us about our opinion* (Bauman, 1999, p. 101).

Due to continuous travelling and crossing of borders, a contemporary female researcher who has chosen a path of investigating an environment of the researched in the field is in constant movement. This movement is not a new aspect – in order to observe, investigate, learn and discover that which was undiscovered, explorers in ancient, colonial and postcolonial times constantly migrated, giving a part of their lives to the field.

In the era of global transformations, the instability of translocation and access to the researched in the territories connected with the so called "fragile contexts" seem to increase. At the same time, they generate hitherto unknown problems and challenges linked to the construction of the space of relations and co-activity in points of contact and in a situation in which cultures and civilisations permeate each other, relocate and clash. These are also challenges linked to the dissonance of social statuses and values. Migration and being in constant movement have become undeniable facts shaping the lives of women who have committed themselves to conducting intercultural research in the field outside their own country and culture.

To conclude, in order to illustrate my passion for field research in culturally diversified backgrounds I would like to bring the metaphor of a rhizome closer to the readers. The metaphor of a rhizome is a figure of nomadic thinking and simultaneously an illustration of intercultural contact with the reality found in the passion of field explorations. For a researcher, a rhizome is a map, a drafted, dynamic action plan of fieldwork. On no account is the rhizome a diagram showing the beaten tracks which lead the researcher, step by step, to the aim. A rhizome understood as a map – unlike a diagram – allows one to be fully oriented towards experience in contact with the reality which the researcher navigates.

"Unlike trees or their roots, a rhizome connects any point to any other point, and its traits are not necessarily linked to traits of the same nature; it brings into play very different regimes of signs, and even nonsign states" (Deleuze, Guattari, 1980; Deleuze, Guattari, 2001, p. 1605). The metaphor of the rhizome is

thus an embodiment of my passion which formed in childhood, deepened during my studies and which reforged the notion of difficult field into fascinating, ceaseless learning and an unyielding desire to conduct research in multicultural backgrounds. The process of drawing one's own map is a long one, abundant with unknowns, "oriented towards experience in contact with reality" (Deleuze, Guattari, 1980, p. 1605) which will never be static and predictable since as a researcher "you will be as people in the field define you. And you do not have much control over it as you step into their cultural identity – they do not step into yours."[15]

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Justyna Pilarska*

Culturally sensitive research – on theory and some good examples

Research is a power of suspending judgment with patience
of mediating, with pleasures of asserting with caution,
of correcting with readiness or arranging thought with scrupulous plan
Francis Bacon

Introduction

Field research is a kind of experience that is not only of academic importance, but entails numbers of features that influence the life perspectives of the researched and the researchers. Research projects exploring various communities such as culturally diverse environments, often draw methodological attention to the intercultural educational realm and its methodological priorities. According to C. Nobles (1985), the concept of culture constitutes a group's design for living, entailing the shared knowledge, consciousness, skills, values, expressive forms, social institutions, and behaviour. Thus "a people's particular ways of interpreting and perceiving reality – their social thought and folk wisdom – constitute one aspect of collectively generated autochthonous cultural knowledge" (King, 2004, p. 356). It implicates specific consequences for the researchers exploring a given realm of a culture and a society, as it makes the area they investigate contextual and subject to some regional, local

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nuances. This shall be taken into consideration if a profound and reliable, context-related research design is to be produced. Such stance can empower intercultural (cross-cultural) educational priorities, that – by managing diversity – strengthens the local communities in their endeavour to preserve their cultural uniqueness and heritage, as outlined within emancipatory or transformative paradigm. This goal, at the same time, can be provided by a culturally-sensitive research approach that can be exercised within the framework of social or humanistic sciences.

As an intercultural pedagogue, I have been carrying out ethnographic, qualitative research projects concerning the social, cultural and educational issues of Bosnia-Herzegovina, designed with the application of various paradigms and approaches. The variety of the accessible methodological tools, however, does not always ensure reliability and validity of a research design a researcher can consider successful. The first lessons learnt "in the field" led me to the conclusion that high-principled, conscientious and true-hearted research projects require great mindfulness and caution when dealing with cultural diversity the investigated communities represent. From 2001 to date, I have conducted nine research projects in Bosnia-Herzegovina, within which I explored a number of culturally oriented fields of interest. Amongst these are Sarajevo as an area characterised by informal cross-cultural education, attitudes towards ethnic minorities, shaping cultural identity in multicultural societies, the identity of contemporary Bosnians as capital for cross-cultural education, the potential of intercultural education in culturally diverse communities under the context of religious radicalisation and the sense of subjectivity amongst the young Muslim generation as they undergo socialisation in the diverse Bosnian cultural borderland. The problems I encountered in research afforded me valuable experiences and ideas, which, I hope, can enrich discussions on the manner by which research paradigms and methodological tools are adopted. I also wish to express the desire to shed some light on the importance of becoming culturally sensitive in terms of the various life narratives the respondents are willing to present to us, only if we are sensitive, empathetic and veracious in such a relation. The latter can be facilitated if (not only female) researchers introduce to their research designs some well-founded theory, acknowledged models and recommendations stemming from cross-cultural and anthropological studies.

Ontological assumptions constitute provisions for a methodological approach. Two contemporary mainstreams in this regard are the positivist and anti-positivist approaches. Positivists advocate quantitative methods, whereas anti-positivists, "acknowledging nominalist ontological prospect, recognize the possibility of getting to know social reality […] rejecting the search for cause-and-effect dependences claiming **that social reality is relative and can be understood only from a perspective of an individual involved in a given social situation** […] Hence, such researcher is not just a sole, objective observer of the events, but makes an attempt to understand them by making reference to the experience of a participating individual" (Glinka and Hensel, 2012, p. 42). Consequently, one should remember that various ontological perspectives are apparent within a given society, hence cultural diversity within a society gives rise to the need for different types of explanations and interpretations. In turn, this is something a culturally aware and sensitive researcher should bear in mind while preparing own design for research. All things considered, the aim of these reflections is to provide a review of the contemporarily acknowledged approaches to culturally sensitive research designs that could become a point of reference or inspiration while reflecting on the manner of in-field, culturally conscious projects.

Quantitative, mixed and qualitative research designs

Since the researcher's role is to make a choice on the adapted design assumptions about knowledge claims such as positivism, constructivism, pragmatism or participatory/ advocacy stand, it must be followed by selecting corresponding strategies of inquiry, i.e. qualitative, quantitative or mixed methods.

Commonly, the universalistic (etic) versus relativistic (emic) approach is applied to research designs concerning the construction of knowledge, where in the first instance the approach seeks confirmation of general truths that extend across cultural groups, whereas the relativistic or emic view maintains that "concepts and methodologies do not have universal validity; […] may be appropriate only within a narrow range of cultural groups" (Padilla, 2004, p. 128). Consequently, the researchers applying etic approach hold the view that the theory and hypothesis testing should be the researcher's priority,

thus quantitative methods are employed and statistical inferences are used to "draw conclusions that support the universal principles" (Ibidem)[1]. According to Trudy Dehue *(2001),* universalistic design prioritizes logic of the laboratory, experimentation, control, and random assignment of subjects to experimental and control groups. In the context of the topic of these reflections, the main criticism concerns the fact that such an approach eschews one of the most crucial aspects as the culture (a key concept within the framework if this article), and the emphasis are rather on a comparative approach entailing similar measures for comparison of males and females, children of different ages, ethnic groups, etc. It was one of the reasons such a universalistic approach to quantitative studies came under sharper criticisms on account of its Eurocentric perspective (Banks, 1993), empowering a mono-cultural, male-oriented, and comparative approach to research (Yoder, Kahn, 1993).

Quantitative approach embraces experimental and nonexperimental research entailing quantitative and categorical variables. The latter puts emphasis on, for instance, gender, religion, ethnicity, marital status, native langue, social class, etc. Nonetheless, quantitative research with ethnic minorities has a long history (Padilla, 2004, pp. 127–146). As for intercultural education, the research projects have concerned, for instance, intellectual assessment and school achievement of Afro American immigrants and other ethnic minority students in the USA. Yet, they seem to have failed to provide reliable data as many variables (critical for students ability) were neglected, thus affecting the final outcomes and conclusions (Valencia, Suzuki, 2001, Padilla, 1988). Moreover, the research legitimacy was questioned in, for instance, assessing intelligence, as little attention was given to the fact that in the development of IQ tests minority children were not included in standardizing the instrument (Kamin, 1974). It resulted from the fact that white middle-class Americans served as a "template"[2], and a standard against which other groups were/have been compared. On top of that, "[…] the instruments used for assuming differences are universally applicable across groups, with perhaps only minimal adjustment for culturally diverse populations, and […] although we need to recognize such sources of potential variance as social class, educational attain-

[1] Both these approaches are subject to methodological fusion as presented later on within the framework of one of the "good examples" of methodological models.

[2] Such as WASP, i.e. White Anglo-Saxon Protestant.

ment, gender, cultural orientation […], these are nuisances that can later be discarded" (Padilla, 2004, p. 127).

The quantitative research forms include controlled experiment, quasi-experiment, survey, observational study, case study, statistical stimulation, meta-analysis, etc. Consequently, quantitative studies are hypothesis-generating, i.e. exploring data to "form or sharpen a hypothesis about a population so as to assess future hypotheses" (Padilla, p. 127), whereas others are hypothesis-testing, i.e. seeking to assess specific *a priori* hypotheses or estimate parameters by random sampling from a population. It should be stressed that the mode of such research in social sciences can also embrace nonexperimental research (Johnson, 2001). Taking the above into account, in terms of the major challenges in conducting research with culturally diverse groups and quantitative design, the main concern entails:

- properly identifying, describing and selecting a sample;
- understanding the heterogeneity within a given culturally diverse, ethnic, national or other group;
- difficulties from cultural and language barriers;
- appropriateness of the instruments such as achievement or self-esteem scales;
- some ethnic-specific instruments such as ethnic identity, acculturation,
- acculturative stress that has not been viewed as a significant issue by most White middle-class individuals;
- assessing the response patterns to ethnic respondents including the response set, social desirability and acquiescence, internal-consistency reliability and external factor analysis (such as principal components factor analysis with Varimax rotation).

Without passing on any judgmental claims, it shall be emphasized that a narrow-angled perspective of quantitative research followed by behaviour studied under controlled conditions, consequently resulting in some generalizable findings, can affect the process of understanding various cultural nuisances that emerge in the process of entering the realm of other cultures, whose members are to be researched.

Taking the above into consideration, quantitative research applied in cross-cultural context can prove to be a rather tricky procedure, yet there are numerous suggestions for improving research designs with culturally diverse

respondents, further developed within the framework of these reflections. Consequently, quantitative methods shall be applied with a great awareness as they can – if inappropriately designed -objectify the respondents' identities, narrowing their perspectives on the research phenomena to some top-down categories, leading to generalized, and at times biased conclusions deprived of the local, indigenous context.

Applying a pre-established approach is akin to disregarding the degree to which the subject of research is involved in various cultural discourses, which are often of local character and typical only in, and for, the examined reality. This type of researcher therefore falls into the trap of scientific imperialism, making himself/herself axiologically and ontologically 'superior' to the members of the examined community. Bearing in mind that the majority of current research, theory and practice within cross-cultural education manifest Western-centric dominance whilst interacting with cultural difference, it can play a crucial role in the success or failure of intercultural research (Pilarska, 2015, p. 65).

To counter-balance and avoid narrowing database and biased conclusions due to addressing respondents who do not share all the demographic characteristics of the normative group, more and more researchers turn to the indigenous, cross-cultural approach, or at least qualitative stand. The different types of qualitative research entail phenomenology, ethnography, case study research, grounded theory and historical research. There is also, for instance, Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software that provides practical support, training and information on the use of a range of software programs designed to assist qualitative data analysis, acquired via different interview types including structured, semi-structured and unstructured.

Thus:

"qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consist of a set of interpretative, material practices that make the world visible. These practices transform the world. ***They turn the world into a series of representations, including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings, and memos to the self****. At this level, qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world. This means the qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them"* (Denzin, Lincoln, 2005, p. 3).

For that reason, qualitative research methods are indicative "in the sense that a researcher may construct theories or hypotheses, explanations, and conceptualizations from details provided by a participant" (Harwell, 2011, p. 149). Moreover, "the researchers cannot set aside their experiences, perceptions, and biases, and thus cannot pretend to be objective bystanders to the research" (Ibidem). Therefore, "inherent in this approach is the description of the interactions among participants and researchers in naturalistic settings with few boundaries, resulting in a flexible and open research process" (Harwell, 2011, p. 148). Within the framework of social and educational (cross-cultural) research designs, there is also a mixed methods approach embracing sequential, concurrent and transformative strategies of inquiry, constituting "the class of research where the researcher mixes or combines quantitative and qualitative techniques, methods, approaches, concepts or language into a single study. […] It is also an attempt to legitimate the use of multiple approaches in answering research questions, rather than restricting or constraining researchers' choices" (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004, pp. 17–8), thus rejecting given methodical dogmatism. Moreover, "it is an expensive and creative form of research, not a limiting form of research. It is inclusive, pluralistic, and complementary, and it suggests that researchers take an eclectic approach to method selection and the thinking about and conduct of research" (Johnson, Onwuegbuzie, 2004, p. 18). This, consequently, can prove supportive in the context of the research in culturally diverse settings.

The main differences and features of the three research approaches can be found in the table below.

Table 1. The main points of quantitative, mixed and qualitative research

	Quantitative research	**Mixed research**	**Qualitative research**
Scientific method	Deductive or *top-down* The researcher tests hypotheses and theory with data	Deductive and inductive	Inductive or *bottom-up* The researcher generates new hypotheses and grounded theory from data collected during fieldwork
View of human behaviour	Behaviour is regular and predictable	Behaviour is somewhat predictable	Behaviour is fluid, dynamic, situational, social, contextual, and personal

	Quantitative research	Mixed research	Qualitative research
Focus	Narrow-angle lens, testing specific hypotheses	Multi-lens focus	Wide-angle and *deep-angle* lens
Nature of observation	Attempt to study behaviour under controlled conditions	Study behaviour in more than one context or condition	Study behaviour in natural environments
Nature of reality	Objective	Common-sense realism and pragmatic view of world	Subjective, personal, and socially constructed
Form of data collected	Collect quantitative data based on precise measurement using structured and validated data collection instrument (close-ended items, rating scales, behavioural responses)	Multiple forms	Collect qualitative data (in-depth interviews, participant observation, field notes, and open-ended questions) The researcher is the primary data collection instrument
Nature of data	Variables	Mixture of variables, words, and images	Words, images, categories
Data analysis	Identify statistical relationship	Quantitative and qualitative	Search for patterns, themes and holistic features
Results	Generalizable findings	Corroborated findings may generalize	Particularistic finding Representation of insider (emic) viewpoint Present multiple perspectives
Form of final report	Statistical report	Eclectic and pragmatic	Narrative report with contextual description and direct quotations from research participants

Source: Burke, R., Johnson, L.C. (2014). *Educational Research: Quantitative, Qualitative, and Mixed Approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, pp. 34–35.

As the table above shows , the three methodological approaches differ in many fundamental areas starting from the method, view of human behaviour, perception of the nature of observation and reality, through the notion of research data, manner of its collecting, processing, and making the final conclusions. Therefore, adopting a given methodological design orientates a researcher towards a specific epistemological, ontological and axiological sphere, within which s/he accomplishes own research objectives. Thus, depending on the way a given researcher perceives human nature (i.e. the nature of subject to be researched) s/he may interpret the researched behaviour as situational, contextual, or quite the opposite, as something regular, fixed and predictable. Only this single factor shows how taking a given approach to the understanding of a particular part of human nature can crucially affect the whole methodological design.

As far as cultural sensitivity in research is concerned, it is worth highlighting the key qualitative research features such as:

- bottom-up methodology;
- social, contextual and personal view of human behaviour;
- studying behaviour as a part of the research design,
- the respondents being the co-producers of the knowledge generated from data collected during fieldwork;
- application of visual methods such as visual anthropology or ethnography.

Undoubtedly, such features do not narrow the culturally sensitive research designs to the qualitative projects as the reflections will prove, yet it is a clear indication for all those explorers who wish to gain insight into some indigenous cultural and social phenomena with recognition and acknowledgment for the subjectivity of the local communities and their representatives. All the three approaches entail certain ethodological potential and imply some drawbacks to the culturally sensitive procedures, yet in the light of the culturally 'empathic' methods, it is of key importance to acknowledge the local respondents as the equal co-producers of data and experts in the field of given social or cultural phenomena they experience on a daily basis. Since, however, their perspective is 'inward' and at times hidden or unconscious, the role of the researcher is to facilitate and usher in the discovery of the undercover meaning and significance of given cultural or social processes within the sphere of daily life.

Culturally sensitive approach to research – selected issues

Culture hides more than it reveals, and strangely enough what it hides, it hides most effectively from its own participants

Elliot T. Hall

Within the framework of methodological reflections concentrated on culturally diverse discourse and its real-world manifestations, it is of key importance to examine the construction of knowledge and its impact on cross-cultural and overall educational studies. The critical approach points to the fact that Eurocentric paradigms dominate in the domain of knowledge generation, influencing the way accumulated scientific facts are processed and understood, just as the previous remarks on the quantitative approach implied. It is thereby acknowledged that "such approaches have resulted in erroneous interpretations because of specific biases inherent in the paradigms themselves" (Padilla, 2004, p. 128). If intercultural education shall be taken into methodological consideration, it could maintain the commitment of the local communities to their cultures, at the same time providing them with knowledge, skills, and cultural capital needed to function in the national civic culture and a wider community. To indicate the importance of such interculturally oriented projects, David O. Sears (1986) came to some interesting conclusions, stressing the fact that research based on college students tested in academic laboratories on academic-like tasks, has culminated in social-psychological theories that are incompatible with the everyday life experiences of the most non-college-age majority-group adults. Thus, a paradigm shift in ethnic (cross-cultural) research emerged in order to at least partly counter balance the universalist approach that according to feminist and minority researchers lead to biased and prejudice-generating conclusions (Banks, 1993). It seems to be corresponding with Lloyd H. Rogler's concept (1989) highlighting some key aspects in favour of the culturally sensitive research approach, placing culture in the heart of the matter:

Research is made culturally sensitive through a continuing and open-ended series of substantive and methodological insertions and

> *adaptations designed to mesh the process of inquiry with the cultural characteristics of the group being studied…the insertions and adaptations span the entire research process, from the presenting and planning of the study, to the collection of the data and translation of instruments, to the instrumentation of measures, and to the analysis and interpretation of the data.* ***Research, therefore, is made culturally sensitive through an incessant, basic, and active preoccupation with the culture of the group being studied throughout the process of research*** (p. 296).

It must be remembered, however, that a "culturally sensitive approach to research holds that empirically derived facts are not valid for all time, but need to be examined from the perspective of the assumptions, language, and activities of the community of scientists" (Padilla, 2004, pp. 129–130). It conforms to Rogler's view, that a **group does not need to be compared to another in order to validate the research, hence a given culturally diverse community is valued for its own sake** (Ibidem). Some studies acknowledge and stress the importance of comprehending how the cultural background that the ethnic respondent brings to the task of completing an interview, survey or questionnaire of various types determines the response patterns that emerge (cf. Marín, 1991, Ross and Mirowsky, 1984). There are a number of critical issues that must be considered in doing research with culturally diverse populations. In this regard, the Eurocentric approach has been called into question because of potential bias in favour of White middle-class (male) college students, who "are used as the standard by which to evaluate research findings and to draw inferences to a broader population" (Padilla, 2004, p. 142). To provide some specific manifestations, many cultural, socialization and contextual (regional) nuances can be indicated. For instance, the differences in Asian and European culture are reflected in the fact that the developmental psychology within Freudian, Piagetian, behaviourist and humanist theories largely ignores the important role played by parents and culture, whereas in East Asia, parents play a control role in child development by defining the goals of socialization, teaching the necessary cognitive, linguistic, relational, as well as social skills, providing supportive family environments (Kim, Yang, Hwang, 2004, p. 13). Other differences, crucial for the sense of personal and subsequent cultural as well as social identity, encompass the manner

and dynamics of constructing the Self in individualist and collectivist cultures. These differences provide paramount factors to be taken into consideration while constructing a research design in a cultural setting different from the one a researcher stems from. The key differences can be found below.

Table 2. Differences between construction of the Self in Individualist and Collectivist Cultures

Feature	Individualist culture	Collectivist culture
Definition of the self	Unique individual, separate from social context	Connected with others in mesh of social roles and relationships
Structure of the self	Unitary and stable, constant across situation and relationships	Fluid and variable, changing from one situation or relationship to another
Important features	Internal, private self (abilities, thoughts, feelings, traits)	External, public self (statues, roles, relationships)
Significant tasks	Being unique, expressing yourself, promoting your own good, being direct	Belonging, fitting in acting appropriately, promoting group goals, being indirect

Source: Adapted from Markus H., Kitayama S. (1991). Culture and the self: Implications for cognition, emotion, and motivation. *Psychological Review*, *98*, p. 230.

Taking into consideration the key determinants of the Self construction, the researcher enters ontological sphere of the representatives of other cultures. The latter perceive their relation to others, social roles, a sense of hierarchy and autonomy in various ways, often different from the one manifested by the researcher. Considering such factors as the structure of the Self, its features or assigned tasks can affect the process of conducting reliable field research, as the researcher must be aware of the social context, the nature and degree of the relationships with the group, the degree of the respondents' prioritizing of own good or group goals, and their individually experienced senses of uniqueness or belonging. Moreover, a culturally sensitive research design needs to recognize the risk of the so called 'social desirability' i.e. a phenomenon that occurs upon data collection and when the respondents reveal the tendency to "deny socially undesirable traits and to claim socially desirable ones" (Nederhof, 1985, p. 264). In such stances, being familiar with the specificity of the local cultures, their ethos, hierarchy of values, myths and taboos proves the researcher is not only culture-sensitive,

but can also manage the research project in such a professional, yet ethical way, to provide "thick" data from the field. It stems from the fact that responding in a socially desirable manner may occur aware or unconsciously (Paulhus, 1984), and depends on many factors entailing personal traits, degree of internationality of given values, dynamics of the process of socialization and for instance, high (or low) self-esteem. Consequently, the researcher's awareness on the latter can secure reliability and validity of own research project. Researching culturally diverse communities and societies cannot take place without taking into consideration the educational plane, with emphasis put on pedagogical discourse and other issues related to upbringing, socialization and enculturation, as they allow to interpret and read out given cultural contexts of the researched phenomena. The table below presents the two main multicultural educational paradigms that dynamize and crucially influence the process of a research design, as the culturally-diverse research projects concern a given plane of the accomplished multicultural paradigms in interpreting the indigenous, local and contextual phenomena under investigation. As seen from the table below, the research characteristics concern, on one hand, assimilation entailing a single social construct, and on the other hand, pluralism with multiple or intersectionality of such social constructs.

Table 3. Two key multicultural educational paradigms

Research characteristics	Assimilation	Pluralism
Focus on population	Single social construct (e.g., race, or class, or gender)	Multiple or intersectionality of social constructs (e.g. races, classes, genders; or intersection of race, classes, and gender)
Use of rational power	Power status quo; seeks tolerance and acceptance of differences	Transformation of power; seeks freedom, justice, equality, equity, and human dignity

Source: Grant, Elsbree, Fondrie, 2004, p. 187.

These two paradigms, i.e. assimilation and pluralism are most frequently applied amongst the five approaches to multicultural education, i.e. positivism, post-positivism, critical theory, constructivism and participatory practice paradigm and its subsequent research projects (Grant, Elsbree, Fondrie, 2004,

p. 187). They affect the decision making processes for educational policy and practice, employing different types of methodological procedures.

The assimilation paradigm "espouses tolerance and acceptance of difference in an effort to uphold the existing social structure and power relations" (Ibidem), whereas the pluralism paradigm recognizes "multiple social constructs and includes multiple perspectives and voices of the school community in its research" (Ibidem). If, additionally, the previously-recalled five basic paradigms by Egon Guba and Yvonna Linclon (2005) shall be taken into consideration, it is clear that various cultures require various approaches such as, for instance, the implication of the 'individualist versus collectivist' paradigm of cultures.

Since scientific theories are developed to summarize and explain the observed patterns of behaviour, they must rely on a reliable and validated insight of the researcher into the cultures and community members s/he wishes to explore. This process, however, is influenced not only by the rules and customs of science, but also by personal and cultural values and goals of the researcher. The latter provides another challenge to the whole methodological process, as it requires from the researcher not only to process given expertise knowledge, but to manifest self-awareness and some kind of mindfulness concerning given soft silks (cf. Pilarska, 2015).

In a similar manner, it is acknowledged that in the cultures of many European countries and nations people think of themselves as related to others in different ways and degrees than in, for example, Japan. Thus when defining themselves (own Self) the latter make reference to their relationships to others (Markus, Kitayama, & Heiman, 1996). Consequently, there are a number of cultural differences which influence the ways people process information about the Self, respond to social conflict and disagreement, and experience emotions thus "**any theory on these topics that has been formulated and tested in only one type of culture may not generalize members of other cultures**" (Smith, Mackie, Claypool, 2015, p. 39). According to social psychologists, for example, ensuring the external validity with regard to the underlying research purpose can be defined as follows:

> *if the goal is to generalize to some specific target population and setting, the participants and setting must be representative of the target […] if the goal is to generalize across people, places, and times, the*

> *best way to do so is to repeat the research in multiple setting and with multiple populations, including people from different cultures* (Ibidem, p. 42).

Such a cross-cultural perspective highlights the important status in the culturally sensitive research assigned to the representatives of given local cultures, allowing the recognition of their own voices on specific features of their cultural, social and ontological surrounding, with the need to compare, categorize or classify given cultural phenomena. With reference to the above, an Australian anthropologist Roger Keesing (1974) argues that culture provides people with an implicit theory about how to behave and how to interpret the behaviour of others, i.e. those from different cultures learn different implicit theories, which are learned through socialization, entailing the dominant values of their particular culture and their self-identities (Ibidem). It is, therefore, of paramount importance for a researcher entering a cultural realm different from the one s/he originates from, to become aware and mindful of different cultural variables and specificities, even before designing a methodology for own research, as the latter should be the reflection of the comprehension and understanding of the local cultural contexts, a process facilitated by, for instance, formal or informal intercultural education. As James W. Neuliep observes, "over the past few decades, anthropologists, communication researchers, psychologists, and sociologists have isolated several dimensions of cultural variability that can be used to differentiate cultures" (2015, p. 44). They, in turn, are representative of different implicit cultural theories and concern the below **five dimensions of cultural variability**[3] that should be taken into consideration by a culturally-aware and sensitive researcher. Only in such way can an inspired and aware researcher uncover and discover the real cultural and biographical meanings of the phenomena experienced by the researched respondents, i.e. equal subjects of the investigation.

1) **Individualism-collectivism**. Relying on Harry Triandis's works (1995, 2001), this model explains that individualistic cultures put accent on the goals of individuals over group objectives, stressing the values that benefit an individual, whereas collectivistic cultures give

[3] Of course, no culture exists exclusively on one end of the continuum and the cultural continuum is the best way to approach such issues.

the priority to group goals and extended primary groups such as the family, neighbourhood, or occupational group. Individualistic-oriented cultures embrace, for instance, the USA, Great Britain, Australia, the Netherlands, Denmark, Sweden, France or Norway, whereas the collectivistic-oriented cultures encompass Guatemala, Ecuador, Panama, Venezuela, Indonesia, South Korea or Thailand. Such division is consequently reflected in, for instance, the recognition of individual accomplishment or the approval of the in-group, conformance to the group's norm, etc. Moreover, as Triandis points out, within the individual axis there might be two dimensions, i.e. horizontal or vertical one. The first one concerns cultures where an autonomous self is valued, yet an individual is more or less equal in status with others, whereas the latter, i.e. vertical individualism makes an individual autonomous, yet seen as different or at times unequal with others, hence status and competition are key aspects of such orientation. (Triandis, 2001).

2) **High-low context**. According to Edward Hall, there are environmental, socio-relation and perceptual contexts affecting the process of communication, thus high-context cultures have the overall restricted code systems, whereas in a low-context culture the verbal code constitutes the primary course of information. Interestingly, a conclusion can be drawn that the majority of high-context cultures are collectivist, such as China, Japan, North and South Korea, Vietnam as well as a number of Arab and African countries (cf. Oyserman et al, 2002).
3) **Value orientations**. From various typologies of values, such as Hsu's postulates of basic American values, the Chinese value survey (The Chinese Culture Connection CCC), Schwart'z universal values, etc., John Condon and Fathi Yousef extended the Kluckhohn and Strodbeck's five sets of values orientations to a total of 25 value orientations around six dominant themes, i.e. self, society, human nature, and the supernatural. The overall set of value orientations specific in terms of the concept of the Self, family, society, human nature, nature and supernatural can be found below with a distinction made between individual low context cultures and collectivistic high context cultures, providing another useful, culturally sensitive tool, protecting the researcher from biased error of homogenizing the cultural features as manifested by their representatives.

Table 4. The Condon and Yousef Set of Value Orientations

	Individualistic Low Context	**Collectivistic High Context**
THE SELF	Individualism Age Sex Activity Individualism Youth Equality of sexes Doing	Individuality Middle years Female superiority Being-in-becoming Interdependence Old age Male superiority Being
	Relational orientations Authority Positional role behaviour Mobility Individualistic Democratic Open High mobility	Collateral Authority centred General Phasic mobility Lineal Authoritarian Specific—prescribed Low mobility—stasis
SOCIETY	Social reciprocity Group membership Intermediaries Formality Property Independence Many—brief membership Few Informal Private	Symmetrical—obligatory Balanced Specialist only Selective formality Utilitarian Complementary—obligatory Few—prolonged membership Essential Pervasive formality Communal
NATURE	Relationship between humans and nature Ways of knowing nature Structure of nature Concept of time Humans dominate nature Abstract Mechanistic Future	Harmonious Circle of induction and deduction Spiritual Present Nature dominates humans Specific—direct Organic Past

	Individualistic Low Context	Collectivistic High Context
THE SUPER-NATURAL	Relationship between humans and the supernatural	Pantheism
	Meaning of life	Intellectual goals
	Providence	Balance of good and misfortune
	Knowledge of cosmic order	Faith and reason
	Humans as God	
	Physical/material goals	Humans controlled by supernatural
	Good is unlimited	Spiritual goals
	Order is comprehensible	Good in life is limited
		Mysterious and unknowable

Source: Neuliep (2015), p. 73.

Such a set can be made a point of departure for comparative analyses or cross-cultural analyses of cultures within multicultural education research or any other qualitative research design concerning culture and its representatives, thus the scope of application of such a model can be wide enough to embrace a number of various social research designs. As the authors of the first set of values orientations remarked in the 1960s (Kluckhohn, Strodtbeck, 1961), in every culture there are universal issues to be addressed, such as natural environment, child-rearing, health, etc., thus their set of five themes encompassed nature, time, social relations, activity, and humanity. This is not a universalistic, homogenizing procedure, but rather a manner of establishing a common ground for given cultural realms, yet not limiting the sense of identity of their members, preserving their sense of subjectivity and identity.

4) **Power distance**. According to Geert Hofstede, power distance is "the extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organizations within a country expect and accept that power is distributed unequally" (1980, p. 58). Consequently, large and small power distance cultures value different types of power, including positional or formal authority. As follows, a division between small power distance cultures (e.g. Austria, Denmark, Sweden, Great Britain, Germany), and large power distance cultures (e.g. Guatemala, Philippines, Indonesia, India, Brazil) can be taken into account while preparing the research design. Power distance affects verbal as well

as nonverbal communication, decoding nonverbal behaviour etc., and these can constitute key premises while designing own methodological projects.

5) **Uncertainty avoidance**. It is a theory developing the previous findings of GeertHofstede (Shuper et al., 2004) stressing the idea that a division can be made between individuals who are uncertainty-oriented and the certainty-oriented, where the first group's preferred method of handling uncertainty is "to seek out information and to engage in activity that will directly resolve the uncertainty" (Neuliep, 2015, p. 84), whereas certainty-oriented persons "develop a self-regulatory style that circumvents uncertainty" (Ibidem). Therefore, Western societies tend to be more uncertainty oriented because of their self-oriented and individualistic approaches to life than people in Eastern societies, who, in turn, should be more certainty-oriented as a function of their heavy reliance on groups (Shuper, 2004, pp. 470–71), highlighting such aspects as the sense of belonging, autonomy, etc.

Summing up, the five dimensions provide a model of exemplary cultural ground encompassing the extent to which:

- individual goals are placed over those of the group (i.e. individualism) or the degree to which individuals perceive themselves as members of a group first, then as individuals (i.e. collectivism);
- information from the physical, social, and psychological context is gathered (i.e. high context), or the extent to which information is gathered from the verbal code (i.e. low context);
- orientation guiding decisions as to what is right or wrong, decent or indecent, moral or immoral are valued;
- there is acceptance and expectance of power being distributed unequally (i.e. large power distance) or a belief that people are inherently equal (i.e. small power distance);
- uncertainty and unpredictability in lives are accepted and tolerated (i.e. weak uncertainty avoidance) or the extent to which uncertainty should be fought and conquered (i.e. strong uncertainty avoidance).

These dimensions can provide a researcher with reliable, context-sensitive and methodologically mature tools that can contribute to the process of designing a reputable, responsible and culturally emphatic project that would

empower the local cultures and their representatives in reflecting the way they perceive the world under the methodological investigation.

An antidote? Cross-cultural and indigenous approach to research

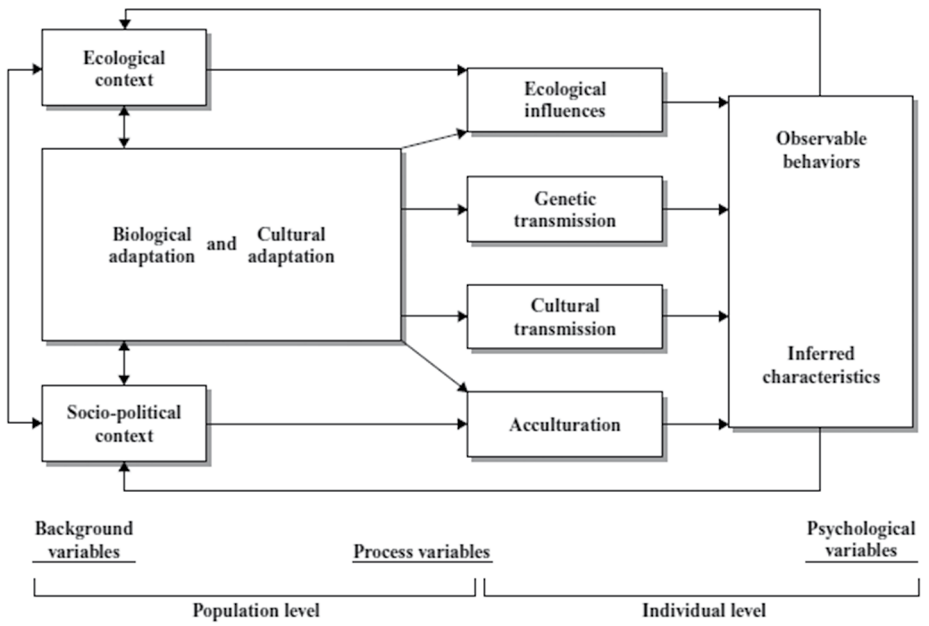
Taking into account the above theoretical assumptions and models of conducting research oriented towards cultures and their representatives, a question arises: how to implement such emancipating, participatory and pragmatic "indigenous" claims in the realm of contemporary social and cultural research? The are many affirmative examples of conducting research that acknowledge the subjectivity and voices of representatives of cultures, granting them the right to become the co-producers of knowledge, not solely the source of data. They can therefore serve as examples of good practices and inspiration for the researchers that wish not to objectify the respondents nor to impose their own image of the world, so that such an inquiry is "completed 'with' the Other rather than 'on' or 'to' the Other" (Creswell, 2003, p. 11).

The project "culture cluster methodology" illustrates one of such positive examples. It is a methodology that "would enhance the interaction between the indigenous psychology approach and the cross-cultural comparative approach" (Georgas, Mylonas, 2006, p. 203). It classifies psychological phenomena into clusters of cultures as a complementary methodology seeking cultural universalities without prejudicial or generalized inclinations. Such an approach is reflected, for instance, in Alfred L. Kroeber's (1939) methodics of grouping many clusters into broader culture areas, or James Georgas's and John W. Berry's (1995) approach, who grouped nations into clusters based on five a-priori dimensions within the framework of Berry's Ecocultural Framework entailing three types of variables:

(1) contextual variables embracing ecological and socio-political variables;
(2) process variables that include biological and cultural adaptation and transmission to individuals;
(3) psychological outcomes.

The graph below shows the ecocultural link between various categories of variables that find application in cross-cultural psychology and can serve as a point of departure for other culturally sensitive field researchers.

Graph 1: An ecocultural framework of relationships among classes of variables employed in cross-cultural psychology.



1.1 An ecocultural framework of relationships among classes of variables
Source: Berrry, Poortinga, Segall, Dasen (2002), p. 11.

In the 1980s it was acknowledged that studies of culture and cognition require the application of an ecocultural approach (Whiting, 1980) in order to study socialization, i.e. a process related to upbringing, enculturation, as well as personality and identity shaping. All these processes, in turn, play a key part in the cultural dynamics and cultural patterns of behaviour as well as instilled hierarchy of values, specific for a given cultural circle. It leads, among others, to the promotion of multidisciplinary methodologies "owing to the differing methodological structures of the contributing disciplines, questions of methodology and the legitimacy of inferences from data became a predominant feature of cross-cultural

work" (American Psychologist, 1986, p. 1052). In Beatrice B. Whiting's model, "the subsistence press on a society, mediated by the accumulated cultural capital of the group, affects what people do with their time on a daily basis" (Laboratory of Comparative Human Cognition, 1986, p. 1052). Consequently, "adoption of the ecocultural framework has coincided with a common recognition that the issues of culture and development cannot be resolved using the ideas and techniques of a single discipline" (Ibidem). It was also recognized that "acceptance of the need for genuinely interdisciplinary research quickly sensitized cross-cultural researchers to the shortcoming in the ways that psychological experiments were used to make claims about basic cognitive processes" (Laboratory of Comparative Human Cognition,1986, p. 1052). Under the circumstances, Berry's model allows to "endorse a certain symbiosis of cultural and comparative aspects of the field, enabling cultural (and ecological) explorations of human behaviour within and across settings" (Berry, 1999, p. 169), thus making reference to the original notions of etic and emic as complementary and holistic, rather than contradictory concepts. As the results of recent research by Georgas and Mylonas prove, "employing the Ecocultural Framework to classify countries with similar ecological, social, and institutional patterns can lead to establishing cultural clusters with common ecosocial indices" (Georgas, Mylonas, 2006, p. 204). Indigenous psychology approach is of key importance in cross cultural psychology, as it, for instance, highlights the study of psychological variables within the context of the culture, encourages psychologists from non-western cultures to creatively study psychological concepts that may be important to their cultures, thus such a strategy allows to "determine the degree to which the specific cultural contexts have shaped the morphology of the psychological concept or behaviour in the cultures" (Georgas, Mylonas, 2006, p. 219).

The project of Georgas and Mylonas concerned European countries and within the framework of research the four following clusters of countries were obtained:

1) Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, France, West Germany, East Germany, Luxembourg, Slovenia, Spain, and the United Kingdom;
2) Belarus, Bulgaria, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Russia, Slovakia, and Ukraine;
3) Croatia, Greece, Ireland, Northern Ireland, Italy, Poland, and Portugal;
4) Denmark, Finland, Iceland, the Netherlands, and Sweden.

The examined values and factors concerned, among others:

- religiosity and family life;
- companionship in marriage;
- family security;
- importance of marriage and family life,
- adequate income;
- good housing and children;
- companionship in marriage;
- woman's role as a housewife, etc.

The above factors can therefore afford a point of reference or departure in culturally sensitive research designs providing some orientation points that direct the methodological discourses towards given cultural features, at the same time not making their representatives subject to given categories or ontological reduction. The basic hypothesis of this paradigm concerns the fact that there might be some universal family values constructs across cultures, yet there might be also "constructs made up of items which contain both common items across countries and also items which are characteristics to a group of clusters of countries" (Georgas, Mylonas, 2006, p. 214). The methodology is illustrated with data from the European Values study (Halman, 2009). Georgas, Mylonas, Gari and Panagiotopoulou (2004) analysed data related to family and values based on representative samples (n= 39,919) from 33 European countries. The mean age of the respondents was 45 (sd=17.18) and the range was from 16 to 99 years of age; 45,9% of the respondents were males an 54,1% were females. Information was gathered within each culture on the relationship between cultural and family values, acknowledging the indigenous approach. The cross-cultural analyses presented family values as "universal across all cultures, and the universal patterns of family values that characterize the family in different clusters of cultures" (Georgas, Mylonas, 2006, p. 205). There are three different hierarchical levels at which cultural phenomena can be measured, i.e. universal, clusters of cultures, and culture-specific. The latter is of key importance as it "refers to the pattern of manifestation of the psychological variable within the cultural context as unique, rather than maintaining that the psychological phenomenon by itself is unique" (Ibidem, p. 219). Summing up, the findings provide "a system for studying issues related to psychological variables in two ways: 1) on the basis of factor congruence, and

2) on the basis of the indigenous approach, which seems to salvage the information for country-cluster-finding items or functions that would otherwise be considered biased or simply not culture equivalent" (Ibidem). Thus the authors of the research provided an outline of the levels of universal traits, taxonomies of traits, and traits of individuals. Interestingly, the two first levels make reference to nomothetic methods whereas the latter one concerns the idiographic method. The cross-cultural value of such methodical design puts accent on the fact that a number of countries can have common cultural elements and psychological similarities, forming a common cultural cluster, acknowledging the obvious fact that each culture has distinct and possibly unique features and meanings embedded in their language, myths, and history. In order to gauge the degree to which psychological variables are so unique in one culture that they do not appear in any other, a combination of cross-cultural comparative approach joint with the indigenous approach make it complementary. Thus, clusters of cultures embracing cultural universals, such as for instance cluster 2 countries support religiosity and family life values, as well as values associated with children in family life and marriage, whereas countries from cluster 4 are in strong favour of divorce and abortion, against the family values that are reflected in the 'conventional' family life. On the other hand, cluster 3 counties (Croatia, Greece, Ireland, Northern Ireland, Italy, Poland, and Portugal) stand more in favour of the religiosity and family life values, yet strongly against abortion and divorce issues. Interestingly, culture has been "treated as a quasi-independent variable, since researchers cannot control culture and researchers are interested in examining its influence on behaviour" (Berry, 1980). This can provide an argument in favour of sensitively oriented cultural research projects that do not narrow culture to a set of fixed rituals, patterns or "predictable" mechanisms.

Another thought-provoking and innovative approach has been put forward by Shirely Brice Health from Stanford University, the author presented in the contribution "Ethnography in Communities. Learning the everyday Life in America's Subordinated Youth" (Heath, 2004, pp. 146–162). She portrayed five contemporary communities of different types, studied by an ethnographer as insider/outsider over a long period of time, embracing a Puerto Rico barrio in New York City, a pre-World War II Japanese fishing community in California and its current nonspatial community, a rural-oriented African Ameri-

can community of the 1970s, and its current nonspatially based connections, a community-based organization in a high-crime inner-city area, and a community of street youth in a university neighbourhood. The researched communities, struggling to meet everyday life subsistence need "a few resources of reform that can bring back into place older bonds based on little communities, occupying common spatial territory" (Ibidem, p. 159), correspondingly highlighting social bonds within spatial identity. As communities are recognized to serve the five central functions, i.e. mutual support, social control, social participation, socialization and production (Dynes, 1970, p. 84), the array of the examined communities all include these key functions, thus they should be taken into consideration in the content of classrooms, "allowing students to learn about groups other than their own and thereby grow to appreciate them" (Heath, 2004, p. 159). Thus, the culturally diverse youth "can meet their own potential and the needs of society only if education, health, employment, and housing policies take into account contemporary diversities of communities" (Ibidem, p. 161). This, in turn, gives rise to the appeal that further research must continue to integrate paradigms, bringing together census data, literary and historical representations, and participant observation (Bender, 1978). According to Heath:

> *"these must be long-term accounts that draw in every possible form the knowledge gained by the long-term insider-outsider perspectives of anthropologist, descendants of earlier communities, and individuals who claim several communities of origin through intermarriage; acculturation and biculturalism"* (2004, p. 160). *Moreover, "community studies can no longer take historical identities as given; researchers must attend much more to ways that groups and institutions create alternative historical identities for themselves"* (Heath, 2004, p. 161, cf. Dorst, 1989).

Moreover, it must be remembered that:

> *to speak of ethnic communities or even of multicultural communities is to perpetuate myths that such communities are, on one hand, homogenous across classes, regions, and histories of immigration,*

> *or, on the other hand, to suggest that there is homogeneity of culture, language, and socialization within local communities* (Heat, 2004, p. 160).

As the author proves, a complete research design tackling local cultures and their representatives shall entail both perspectives – the observer's (researcher's) stand and the "insider" perspectives that would reveal the wide arrays of understanding the local cultural contexts with their complexity, heterogeneity and other nuisances.

Conclusions

Taking the above into account it is worth stressing the fact that Eurocentric paradigm dominance did not only affect the process of collecting reliable in-field data, but very often objectified the respondents and their cultures. Concurrent judgmental claims disable a long-term and insider look approach that could empower indigenous and cross-cultural stance. Nowadays, however, it seems of paramount importance to develop a more critical approach enforcing ethnic and cross-cultural designs, contrary to the previously dominant universalists ones, often entailing biased and top-down conclusions. A recognition of given cultural groups in the process of research for their own sake promotes idiographic design with meanings embedded in a given local, contextual culture, revealed only for the judgment-free and open-mined researcher. It can also be reached by the above-mentioned affirmative examples such as universal clusters of culture or culture-specific models that combine idiomatic and nomotetic methods. A recommendation should be taken into consideration that whenever possible, members of the researched communities should be incorporated into the planning and implementation of research design, as this prevents bias at the planning stage. Additionally, the interpretations of given findings could be enhanced in such a way, increasing the potential for more relevant research questions and approaches.

Moreover, adapting to local circumstances should be of paramount importance, as much as the ontological recognition of the presence of multiple 'truths' that are socially constructed (Lincoln, Guba, 1985). The are numbers of

personal factors that affect the research design. B. Morgan (1997) for instance, applies the term 'psychic prisons' to describe the ways in which a researcher's imagination becomes trapped. Moreover, it is common understanding in the social sciences that knowledge is a social constriction of reality (Holt, 2000, p. 354) and that both reality and knowledge pertain to specific social contexts (Berger, Luckman, 1967). Yet there is a link between methodological bias in social science knowledge production, culture, ideology and hegemony (Allalimat, 1969; Ani, 1994; Childs, 1989; Dixon, 1971; Semmes, 1992; Ladner, 1973), and a culturally sensitive researcher should be aware of such challenges.

Overcoming epistemologically limited quantitative paradigms, particularly those applied to such complex areas as culturally diversified borderlands, depends on the intercultural imagination, knowledge and interpersonal competences of a researcher. In considering all these perspectives, a researcher can ensure that research methodologies truly correspond to the culturally diverse and sensitive empirical demands of cross-cultural examinations. Such examinations, which are part of pedagogical discourse, allow to avoid post-colonial, objectifying and inferiorizing practices towards those who represent the culture in the eye of the researcher. All things considered, the following guidelines can serve as points for further reflection (Pe-Pua, 2006, pp. 109–137):

1. A researcher should treat participants as her/his equal instead of 'guinea pigs', whose only role is to provide data. An imperative, therefore, is to shape a sense of subjectivity and self-awareness within oneself because these attributes facilitate the development emotional competencies.
2. The welfare of research participants is of greater importance than data acquisition since, although the objective of research is to understand given communities and their actions, such understanding cannot take place at the cost of participants' subjectivity. This guideline is the key ethical premise of research on culturally diverse communities.
3. The main principle is to adapt research methods to the specific circumstances of participants, not the other way around.

Researching cultures, communities and their representatives is a rewarding, yet challenging journey for both participating parties – the researcher and the respondents. There are procedures that can assist in making such projects not only reliable, but recognizable for the local communities, their sense

of autonomy and self-empowerment. Amongst the three strategies of inquiry even the 'technocratic' quantitative approach can be applied in such a manner as not to objectify the respondents and provide reliable data that would reflect the real phenomena taking place, not the projections generated by the pre-cognition and prejudgment of the researcher.

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ABSTRACTS

Agnieszka Gutkowska PhD

If I were a Chechen, I would be a feminist ...

The article presents the experiences of a woman – a scientist involved in researching criminological aspects of the phenomenon of multiculturalism. In a sense, these studies are unique as they were preceded by over 8-year period of relatively close contacts of unscientific nature with the community who would later become one of the main subjects of her research. The Author, a lawyer, assisted refugees and migrants from the North Caucasus in their efforts to gain refugee status, as well as during other procedures related to their stay in Poland and Europe. These years have resulted in many acquaintances and friendships and were also an opportunity to observe the daily functioning of these people, their problems and joys, as well as real life dilemmas that arise in connection with migration, especially into societies built on a relatively different axiological basis. In her paper the Author, drawing from her experience, relates to two types of anthropological studies: etic and emic studies.

Key words: multiculturalism, conflict of cultures, Northern Caucasus, etic and emic studies

Urszula Markowska-Manista PhD

The dilemmas and passions in intercultural field research – a female pedagogue's ethnographic notes

The field research which I conduct has a dynamic and "mobile" character and entails the duality of the term *field*, as it becomes not merely a "peculiar space of a researcher's experience" (Kaniowska), but the female researcher – nomad's temporary "home". This research is done in environments outside Europe (African countries and the countries of the Caucasus), in socially, culturally and normatively distinct worlds of children and adults. It is conducted in places which are difficult due to external factors (natural environment, climate, social, political conditioning, etc.) and internal factors (the hermetic character of the studied community, difficult memory, poverty, children's malnutrition, illnesses, discrimination and marginalisation). At the same time, it is research in "sensitive" contexts (among communities affected by war, conflicts, rebellions and the burden of difficult history). My journeys in the field, loneliness, young age, visual distinctness, the fact that I belong to the European cultural circle and come from a country of the Global North do not only make me "exotic" in the eyes of those I reach and study. They also entail the baggage of psychologically and physically negative experiences, difficult research situations, and at times border situations. The text is an attempt to outline selected areas related to the challenges and dilemmas as well as the COSTS of female field research in multi-ethnic environments.

Key words: field research, female researcher – nomad, difficult knowledge, "sensitive" contexts, distance, Global North and Global South

Anna Odrowąż-Coates PhD

An ethnographic study about women – The female researcher's experience

The paper is based on the autobiographical experience of a female academic from Poland, during a long-term research carried out in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (2010–2012). Sensitive intercultural ethnographic issues are explored together with 'gateways' used to overcome the practical difficulties of field work in this socio-cultural space. The author studies her own personal experiences retrospectively through the use of 'herstory'. The personal difficulties and psychological effects are placed in the centre of the discussion when considering the prolonged interplay with the research situation proceeding, during and following the data collection process, as well as during its further analysis. The paper unveils the long-term effects of field work on the deconstruction and reconstruction of 'self' (the female researcher), which is somewhat underestimated and frequently absent from the field work accounts by social researchers.

Key words: auto-ethnography, intersectional approach, social bias, 'herstory', intercultural experience

Justyna Pilarska PhD

Culturally sensitive research – on theory and some good examples

The article tackles the general issue of culturally oriented field research, i.e. methodological projects that take into account idiomatic, etic conditioning of the cultural subject area of the researcher's examination. It also focuses on field research as a kind of experience that is not only of academic importance, but entails numbers of features that influence the life perspectives of the researched and the researchers, making the latter a key factor in profound and reliable, context-related research design. Since various ontological perspectives are apparent within a given society, cultural diversity within a society gives rise to the need for different types of explanations and interpretations. In turn, this is something a culturally aware and sensitive researcher should bear in mind while preparing own design for research. Thus, the aim of these reflections is to provide a review of contemporarily acknowledged approaches to culturally sensitive research designs that could become a point of reference or inspiration while reflecting on the manner of in-field, culturally conscious projects.

Key words: qualitative methodology, cross-cultural research, cultural sensitivity, emic research, multiculturalism, indigenous methodology

Katarzyna Taczyńska PhD

"A Scattered Mosaic of Records and Reminiscences": Ženi Lebl's War Odyssey in Her Personal Writings

When Svetlana Slapšak was presenting the participation of women's perspectives in the reconstruction of Balkan history, she established a critical diagnosis that it is the history of the region from the perspective of women that represents one of the largest gaps in current gender studies[4]. The primary objective of my text is to draw attention to Ženi Lebl's texts which address the war and post-war experiences of the author. I also aim to show the role which her output, de facto her memory of the past, can play in the reconstruction of the history of Yugoslavia during World War II (Jewish origin, hidden identity, concentration camps) and after it (Goli otok prison camp).

Key words: Herstory, Ženi Lebl, World War II, Concentration Camps, Goli otok

[4] Svetlana Slapšak, "Posleratni rat polova. Mizoginija, feministička getoizacija i diskurs odgovornosti u postjugoslovenskim društvima", in *Zid je mrtav, živeli zidovi! Pad berlinskog zida i ras pad Jugoslavije*, ed. Ivan Čolović (Beograd: Biblioteka XX vek, 2009), p. 290.

Agnieszka Wołowicz-Ruszkowska PhD

The study of women with disabilities – emancipatory perspective

Women with disabilities constitute a group experiencing marginalisation because of their social invisibility. There is a lack of interest in disability in feminist theory and practice. On the other hand, disability studies treat disability as a state which cancels and "erases" gender, and all attention is drawn to the lack of ability. It leads to the acceptance of an allegedly neutral perspective both in the discourse about women, which does not recognise women with disabilities as a specific group, and in the discourse about people with disabilities which accepts a male model as default. The aim of this article is to describe the search for a research strategy which captures intersectionality of both the categories, i.e. gender and disability. As a result, three themes will be analysed:

- breaking away from the traditional female researcher – participant relations including: researcher destabilisation, resignation from the privileged role, leaving comfort zones and taking the risk of losing oneself, rejecting the language of political correctness, escaping the trap of paternalism and compassion, reflections on about power and domination relations.
- avoiding forcing the researcher's terms and definitions and accepting the competence of research participants.
- providing full access as a condition of subjective treatment of the participants.

Key words: women, disability, gender, intersectional qualitative research

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The book **An Introspective Approach to Women's Intercultural Fieldwork**, edited by Urszula Markowska-Manista and Justyna Pilarska, is a very extraordinary and valuable monograph. Its originality lies with its innovative juxtaposition of three discursive dimensions: female voice in research, theoretical and methodological dilemmas of fieldwork and its application to distant environments. As such, the book combines two main threads of thought: On one hand it confronts a reader with questions such as: Does something like female research exist? In what way is female researcher situation different from that of man researcher; does (and how) this influence the research (selection of research problems, methodology, interpretation)? Secondly, the authors challenge the readers with the dilemma whether (and how) cultural remoteness of a cultural phenomenon studied affects the research process, and with what implications.

Step by step, the authors unfold various aspects of the female research perspective. They convincingly show that women researchers (because they are women?!) contribute to the growth of human knowledge: They take part in the reconstruction of contemporary history by researching the role of women in history. By being able to reach women and ask uncomfortable questions they enrich ethnographic research. They also enrich the research by posing research questions which are relevant to women, particularly to their emancipation and freedom.

By opening new topics and new perspectives, the authors enrich the discussion on fundamental research dilemmas about the normative nature and function of research, the role of the researcher in qualitative studies, the relationship between the subject and object of research and similar research-related issues. Moreover, by detailed and emotional (sometimes heart-breaking) descriptions of personal research experience the authors show how tightly research and life are intertwined, whether the researchers (male or female) make this connection visible or not, and therefore this visibility makes the findings even sounder.

From the review by prof. Klara Skubic Ermenc

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