

**GENDER REPRESENTATIONS**  
**IN**  
**THE POLISH PRESS**  
A FEMINIST CRITICAL DISCOURSE STUDY

By

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## ABSTRACT

Communication between politicians and the public is rarely direct and first-hand, but almost always mediated by journalist opinions and values. Consequently, the way in which the media reports on State matters has a profound impact on people's understanding of political processes and their attitudes towards the governing figures. The aim of this research project is to investigate the role that the Polish Press assumes in mediating women's involvement in contemporary politics. Stemming from the perspective of feminist critical linguistics, the thesis empirically examines a wide array of media publications derived from leading Polish socio-political magazines ('Polityka', 'Wprost', 'Newsweek Polska') and electronic press. By engaging with the journalist discourse, it focuses on the importance of language in generating epistemological claims about women and femininity. It demonstrates not only how female subjectivities are produced in the Polish public domain, but also how history and culture impinge on these constructions in a dialectical-relational manner. The intention is to draw up an 'inventory' of signifying practices through which female MPs emerge as gendered subjects in the hope that this will inspire closer scrutiny of media content, leading to its informed critique and transformation.

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*In memory of Maria Grzybowska  
and for my parents, Ewa and Marian Buławka*

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*I tried to write with fire and by fire. Fire has unforeseeable consequences. It destroys less than it transforms. It acts on what it burns with an inevitable force that possesses magic.*

*adapted from Joan Miro, Tate Modern Exhibition, London, 2011*

# Chapter 1

## Research Context: Theoretical and Methodological Issues

### 1 Introduction

Years 2007-2010 saw gender identity emerge as a key element of Polish public life. The resurgence of Poland's ultra-Catholic agenda under the twin leadership of Lech and Jarosław Kaczyński posed new challenges to women's already fragile social standing. The new form of interventionist politics pursued by the elected coalition government, resulting in consultations on the proposed restrictions to the already rigorous anti-abortion legislation, led to the formation of the first Polish Women's Party ('Partia Kobiet'). At the same time that women's involvement in decision-making became coercively undercut by the conservative ruling, the leading parties engaged in carefully crafted media campaigns designed to stress Poland's feminist gains in the area of political representation. The radical inquiries into the nature of Polish gender and sexual identity brought the issues of discourse, language and talk into the core hub of public considerations.

#### 1.1 Aims and Research Questions

Informed by the above, this thesis sets out to examine whether the press coverage of women in Poland upholds the values of patriarchal hegemony and thereby participates in women's 'symbolic annihilation' (Tuchman, 1978: 8) and exclusion in the public domain. My principal aim is to identify and theorize discursive representations of female policymakers that circulate in Polish written media in an attempt to gain a more

nuanced understanding of the linguistic practices and socio-political processes that jointly define the character of nationwide newsmaking in contemporary Poland.

The foundation texts that provide a starting point for my critical discussion of gender are the leading, high-circulation, socio-political magazines ‘Wprost’, ‘Polityka’ and ‘Newsweek Polska’, all of which have played a dominant role in forming public opinion in Poland in recent decades (see also Graff, 2007a, 2008). Throughout this study, I approach these mainstream ‘opinionated’ data as routine sources of identity attributions and repositories of gender meanings, which not only assist in the mediation of women as public sphere agents, but also serve as the epistemological sites for (re)articulations of gender-based beliefs and ideologies (see discussion of gender in Section 2.2). In order to address the above issues I have formulated the following theoretical questions, which I explore based on relevant linguistic evidence in the chapters of the thesis:

1. How are female politicians constructed, positioned, evaluated and given identity in Polish media discourse and how are these constructions, positions and evaluations located within broader cultural ideologies?
2. How is the practice of women’s political participation recontextualized in the Polish Press and what arguments are offered in support of women’s political agency, as well as those against it?
3. Is public sphere discourse in Poland organized to illustrate and enforce the legitimacy of women’s political power, thus enhancing their public image, or does it undermine their professional status as politicians?

4. Do representations of female leaders and their associated ideological values participate in the production of bipolar conceptions of gender, or is there evidence in the data of a gender-neutral perspective?
5. Are female politicians constructed in sex-stereotyped ways? If so, what linguistic/visual strategies and (inter)textual framing devices have been most frequently used to preserve stereotypes and generalizations about women?

The overarching concern of the thesis is with textual analysis, always taking into consideration its cultural and historical context. I investigate the written and semiotic representation of high-profile women in Poland and the extent to which texts are the product of localized regimes and practices. By evaluating the ways in which political actors are organized and assigned values in discourse, I aim to bring to light recurrent linguistic patterns that cooperate in the systematic production and legitimation of normative conceptions and ‘structures of gender’ (Grant, 1993: 1985).

It is increasingly being argued that it is in and through discourse – the use of language in speech and writing (Fairclough and Wodak, 1997) – that gender identity achieves its socially developed status (e.g. Baxter, 2003; Bucholtz, 1999; Cameron, 1997a, 1997b, 2005; Hall, 1995; Sunderland, 2004; Talbot, 1995, 1997; Tannen, 1994; Wodak, 1997). Recent feminist work in language and gender endorses the view that not only is femininity constructed through semiotic practices but the processes of constituting women as gendered subjects are constantly shifting, unbounded and fluid (Bucholtz 1999; Cameron, 1996; Sunderland and Litosseliti, 2002; Sunderland 2004). As Cameron (1996: 45) points out, ‘no one is ever finished becoming a woman’. The role of

discourse analysts is to locate these ongoing constructions in reference to the specificity of cultural, historical and institutional contexts.

In order to demonstrate how culturally informed gender ideologies are manifested in contemporary discourses about female politicians, I will adopt in this work an interdisciplinary Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis (FCDA) approach (Lazar, 2005; Walsh, 2001). Feminist CDA is a 'political perspective on gender' (Lazar, 2005: 5) (see also Mills (1995) for an illustration of the analogous approach called 'Feminist Stylistics' and Litosseliti (2006) for a description of 'Feminist Linguistics'), whose central preoccupation is with demystifying, theorizing and critiquing discriminatory representations of gendered practices. These include the analysis of sets of concepts and images which overtly reproduce relations of domination (e.g. semantic derogation or body fragmentation in Chapter 6) as well as the more subtle and pernicious forms of semiosis (e.g. metaphoric scripts or humorous descriptions in Chapter 6) that are characteristic of contemporary times and indirectly support male-gendered readings and perspectives (Mills, 1995, 2008; Walsh, 2001).

A feminist political critique of discursively mediated inequalities is aimed at not only describing and documenting the instances of sexist representations that occur in a variety of socio-cultural domains but also, and predominantly, at raising awareness about the role of language in sustaining the oppressive gender order. As Lazar (2005) points out, the ultimate goal of FCDA is to pave the way for social transformation – the effect of which is the subversion of the social status quo 'in favour of a feminist humanist vision of a just society, in which gender does not predetermine or mediate our relationships (...) our sense of who we are or might become' (Lazar, 2005: 6).

Thus, by showing how language contributes to the production and maintenance of unequal relations of power between men and women, the feminist approach to critical analysis simultaneously provides an emancipatory critique (Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1999), encouraging social action and stirring ‘analytical resistance’ (van Dijk, 1991 in Lazar, 2005: 6). The compatibility between the social-constructionist orientation of much current feminist enquiry and the CDA view of identity as ‘emerging from discourse’ (Bucholtz, 1999: 4) means that it is now possible for language and gender analysts to join forces in a shared intellectual venture (Bucholtz, 1999).

## **1.2 Data**

The primary data for this study comes from the serious socio-political publications, represented by the magazines *Wprost* (‘straight’), *Polityka* (‘politics’) and the Polish version of Newsweek – *Newsweek Polska*. I have collected the weekly press over an extended period of time, commencing in January 2007 and finishing in January 2009. The linguistic content of the data is available online in the electronic version. However, due to my interest in multimodal aspects of representation, I have been compelled to obtain the paper copies of the weeklies in their complete formats, parts of which I have reproduced in the main body of the thesis.

I have chosen the above publications for a number of reasons. First, all three of them are enormously popular among Polish readers (both men and women), with an average circulation of between two hundred and sixty and three hundred thousand copies per week (<http://en.poland.gov.pl>). Second, collectively the magazines show a balanced spectrum of ideological values, ranging from the liberal and pro-E.U. *Polityka* and neo-liberal and conservative *Wprost* to the scientifically-minded *Newsweek* (Graff, 2007a).

Third, since their inception – the oldest of which (‘Polityka’) has been in print since 1957 and also remained independent during the Communist regime – the magazines have been the source of bold and uncompromising journalism. They have attracted the nation’s most acclaimed personalities, from journalists through economists, politicians and lawyers, who have regularly assigned their opinionated texts to their pages (<http://en.poland.gov.pl>). The magazines’ crucial role in shaping the views of contemporary Poles is therefore hard to dispute.

When choosing the leading publications, I was particularly drawn to the quality profile maintained by the weeklies. However, I quickly realized when interpreting the data that this was not the case. At least some stories about women leaders, most of which I quote in this study, defied, in my view, many professional principles and values. The initial intent, nonetheless, was to explore the dominant modes of featuring female MPs in the serious political media, thus in direct contrast to the downmarket and sensationalist tabloid journalism.

In order to investigate whether the media frames of the quality press were multiplied in other public discourses, I have carried out an additional analysis of Polish electronic media by looking at its news output devoted to the current socio-political issues. Theseis were reproduced by the following websites: [dziennik.pl](http://dziennik.pl), [wiadomosci24.pl](http://wiadomosci24.pl), [gazeta.pl](http://gazeta.pl), [wyborcza.pl](http://wyborcza.pl), [wiadomosci.wp.pl](http://wiadomosci.wp.pl), [money.pl](http://money.pl) or [pardon.pl](http://pardon.pl). The text types reported in these joint contributions include a variety of media genres, such as features, opinion pieces, commentaries, editorials, news reports, author interviews or cartoons, which together enable a critical and differentiated examination of the topic.

Before I move on to theorizing and applying the key analytical principles constituting the cornerstone of feminist critical discourse research in the following chapters of this thesis, I will firstly review in the sections below the most important propositions developed by prominent researchers in this field in order to justify why I have chosen Critical Discourse Analysis as a theoretical approach for the linguistic explorations of gender ideologies in my data.

## **2 A Theoretical Review**

### **2.1 Critical Discourse Analysis: A Multi-Disciplinary Approach to Language Studies**

Critical Discourse Analysis (hence CDA) is a relatively new ‘perspective on doing linguistic, semiotic or discourse analysis’ (van Dijk, 1993a: 131), which emerged as a distinct research position in the 1980s and ‘90s (Wodak and Meyer, 2009). CDA belongs to a cross-disciplinary field of scholarship, established and institutionalized like other academic disciplines, even though many of its practitioners openly renounce claims to a disciplinary title and instead opt for the label of a research perspective, a school or a paradigm (Lazar, 2005; van Dijk, 1994; Wodak and Meyer, 2009).

CDA adheres to multiple methods of investigation (van Dijk, 2009). Likewise, the theories it puts into practice are eclectic and multifarious, drawing on a variety of scholarly traditions, ‘ranging from theories on society and power in Michel Foucault’s tradition [to] theories of social cognition and grammar (...)’ (Wodak and Meyer, 2009: 23). Although there is now a diversity of critical approaches to discourse analysis (see Wodak and Meyer, 2009 for a summary of different analytical models), all distinguished by unique disciplinary backgrounds and oriented towards different data

and empirical methods, certain theoretical and methodological principles (Fairclough and Wodak, 1997) remain stable across all variants of Critical Discourse Studies, as I explain below:

### **2.1.1 CDA Addresses Social Problems**

CDA is situated within the tradition of critical language enquiry and its primary concern is therefore the analysis of semiotic aspects of socio-cultural practices (Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1999). Unlike ‘linguistics proper’, which studies languages as autonomous, self-contained systems, detached from their historical or cultural contexts, CDA focuses not only on the properties of the linguistic code but also on its functioning in political and ideological structures. As Fairclough (2001: 229, 232) points out, ‘the starting point for CDA is social issues and problems (...). The dramatic problems in economy and society. If CDA wants to address the latter, it has to have a picture of how language and semiosis figure in the former’. The interest of critical discourse analysts in the semiotic character of social, economic and political processes synthesizes theoretical and practical concerns of linguistics and social sciences into a single analytical paradigm (Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1999).

By theorizing the relationship between discourse and other elements of social practices, CDA gives prominence to pressing political issues confronting society, like social inequality, injustice and power struggles, all of which are instantiated and sustained through language use (Lazar, 2005). The fundamental aim of a critical approach to discourse is to expose the often hidden and subtle ways in which language constitutes and maintains relations of power and domination (Sunderland, 2004). This inevitably requires the adoption of an ‘explicit socio-political stance’ (van Dijk, 1993a: 249), to

which CDA avowedly acquiesces by seeing its role as engaged and committed, as opposed to dispassionate and apolitical (Fairclough and Wodak, 1997).

A critical perspective of the ideological processes that act through language is at the same time a form of intervention in unequal social practices or relationships. Fairclough and Wodak (1997) note that many CDA researchers are already actively standing against racism or sexism by getting involved as activists or participating in consciousness-raising movements. Their intervention is always in defence of those who are oppressed and dominated, with emancipation from relations of dependence constituting the ultimate goal of their political involvement. The ‘emancipatory knowledge interest’ (Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1999: 29) that underpins work of critical discourse analysts has already contributed to changes in many social practices, leading to revised standards in doctor-patient interactions and the development of guidelines for non-discriminatory language use in many countries (Fairclough, and Wodak, 1997; Wodak, et al., 1987; van Dijk, 1993b).

### **2.1.2 Power Relations are Discursive**

CDA draws on the Foucauldian concept of discourse as inextricably entwined in relations of social power (Lazar, 2005). For critical discourse analysts, the socio-cultural practices of discrimination, whether connected to class, gender or race relations, are partially a matter of discourse (Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1999). Discourse exerts and negotiates power in society because it institutionalizes and normalizes socially approved modes of talking, thinking and behaving (Jager and Maier, 2009). It regulates the way a given topic can be discussed and ‘reasoned about’, and thereby ‘rules out’ other ways of thinking or producing knowledge(s) (Hall, 1997a: 44).

By adapting Foucault's notion of discourse as meaningful social practice, CDA devotes special attention to the role of language as an instrument of social control and manipulation. This entails looking at linguistic mechanisms that serve to legitimate the power of dominating groups or institutions (power in and through discourse) (Fairclough and Wodak, 1999), along with the personal or organizational 'control of the social occasion by means of the genre of a text, or by the regulation of access to certain public spheres' (power over discourse) (Reisigl and Wodak, 2009: 89).

Typically, CDA researchers are interested in the ideological effects of discursive practices, i.e. the ways in which particular institutional discourses, through their various epistemic statements or restricted access to alternative definitions, reproduce (consciously or unconsciously) asymmetric power relations between groups of people, for instance between women and men or members of different ethnic/racial communities (Fairclough and Wodak, 1999). By revealing how language often silently partakes in the use or misuse of social power, the critical orientation to representation aims to provide discursive mechanisms of resisting such abuse (Wodak and Meyer, 2009).

### **2.1.3 Discourse Constitutes Society and Culture**

Central to CDA is a dialectical (two-way) view of relations between semiotic and other aspects of social practices (Fairclough, 1992, 1995a, 2009). Language is seen here as an 'irreducible part of material social processes' (Fairclough, 2001: 234), both acting as a force on the social world and being conditioned by it (Caldas-Coulthard, 2009; Fairclough, 2009). The role of the analyst is therefore to examine the set of relations between the extra-discursive and material elements of the 'real world' and the semiotic

structure of discourse which is used to construct knowledge about this world (Sunderland, 2004: 11).

CDA aims to show that ‘every act of meaning-making through language use and other forms of semiosis contributes to the reproduction and maintenance of the social order, also in the sense of resisting and transforming that order’ (Lazar, 2005: 11). Fairclough and Wodak (1999) call attention to three areas of social life which can be constituted or transformed by semiotic practices: representations, relations and identities (see also Fairclough, 1989, 1992). Their categories reflect the multifunctional character of language (see Systemic Functional Linguistics in Section 3.1), according to which even single clauses within a text ‘function ‘ideationally’ in representing reality, ‘interpersonally’ in constructing social relations and identities and ‘textually’ in ‘making the parts of a text into a coherent whole’ (Fairclough and Wodak, 1999: 275).

The foregrounding of the mediation between discourse structure and social structure, combined with the complexity of objects of critical enquiry, requires that CDA be placed within the tradition of transdisciplinary research (Fairclough, 2009; Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1999; Fairclough, 2005; Reisigl and Wodak, 2009). For linguists this means working with multiple theories and disciplines, as well as adopting diverse analytical perspectives, all of which are specially tailored to specific problems under investigation. Most researchers enhance their analyses of semiotic data (oral, written, visual) with conceptual frameworks derived from sociology, politics and economy (Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1999; Fairclough, 2009).

#### **2.1.4 Discourse is Intertextual/Historical**

This proposition refers to the variety of connections that exist between texts, discourses or genres and the extra-linguistic elements of social practices, such as socio-political factors or historical conditions (Reisigl and Wodak, 2009). Discourse for critical social theory is both a part and an effect of sociological processes (Fowler et al., 1979) and therefore should be examined by taking into consideration its contextual determinants. (Fairclough and Wodak, 1999). For instance, every discursive event can be analysed in terms of how it relates to previous discourses that existed prior to its conception. The diachronic analysis of texts is possible because each ‘topic has a genesis, a historical a priori’ (Jager and Maier, 2009: 46) that predates contemporary statements. According to Foucault (1972, 1978), knowledge about social phenomena varies between different historical periods and assumes a distinct character within particular societies and cultures (Hall, 1997a).

However, certain discursive meanings are ‘carried through time’ (Peterson, 2002) across a range of texts, thus maintaining ‘trans-historical continuities’ (Hall, 1997a: 47) between past and present. As well as having a diachronic dimension, a given discourse can enter into a set of relations with coexisting statements (Sunderland, 2004). The synchronic examination of discursive practices involves the analysis of ‘what is said and sayable at a particular point in time’ (Jager and Maier, 2009: 46).

The processes of linking texts or discourses in distinct or similar moments of history are referred to in critical language terms as ‘intertextuality’ and ‘interdiscursivity’ respectively (Fairclough, 1992; 2009; Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1999; Reisigl and Wodak, 2009). For instance, Fairclough (1995a: 88) draws a contrast between

‘sequential and ‘embedded’ intertextuality, where different structural features can either ‘alternate within a text’ or be ‘embedded’ within one another. Reisigl and Wodak (2009) and Simpson and Mayer (2010) illustrate various strategies for creating intertextual links between different linguistic practices, which involve making allusions to the same topic, discourse event or social actor, evoking arguments from other texts, as well as employing references to proverbs or cultural idioms, the understanding of which requires some form of socio-cultural knowledge. The concept of ‘interdiscursivity’ signifies a mixing and co-articulation of distinct discourses or genres (Fairclough, 1992).

### **2.1.5 Discourse Does Ideological Work**

Of particular importance to discourse enquiry are those aspects of representation which are used as a means of producing and disseminating ideologies (Lazar, 2005). The prevailing assumption of the critical paradigm is that language can never objectively transmit meanings, as these are always conditioned by social, political or economic interests (Fowler, 1991). The practical concerns of society enter into the very fabric of discourse – rightfully seen as a site of ideological contention (Sunderland and Litosseliti, 2002).

Ideologies for CDA are coherent and relatively fixed constructions of the world comprising ‘mental representations, convictions, opinions, attitudes and evaluations’ which contribute to the maintenance or establishment of unequal relations of domination and exploitation (Reisigl and Wodak, 2009: 88). For instance, van Dijk (1993b) defines ideologies as ‘the ‘worldviews that constitute ‘social cognition’: schematically organized complexes of representations and attitudes with regard to

certain aspects of the social world, e.g. the schema (...) whites have about blacks' (van Dijk, 1993a: 258). This view of ideology signals a departure from the politically neutral definition, still popular among political scientists, according to which ideology simply captures individual or collective ideas and values. The negative interpretation proposed by CDA challenges this definition by imbuing ideology with pejorative connotation (Wodak and Meyer, 2009).

The work of many discourse analysts (Caldas-Coulthard, 1993; Fairclough, 1995a, 1995b, 1992; van Dijk, 1991, 1993b, Wodak, 2003, Wodak et al. 1999) has since convincingly shown how certain shared and axiomatic constructions of reality contribute to a reproduction and legitimation of unequal social arrangements. The overall incentive of these studies has been the same – to reveal the connections between language, power and ideology which are often concealed from people (Fairclough, 1989), thereby enabling them to develop a greater critical awareness and self-reflection that may pave the way to social enlightenment and emancipation (Wodak and Meyer, 2009).

### **2.1.6 Discourse Analysis is Interpretative and Explanatory**

A further characteristic of CDA is that it suggests three stages of analysis: description, interpretation and explanation (Simpson and Mayr, 2010). The task of the analyst is thus not only to 'abstractly describe text and talk, but to explain how real language users go about producing and understanding discourse, how their personal and socially shared beliefs affect discourse production and how these are in turn affected by discourse' (van Dijk, 2009: 79). Chouliaraki and Fairclough (1999: 33) call this form of critical inquiry the 'explanatory critique'. In their view, the examination of discourse begins with

identifying a problem, which may be of a cognitive nature, such as a misrepresentation or an unfulfilled need of a group of discourse participants. After acknowledging the problem, the analyst should then look for ways of remedying the situation by offering examples of a better practice or clarifying the ideological effects produced by the misrepresentation.

This type of discursive intervention requires the exercise of ‘grounded judgements’ (Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1999: 33). For instance, a critical researcher is expected to pass an opinion on whether a particular definition of social action or description of participants in discourse is true, adequate, fair, equal, democratic or representative, etc. (Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1999). Whether the readings provided by means of the ‘explanatory critique’ should be viewed as privileged or more justifiable is one point of contention in a series of accusations against the critical paradigm (see, for instance, Widdowson, 1995, 1996). Fairclough and Wodak (1997) argue that the difference between a discourse practitioner and an uncritical reader is simply the degree of his/her self-awareness.

The critical and politically engaged interpretation does not, however, compromise the principles of scientific inquiry. This is a criticism that feminist researchers are well equipped to answer, as their theories and methods of investigation openly contest dominant ideologies (Walsh, 2001). The significant contribution of critical social science, reflected in the recently developed approaches to discourse analysis (see Wodak and Meyer, 2009), is the widely recognized contention that by adopting the ‘apolitical’ stance we do not remove politics from the picture but only support the political status-quo (Caldas-Coulthard, 2009).

### **2.1.7 Discourse Constructs Representations and Knowledge(s) (Cultural Ways of Thinking and Talking)**

The concept of ‘discourse’ encapsulates a wide range of linguistic and philosophical meanings that are variously applied in accordance with assumed theoretical viewpoints and pursued analytical objectives. In the formalistic or structuralist sense (discourse as structure) the term denotes an extended stretch of language above the level of a sentence or a clause (Stubbs, 1983; Schiffrin, 1994). Although structural descriptions of discourse differ in the scope and methods of linguistic analyses, their shared focus remains on the general patterns and relations in which lower-level constituents of language occur relative to each other in textual arrangements (van Dijk, 1985; Schiffrin, 1994).

The shortcoming of this approach from the standpoint of critical social inquiry is that discourse is assumed to be independent of human affairs – the socio-cultural meanings, activities and systems that govern its semiotic structure (Schiffrin, 1994). The interpretation of discourse as ‘language in use’ or ‘text in context’ is associated with the functionalist paradigm (discourse as function), according to which every utterance serves purposes and functions which are ‘external to the linguistic system itself’ but which impinge on its internal organization (Richardson, 2007: 22-23; Schiffrin, 1994: 22).

In this thesis the dominant reading of discourse pertains to the post-structuralist (Foucauldian) and critical theory usage, which interprets discursive practices as cultural ways of thinking and making sense of certain areas of experience (Fairclough, 1992; van Leeuwen, 2009, Litosseliti, 2006), i.e. as ‘systematically-organized sets of

statements which give expression to the meanings and values of an institution (...) and [lend] structure to the manner in which a particular topic, object, process is to be talked about' (Kress, 1985: 6-7). In this view, discourse is taken to refer not only to language in use but also, and more importantly, to representations and constructions (knowledges) of socio-cultural practices including 'how things are or must be done, together with specific evaluations and legitimations of, and purposes for, these practices' (Caldas-Coulthard and Fernandes-Alves, 2008).

Though my primary concern is with the cluster and formation of 'themes, voices, assumptions and explanations' (Litosseliti, 2006: 48) that underpin the knowledge and routine practices of local journalists – the preoccupation that corresponds to Sunderland's (2004: 6) definition of 'interpretative discourse' – I will also be using the term in its 'descriptive' sense to mark its specific realizations in textual praxis.

As both a feminist and a critical discourse practitioner, I assume a 'constructionist' approach to representation (Hall, 1997a: 25), according to which language does not uncritically reflect the material world as it exists out there but rather constitutes the meanings of reality, 'systematically forming the objects [and subjects] of which it speaks' (Foucault, 1972: 49). Given the constitutive nature of discourse, the contents of the magazines examined in this study should not be viewed as an exact and unadulterated mirror of Polish social conditions but as a discursively mediated picture of reality filtered through the perceptions and beliefs of journalists and their institutional (media) values.

The term discourse is not synonymous with the term text (van Leeuwen, 2009). However, since discursive meanings are obtained from textual evidence in the form of

linguistic features and ‘cues’ (Sunderland, 2004: 3), I often use the two terms interchangeably. Moreover, in response to the recent multimodal turn in critical language research (Kress and van Leeuwen, 1996; Machin, 2007; Machin and van Leeuwen, 2007; O-Toole, 1989, 1994; Toolan, 1996), I provide a complementary analysis of visual texts, as the meanings of linguistic representations are realized in combination with other semiotic codes (Machin, 2007).

## **2.2 Gender Theory and Feminist Linguistics**

The discursive relations of power which this thesis tries to make visible revolve around the cultural production of ‘gender’. My theorization of the concept reflects the current social construction perspective adopted by contemporary feminist scholars (Baxter, 2003; Butler, 1990; Bucholtz, 1999; Eckert and McConnell-Ginet, 2003; Fausto-Sterling, 2000; Lazar, 2005; West and Zimmerman, 1987; Wodak, 1997) according to which gender should be seen as independent of biological determinants of ‘sex’ – the anatomical, physiological and hormonal characteristics that differentiate men from women.

Although it is now increasingly being recognized that gender builds on the biological binaries (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet, 2003; Nicholson, 1994) (see Butler’s (1990, 1993) discussion of the problems generated by the uncritical approach to sex/gender distinctions), its ‘elaboration’ is nevertheless of a purely social nature (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet, 2003: 10). Thus, what defines maleness and femaleness is their acquired and performative status, which assumes culturally specific forms against the backdrop of biological sex (Jackson and Scott, 2001; Sunderland, 2004; Weatherall, 2000; Wodak, 1997).

Contrary to many essentialist and universalizing approaches, which conceptualize gender as a quality or trait residing within an individual (something we have or inevitably are) and producing differential modes of thinking, relating, judging, etc. (e.g. Bohan, 1993; Chodorow, 1978 Galligan, 1982; Potter 1996), the social construction position adopted in this study considers gender to be a process of articulation and a discursive achievement through which normative social definitions are drawn upon and co-constructed (Litosseliti, 2006).

Sunderland (2004) states that gender – the synonyms for which include terms such as identity, femininity/masculinity, subjectivity, subject position/location (see e.g. Bucholtz, 1999; Connell, 1995; Eckert and McConnell-Ginet, 2003; Edley, 2001) and many other expressions connected to specific disciplines or analytical perspectives – should be seen as a process (something we ‘do’ or ‘orient to’) (ibid: 17) or a construct, (‘a set of ideas’ expressed through language) (ibid: 18) rather than a fixed and predisposing category that we are claimed to inhabit. For Sunderland, gender can be ‘accomplished’, ‘achieved’, ‘performed’, ‘constructed’, ‘represented’, ‘indexed’ and ‘effected’ in talk or written text (Sunderland, 2004; 22-26).

Lazar (2005: 6-7) argues that the performances and construals of gender in discourse erect ‘ideological structures’ that separate men and women into distinct classes marked by a hierarchical relation of authority and subordination. Hodge and Kress (1988: 98) employ a corresponding term – ‘gender system’ – to reveal how different classifications of social reality encode varied meanings about men and women. Likewise, Mills (1995: 159) has coined the phrase ‘gendered frameworks’ to illustrate the link between language and ideology and display the stereotypical nature of beliefs and attitudes relating to gender. For her, gender ideologies are ‘well-trodden pathways, which

because of their familiarity, take on an air of commonsense knowledge. It is only by describing these seemingly commonsense structures that we will begin to expose their constructed nature and at the same time their perniciousness' (Mills, 1995: 197).

According to Lazar (2005: 5), the gendered character of social practices can be analysed from two perspectives. The first perspective studies identity as an 'interpretative category', while the second perspective describes it as a form of 'social relation'. From a feminist critical standpoint, both levels of analysis are effective in identifying ideologies of gender difference. In this thesis my focus will be on the interpretations of gender peculiar to Polish socio-political media, including the prevailing modes of description and semiotic resources or systems of signification through which Polish journalists ascribe gendered characteristics to female policymakers. I concentrate therefore on explicit and implicit evaluative attributions, ascriptions and 'interpellating' (naming) devices (Althusser, 2004: 699), which determine how female politicians are being addressed, categorized and produced as participants in representation.

The 'nomination' and 'predication' strategies (see Section 3.4) in particular play an important role as positioning resources, placing represented participants in specific 'modalities' as discourse subjects (Sunderland and Litosseliti, 2002; Sunderland, 2004; Reisigl and Wodak, 2001; Wodak and Meyer, 2009). For Edley (2001: 210), 'subject positions' designate 'locations' within representation. 'They are the identities made relevant by specific ways of talking (...). In a sense, it is this concept that connects the wider notions of discourses and interpretative repertoires to the social construction of particular selves' (Edley, 2001: 210).

Edley (2001) notes that the subjectivities created for women (and men) in discourse are not always equal. Some of them will be more dominant or 'hegemonic' (Gramsci, 2004: 673) than others. The notion of hegemony delineates the mechanisms through which a powerful group establishes a relation of domination by inducing a subordinate group to acquiesce to the former's beliefs and values, the effect of which is the preservation of the status quo in power relations (Simpson and Mayr, 2010). This process is predominantly consensual and achieved largely through discursive means. People consent to the hegemony of power because the ideas disseminated by the 'ideological apparatuses' (Althusser, 2004: 695) are constituted and promoted in discourse as natural and commonsensical.

Both Foucault (1977, 1980a) and Althusser (1971) see power as exercised in the discursive form, as a web of ideas and relations 'inserted into the hierarchical arrangement of socially and politically determined practices and rituals' (Simpson and Mayr, 2010: 4). The critical examination and demystification of naturalized and normalized beliefs and assertions that justify the patriarchal interests is the central aim of my analysis. Such an approach has been pursued for some time by feminist scholars (Bing et al., 1996; Cameron, 2008; Coates, 1999; Talbot, 2008). It is especially the work of 'deconstruction' (Baxter, 2003; Bem, 1993; Bing and Bergvall, 1996; Cooper, 1989; Derrida, 1981; McConnell-Ginet, 2003; Trechter, 1999) committed to unfolding the socially formulated forms of gender binaries, dichotomies, oppositions, dualisms or double binds, along with the concomitant desire to move beyond these hierarchies, which informs to the greatest extent the object of this inquiry.

### **3 Methodology**

In the following sections I want to summarize the theoretical premises of the major linguistic approaches used as analytical tools in this study: Systemic Functional Linguistics (Halliday, 1985/1994/2004), Social Actor Theory (Van Leeuwen, 1996, 2008) Appraisal Theory (Martin and White, 2005) and Discourse-Historical Theory (Reisigl and Wodak, 2001, 2009). The theoretical considerations discussed in the early parts of this chapter provide a rationale for the selection of linguistic categories and frameworks which have been used to facilitate the analysis of written media discourse. Because each chapter of the thesis addresses separate research questions, other theories and linguistic concepts have been added to the analytical toolkit. These will be systematically explained within each of the content chapter.

#### **3.1 Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL)**

The theory of SFL originated from the work by M. A. K. Halliday and his associates (Christie and Martin, 1997; Halliday, 1985/1994/2004; Halliday and Hasan, 1985; Halliday and Martin, 1993; Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004), who put forward an illuminating account of language as a social phenomenon, thus bringing to the fore the importance of linguistic activity in the processes of cultural production and transmission. For systematians like Halliday, the purposes and effects of human communication are predominantly semiotic, geared towards encoding and mapping ‘reality-constructing’ meanings, which are at the same time ‘constructed and changed by social processes and social realities’ (Threadgold, 1997: 90). The theorized interdependence between linguistic structure and social concerns, among other reasons, accounts for the popularity of SFL among CDA practitioners (see e.g. Fairclough, 2003,

2009; Martin and Rose, 2003, 2007; van Leeuwen, 1996, 2008). As I have also drawn upon some aspects of Systemic Functional Linguistics in my analysis, I believe it is important to clarify its main theoretical claims.

### **3.1.1 Realization**

The SFL theory sees language as a complex semiotic system, with meanings encoded at different levels or ‘strata’ of abstraction, such as phonology, orthography and grammar (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004: 24). In writing, the first level of coding has to do with combining the letters into sentences, along with punctuation, layout and formatting. At the higher level, referred to as ‘lexicogrammar’, the language ‘recodes’ graphological sequences as words and structures (Martin and White, 2005: 8). Here, grammar and vocabulary are brought together to form a single ‘stratum’ of the coding process comprising syntax, vocabulary and, in languages consisting of word paradigms, also morphology (Halliday, 1994).

The final level of abstraction, known as ‘discourse semantics’ (Halliday, 1994: 15), focuses on meanings beyond the clause, such as those ‘concerned with various aspects of discourse organization, including the question of how people, places and things are introduced in text and kept track of once there’ or how they are connected as subordinates or subclasses to superordinate categories (Martin and White, 2005: 9). The relationship between the different strata making up the system is referred to as ‘realization’ (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004: 24). The functional approach has formulated the concept of a ‘system network’ to further illuminate the process by which meanings are realized in a coherent discourse (e.g. Halliday, 1967/8, 1973, 1976).

### 3.1.2 Meaning as Choice

The system network describes language as part of a system which presents the speakers/writers with a set of possible choices for expressing meanings. The choices are ‘the lexical and structural possibilities’ that the methodically organized language creates for us in accordance with the type of linguistic function (Thompson, 1996: 8). For instance, the ideational component of language (see Section 3.1.4) involves the following options: ‘a message is either about doing, or about thinking, or about being’: if it is about doing, this is either plain action or action on something: if acting on something it is either creating or dealing with something already created’ (Halliday, 1985: 130). The selection of options within one system opens up a set of options within another, until the entire message is networked in a structural way (Halliday, 1985).

It should be noted that by choosing from a set of possible alternatives we do not necessarily participate in a controlled or conscious process. In fact, there are relatively few occasions when the exercise of choice becomes monitored and staged, as when editing a piece of writing. More often than not, we make closely interwoven decisions that we can hardly even recall (Thompson, 1996). The concern at the heart of this thesis is to investigate the choices or network representations selected by Polish media to discuss women in power in terms of the meanings they embody or functions they perform, as well as in terms of the lexico-grammatical resources that have been mobilized to impart these meanings (Thompson, 1996).

The semiotic examination of the systems of language helps to illuminate the discursive effects of the chosen wordings: the interests they serve, the goals they achieve, as well as what contextual factors make some uses more desirable than others. The notion of

language as a network of options allows me to interrogate not only the actual linguistic choices, that is, what has been written or said about female politicians in a given context, but also the potential choices that have not been selected but which were equally available (Eggins, 1994).

### **3.1.3 The Metafunctions of Language**

The founding premise of Hallidayan Linguistics is the ‘metafunctional’ hypothesis which claims that, as a ‘social semiotic’ system (Halliday, 1978: 1), language is structured around several instrumental or functional components, referred to globally as ‘metafunctions’ (Halliday, 1994: 36). The types of functions that we carry out through language are not arbitrary but developed with respect to fundamental social needs. As Halliday (1994: xiv) explains, they are ‘the manifestations in the linguistic system of the two very general purposes which underlie all uses of language: to understand the environment (...) and to act in it’. The systemic theory distinguishes between three general categories of functions. They are known as ‘ideational’ (‘clause as representation’), ‘interpersonal’ (‘clause as exchange’) and ‘textual’ (‘clause as message’) meanings (Halliday, 1994: 36). Since I make references to metafunctions systematically throughout my thesis, a general characterization of each mode of meaning needs to be carried out.

### **3.1.4 The Ideational Metafunction**

This function (sometimes called experiential) has a representational role related to encoding the experience of the writer/speaker. It highlights the content of discourse: the goings-on, who did what to whom, when, where and in what circumstances, as well as how those involved in linguistic activities are referred to and classified (Halliday, 1971;

Martin and Rose, 2003, 2007; Martin and White, 2005 Thompson, 1996). In Halliday and Matthiessen's (2004: 29) words, the language '*construes* human experience. It names things thus construing them into categories, and then, typically goes further and construes the categories into taxonomies, often using more names for doing so' [my emphasis]. The function through which the speaker maps out the experiential phenomena occurring in the real world also encompasses internal experiences or psychological states, for instance the reflective knowledge of his/her reactions, cognitions or modes of reasoning (Halliday, 1971). The major description of the ideational function is through the system of transitivity which represents a general grammatical resource for encoding the semantic domain of experience. In the following pages I provide a brief outline of the transitivity framework and suggest how it can strengthen the empirical basis of stylistic analysis.

#### **3.1.4.1 Transitivity Theory**

Like any system network which provides a typological description of a class of items (Halliday, 1973), the transitivity model offers a set of options for classifying the events and actions of the external, material world, along with the internal processes of feeling, sensing and emoting concerned with the inner world of perception, affection and cognition (Halliday, 1967/8, 1972, 1985). According to Halliday (1985: 101), 'our most powerful conception of reality is that it consists of 'goings-on': of doing, happening, feeling, being'. These goings-on are modelled as 'figures' of experience by the grammar of the clause, which consists of 'processes', 'participants' and 'circumstances' (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004: 170).

In the ideational account of transitivity, the processes constitute the prime means of expressing the content of our external and internal experiences and impressions. They are the representations of happening, thinking or saying (Butt et al., 2003) realized by verbal phrases (for instance ‘John *kicked* the ball’ or ‘The lion *sprang*’) (Simpson, 1993: 88-89). The ‘participants’ (see the Social Actor model in Section 3.2) are the animate or inanimate referents of these processes (e.g. ‘John’, ‘lion’, ‘ball’): those who act or are acted upon. Their character is determined by the nature of discursive events set out by the phrases. Together with processes, participants ‘constitute the experiential centre of the clause’ (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004: before 176). They are ‘directly involved’ in the construed happenings by effecting or undergoing various processes (ibid).

The ‘circumstantial’ elements, on the other hand, are attendant and optional components of the clause indirectly related to the processes. As Halliday and Matthiessen (2004: 176) observe, circumstances ‘augment the centre in some way – temporally, spatially, casually and so on: but their status in the configuration is more peripheral’. The typical realization for circumstances is a prepositional or adverbial phrase signifying time, space, cause or manner.

The formulation of transitivity in terms of a network of choices allows for the distinction of six major types of linguistic processes: ‘material’, ‘mental’, ‘verbal’, ‘behavioural’, ‘relational’ and ‘existential’ (Halliday, 1994: 106- 144). The processes represent different modes of modeling the experience and can be distinguished based on the following characteristics.

## **A. Material Processes**

Material processes construe doings (Halliday, 1994). These can be concrete, such as changes in the material world (e.g. The ice *cracked*) or abstract, such as a ‘movement in the space of measurement’ (e.g. The rate of inflation *dropped* to three percent) (Martin et al., 1997: 103). The material clauses provide answers to the question: ‘What did x?’ or ‘What happened?’ (Butt et al., 2003: 53) and involve the following participants: an ‘actor’ (the doer of an action or a deed expressed by the clause) (e.g. ‘*Paul* opened the window’), a ‘goal’ (the person or entity affected by the doing – ‘the one done to/with’) (e.g. The cat broke the *vase*) (Martin et al., 1997), ‘a ‘range’ (the participant unaffected by the process) (e.g. Marta climbed *McKinley*) and a ‘beneficiary’ (the participant benefiting from the outcome of the doing – ‘the one given to or done for’) (e.g. He bought flowers for *his cousin*) (Halliday, 1994; Martin et al., 1997).

## **B. Mental Processes**

Mental processes construe the inner world of consciousness related to the states of perception, emotion, cognition, inclination or imagination (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004; Butt et al., 2003). The principal participants in these types of clause are a ‘senser’ (the human or other conscious participant who senses, i.e. thinks, feels, perceives, likes/dislikes etc.) (e.g. *Anna* loved the surprise) and a ‘phenomenon’ (the one who/which is being sensed – felt, perceived, seen, heard etc., i.e. ‘entertained or created by consciousness’ (e.g. He spotted a *shooting star* with his telescope) (Halliday, 1994: 117; Martin et al., 1997: 105). Martin et al. (1997: *ibid.*) observe that the content of mental processes can be expressed by a wide range of lexico-grammatical features.

These entail, among other things, references to a ‘conscious being’, an ‘object’, a ‘substance’, an ‘institution’, an ‘abstraction’ as well as ‘acts’ (e.g. I enjoy *cycling to work every morning*) and ‘facts’ (e.g. I appreciate *the fact you let me stay*).

### **C. Behavioural Processes**

Behavioural processes construe physiological and psychological behaviours and are the borderline category located between mental and verbal clauses. They resemble mental processes in that the principal participant referred to as the ‘behavior’ is usually a conscious being like the ‘senser’ (*The customer* complained about his order) (Halliday, 1994: 139). They are also seen as an active or doing version of ‘verbal’ processes by construing the processes of verbalization in terms of an activity or behaviour (e.g. ‘to chat’ or ‘to gossip’) (e.g. Don’t *laugh* at my misfortune) (Martin et al., 1997; Butt et al. 2003).

### **D. Verbal Processes**

Verbal processes construe processes of saying (Halliday, 1994). They include both the prototypical predicates encoding the verbal modes of communicating such as ‘talking’, ‘asking’, ‘commanding’, as well as the more symbolic expressions of nonverbal actions, such as ‘showing’ or ‘indicating’ (Martin et al., 1997: 108). Verbal processes have three participants associated with them: the ‘sayer’ (the individual talking, asking, commanding, describing etc.) (e.g. *They* told me to leave before ten o’clock), the ‘target’ (the addressee of the communication) (e.g. Don’t flatter *me*) and ‘verbiage’ (‘that which is said’ - the participant equivalent of ‘phenomenon’ in mental processes) (e.g. I explained to him *the basic law of physics*) (Halliday, 1994; Butt et al., 2003).

## **E. Relational Processes**

Relational processes construe processes of being and having (Halliday, 1994). Their primary role is to 'relate a participant to its identity or description' (Butt et al., 2003: 58) and this is done in two different modes via 'identification' (e.g. Anthony is *the leader of the group*) or 'attribution' (e.g. Mark is *exceptionally intelligent*). The participant roles inherent in 'identifying' clauses are the 'identifier' (the individual or entity that is identified) (e.g. *Anthony* is the leader) and the 'identified' (the nominal group that describes the 'identifier') (*Anthony* is *the leader*). The participants of 'attributive' clauses are the 'carrier' (the individual or entity that carries the predicated features or attributes) (e.g. *Mark* is intelligent), and the 'attribute' (a characteristic predicated on the 'carrier') (e.g. Mark is *intelligent*) (Halliday, 1994: 119-123).

## **F. Existential Processes**

Existential processes sit on the borderline between relational and material processes in that they 'represent that something exists or happens' (Halliday, 1994: 142). The participants brought into existence are called 'existents' and the processes in which they participate are almost always preceded by the word 'there' (e.g. There was *a ladybird* in my pillowcase) (Butt et al., 2003: 58).

The study of transitivity involves an examination of how grammatical choices selected by the author or producer of a text influence the interpretation of its meaning. Halliday (1971) has approached this question in relation to the work of fiction by reviewing the transitivity options in William Golding's novel 'The Inheritors'. His overall aim was to demonstrate how the syntactic organization of experience can lead to a projection of particular 'mind-style' or 'world-view' of a character or a narrator (Halliday, 1971:

348). Halliday suggested that systematic selections in the patterns of transitivity not only produce a specific stylistic effect but also impart the ideological position of the writers/speakers: their 'interpretation of the experience of the world, [their] understanding of its processes and [their] own participation in them' (Halliday, 1971: 353).

In recent years, the focus of studies in transitivity has shifted to genres from non-literary domains, particularly to discourses of the media (Simpson, 1993). Researchers in Critical Linguistics (Fowler, 1991; Fowler and Kress, 1979; Trew, 1979a, 1979b) have shown that syntactic choices carry important political implications. Trew (1979a, 1979b) and Fowler and Kress (1979) have revealed, for instance, the salient effects of 'passive transformation' and 'agent deletion', which can be used to mystify social actors and conceal their responsibility for action. Richardson (2007: 56), quoting Fairclough (2000), notes that 'transforming an active process into a relation or 'state of affairs' can remove important (perhaps uncomfortable) political implications'.

The model of transitivity has also made a valuable contribution to feminist critical discourse studies by helping to disclose asymmetries in the representations of men and women (see Clark, 1998; Simpson, 1993). According to Mills (1995: 155), 'the extent to which a character [or participant in nonliterary discourse] is the passive 'victim' of circumstance, or is actively in control of the environment, making decisions and taking action, is one of the concerns of feminist stylistics'. The linguist suggests that one way of doing a feminist analysis of transitivity is by counting the ratios of disabling processes in texts and comparing them with syntactic choices that project agency and control. Halliday's socio-semantic approach to the ideas conveyed by the grammar of the clause (Fowler, 1991) represents an effective means for verifying whether a culture

or institution in question considers women as equal members of society, that is, as ‘capable of thought, communication, plans and action’ (Mills, 1995: 143). From this perspective it is easy to see why I have chosen the transitivity model as a framework for the analysis of gendered discourses.

### **3.1.5 The Interpersonal Metafunction**

The meanings associated with the interpersonal component of language are both more interactive and personal than those encoded by the ideational metafunction. The purpose of interpersonal resources is the enactment and negotiation of social identities and social relations, including the expression by speakers/writers of evaluative stances in relation to people or activities they are involved with (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004).

Halliday (1971) describes the second macro-function as follows:

Here, the speaker is using language as the means of his own intrusion into the speech event: the expression of his comments, his attitudes, and evaluations, and also of the relationships that he sets up between himself and his listener – in particular, the communication role that he adopts, of informing, questioning, greeting, persuading, and the like (Halliday, 1971: 333).

The interpersonal element refers to the part of language which enables human beings to achieve a wide range of socio-personal goals, for instance to explain or justify their attitudes and actions, influence or control the behaviours of others or create intimacy or distance in interaction (Halliday, 1973; Thompson, 1996). The category through which the speaker or writer produces subjectivities in discourse, adding feelings and values to representation is of particular significance to the study of ideologies (Poynton, 1990).

### 3.1.6 The Textual Metafunction

The last mode of meaning plays a facilitating role in relation to the two functions described above by allowing representations and interpersonal enactments to be organized coherently as a logical text (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004; Martin and Rose, 2003). The textual function enables information flow by linking sequences of utterances, creating cohesion and continuity and connecting language with other modalities (image, music etc.) (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004; Martin and White, 2005).

As systematians demonstrate (Eggins, 2004; Halliday, 1971; Thompson, 1996), any social discourse is typically organized to make not one but all three types of meanings simultaneously, with each function contributing commensurably to the content of the message in accordance with their communicative role. The separation of linguistic functions into distinct categories, though clearly intended for the purpose of grammatical classification, is not as clear-cut in the process of analytical description. The functional distinction between ideational and interpersonal meanings is, I would argue, particularly difficult to maintain. Walsh (2001), who adopts systemic categories as a point of reference in her analytical framework, notes that:

(...) the majority of linguistic choices related primarily to the ideational also have implications for the way the identities of participants, and the relationships between them, are enacted via texts. Thus, the ideas, beliefs and attitudes that producers encoded in texts obviously say a good deal about their own social identities and their attitudes towards addressees (Walsh, 2001: 38).

The researcher points out that functional grammarians often narrowly define the ideational function of language by focusing on its referential dimension to the detriment of the evaluative one (Walsh, 2001: 56). Walsh (2001: 47) gives an example of how the

titles and names adopted to address women (and men) activate and enact a whole variety of attitudinal stances and positions, including distance and affinity. Reisigl and Wodak (2001) share a similar observation, indicating that many referential categorizations involved in self- and other-presentation are at once designative and evaluative because identification through nomination often already contains a feature of predication.

Despite the lack of conceptual transparency, I find it helpful to retain these functions on generic terms, as it is possible to look at discourse from any of the three perspectives. Even though each type of meaning can be equally well expressed by the same linguistic pattern (Thompson, 1996), the multi-functionality of clause constituents does not preclude the prediction of what type of structure will be especially suited for particular analysis. In this thesis, my overriding focus will be on the sets of wordings and features of texts fulfilling the first two metafunctions – constitutive of gender identities and relations (ideational) and contributing to the reproduction and maintenance of social attitudes and values (interpersonal).

In the following section I will describe a generic system network for naming and categorizing people in discourse: van Leeuwen's (1996, 2008) Social Actor model. Since I have applied the categories of Social Actor analysis selectively in different parts of the thesis, I now wish to provide a summary of the linguistic choices specified by the framework.

### **3.2 Social Actor Theory**

The Social Actor model, also referred to as the 'socio-semantic inventory' (van Leeuwen, 2008: 23), maps out a network of choices for representing participants in

discourse. The model discusses the categories of representation as both linguistic and sociological phenomena, demonstrating how social meanings derived from different concepts of ‘social actors’, that is, participants in representation, are tied to specific linguistic realizations. Like other frameworks which have been formulated or adapted by critical linguists (e.g. transitivity), van Leeuwen’s system of classification can be equally applied to linguistic and visual data and is considered to be of great use in identifying the more insidious forms of discrimination sustained through language descriptions, as well as the more positive attributions (Reisigl and Wodak, 2001; Simpson and Mayr, 2010). Let us now take a closer look at some of the referential categories proposed by the framework.

### **3.2.1 Exclusion vs Inclusion**

Any representation can ‘include’ or ‘exclude’ (van Leeuwen, 2008: 28) social actors and the choice of the respective category reflects the psychological, social or political interests of writers/speakers who communicate their purposes in relation to the readers they try to address (Reisigl and Wodak, 2001; van Leeuwen, 2008). Though in some instances the exclusion of participants can be ‘innocent’ – such as when the writer/speaker omits certain details of representation with which the readers are thought to be familiar or which the author considers unnecessary or irrelevant (van Leeuwen, 2008: 28) – in other cases the omission is ‘strategically employed’ in an attempt to deny responsibility for discriminatory behaviour (e.g. agent deletion) (Reisigl and Wodak, 2001; 47).

The consequences of linguistic exclusions are in some instances especially pernicious. For instance, Reisigl and Wodak (2001: 47) observe that the use of generic masculine

expressions in languages like German makes women linguistically invisible, which puts them at a disadvantage in actual social domains (see also discussion in Chapter 6). The linguistic underrepresentation of ethnic minorities by ignoring their voices in media reports achieves a similar marginalizing effect.

Van Leeuwen (2008) accounts for two different ways in which people can be linguistically excluded from discourse. He distinguishes between ‘suppression’ and ‘backgrounding’ (ibid: 29). While ‘suppression’ radically excludes social actors by not mentioning them at any point in a text, ‘backgrounding’ does include the participants, but places them in a de-emphasized role. Although the backgrounded social actors ‘may not be mentioned in relation to a given action’, their presence can be inferred from other parts of the text (van Leeuwen, 2008: 29). Suppression is normally realized by passive agent deletions, nonfinite clauses and nominalizations. Backgrounding can be achieved by the same means, as well as by ellipses in nonfinite clauses (ibid: 29: 31).

### **3.2.2 Role Allocation**

If included, social actors can be ‘activated’ or ‘passivated’ (see discussion of transitivity in Section 6.2), that is, depicted as ‘the active, dynamic forces in an activity’, as the affected participants ‘undergoing the activity’, or as being ‘at the receiving end of it’ (ibid: 33). ‘Activation’ can be achieved through a configuration of processes, participants and circumstances, for instance by representing social actors as ‘agents’ in ‘material’ processes, ‘behavers’ in ‘behavioural’ processes, ‘sensors’ in ‘mental’ processes, ‘sayers’ in ‘verbal’ processes, or ‘assigners’ in ‘relational processes’ (see Halliday, 1985/1994/2004).

‘Passivation’, correspondingly, refers to the opposite pole of sociological agency, featuring discourse participants as recipients of activities variously affected by others’ decisions and actions. Informed by the grammatical system of transitivity, van Leeuwen’s classification of passivated participants includes a further distinction between ‘subjected’ or ‘beneficialized’ actors, as expressed by the participant roles of ‘goals’ and ‘beneficiaries’. Thus, while subjected individuals and groups are ‘treated as objects in the representation, for instance, as objects of exchange’, the beneficialized actors obtain benefits from the doing (ibid: 33).

### **3.2.3 Genericization vs Specification**

The distinction between ‘generic’ and ‘specific’ reference is another important resource exploited by writers/speakers for categorizing and evaluating people. The generic strategy construes the view of the world where ‘generalized essences, classes, constitute the real, and in which specific participants are ‘specimens’ of those classes’ (van Leeuwen, 2008: 35). Reference through ‘specification’, on the other hand, represents the world ‘populated with specific, concrete people, places, things, and actions’ (ibid: 35).

Van Leeuwen illustrates this classificatory distinction by comparing representations of social actors in different sectors of the press. He notices that, in the middle-class-oriented publications, government officials and professional experts are more likely to be referred to specifically, while ‘ordinary people’ remain largely genericized. As he explains, ‘the point of identification, the world in which one’s specifics exist, is here not the world of the governed, but the world of the governors, the ‘generals’’ (ibid: 35). By contrast, newspapers written for the working class encode ‘ordinary people’ by means

of specific reference. The classic realization of generic representation is the plural without the article ('immigrants'), a singular with a definite or indefinite article ('the child' / 'a child') or a mass noun ('staff') (ibid.).

#### **3.2.4 Assimilation vs Individualization**

The different types of generic and specific address terms have been analysed by van Leeuwen (2008: 37) in terms of 'individualization' and 'assimilation'. When social actors are 'assimilated' they are either treated as numbers and statistics, in which case we speak of 'aggregation', or depicted as non-quantified entities, which signifies 'collectivization' (Reisigl and Wodak, 2001). Aggregation is typically expressed by definite or indefinite quantifiers, as in 'a number of critics' or 'forty percent of Australians' (van Leeuwen, 2008: 38). Collectivization occurs in expressions of deictics ('we') or in collective terms such as 'family', 'group', 'team', 'class', etc. (Reisigl and Wodak, 2001: 53). The linguistic realization of individuality is a singular noun, for example a proper name (ibid.).

#### **3.2.5 Nomination vs Categorization**

Social actors can be qualified through 'nomination', which calls attention to their unique identity, or represented in terms of 'identities and functions they share with others', in which case we speak of 'categorization' (van Leeuwen, 2008: 40). Nomination is most often expressed by proper nouns, which can be 'formal' (surname only), 'semiformal' (name and surname) 'informal' (name only) or 'titulated' (honorification, titles, ranks, as in 'Dr. Price') (ibid: 41). Differences in the use of nomination strategies have been found in numerous studies of media discourse (Banwart et al., 2003; Caldas-Coulthard, 1993; Lemish and Tidhar, 1999; Pantii, 2005;

Spears and Seydegart, 2000) that show that journalists more frequently categorize women in terms of their age, marital or family relations, while they tend to gloss men by their professional credentials.

### **3.2.6 Functionalization vs Identification**

There are two types of ‘categorized’ referents. These are either ‘functionalized’, which means they are described in terms of what they do, for instance their occupation, role or social activity (e.g. ‘interviewer’, ‘correspondent’ etc.), or ‘identified’ in terms of ‘what they more or less permanently, or unavoidably are’ (van Leeuwen, 2008: 42). Van Leeuwen draws a further distinction between different occurrences of ‘identification’, which he terms ‘classification’, ‘relational identification’ and ‘physical identification’. Classification distinguishes social actors in terms of socially established categories, such as age, gender, provenance, class, wealth, race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation (e.g. ‘a Warwick University scientist’), relational identification defines them in terms of personal, kinship or work relations (e.g. ‘a mother of five’, ‘a friend’), and physical identification ascribes to them physical traits (‘a blonde’, ‘a cripple’, ‘tall’) (ibid: 42-45). Unlike the previously discussed nomination, the identification of social actors in terms of physical characteristics is always ‘overdetermined’ (ibid: 45) (see Section 3.2.8). As van Leeuwen (2008: 45) has put it, ‘physical attributes tend to have connotations, and these can be used to obliquely classify or functionalize social actors’. The category is therefore consistently used in newspaper discourse as a lexical means for practicing discrimination.

### **3.2.7 Personalization vs Impersonalization**

The socio-semantic terms discussed so far are all ‘personalized’ in that they construe discourse actors via categories which make a reference to the semantic feature ‘human’. However, van Leeuwen (2008: 46) also points to an ‘impersonal’ means of featuring discourse participants. He defines two types of ‘impersonalized’ strategies: those which construct social actors by means of abstract qualities, so called ‘abstractions’ (ibid), for example ‘the quality of being a problem’ (Reisigl and Wodak, 2001: 54), and those which classify participants in terms of a reference to a place or a thing with whom they are associated, including the activities they are involved in. This latter type of metonymical reference is known as ‘objectification’ (van Leeuwen, 2008: 46).

Of the four types of objectification (‘spatialization’, ‘utterance autonomization’, ‘instrumentalization’ and ‘somatization’ (ibid.), the last two are most prevalent in the media depictions of female actors (see Fowler, 1991). In the case of ‘somatization’, emphasis is placed on the part of the body which metonymically defines the referenced participant (e.g. face). ‘Instrumentalization’, on the other hand, implies a designation by means of the instrument ‘in which they carry out the action in which they are represented as being engaged’, e.g. ‘cogs in the machine of PiS’ (see analysis in Chapter 4).

### **3.2.8 Overdetermination**

The last category in van Leeuwen’s socio-semantic network is ‘overdetermination’ (ibid: 47), which occurs when the represented person is shown engaged in more than one social practice. This can be achieved via ‘symbolization’, for instance when a fictional character stands for an actor in a nonfictional practice (the hero/villain in Western

movies symbolizes doctors, politicians, scientists, etc.), or ‘connotation’, when ‘a unique determination’, most typically a physical identification, constitutes the basic means of classification (‘a man with the large mustache’ connotes the Prussian military). The knowledge implied by the connotative signs is often ‘mythical’ (see Barthes, 1977), i.e. acquired unconsciously from cultural texts, most commonly from the mass media (van Leeuwen, 2008: 47- 51).

In order to examine how female politicians have been positioned and appraised in mass media texts, I needed another theory that would allow me to explore the complex character of linguistic evaluation. It is because of this concern that I turned to Martin and White’s (2005) Appraisal model, which I discuss below.

### **3.3 Appraisal Theory**

The system of appraisal (Martin, 2000; Martin and White, 2005; White, 2001a) belongs to the interpersonal function of language and constitutes an overall framework for mapping the speaker’s or writer’s opinions, feelings and values with regard to people, entities, situations, events and propositions (Martin and White, 2005). The interpersonal aspects of communication have been widely investigated in linguistics in the last two decades. One of the most comprehensive overviews of existing approaches to evaluation comes from Thompson and Hunston (2000), who concede that the same linguistic phenomenon has been covered by different but overlapping designations. For instance, Lyons (1977) speaks of ‘connotation’, Besnier (1993) of ‘affect’ and Halliday (1994) of ‘attitude’. These approaches relate in various ways to Conrad and Biber’s (2000) notion of ‘stance’ (Thompson and Hunston, 2000: 2) and are conceptually

compatible with the literary stylistic description of the ‘point of view’ (e.g. Simpson, 1993; Stuart, 1996).

The appraisal model emerged from research undertaken over a period of fifteen years under the auspices of J. R. Martin (White, 2001b). It is situated in Halliday’s Systemic Functional Theory and designed as a basis for examining and extending its interpersonal metafunction (see Section 3.1.5) (Martin and White, 2005). Similar to other typologies informed by the SFL paradigm (e.g. Transitivity and Social Actor Analysis), the appraisal framework is characteristically framed in terms of systems (Martin, 2000) – the sets of options modeling the ways in which speakers/writers ‘approve and disapprove, enthuse and abhor, applaud and criticize’, how they share ‘emotions, tastes and normative assessments’ and how they ‘construe for themselves [and others] particular identities or personae’ (Martin and White, 2005: 1).

Although there are innumerable kinds of lexical choices through which speakers or authors of texts adopt stances towards the phenomena they assess or people they address, Martin and White’s (2005) network of attitudinal meanings gives prominence to three major categories of reactions: ‘affect’, ‘judgement’ and ‘appreciation’ (Martin, 2000). I will now provide a brief summary of these classificatory groups:

### **3.3.1 Affect**

Martin (2001) sees ‘affect’ as the most rudimentary resource of evaluation deployed to evaluate phenomena, participants and processes by reference to emotion (e.g. happiness, sadness, fear, loathing). Affective assessments include the instances in which the author openly expresses his/her attitudinal stance towards the entities or situations that create the emotional trigger (‘authorial, 1<sup>st</sup> person’), as well as those where the

author's emotions are predicated on other social actors ('non-authorial, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> person') (White, 2001c: 5).

Martin and White (2005) distinguish between three types of attributed emotions: 'un/happiness', 'in/security' and 'dis/satisfaction'. The first group characterizes emotions that deal with 'affairs of the heart' (e.g. happiness, sadness, love, hate). The second group comprises emotions that pertain to the 'eco-social well-being' (e.g. confidence, fear, anxiety) while the third group covers emotions that relate to the 'pursual of goals' (e.g. listlessness, displeasure, curiosity) (Martin and White, 2005: 49-50).

### **3.3.2 Judgement**

The region of meaning responsible for the construal of evaluations of human behaviour by reference to the moral, legal or religious codes laid down by society is termed 'judgement' (Martin, 2000). As White (2001d: 1) explains, 'under judgement, we are concerned with language which criticizes or praises, which condemns or applauds the behaviour – the actions, deeds, sayings, beliefs, motivations etc – of human individuals and groups'. The kinds of normative attitudes that speakers/writers adopt in relation to human behaviour are separated by Martin and White (2005: 52) into judgements of 'social esteem' and 'social sanction'.

Evaluations of esteem entail assessments of personal character, whether it measures up to social expectation and desired public estimation, for instance in respect of 'normality' (e.g. normal, conventional, eccentric, maverick, conventional), 'capacity' (e.g. skilled, competent, helpless, feeble) or 'tenacity' (e.g. brave, reliable, cowardly, lazy) (Martin and White, 2005: 52-53).

Evaluations of social sanctions, on the other hand, deal with assessments of ‘civic duty and religious observances’ (Martin and White, 2005), in other words they assess human character or actions based on their compliance with the rules set out by the Church and the State. The values of social sanctions orient to ‘veracity’ (e.g. truthful, candid, manipulative, dishonest) and ‘propriety’ (e.g. ethical, modest, insensitive, arrogant) (Martin and White, 2005: 53). In contrast to estimations of social esteem, judgements of morality and legality carry more severe implications, such as penalties and punishments which are administered to individuals who infringe the established civic/religious codes.

### **3.3.3 Appreciation**

‘Appreciation’ describes the system of meanings that construes aesthetic evaluations of products and processes, including natural and semiotic phenomena. It consists of a range of values by means of which the qualities and properties of things are measured and institutionalized as formal assessments (e.g. remarkable, elegant, shallow, glitzy) (White, 2001e). Appreciations are broadly divided into three categories or subsystems: ‘reaction’, ‘composition’, and ‘valuation’.

Reactions assess whether the text or process under analysis exerts an emotional impact on us (e.g. ‘Did it grab me?’). Evaluations of composition encode our perceptions of ‘proportionality’ (e.g. ‘Did it hang together?’) and ‘detail’ (e.g. ‘Was it hard to follow?’), while valuations appraise the significance of entities according to social importance (e.g. ‘Was it worthwhile?’) (Martin, 2000: 160).

Martin and White (2005) observe that expressions of appreciations can be seen as derivatives of Hallidayan mental processes, with reactions corresponding to affection, composition correlating with perception and valuation conforming to cognition.

Although the appreciation system is principally deployed to describe the qualities of processes and things, it can equally be used in descriptions of people by showing them as entities deprived of emotions or behavioural dispositions (Bednarek, 2006).

The analysis of evaluation is a significant part of critical discourse research. Words bear imprints of society and their values (Richardson, 2007) and the systematic approach to lexis, as developed by Martin and White (2005), represents a means of capturing that value system and displaying it to others. The fundamental role of evaluation is to tell the reader or speaker how we perceive and categorize the world around us; what we see as good or bad, normal and deviant (Hunston and Thompson, 2000). Such values arguably define our personal worldviews. Equally, though, they reveal the wider patterns of thoughts and beliefs embedded in the consciousness of our society or culture. Because ideologies are expressions of personal opinions, ideas and values in the context of social and political structures (Simpson and Mayer, 2010), the study of evaluation is an important step in their discovery and description (Hunston and Thompson, 2000). A major theoretical perspective which influenced my analysis of gender ideologies in Polish discourse was developed by Reisigl and Wodak (2001, 2019). The following section further clarifies my motives for choosing this particular framework.

### **3.4 Discourse-Historical Theory (DHT)**

The discourse-historical approach (Reisigl and Wodak, 2001, 2009) provides a comprehensive review of discursive tools originally designed for the analysis of racist, nationalist, ethnicist and anti-Semitic representations. However, I would suggest that the model also lends itself to an examination of gender discrimination. In what follows I want to briefly describe three out of five proposed means ('strategies') for linguistically discriminating against people. The categories have been developed with reference to the

following questions: How are social actors named and referred to linguistically? What values and characteristics are predicated to them in the processes of lexical or rhetorical presentation and description? And what arguments or argumentation schemes are used to ‘justify and legitimize [their] exclusion, discrimination, suppression and exploitation’ (Reisigl and Wodak, 2001: 44)?

By focusing on the above research questions, Reisigl and Wodak (2001: *ibid.*) identify several major groups of ‘discursive strategies’ whose realizations spread across a whole spectrum of linguistic organization and complexity. These include ‘referential or nomination strategies’, which construe and represent participants in discourse, ‘predicational strategies’, which identify and appraise social actors based on positive or negative attributions, and ‘argumentation strategies’, which legitimize or delegitimize the predicated attitudes, classifications and dispositions (Reisigl and Wodak, 2001: 44-45) I will now look at them in more detail.

### **3.4.1 Referential strategies**

Linguistic reference to individuals or groups of people can take many forms, as van Leeuwen (1996: 2008) so aptly demonstrates. A great number of referential strategies in the discourse-analytical framework have been borrowed and adapted from van Leeuwen’s semantic typology (see Section 3.3 for an overview). These include the categories of ‘exclusion/inclusion’, ‘suppression/backgrounding’, ‘passivation’, ‘categorisation’, ‘specification/genericization’ and ‘assimilation’ (Reisigl and Wodak, 2001: 53-54). At the same time, several other categorization devices have been proposed by Reisigl and Wodak (2001) that supplement the Social Actor model, for instance by incorporating the ‘reference by tropes, biological, naturalizing and depersonalizing metaphors and metonymies, as well as synecdoches in the forms of a

part standing for the whole ('parts pro toto') or a whole standing for the part ('totum pro parte')' (ibid: 45).

The last two tropes (metonymy and synecdoche) are among the most frequent strategies adopted in discriminatory representations of immigrants (and women). As a result of metonymic references ('somatonyms') or synecdochizing manoeuvres, certain personal characteristics or physical descriptions are selectively foregrounded and treated as the representative hallmark of wider communities (ibid: 46). According to Reisigl and Wodak (2001: 63), 'the collective singular [a singular standing for the plural] and particularising synecdoche [a part standing for the whole] are typical of stereotypes and prejudiced discourses in which statements about persons are made in a levelling, generalizing, essentialising and eternalising manner'. The social actors in such discourses are represented as homogenous and 'selectively ascribed a specific, allegedly shared, either negative or positive feature, mentality and so on' (ibid.). Because of the evaluative properties of referential identification, nomination strategies cannot be clearly separated from predicational strategies (ibid: 2001), as discussed below.

### **3.4.2 Predicational strategies**

Predication in discourse-analytical terms is a process whereby characteristics are attached to persons, animals, objects, events or social phenomena and with reference to which represented participants or social actions are specified in terms of quality, quantity, space or time (Reisigl and Wodka, 2001: 54). Similar to appraisal systems (see Section 3.3); predications can be positive or negative, explicit or implicit, specific or vague. They are typically realized by nomination (established through overt denotations or more or less covert connotations), attributes (e.g. adjectives, appositions, relative

clauses etc), predicates, collocations, comparisons, similes, metaphors and implicative allusions, evocations or presuppositions (ibid: 54-55).

Among different linguistic forms that can serve as expressions of discriminatory predications, the rhetorical figures of metaphors, metonymies and synecdoches are once again the most significant. Employed in the constructions of discourse communities or aggregated subjects, the three ‘mastertropes’ encode ‘difference-levelling sameness’, conflating individuals into undifferentiated masses of people (ibid: 56). The discursive effects of rhetorical appraisal are ‘de-individualisation’, ‘anonymisation’, ‘referential absorption’ and ‘generalizing selective foregrounding of common particularities’ (ibid: 56).

Reisigl and Wodak (2001) observe that in nationalist, racist or ethnicist (and I would also add sexist) representations, the predicating metaphors, synecdoches and metonymies are frequently combined with appreciative evaluations of the in-groups, which engenders dichotomizations, black-and-white categorizations and Manichean-style distinctions between good and bad (ibid: 56). Hasty (fallacious) generalizations, stereotypes and prejudices are often strategically used as premises in argumentation, the third aspect in discourse-analytical typology.

### **3.4.3 Argumentation strategies**

Reisigl and Wodak (2001: 71) maintain that the ‘pseudo-argumentative backing’ of many deprecatory statements about members of ethnic or racist minorities directly violate the rules for rational and constructive arguing. These violations are known in rhetorical theory as ‘fallacies’ (ibid: 71). An example of an argumentation scheme that results in a legitimation of discriminatory claims is ‘the argumentum ad verecundiam’

(ibid: 72). This fallacy involves an appeal to authority as a means of justifying one's attitudes and standpoints. The explanation by reference to authority is fallacious if the adduced authority lacks competence, is prejudiced or cited incorrectly. The 'fallacy of rigged question' (ibid: 73) is another deceiving strategy functionally employed in legitimation of prejudiced statements. It consists of posing manipulative questions that start with a wrong premise, contain unjustified presuppositions or which erringly attribute something to someone.

Aside from fallacious argument schemes, the establishment and cultivation of discriminatory views can also result from the parts of argumentation associated with the 'required premises' – so called 'topi' (Reisigl and Wodak, 2010: 110). The argumentation theory defines 'topi' (or 'loci') as the 'formal or content-related warrants or 'conclusion rules' which connect argument(s) with the conclusion, the claim [and] justify the transition from the argument(s) to the conclusion' (Kienpointner, 1992 in Reisigl and Wodak, 2010: 74-75). Reisigl and Wodak (2001) provide a list of topoi adopted from Wengeler (1997). I selectively reproduce some of the examples.

For instance, the 'topos of advantage or usefulness' (Reisigl and Wodak, 2001: 75) rests on the assumption that if an action under consideration will be useful, then one should perform it. More specifically, the 'topos of bono publico' argues that the advantage associated with the action will benefit the general public, while the 'topos of bono nobi' speaks of the advantage of 'us' in contrast to the 'topos of pro bono eorum' where the advantage is claimed to be 'theirs'.

By analogy, the 'topos of uselessness and disadvantage' (ibid: 75) is based on the belief that if one can foresee the failure of the prognosticated decision or action, that decision or action should be abandoned. Other examples quoted by Reisigl and Wodak (2001:

77) include the ‘topos of danger or topos of threat’, which can be expressed by the following conditional: if a political plan or decision might lead to dangerous or threatening consequences, it should be rejected. An illustration of this argument scheme is the ‘topos of threat of racism’ which says that if too many immigrants are allowed to enter a host country, its native society will be unable to manage the situation and as a result will respond with aggression (ibid: 77).

The ‘topos of humanitarianism’ (ibid: 78) argues the opposite case, postulating that if an action or resolution does comply with human rights and humanitarian objectives, it should be performed or adopted. It closely resembles the ‘topos of justice’ (ibid: 78), according to which if people, actions or situations are deemed equal, they should be treated with equality. The topoi of humanitarianism and justice, which adhere to the principle ‘equal rights for all’, are important elements of discursive struggles against unequal treatments and discrimination of racialized, religious and gendered minorities (ibid: 78).

In this introductory chapter I have outlined the topic and research aims of the thesis. I have also given an explicit rationale for why I have chosen the broad interdisciplinary approach of (Feminist) Critical Discourse Analysis to investigate gender representations. Finally, I have provided clear explanations of the theoretical-methodological frameworks that have been used in the analysis and interpretation of media texts.

#### **4 Structure of the Thesis**

All chapters presented in this study deal in various ways with the question of women’s representation. Chapter 2 sets the scene for the rest of the study by examining the

cultural and historical origin of Polish archetypal femininity(ies). By taking a discourse-historical perspective on female subject positioning, I aim to draw attention to the significance of national gender mythology in establishing conceptions of women's identity-roles. To give a full account of the forces that maintained their normative continuity, I provide an analysis of Polish religious discourse, which has been instrumental in upholding the image of traditional femininity and legitimating what I perceive as oppressive ideology. I focus on the recent political incident staged by the nationalist party, the League of Polish Families ('Liga Polskich Rodzin'). The leader of the party exploited the symbolic power of Polonia and the Virgin Mary to advance the anti-abortion lobby agenda.

Chapter 3 looks at the constructions of female subjectivity in contemporary texts of the 'Women's Party' (WP) – 'Partia Kobiet'. I juxtapose and critically compare the model of identity produced by the newly formed gendered organization with the opposing discourse disseminated by the nation-state, discussed in the previous chapter. I draw on Appraisal Theory (Martin and White, 2005) and the more recent work on Social Actor Analysis (van Leeuwen, 2008) to see how the leading voices of the feminist association classify and evaluate Polish women. I apply the analytical frameworks mentioned above to identify social actors with regard to who they are and what they do, but also what qualities, traits and characteristics are assigned to them. In the remaining part of the chapter, I explore the Women's Party's ambiguous attempts at transforming and re-inventing feminine identity. I give evidence of a discursive shift towards new modes of belonging, which pose direct challenges to the hegemonic ideal of a woman as a 'brave victim' (Marody and Giza-Poleszczuk, 2000: 163). Simultaneously, I am critical of

other representational choices made by the feminist organization, which re-inscribe essentialist claims and assumptions or show similarities with nationalist depictions.

Chapter 4 presents an analysis of another political campaign, this time administered by male leaders and members of the elected political formations: The Civic Platform ('Platforma Obywatelska') and the Law and Justice ('Prawo i Sprawiedliwość'). I begin by describing the dominant framing conventions used by the media in the aftermath of 2006 and 2007 government elections. According to Polish post-campaign coverage, there was a major 'women's breakthrough' (Norris, 1997b, 161). I concentrate on the semantic features of the frame's macro-structure and consider plausible motives that hide behind the 'hysterical' reporting. I also examine in more detail the way in which the 'widely appointed' female government officials have been recontextualized in the same discourse. A close analysis of the argument schemes (van Leeuwen, 2008; Reisigl and Wodak, 2001) and transitivity choices shows that the appointment of women in the government has been represented as the 'doings and feelings' of male politicians. I explore the lexico-grammatical processes of denigration underlying naming and evaluation of female leaders and identify 'possessivation', 'impersonalisation' and 'appreciation' as the chief strategies for construing female ministers as sexualized objects.

Chapter 5 examines the role of the military metaphor in constructing the professional identity of three leading female politicians: Zyta Gilowska, Julia Pitera and Anna Streżyńska. Although previous studies in the field (Desmond, 1997; Koller, 2004) have pointed to a masculinizing impact of the metaphor on the wider spheres of discourse and cognition, I argue here that, far from being male-defined, the war-based discourse models are organized to illustrate and enforce the legitimacy of women's political

power. To demonstrate the subversive potential of the concept, I expand and reformulate (Chilton and Ilyin, 1993) the metaphorical ‘target domain’ (Forceville, 1996: 213) in a way that induces a shift of meaning from war to fighting. Such an approach calls attention to the hitherto overlooked and neglected semantic properties, such as agency and causality. I then consider how the re-specified rhetorical figures structure a professional domain in ways in which women can feel included, offering space for alternative (de-gendered) modes of thinking. The chapter also reflects on the adverse effects brought about by the disruption of gender schematic behaviour.

Finally, in Chapter 6 my concern is with a diversity of discursive practices that are relevant to the construction of female MPs as ‘differently gendered’ subjects. My paramount interest is in the concrete linguistic processes that occasion this divergence – i.e. routinized and habituated patterns of signification by which Polish media commentators discursively assign gender meanings to female politicians. The chapter examines (inter)textual constructions of women tied to the attribution of varying narrative roles. It also considers lexical and collocational patterns that occur in designations of gender at the level of individual words and sentences. The final part of the inquiry deals with the language of exclusion underlying depictions of female MPs as embodied and sexualized beings. The analysis provides evidence that the linguistic processes underlying gendering are predominantly negative, resting on and endorsing the acquired notions of female ‘markedness’, ‘otherness’ and ‘deviance’. The chapter thus makes a strong case for a closer examination of the media input.

## Chapter 2

# Women and Nation

*In some ways, many Polish women are premodern: they pray on their knees, confess their sins to male priests, believe in Satan and hell, let men kiss their hands, and expect doors to be held open while they pass through.*

(Hauser et al., 1993: 257)

*One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman.*

(de Beauvoir, 1973: 301)

### 2.1 Introduction

All national discourses have a history – a point of origin evoked through memory and myths – which predates the beginning of modern consciousness. The knowledge produced by those cultural narratives is often hidden and unconscious, frequently inaccessible. Yet, as Hall (1990: 226) concedes in his famous essay on the topic, ‘the past continues to speak to us’ and it does speak loudly with contemporary Polish women. Stalked by traditionalist ideas of the previous era and caught in the nationalist rhetoric of the political present, they are constantly re-positioned between past and future (Graff, 2007b, 2007c). The ‘hidden histories’ (Hall, 1990: 224) embedded in the national stories of Polish womanhood continue to exert a prominent mark on the identities of contemporary Poles. Although establishing the precise origin of the discursive-self will never be achievable beyond the level of mere conjecture, I believe, in concurrence with van Leeuwen (2005), that it is viable – and illuminating – to retrieve its approximate moments of emergence.

In this chapter, which sets the scene for the rest of the thesis, I take a discourse-historical perspective (Reisigl and Wodak, 2001, 2009) on the question of women's cultural construction by evaluating the socio-discursive processes of female identity formation in the dominant narratives of Polish national culture. My overarching aim is the identification of discursive forms of gendered practices – recurrent and familiar ways of talking about and subject-positioning women (Sunderland, 2004), which have been central to the Polish experience.

The historical dimension of the approach is sought to expose the obfuscated and hidden continuities and ruptures (Hall, 1996) within the broader system of gender representation, while the focus on socio-political forces and institutional settings connects the textual processes of cultural production with the world of everyday practice. By bringing to light the associative and causative relations between discursive events and material fields of action, I demonstrate how discourse theory (See Chapter 1) accurately portrays the dialectical intersection between the two spheres of social practice (Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1999; Fairclough, 2009).

I begin my discussion with a diachronic examination of Polish gender mythology, considering the role of the nationalist discourse in establishing hegemonic conceptions of women's identities and exploring their implications for proper behavioural patterns. Three prominent ideals of womanhood, epitomized by the symbolic figures of the Virgin Mary, Mother Pole and Polonia, are analysed from a feminist perspective, with close attention paid to the historical context which rendered these identity roles enduringly relevant. The concluding section of the chapter illustrates the significance of maternal constructions in material, rather than symbolic, terms, by critically discussing the legal battles over abortion. The purpose of this investigation is to show how the

lofty ideas underpinning Polish nationalist rhetoric collide with the actual treatment of contemporary women (Graff, 2007b).

## **2.2 The Marian Cult**

As one of the most salient religious symbols in the Roman Catholic tradition, the Virgin Mary has come to embody a wide repertoire of meanings and symbolic functions. What distinguishes Polish Marianism from many foreign adaptations is the extra-religious and national dimension of the cult. Just like the myth of the Polish Mother discussed below, the Virgin Cult has evolved through the country's involvement in armed struggles. In 1655 Poland fought a victorious battle against the Protestant Swedes near the town of Częstochowa, a home to the holy icon of the Virgin. The victory over the Swedish army, attributed to the divine intervention of the Virgin, prompted the Polish king Jan Kazimierz to bestow on Mary the title of the 'Queen of Poland'. That event marked the beginning of a long period of Marian devotion in Polish Catholicism (Szwajcowska, 2006: 20-22).

What is the meaning behind Polish worship? Porter (2006: 153) points to the 'mystical duality' that represents the core essence of the cult, noticing two overarching metaphors lying at the root of Polish devotion. The Virgin Mary performs the role of the military 'protectress', while at the same time setting an example of good Catholic behaviour. Of the two models, Mary the Exemplar, rather than the mighty Mediator, offers profound implications for gender norms in Poland. It is the most widely quoted feminine ideal in Catholic sermons and homiletic writing, a model that Polish women should ideally try to emulate (ibid.).

The feminist theological critique of Marianism as a representation of proper feminine behaviour draws attention to the limited and stereotypical delineation of the roles of women and their position in society (Szwajcowska, 2006). The cult represents femininity reduced to motherhood, relegating women to activities tightly linked to the domestic sphere of hearth and home (ibid.). In the same breath as establishing an order where traditions of family remain constraining on women's lives, the model places much responsibility upon women to maintain the Catholic faith and restore the moral balance in an overly rationalized and masculinist society (Porter, 2006).

Equally problematic is the peculiar celebration and extolment of what are seen as typically 'feminine' virtues such as 'obedience', 'humility', 'faithfulness', 'simplicity', 'passivity' and 'purity', all of which arguably reinforce gender stereotyping and fuel women's oppression (Środa, 2007: 611). Finally, by linking two mutually contradictory dimensions of women's perceived vocation, i.e. virginity and motherhood, the Marian cult represents a model (virgin-motherhood) which is illusionary and impossible to achieve (Caldwell, 1991). The perpetuation of the virginal myth has further repressive consequences for women's sexuality, contributing to its denigration or even negation (Hammington, 1995). When measured against the lofty and unattainable identity standards, the average, full-blooded woman appears guilty in all respects (Graff, 2008).

For an ordinary contemporary Catholic Pole, however, the Virgin imagery illustrates predominantly an idealized experience of motherhood (Graff, 2008). Viewed already as a nurturing and concerned mother, Mary becomes elevated to her almost divine status and accredited with an identity of a martyr through her direct involvement in the sacrifice of Jesus. The gender aspects of the Virgin's ultimate oblation and charitable

self-devotion invite an interesting analogy with another female archetype commonly referred to by historians as the ‘Mother Pole’ (‘Matka Polka’).

### **2.3 The Myth of the Polish Mother (PM)**

The national story of the Polish Mother, also known as the ‘myth’, outlines the construction of womanhood with its origin in a partitioned Poland. The story is essentially a form of representation – motivated, fragmentary and simplified. It condenses the multi-faceted experiences of real women into a single narrative of cultural identity (Macdonald, 1995). Unlike Barthes’(1972: 114) ‘second-order semiological system’, which appears in the present like a mystical object devoid of history that has caused its origin, the Polish myth is strongly determined by Poland’s historical trajectories and their material effects on women’s everyday lives. The myth originated in the eighteenth century, when Poland was partitioned and consequently disappeared from the map of Europe. A long period of foreign domination, lasting for more than 120 years (1772 - 1918), has led to the formation of a model of heroic female behaviour graphically allegorized in the mythical figure of the ‘Polish Mother’ (‘Matka Polka’).

The new geopolitical reality related to the lack of Poland’s sovereignty created new roles and responsibilities for the members of the non-state nation. In particular, a heavy demand was placed on the female population. Watching men plunge the nation into wars over freedom, women were forced to take over men’s duties, but more importantly, contribute to the national cause by preserving the language, culture and religion (Titkow, 1993). The newly acquired role of Polish women consisted primarily of being a mother and raising the young in a patriotic spirit. In addition to

acknowledging female share in safeguarding patriotic virtues, the myth also contains a heroic aspect by stressing women's direct involvement in the armed struggle as partisans and insurgents, or in caring for the wounded (Szwajcowska, 2006). In the words of the Polish gender historian Sławomira Walczewska (2006: 53), 'the loss of independence gave women an open invitation to the national community, and this was equivalent to obtaining a female citizenship' [my translation].

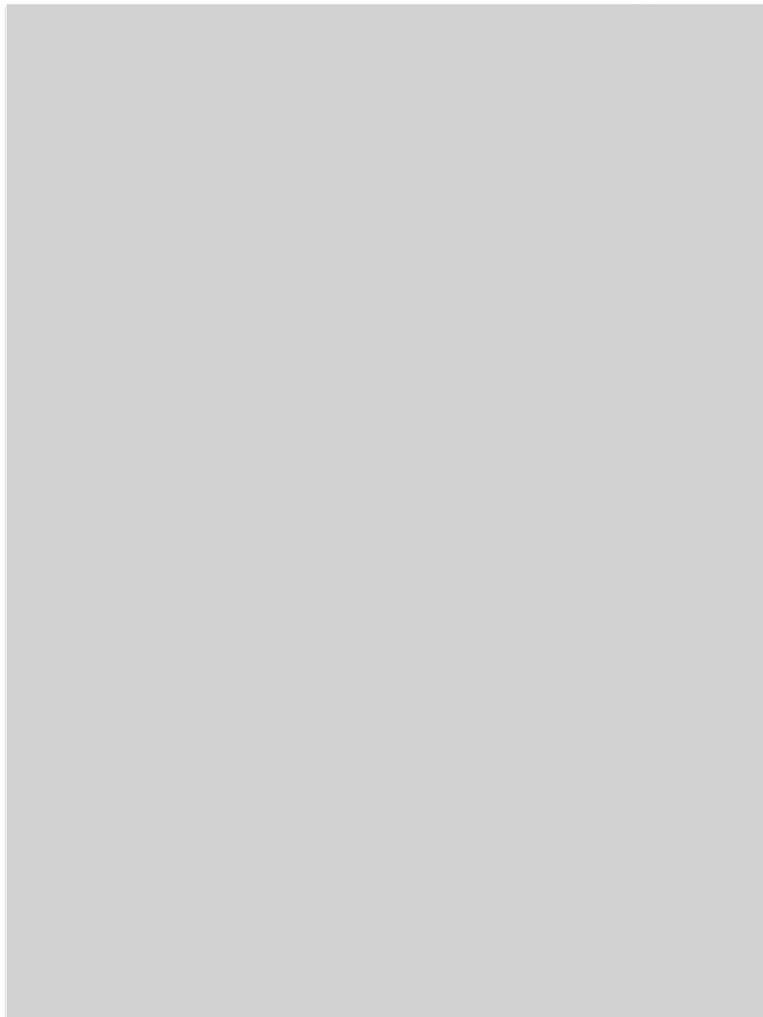
In many ways the specifically defined notion of motherhood epitomized by the social genotype of the Polish Mother reflects some of the central dimensions of women's locations within the cultural communities (Anthias and Yuval-Davis, 1989; Yuval-Davis, 1997). The subject positions produced by the maternal identity label parallel women's roles as biological and cultural reproducers of national collectivities (see Yuval-Davis, 1997). However, it is the motif of suffering – the seemingly limitless ability to endure pain – together with the readiness to sacrifice without asking anything in return, that makes the myth a dominant topic of Polish feminist writing (Szwajcowska, 2006).

Without a doubt, the Polish Mother is conceived as a tragic figure. She sacrifices her personal happiness for the love of the country. Her suffering involves both watching her relatives perish in wars for Poland's freedom, as well as grieving the fate of the 'dying' nation (ibid: 19). The national and religious underpinnings of the myth invite strong associations with the figure of the Virgin Mary, also known as 'Mater Dolorosa'. As noted by Porter (2005: 160), 'the Matka-Polka image and the Marian cult shared an emphasis on suffering and pain, with portraits of grieving mothers echoing pietas of an earlier time'. At a time when religious symbolism intermingled with Romantic poetry, those two models formed a strong alliance. They were often referred to in public

sermons or national poems as examples of proper social norms and well-respected Catholic behaviour, providing a refuge from moral decadence and foreign oppression (ibid.).

The continuity of Polish liberationist struggles, together with the almost never-ending experience of living under foreign oppression, rendered the Mother Pole ideal enduringly relevant. The myth underwent, however, several transformations, succumbing to local forces and political influences. Thus, the mothers of soldiers fighting in insurrections were replaced by mothers of partisans and insurgents who engaged in battles during the Second World War (Kowalczyk, 2003).

A caricature of the story, or perhaps its most compelling characterization, represents the socialist mother-worker. Similar to its Romantic precursor committed to rearing respectable future patriots, the Communist mother was duty-bound to 'produce' citizens for the state in accordance with the official demands of the socialist propaganda. But life under Soviet occupation was fraught with other pitfalls and difficulties, such as dealing with the consequences of the shortage economy. This had serious repercussions for Polish women, who were forced to work night shifts, wait in mile-long queues to obtain basic food, and generally take all possible measures to reconcile their double roles as mothers and workers (ibid.).



**Figure 2.1** The caricature of the socialist mother. Reproduced in Reading, 1992: 116.

The image of Polish women as more mature and skillful than men, and hence ready to ‘raise’ their husbands in order to meet family demands, was typical of women’s press during the Communist period. This led Marody and Giza-Poleszczuk (2000: 159-64) to describe gender relations by recourse to the ‘big child’ and ‘brave victim’ analogy. Here, a number of parallels can be established between the Communist woman and her nineteenth-century predecessor. Just like the pre-war female who wore black to express

empathy with the grieving nation, the 'brave victim' also displayed a high level of agency by fully embracing her troubled identity. Again, the magazine discourse (*ibid.*) reveals that women often willingly followed the bravery pattern and complied with the gender-demarcated roles imposed by the Communist reality. Titkow (1993, 1994) points to 'psychological gratification' and respect that accompanied women who acted as guardians of family matters. As Marody and Giza-Poleszczuk (2000: 163) summarize, 'the 'brave victim' identity gave women some justification for – and pride in – their situation: they were sacrificing themselves for the greater good'. In this respect, and in many others, the Communist women were the same patriotic mothers of pre-war Poland who ignored their own needs to serve the family and nation.

The fall of the Communist regime did not send the maternal myth into oblivion. On the contrary, the story has maintained its significance and timeless, universal meaning owing to the nationalist discourse of the Catholic clergy and the ideologically-allied right-wing politicians (Kowalczyk, 2003). In their conservative rhetoric, highly peppered with national symbols and traditional imagery, the representatives of the Church and the Polish Parliament reused the epic figure to revive society's interest in maternity (Marody and Giza-Poleszczuk, 2010; Watson, 1993a). Women's reproductive role was seen as crucial to the survival of the national and ethnic community following the post-1989 transformations. Although the patriotic theme gave way to newly emerging consumer interests, the emphasis of the official public discourse still remained on maternal virtues, maintaining a dichotomous divide between the public sphere of men and the private world of women (Kowalczyk, 2003).

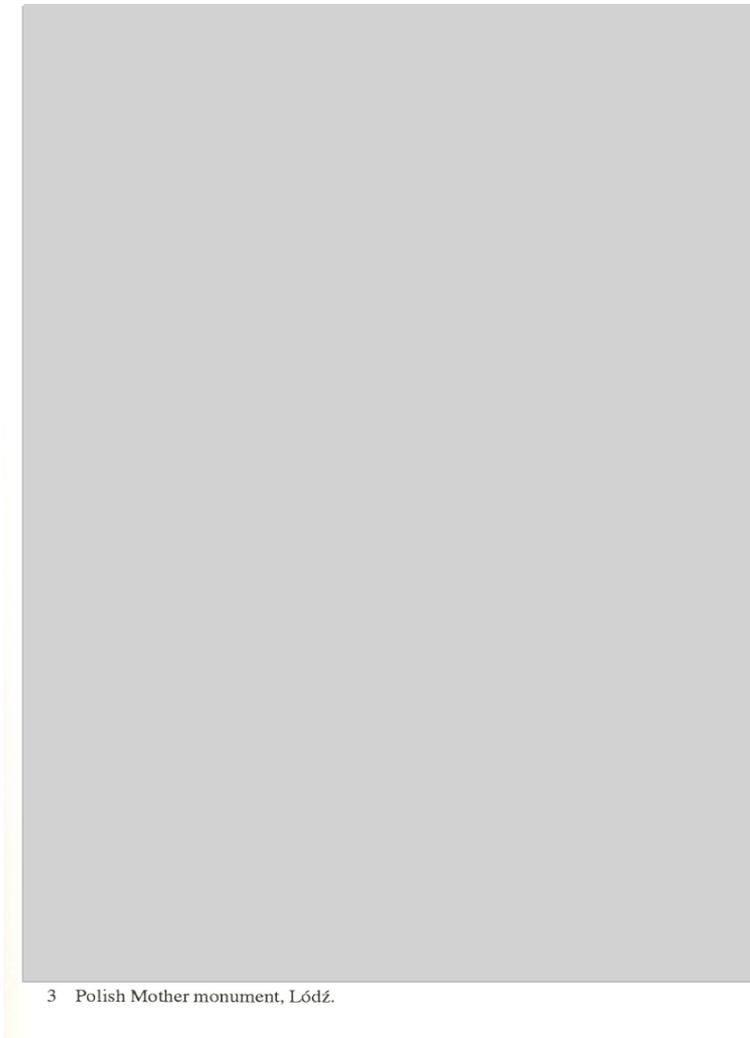
There is no doubt about the influence the motherist imagery exerted, and still exerts, on Polish consciousness and collective imagination. As noted by Titkow (1984: 566),

‘historical epochs and political systems changed, while women continued to function according to the ‘norm’ that they are brave, resourceful, capable of coping and selfless’. The above quotation points to the far-reaching effects of the cultural model on women’s individual lives, the general perception of their roles and responsibilities, and the attitude to their rights. Not only does the Polish Mother narrowly define women’s space by prioritizing female reproductive function and extolling familism at the expense of women’s freedom, but it also helps to uphold the national stereotype of Polish women as strong and sacrificial. What is more, along with the Catholic model of femininity, the Matka Polka ethos bestows on women a special kind of dignity, which many think prevents them from seeing patterns of discrimination – particularly as it gets confused with gender flattery and adoration (Matynia, 2003).

The ‘subjectively positive’ attitudes of benevolence (Glick and Fiske, 1996: 491) towards women are an exceptionally strong component of Polish gender ideology (Kielkiewicz-Janowiak and Pawelczyk, 2010). Unlike its malevolent counterpart (‘Hostile Sexism’), comprising articulations of overtly sexist antipathy and prejudice, the benevolent orientation (‘Benevolent Sexism’) shows women in stereotypical and restricted gender arrangements which are, nonetheless, positive in the evaluative tone and even identified as pro-social (Glick and Fiske, 1996: 491).

Affectively mediated discrimination is typically characterized by the socio-discursive practices of protective paternalism, maternal reverence and romantic idealization (Glick and Fiske, 1996). The symbolic elevation of women, with strong appearances of respect and ceremonious gallantry, is a significant characteristic of Polish culture. The country has long prided itself on its well-established chivalry (e.g. door-opening, hand-kissing rituals etc.), as well as the highly traditionalist views on women’s beauty and character

standards (Bystydzieński, 2001). As Reading (1992: 34) mockingly describes: ‘Polish women also have charm-qualities which excite admiration, a [sexual] attractiveness and an indefinable power of delighting’.



**Figure 2.2** The outdoor sculpture before the Mother Pole Health Centre in Łódź – the public manifestation of the motherist cult. Reproduced in Reading, 1992: 116.

#### **2.4 Subject Nation/Subject Woman: Representing Polonia**

The symbolic power of Polish nationalism relies to a considerable extent on the received images of national history (Hall, 1996a), which have actively promoted female

identity as the ‘privileged’ allegory of Polish collectivity. Specialists in political anthropology point to a significant shift in the representational politics of Polish national identity since the end of the eighteenth century, when the abstract legal-political construct of the Polish state has gradually been replaced by the symbolic figuration of Poland as a female body. The typical female ideals that the authors of the nationalist iconographies most commonly alluded to were once again mothers, virgins or – characteristic of religious imagery – virgin-mothers (Janion, 2006a).

Though ostensibly similar to other patriotic depictions of homelands observed in different cultural contexts (Anthias, 1989; Cho, 1998; Hubinette, 2005; McClintock, 1995; Sinha, 2000), the feminized portrayals of Poland reflect specific ideas of womanhood generated by concrete relations of power permeating historical and material realities of the Polish nation. Consequently, the nineteenth-century version of Polonia epitomizes the agony and devastation of the occupied country: expressive of the mournful spirits and ideationally congruent with the poetry of the partitioned era (Janion, 2006a, Szwajcowska, 2006). The central female figure that frequently emblazoned such lyrical representations is a dead or buried woman, often shown as a corps carried in a catafalque. For instance, the famous rendering of the Polish occupation captured by the Romantic bard Józef Ignacy Kraszewski features Polonia as ‘an exposed female body (...) with a bleeding breast, ruffled hair, tied hands, just about to descend into a grave’ (Janion, 2006a: 263-7).

The obsessive preoccupation of Romantic literature (see Mickiewicz, 1998; Słowacki, 2006) with the question of national identity and liberationist struggle has led to the formation of messianic theories of nations, according to which Poland’s ‘suffering’ became analogous to the martyrdom of Christ (Szwajcowska, 2006). The topos of

messianism is clearly in evidence in the painting by Jan Matejko (Year 1863), where a kneeling and tortured woman is being observed by the figure of Christ hidden in the wall crucifix (Janion, 2006a).

In a similar vein, the pictorial representation of Polonia produced by Stanisław Kaczor-Batowski displays a bereaved woman staring at the cross, thorny crown and nails: the attributes of Christ's crucifixion. Both of these portrayals seek to project the suffering of the Polish nation. The agony of the Polish woman becomes equivalent to the emotive representation of Christ's torture and execution. These two figures coalesce into a coherent symbol, creating a powerful signifier of national pain (ibid: 279).

The loss of political freedom and national sovereignty especially provoked the association between Polishness and victimhood. As Maria Janion (2006a: 283) reports, the 'phantasmic body of Polonia' derived from the era of Poland's partition bears witness to numerous accounts of physical abuse and humiliation, which serve to convey the high level of oppression endured by the enslaved nation. Below are some of the many examples of the highly eroticized and not infrequently sadomasochistic imaginings of Polonia's violation:

- A Cossack horseman brutally ravishing a double corpse; on the body of a dead eagle lies a woman positioned flat on her back, her body half-exposed, her breast treaded on by a horse. The woman's body is about to be mutilated by the Cossack's pike, as was the eagle's body (Artur Scheffer, Polonia, 1831).
  
- Naked and injured arms of three women – murdered and covered in blood Lithuania, kneeling and chained Polonia and brutally abducted Russia are

juxtaposed with uniformed Russian officers. One of the men is conspicuous by virtue of his tensed-up fallic-like silhouette (Jan Matejka, 1863).

(translated from Janion, 2006a: 283-7)

The ravished body of Poland's female martyr represents the fate of the subject nation, a motherland which is holy and cursed, innocent yet humiliated through a series of committed rapes. The peculiar mixture of violence and eroticism, which appears to form the bedrock of the nineteenth-century nationalist depictions, provided the viewer with a strong incentive to avenge the brutal deaths caused by the foreign soldiers. Equally though, the imagery served as a source of voyeuristic fascination and sadomasochistic pleasure, as Janion (2006a) graphically demonstrates.

## **2.5 From Martyrdom to Sexual Provocation: the Modern Concept of the Polish Nation**

In the following decades, the dominant aesthetics of Polish national iconography appeared to undergo pronounced changes. For instance, Janion (2006a) attests to the presence of cheerful and healthy-looking women who personified Poland from 1914 to 1918, as shown in the paintings of Jacek Malczewski. Nevertheless, the strong religious overtones carried by the woman-as-nation trope still remained well assimilated owing to society's constant engagement in military disputes. The national experiences during the Second World War, followed by the Soviet domination, effectively spurred artistic interest in Polish patriotism.

Such conceptual deadlock was finally broken thanks to the 1989 political watershed. The memory of Polonia the martyr gradually faded away, while the Romantic topoi of suffering and victimhood have given way to new erotic fantasies of the consumerist

discourse (Janion, 2006a). One of the recent incarnations of Polish national identity represents the ‘Emblem’ (‘Godło’) – a poster produced by the artistic group called Łódź Kaliska. This project, commissioned by the magazine ‘Playboy’ and released on one of its covers in March 2004, features an attractive naked model spread against the wings of an eagle. The slogan that accompanies the Playboy issue (‘naked, but crowned’) ironically mocks the notion of Polish national pride (Janion, 2006a: 290).

Along with the wings and the crown – the only emblematic attributes of the otherwise naked woman – it is the colour that plays a key role as the semiotic signifier of Polishness. The combination of reds and whites designates the hues of the Polish flag. The different shades of the colour palette enhance the aesthetic appeal of the picture and create cohesive links across different modes of representation (Kress and van Leeuwen, 1996). The emotive functions of red, coupled with its universal characterization as the colour of pleasure (particularly when viewed in the context of the Playboy magazine), add further meanings to the carefully crafted representation (Caldas-Coulthard, 2008).

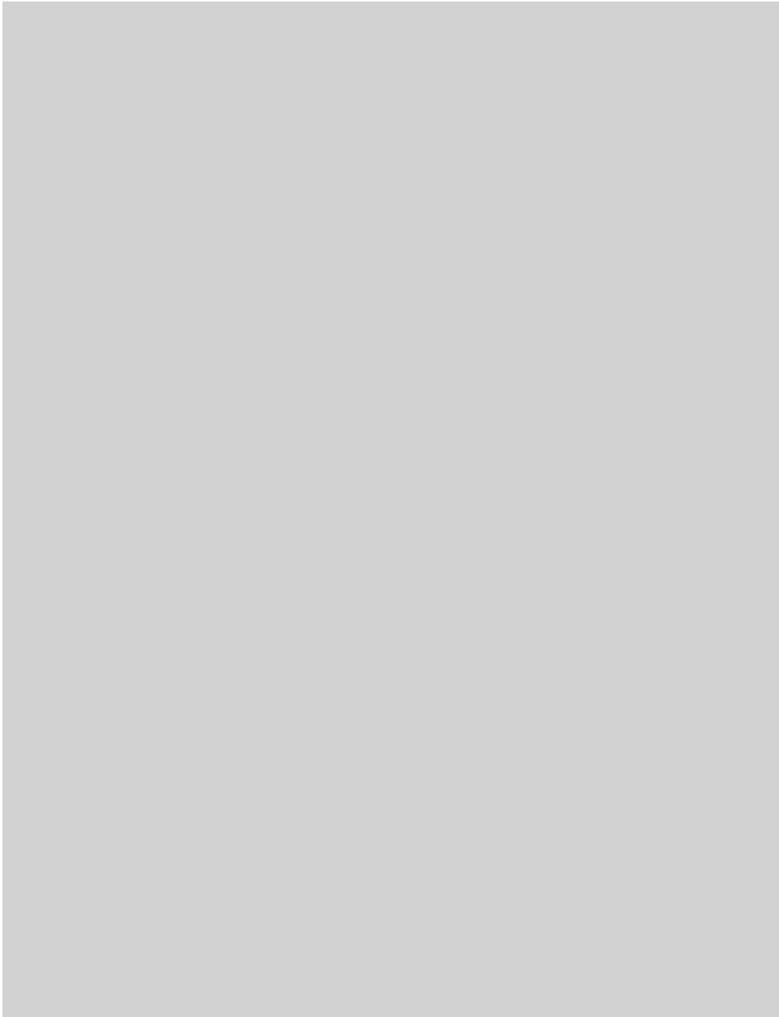




**Figure 2.3** 'The Emblem': Representations of Polonia by Łódź Kaliska. <http://www.miasta.gazeta.pl/lodz;>  
[http:// www.fotal.pl/lodzkaliska](http://www.fotal.pl/lodzkaliska)

In the second version produced by the same group (see Fig. 2.3), the female eagle has been shown standing on the boxes of Coca-Cola. By linking women's nakedness with the most common fizzy drink on Earth, the pop-version of Polonia became a national epitome of women's sexual availability. The naked body, one of the many regularly featured on the pages of Playboy, has been objectified and offered on display like the more famous brand of Coca-Cola (Janion, 2006a).

The celebration of semi-erotic nakedness constitutes one of the central motifs in another media display of Polish identity, featured on the cover of 'Polityka' in connection with Poland's accession to the European Union in May 2004 (Fig. 2.4). The cartoon presents a huge female figure leading the parade of clowns, priests, and other grotesque characters of post-transition Poland: some of whom are visibly aroused by the fully exposed and sexualized woman's body.



**Figure 2.4** ‘Poland Returns to Europe’: Polonia by Andrzej Mleczko - *Polityka* (01.05.04).

In the most recent version of nationhood (Fig. 2.5) produced by the political weekly *Newsweek Polska*, the commodification and pornofication of the female character have been visually expressed by means of different semiotic codes, demonstrating a skillful play of many symbolic resources. According to the ‘grammar of visual design’, meticulously described by Kress and van Leeuwen (1996), there is a substantial difference between those images which openly address the viewer and the ones which avoid such a direct interaction. In the former, an imaginary contact is established between the represented participants and the viewers through so-called ‘vectors’, customarily formed by the participant’s eyelines (ibid: 122). In such pictures, which

Kress and van Leeuwen refer to as ‘demands’, the participants’ gaze urges the viewer to develop a symbolic relation with them.

This is contrary to the visual configuration where no such reaction can be attested. Instead, the represented participant is ‘offered’ to the viewer as a piece of information or displayed as an object of impassionate scrutiny. Visuals like these have been defined as ‘offers’, which highlights the fact that they make no demands on the viewer to generate a social response. More specifically, it is the viewer who in such depictions becomes the author of the gaze, and thus adopts the position of the subject (ibid: 124).

In the image by *Newsweek Polska*, the young and scantily clad female model, who figures as the embodiment of modern Poland, has been manifestly ‘offered’ to the audience of the magazine as an object of aesthetic contemplation. The model is depicted impersonally, almost like a specimen in a display cage (ibid: 124). The highly commodifying effect produced by the visual derives partly from the lack of interaction between the represented and interactive participants. The woman is shown with her eyes closed. Her face is turned away, clearly in an expression of pleasure, which completely obviates the chance for the connection to be established. Consequently, bereft of the agency as the bearer of the look, the female figure subscribes to the hegemony of the male gaze.

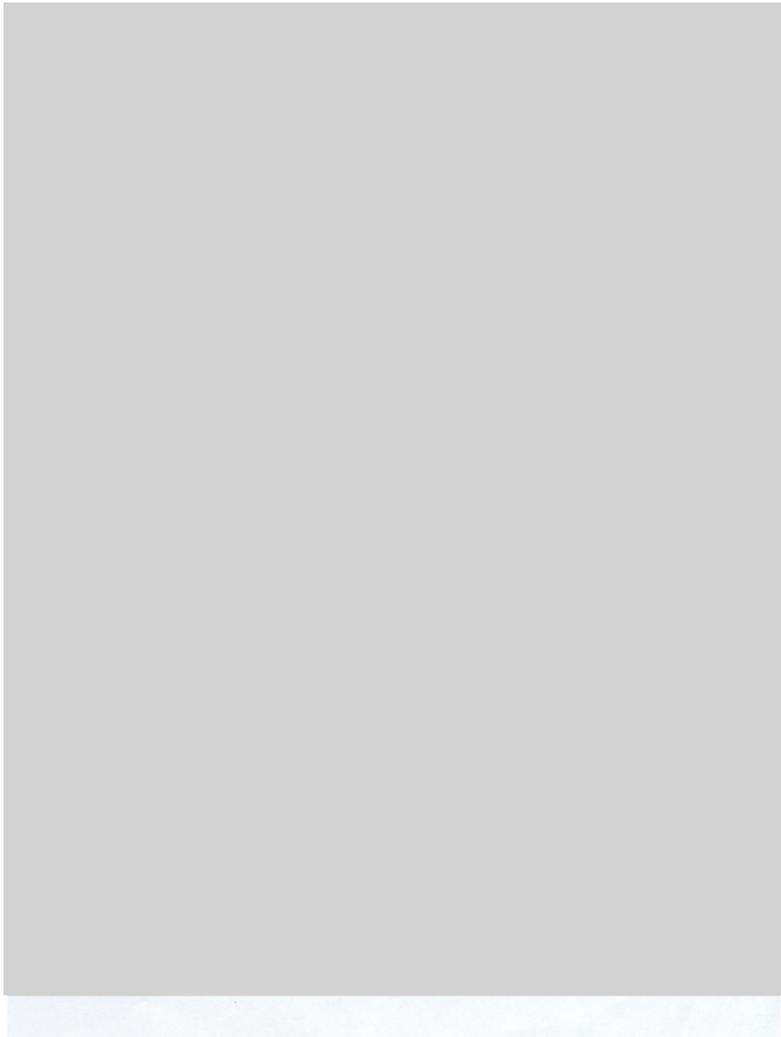
Closely related to the construction of power in visual discourse is the notion of the ‘size of frame’, which the anthropologist Edward T. Hall (1964) introduced under the term ‘proxemics’ (Kress and van Leeuwen, 1996: 130-131). The system, developed originally to gauge the distances of people as they interact, was re-appropriated by Kress and van Leeuwen (1996) as the second most important interactive element in the

socio-semantic framework. The choice between a close-up and a long shot represents, as the scholars assert, a type of judgement with regard to the character of social intimacy that links the participant of the image with their audience.

In the light of the social distance theory, it is more than revealing that the image of modern 'Polka'/Polska produced by the political weekly corresponds to the category of visuals commonly found in product advertising. The represented figure 'shown is full, but without much space around it (...) from a fairly close range, and a steep angle, as if the viewer stands just in front of the table on which it is displayed' (Kress and van Leeuwen, 1996: 134).

Apart from the gaze and the vectors, an important semantic component in this social portrayal of gender is the ritualized gesture, which Erving Goffman (1979: 57) discusses under the term 'licensed withdrawal'. The sociologist points out that, in advertising, women are characteristically shown withdrawn from the scene at hand, as if psychologically detached from the social context. 'Head or eye aversions' are classical examples of such cognitive and behavioural disengagements (Goffman, 1979: 63). The overall effect is the acknowledgment of women's subordinate status engendered through their lack of orientation to and control of the current events.

The photograph in Figure 2.5 reinforces the appearance of female dependency by showing the model physically and mentally disassociated from the immediate thrust of interaction. The ritual has been realized visually via head cant and eye aversion. The exaggerated body posture, combined with the semi-erotic expression of pleasure and self-enjoyment, make a powerful illustration of women's commodification.



**Figure 2.5** ‘2009 as The Year of Poland’: The embodiment of Poland according to *Newsweek Polska* (04.01.09).

The feminist critique levelled against the ‘symbolization’ of women in national narratives pertains to many aspects which, in their comprehensive meaning, offer profoundly negative implications for the position of women within society. The first level of critique – and this appears especially relevant to the Polish case – focuses on the oppressive ideas that those heavily gendered languages have historically come to embody, particularly as regards women’s identity and sexual behaviour. Parker et al. (1992: 6) observe that the ‘trope of the nation-as-woman (...) depends for its

representational efficacy on a particular image of woman as chaste, dutiful, daughterly or maternal’ – thus endorsing the view of women as ‘docile bodies’ ready to be manipulated by men. In this account, provided by Walsh (2001: 168), the construction of women as embodied national signifiers illustrates the Foucauldian conception of the body as the locus of power.

At this juncture, it is important to acknowledge the wide repertoire of gendered meanings that individual nations have articulated in the production of their own identities and cultures. The differential faces of women’s depictions appear to reflect a particular politics of location, revealing ideas about gender or sexual norms prevalent in specific communities (Parker et al., 1992). Thus, contrary to numerous prominent illustrations of brave and knightly females found in many foreign representations, the most central imagery of *Mater Polonia*, following the January uprising of 1863, is that of a young widow, dressed in black, enchained and on the verge of collapse (Graff, 2007b; Hussakowska, 1996; Szwajcowska, 2006).

What therefore appears most striking about the historical construction of Polish (female) identity is the consistency with which the model has been reconfigured as the cult of passive victimology. Though the oppression of Poland as a nation bears a strong political pedigree and has a real material basis, the symbolic rapes and violations of women’s heavily fetishized bodies represent an ideological construct and a representational choice made within a wider field of identity politics. The recent adaptations of *Polonia* ideally reflect the social character and constitutive function of the symbolic practices which lie at the heart of national identity formations (Anderson, 1983; Hall, 1997). Though clearly no longer a subject nation but a free and democratic country, today’s Poland is still actively involved in the production of subject identities.

And so although its modern woman may indeed be crowned, she is still offered to the public as the same naked body.

The various ways through which women's identities have been symbolically re-appropriated within historical translations of national cultures, serving as carriers of 'meanings beyond themselves' by embodying the qualities of justice, liberty, peace and warfare (Macdonald, 1995: 32), attest to their specific role as symbolic bearers of the nation's collectivity (Yuval-Davis, 1997).

In contrast to women, men's discursive presence in the 'Kulturation' (Yuval-Davis, 1997: 21) has been typically premised on the construction of citizenship. The different positionings of both men and women in relation to the nation-state, as well as their social communities, have been aptly summarized by Boehmer (1991) in the 'Stories of Women and Mothers'. The feminist says:

(...) the male role in the nationalist scenario may be characterized as metonymic. Male figures are brothers and equals, or fathers and sons and thus rivals; but in both cases their roles are specific and contiguous with one another. The 'female', in contrast, put in an appearance chiefly in a metaphoric and symbolic role. She is the strength or virtue of the nation incarnate, its fecund first matriarch, but it is a role that excludes her from the sphere of public national life.

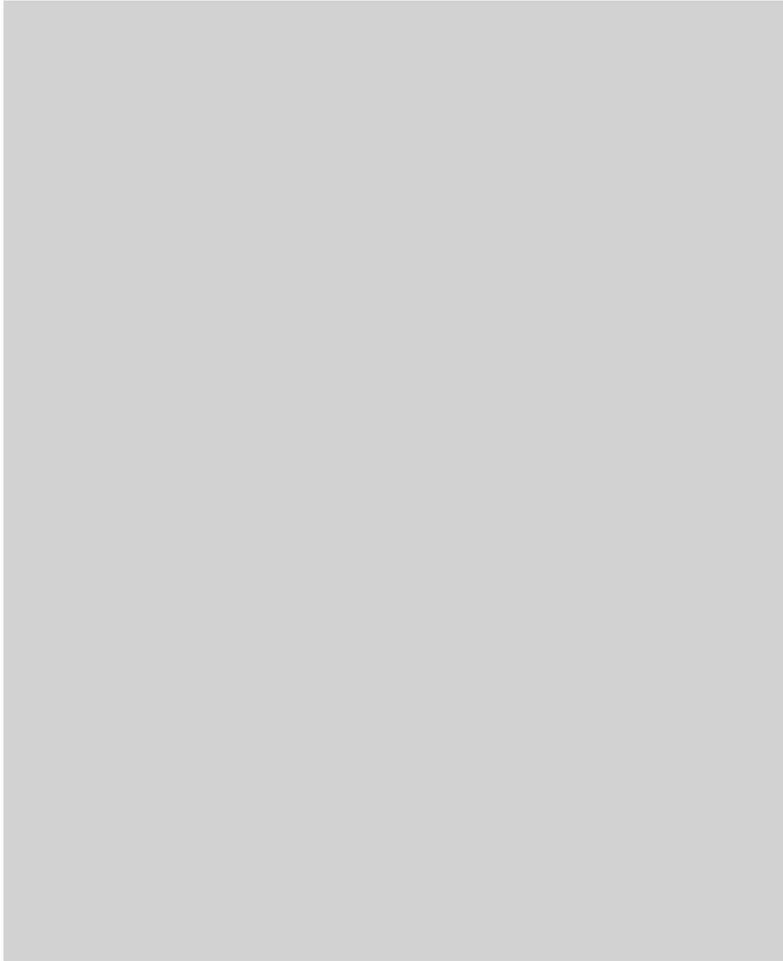
(Boehmer, 1991: 6)

Boehmer (1991) observes that although the language of nationalism has recourse to feminine imagery, it nevertheless endorses masculine ideas and values by treating men as the sole representatives of national communities. The discursive construal of the citizen-subject along the gender lines can be seen in different versions of Polish national representations, where the symbolic figuration of Polonia has been juxtaposed with the metonymic portrayals of men as the state subjects.

For instance, in nineteenth-century iconography, members of the general public were typically kings, priests or dutiful soldiers. In its more recent and humorous adaptation (see Fig. 2.4), civilians are represented by the procession of clowns, priests, villains and other comical incarnations of contemporary statesmen. A prominent example of Polish media's reluctance towards acknowledging women as citizens in equal measure with men constitutes a 'Special Report' released by *Polityka* (30.12.00) at the onset of the new millennium. The supplement, depicted in Figures 2.6 and 2.7, looks into the future of a certain Polish-European called Adam, who characteristically acts as the 'neutral' and 'unmarked' member of the Polish community.

Two aspects of the representation merit special notice. The first one is the almost complete omission of women from the report, and by analogy from the body politic. The second interesting feature of the article is the personal form of address marking the photographic depictions of Adam and appearing to directly contradict the visual principles governing significations of Polonia. The prototypical Pole is shown in different stages of life: as a toddler, a teenager and a mature citizen. Yet, regardless of the point in time at which he has been portrayed, the representative of the national (masculine) community looks equally powerful and commanding.

Already as a few months old baby (Fig. 2.6) Adam exhibits more agency and strength than the average adult Polonia. He is proudly embracing the world with his whole body. The vectors formed by the toddler's arms and spread along the globe produce a visual form of address and thereby initiate a social act. The baby boy demands something from the viewer and by doing it establishes himself as the subject of the representation (Kress and van Leeuwen, 1996).



**Figure 2.6** The 'Special Report': A 'Man' in the New Century - *Polityka* (30.12.00).

In the second photograph (Fig. 2.7), the imaginary contact between the represented participant and his audience has been formed by the participant's eyelines directly addressing the viewer. The sense of connection evoked between the interactive participants is additionally strengthened through the choice of the frame size (ibid.). In his later depictions Adam has been shown at a very personal distance. He is smiling and thus inviting a friendly interaction.

The ideological effect of both images depends on a combination of socio-semantic elements, which act together to construe the image of Polish men as competent and successful. The prototypical Pole presented in the pages of *Polityka* is an active and

confident citizen brimming with social power and political agency, unlike the modern representation of Polonia which, in its usual passive form, represents nothing but sexualized femininity.



**Figure 2.7** The ‘Special Report’: Adam as a career man - *Polityka* (30.12.00).

## **2.6 ‘Biology is Destiny’: Discourse of Polish Religiosity**

A few more national texts belonging to the realm of Catholic discourse have been equally effective in upholding the hegemonic image of traditional femininity. In 1988 John Paul II published a letter (‘*Mulieris dignitatem*’) in which he openly discussed the evangelical ideal of womanhood, providing the reader with a comprehensive illustration of what he sees to be the true vocation and dignity of women. The Pope described the position of women as equal but different from men, projecting a vision of gender relations based on the idea of complementarity and union, yet simultaneously rejecting claims that seek to perpetuate female inferiority or subordination (lines 21, 25). In support of his claims the pontiff made numerous references to the originality and

diversity of females, praising qualities linked to ‘women’s genius’ and affirming richness of their ‘personal resources’.

The particular value of femininity which, as the Pope states, exists irrespective of women’s cultural context or personal characteristics (line 29), is expressed more fully through motherhood: the sincere ‘gift of the person’ (line 18). The ability of women to give birth not only makes them responsible for fulfilling the motherly role, but also directly relates to their specific psychological characteristics. It is the physical disposition to motherhood which, according to Catholic teaching, makes the woman a person of special sensitivity and intuition (line 16). Once again, the biblical figure in which both the dignity and vocation of women is most fully realized is the Virgin Mary (line 4).

A significant step forward with respect to acknowledging women’s rights to equal opportunities on the same footing as men, was the publication by John Paul II of ‘*Evangelicum vitae*’ (1995). This document acclaims women’s role within culture, recognizing the need for feminist thought and action. In the Pontiff’s words:

It depends on them [women] to promote a ‘new feminism’ which rejects the temptation of imitating models of ‘male domination’, in order to acknowledge and affirm the true genius of women in every aspect of the life of society, and overcome all discrimination, violence and exploitation.

(John Paul II, 1995, nr 99)

In the same year, the Pope wrote the famous ‘Letter to Women’ in connection with the World’s Conference on Women in Beijing, where he openly accepts the blame of the Church for contributing to women’s marginalization and oppression (Makowiecki,

2007). Yet, what many saw as a key advance in Catholic thinking with regard to gender politics and values soon gave way to the old style rhetoric of natural law and divine order. The appearance of new documents, such as the Letter addressed to the Bishops of the Catholic Church, published in 2004, shows a clear influence of the statements contained within the earlier texts ('Mulieris Dignitatem') (Makowiecki, 2007).

The discourse of biological differences characterizing Cardinal Ratzinger's recent writing depicts women as 'self-giving', 'mature' and 'serious', but above all, endowed with the 'capacity for others' and a 'deep intuition of the goodness', which allow them to fulfill their duties perfectly within the narrowly demarcated roles as mothers and carers (Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, 2004: 8). The letter additionally contributes to strengthening the connection between women and sacrifice. This is expressed in the following excerpt, which surprisingly, construes a positive evaluation:

It is women, in the end, who even in very desperate situations (...) possess a singular capacity to persevere in adversity, to keep life going even in extreme situations, to hold tenaciously to the future, and finally to remember with tears the value of every human life.

(Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, 2004: 8)

The letter concludes that women should fully acknowledge their unique values assigned to them by virtue of their gender identity (ibid.).

The essentialist argument about gender, which sets forth the theoretical premise for the extolment and glorification of ideal womanhood in Poland, has been criticized owing to the political and empirical questions it raises (Bystydziejski, 2003; Graff, 2003, 2007; Matynia, 2003). In an interview for Makowiecki (2007) Środa openly refuted the loftiness and grandeur of the Catholic rhetoric, saying that the highly elevated epithets

like the ‘genius of women’ or ‘women’s vocation’ serve to keep women in their assigned place and subservient to men. The sociologist observes that the expressions provide a ‘metaphysical rationale’ for women’s dependent status and are often used as legitimation of their unpaid labour, maternal obligations or lower pensions (Środa in Makowiecki, 2007: 228-29). The natural law argument, which forms the bedrock of Catholic teaching, has long been recognized as an effective means of hampering women’s intellectual pursuits in the spheres of politics, theology and priestly ministry (Hamington, 1995; Walsh, 2001).

The ‘benevolent’ female stereotypes (Glick et al., 2000: 763; Glick and Fiske, 1996: 491) underpinning the Catholic ideology of complementary gender differentiation serve a system-justifying role in two important ways. Firstly, the conceptual categories crafted through the contrastive rhetoric construe each gender as essentially fit for the positions and roles designated by the society, reifying the legitimacy of the status quo and reinforcing the existing separate sphere model. Secondly, by revering, rather than reviling, the ‘internal’ qualities of femininity, the reciprocal model of gender relations provides against women’s complete withdrawal from participation in societal relationships (Jost and Kay, 2005).

Quite the contrary, the emphasis on the female moral substance of responsibility and caring (Gilligan, 1979, 1982) highlights the uniqueness of women’s contributions to society. The compassionate language of flattery and admiration thus provides a symbolic mechanism for co-opting women into the patriarchal structure (Jost and Kay, 2005). Despite its misleadingly positive tone, the benevolent style of sexism appears to share much common ground with the hostile orientation. Both varieties assign women to restricted domestic roles as the ‘weaker’ rather than the ‘privileged’ sex, upholding,

as opposed to challenging, the legitimacy of men's supremacy within professional domains (Glick and Fiske, 1996).

The uncritical identification of Polish women as mothers, aside from its various manifestations in the national and religious discourses, has long been one of the primary concerns of the nation-state at policy level. The moral and legal battles over abortion, sexual education and in vitro fertilization staged by the Polish nation since the onset of post-Communist transition represent the main locus of policy control aimed at coercing women into assuming the approved mode of reproductive/sexual behaviour (Graff, 2007c). The next part of this chapter highlights the patriarchal practices within Polish Catholic nationalism by focusing specifically on one of such areas, namely, women's struggle for reproductive rights.

## **2.7 Symbolic Womanhood and Passive Victimology in the LPR Abortion Campaign**

In October 2006, the League of the Polish Families (LPR) put forward an amendment to Article 38 of the Polish Constitution, proposing that the clause stipulating 'the legal protection of life of every human being' be complemented with an additional phrase 'from the moment of conception' (<http://wiadomosci24.pl.3>). The aim of the suggested bill was to completely criminalize the practice of abortion in Poland and thereby revive the importance of Polish religiosity by propelling it to the centre of state ideology. Most importantly though, the proposal formed part of nationalist constructions of Polishness by positing women's constrained freedom as a unifying principle of Polish national identity.

In her recent work focusing on the intersections of gender and nationalism in contemporary Poland, Graff (2008) draws attention to a key religious event that allegedly forerun the national plea for the constitutional amendment. According to the Polish Press Agency (August 2006), the leader of the LPR, Roman Giertych, paid a visit to the famous shrine in Jasna Góra in the days preceding the submission of the parliamentary proposal and silently vowed to the Holy Mother that he would introduce a change in the Polish constitution (Graff, 2007b).

The symbolic act staged by the conservative leader effectively enlivened Polish nationalist tradition by re-appropriating one of its supreme symbols. The Virgin Mary, as discussed in the previous section, represents the model of maternal identity, but also serves as a great intercessor or 'mediatrix' in her role as the military protectress of Poland (Porter, 2005). She is therefore closely related to Polonia – the female embodiment of the nation. During his visit to Jasna Góra, Giertych skillfully played on these national sentiments by re-defining and re-claiming the symbolic notions of ideal womanhood (Graff 2007b).

In many ways, the figurative alliance between the conservative politician and the Holy Mother represents a reversal of the historic relationship that Virgin Mary has been shown to maintain with the Polish nation. In contrast to Mary's direct involvement in protecting the country's national essence, it is Giertych who, through his devotional confession, offered himself as the guard and defender of Polish Catholic substance. 'Sacrificed on the [national] altar' of elevated womanhood were constitutional rights to self-determination and planned parenthood (Graff, 2007b: 4). The legitimization and direct control of women's bodies thus became an important marker of Polish Catholic identity. The projected bearer of this collective identity and spirits has typically been the

Polish woman, once again inscribed within the national cult of selfless sacrifice and passive victimology (Graff, 2007b, 2007c).

The construction of women as cultural carriers and transmitters of nations underlie nationalist projects all over the world, as Yuval-Davies and Anthias (1989) convincingly demonstrate. What is particularly striking about this radically fundamentalist project of contemporary Poland, in my view, is that the constitution of national values has been predicated on the violation of human rights, thereby creating a symbolic association between Polishness and involuntary motherhood (see also Graff, 2007b, 2007c).

The specific character of Polish nationalism derives from the re-appropriation by the radical right of the Catholic logic, which applies also to the language of mainstream journalism. Graff (2007c) points to the unprecedented impact of the Catholic Church on the Polish public scene since post-Communist transformation, which has resulted in the instrumentalization of religious teaching and ideologization of media discourse. Already in the 1990s, peculiar lexical manoeuvres and semantic codes were intentionally employed by the Catholic clergy and later adopted by journalists. These included the use of the terms ‘conceived’/ ‘unborn child’ instead of the word ‘fetus’ or the reference to abortion as a ‘murder of Polish citizens’ (Graff, 2007c: 151; Środa, 2007: 657; Zielińska, 2000: 27).

Criminalization of the language of the debate, which was later extended to other issues relating to women’s health and reproduction (in vitro, prenatal tests, contraception), have effectively destroyed a potential for inter-group communication, rendering those in favour of abortion rights as essentially evil and immoral ‘child killers’ (Środa, 2007:

657). The opposite trend, so-called linguistic sentimentalization, can be seen with regard to issues connected to motherhood or pregnancy, where pregnant women are commonly referred to as ‘future mothers’ or simply ‘mothers’ (ibid.).

The position of the conservative parties like LPR on the question of abortion is thus directly reflective of the Catholic biblical stand, according to which the dignity and inviolability of human life should be cultivated from the moment of conception (John Paul II, 1995).

However, the resurgence of the fundamentalist policies in the midst of Poland’s democratic transformations might also be seen as a form of defensive reaction against the country’s assimilation in the European community. In other words, the construction of Polish women as feminine and maternal has equally served to consolidate Polish national identity, endangered by the prospect of the EU’s enlargement (Graff, 2007c).

References to the sanctity of ‘our women’ and the holiness of ‘our families’ became vividly contrasted in these nationalist discourses with the ‘troubled’ images of homosexuals and travesties borrowed directly from Berlin parades (Graff, 2007a; 2008). It is thus the fear of moral decay and the loosening of society’s Catholic standards that motivated Giertych’s repressive legislation (October, 2006). The ceremonious celebration and protection of Polish national culture and religion at the Mountain of Jasna Góra provided a means of illustrating and legitimating a national boundary within the European community.

The precise nature of these celebrations points to the specific role of women in these processes, which involves acting as symbolic ‘border guards’ in the pan-national political union (Armstrong, 1982), as well as bearers of the collectivity’s honor, as

expressed by the principles of Catholic moral behaviour (Hubinette, 2005). The challenge to the sexual/reproductive conduct by childless women, sexual minorities, feminists or anyone who actively supports reproductive rights often results in public condemnation, social ostracism and other forms of exclusionary practices.

I would add that the particular valuation of motherhood by the right-wing nationalist movement in Poland might be explained by reference to the role that the Polish family historically played in the continually oppressed nation. Particularly under the rule of an interfering, prerogative Soviet state, family and marriage were privately defined in idealized terms and perceived as the locus of freedom and autonomy. Represented as a miniature civil society and separated from the repressive public scene, the family acted as a 'tower of strength' and bastion of sovereignty from which Polish national identity could be freely expressed and articulated (Watson, 1993a).

The essentialization of women's identities in the recent nationalist campaign can thus be seen as a way of defending the patriarchal family model. Consequently, any form of social or political activity that appears to endanger its integrity, such as abortion, divorce, feminism, homosexuality or consumerism, to name just a few, is automatically rendered evil, unpatriotic or even anti-Polish.

## **2.8 Conclusion**

In this chapter I have given a discourse-diachronic account of Polish culture as a contextual prelude to the examination of contemporary representations. I have considered the ways in which aspects of Poland's socio-political reality, such as national history, religious orientation and material constraints in the realm of everyday practice, enter into the production of gendered meanings. I have moved from past to

present, general to concrete, symbolic to material, trying at all times to attest to the significance of discursive processes in their role as constitutive agents of ‘the social’, and vice versa.

As important pre-texts to contemporary narratives of Polish collective identity, I have invoked three prominent images of womanhood: the Virgin Mary, Polonia and the Polish Mother (PM). All three female figures originated and flourished as the ideal gender models under conditions of lost sovereignty, and have since retained their enduring power owing to the strong position of the Catholic Church in the polity and society. The paragons of femininity discussed in the chapter have been recurrently recycled in many contemporary representations and even played a part in the political struggles for women’s reproductive freedom.

The meanings of gender they have come to epitomize are, I would argue, uniformly restrictive in the manner in which they ‘subject-position’ women as mere biological and cultural reproducers, but also oppressive in the way they affirm the qualities of victimhood, pain and self-sacrifice. The benevolent tone of these classifications nevertheless deftly refute accusations of discrimination. The way women in Poland are both revered and demeaned, subjected and put on a pedestal (Jost and Kay, 2005), often in the same breath and, more startlingly, via exceedingly positive appraisal, proves that the historical underpinnings of Polish sexism have a properly ambivalent nature. The aim of the next chapter is to assess the extent to which these received images of womanhood participate in the production of contemporary Polish femininities. I will examine, to this purpose, discourses disseminated by the recently formed political association – the ‘Women’s Party’ (WP).

## Chapter 3

# WOMEN AND DEMOCRACY

*Identities are about questions of using the resources of history, language and culture in the process of becoming rather than being. Not 'who we are' or 'where we came from', so much as what we might become, how we have been represented and how that bears on how we might represent ourselves. Identities are therefore constituted within, not outside representation.*

(Hall, 1996: 4)

*There is no such a thing as 'being a woman' outside the various practices that define womanhood.*

(Cameron, 1996: 46)

### 3.1 Introduction

In November 2006 a Polish novelist, screenwriter and columnist Manuela Gretkowska published an uncompromising commentary on the position of women in contemporary Poland. The manifesto, released by 'Przekrój' (16.11.06) under the same title, brought to light anachronistic aspects of Polish political culture, revealing its chauvinistic practices and manipulative manoeuvres. The statement came as an immediate reaction to the latest developments taking place on the country's parliamentary scene. The formation of the neo-conservative coalition in 2005 resulted in the promotion of a radically nationalist agenda, which greatly endangered women's interests. The constitutional proposal brought by the ultra-Catholic League of the Polish Families (LPR), in an effort to completely ban the

practice of abortion (see Chapter 2), provided a valid reason in the novelist's view for calling for nationwide political action.

Yet, what some saw as an instance of artistic provocation or an isolated publicity gimmick invented by the 'burned-out writer' (<http://www.krytycznymokiem>) as a way of promoting her recent novel, soon materialized into a prominent social movement producing one of the most dynamic initiatives in the local history of women's activism. The spontaneous artistic appeal, born out of powerlessness and genuine anger against the persistence of female oppression, initiated the beginning of a 'gendered' party. Dismissed as 'political folklore' (<http://www.cafebabel.pl>), compared to a 'beer party' and mocked as comical in its expression of 'ovarian solidarity' (<http://wysokieobcasy.pl>), Gretkowska's grouping withstood public resentment and ran for Parliament under the banner of the 'Women's Party' ('Partia Kobiet').

Hundreds of stories, news reports and lead articles have since been released by Polish and foreign media in connection with the feminist campaign, opening a platform for women's voices and creating a site for the articulation and re-negotiation of female interests. In this chapter I examine the many narratives centred around the Women's Party (WP) from the point of view of the way women were positioned in and through discourse. I am mainly interested in the way this new political organization recontextualized Polish female identity in its own space and with reference to concrete semiotic resources, both linguistic and visual (van Leeuwen, 2005).

In order to analyse the party's expressions of women's inner and outer selves, I draw on evidence from written media discourse, based on interviews with members of the political movement, as well as statements produced by other feminist figures associated with the party's political interests, which provide direct observations on the subject of women's cultural location. The texts for this study combine a great number of media sources including printed and electronic publications released by national and regional outlets. These range from broadsheets to political weeklies and women's magazines. In addition to employing different qualitative data, the corpus demonstrates a variety of media genres such as news reports, personal profiles, backgrounds, manifestos, political programmes and advertisements. Specifically, it features the party's own publications available from the website: <http://www.polskajestkobieta.org>. A particularly relevant source of information has been the novel 'The Female Citizen' ('Obywatelka') published by Manuela Gretkowska (2008) in the wake of her feminist project. The book draws a poignant description of Poland's socio-political profile, locating women at the centre of habitual interaction.

Though disseminated across different media outlets and falling under different genres, all of the texts studied belong to the same 'discursive formation' – a group of 'statements, concepts and thematic choices' (Foucault, 2004: 94) which participate in the production of similar knowledge. In order to classify claims about contemporary women, I have readopted Kaunismaa's (1995) two-dimensional schema, which conceptualizes identity in terms of the following clusters: cluster one focuses on discursive categories that identify subjects with regard to who they are and what they do (van Leeuwen, 1996, 2008). It also

considers which qualities, traits and characteristics are typically ascribed to the social actors (Reisigl and Wodak, 2001) and how they are evaluated (Martin and White, 2005).

Cluster two describes properties of identity in relation to systems (system-related identity) (Frey and Hausser, 1987 in Wodak et al., 2009: 16). It concentrates on the relationships between individuals and their collective formations by looking at how State institutions, legal frameworks and social rules of actions inform the position of identified subjects. This approach to identity serves primarily as an evaluation of social and political realms from which the referents derive their collective characteristics. In keeping with this line of inquiry, I will investigate in what way Polish women are civil actors of the contemporary Polish state and how they experience their everyday 'lifeworld' (Habermas, 1984) as part of the national habitus (Bourdieu, 1977; Kaunismaa, 1995).

It must be stressed that the properties of identity pursued in this chapter are viewed solely as discursive facts established in representation by means of symbolic resources. What follows then is an analysis of the epistemic 'statements' made about the attributes of female subjects, as opposed to the assessment of women's actual characteristics perceived as essentialist and pre-discursive. My aim is to discuss the way the master-narrative of the women's movement re-produces and transforms the identity of the modern woman. More specifically, I want to examine if the new forms of identity formulations transgress the oppressive ideals of Polish femininity espoused by the competing identity discourse of Catholic nationalism (see Chapter 2). The analysis in this chapter will seek to grasp the

dialogic relationships between the two discourses, marking their conceptual shifts as well as points of similarities.

### **3.2 Who is She? Linguistic Markers of Identity**

The linguistic acts of ‘self and other presentation’ (Reisigl and Wodak, 2001: 44) entail the use of categories that allow for a distinction between different groups or classes of people based on a number of socially relevant and frequently constitutive criteria. In his classificatory framework for representing social actors in discourse (see Social Actor model in Chapter 1), van Leeuwen (1996, 2008) discriminates between two broad types of linguistic ‘categorization’ that characterize individuals’ identity with regard to ‘who they are’ and ‘what they do’. He refers to them as ‘identification’ and ‘functionalization’ respectively (van Leeuwen: 1996: 54). For instance, identification depicts social actors in the mode of being and assigns to them more permanent identity characteristics. Most contemporary societies construct distinctions between classes of people with regard to a fixed range of socio-demographic criteria, such as age, gender, provenance, class, wealth, ethnicity, religion or sexual orientation.

The sub-type of identification which reiterates these sociological models of representation has been defined in van Leeuwen’s inventory account as ‘classification’ and distinguished from two other categories referred to as ‘relational’ and ‘physical identification’ (ibid.). The function of ‘relational identification’ is to qualify social actors in terms of their personal, kinship or work relationships. The role of ‘physical identification’ is to identify them by their physical characteristics (van Leeuwen, 1996: 56-57).

In the case of ‘functionalization’, van Leeuwen (1996) observes that discourse participants are often activated, that is, represented in terms of an activity they engage in, for instance an occupation or a role. Examples from this typology include referential terms transforming a verb into a noun via suffix endings -er, -ant, -ent, -ian, -ee, (‘interviewer’, ‘correspondent’, ‘payee’ etc.), or a noun into a noun (‘pianist’, ‘mountaineer’) through the suffix -ist and -eer. Alternatively, as exemplified by the compounds ‘cameraman’ or ‘chairperson’, functionalizations are created with the help of generic terms, such as ‘woman’, ‘man’ or ‘person’ (van Leeuwen, 1996: 54).

Applying the socio-semantic model (ibid.) to the narratives of the Women’s Party, I have found that the authors of the feminist initiative in their discussions of contemporary Polish women make frequent allusions to traditional demographic ‘carriers’ of identity, notably ‘classifications’(van Leeuwen, 1996: 54) based on gender and nationality. The frequent co-articulations of sociological categories pertaining to national and gender identifications reflect the current interests of the political movement and dovetail with their specific commitments towards defining and improving the position of women in Poland. Consequently, references to ‘women’ (‘kobiety’), ‘our women’ (‘nasze kobiety’), ‘Polish women’ (‘Polki’, ‘polskie kobiety’) or ‘women in Poland’ (‘kobiety w Polsce’) take a prominent place among other types of categorizations. Some examples below illustrate the co-text in which these identifications occurred:

(1) *Women in our country* are strong, enterprising and educated (<http://exclusive.pl>).

(2) I know that *women in Poland* are busy, but one cannot stay in the background all the time (<http://echomiasta.pl>).

(3) Are *Polish women* helpless? They are not helpless, but unwilling to take responsibility that comes with power (<http://wiadomosci.wp.pl.2>).

(4) *In Poland women* are pushed to the sidelines. It is easier for them to quarrel than to unite. We would like to unite all *women*, but they differ in their approaches to abortion (<http://wysokieobcasy.pl>).

The idea of belonging to the Polish nation is simultaneously linked with another mode of classification based on European membership or democratic citizenship. Similar to national or gender orientations, this type of identity is rather permanent – one we can neither decide for ourselves nor easily abandon (Machin and van Leeuwen, 2008). The following fragments taken from the home press construe the relationship between gender and political citizenship ensuing from Poland's recent democratic and geopolitical transformations:

(5) We, millions of adult women who *live in the European democracy and are its full citizens* (...) (Przekrój, 16.11.06).

(6) We want to wake up Polish women. *They are reportedly the most enterprising Europeans* (<http://newsweek.pl.1>).

(7) We want to enter Parliament. It is part of a social life and *women being its citizens* and paying the taxes are also entitled to it. Only they do not have their interests represented (<http://wiadomosci.wp.pl.1>).

(8) *We are in the EU*, but we are walking away from it. We are walking away from our chance for civilization (<http://gala.onet.pl>).

Women are referred to here as citizens and Europeans, though as will become apparent in later sections, the projected characteristics represent a state which is largely 'irrealis' ('we *want to enter Parliament*') (Martin, 2000: 150) – i.e. one which bears little

correspondence to the actual experience of contemporary Poles. The status bestowed on Polish women as participants in civil society and members of the European community has hardly extended, in Gretkowska's view, beyond its legal and formalistic dimension. The projected image of the autonomous female civilian should thus be read as an expression of the feminist writer's desires with regard to the future shape of Poland's budding democracy, rather than as an attempted description of its current socio-political reality.

Other features of women's identities frequently mentioned in Gretkowska's narratives are less fixed and represent significations that are more likely to change within the course of individuals' lives. These include 'classifications' based on income, wealth, education, place of residence, as well as 'relational identifications', 'functionalizations' (van Leeuwen, 1996: 54-59) and categorizations defining women with regard to their consumer behaviour (Machin and van Leeuwen, 2008):

(9) Poland is a *countrywoman*: ambitious, hardworking, *craving promotion* (Gretkowska, 2008: 52).

(10) Somebody once said that Poland is a woman, yet *from a small town*, so it is this woman which, I think, we should be reaching out to (<http://wyborcza.pl.1>).

(11) These women want to act. They are *tired of making applications, begging for alms* (<http://wyborcza.pl.1>).

(12) Polish women who *admire their men* (...) are deluding themselves (...) Just like a *relationship* should be based on partnership, rather than hypocrisy or lies, so does democracy require equal rights for all of its participants (<http://gala.onet.pl>).

(13) Then in the morning they come back to *their small businesses* (...) and *read women's magazines* (<http://wysokieobcasy.pl>).

The predicational devices italicized above constitute a powerful descriptive tool for outlining individuals' eco-social characteristics. Though not often explicitly expressed, some of the described identity features might be seen as indicating Polish women's working class background, as well as indexing consumer choices characteristic of the culture of poverty.

By contrast, the identity features of the female activists, i.e. those women who expressed a strong interest in Gretkowska's organization, are co-defined in terms of capacity ('specialists', 'experts') and cognitive predispositions ('intelligent'). The high level of socio-feminist awareness attributed to the participants of the women's movement cuts across social and professional classes. The activated participants range from managers and company directors to students and housewives. The fragments below characterize women based on a mixed set of features, such as age ('women between 30 and 35 years of age', 'old and young'), occupation ('committed to their career', 'teachers', 'therapists'), maternal identity ('mothers'), psychological facts or states of mind ('stand on their own feet' have not 'found their way of life') (Kaunismaa, 1995):

(14) The women who come forward are those with the *highest level of consciousness*, regardless of their professional status or life situation. Among them are *intelligent and educated specialists, managers and company directors: highly-placed women and media experts*, but also quite a few *students, housewives and those unemployed* (<http://wyborcza.pl.1>).

(15) The average group comprises *women between 30 and 35 years of age*. These are the most hard-pressed women *committed to their careers*, as well as those who are just becoming *mothers*, those who *stand on their own feet* and those who still *have not found their way in life* (<http://wiadomosci24.pl.1>).

(16) By looking at the emails I have already received, I gather there will be a wide spectrum of ladies - *old, young, students, teachers, therapists, experts*. I have not noticed any social or professional group becoming more active than others. *The age range goes from students to pensioners* (<http://trojmiasto.pl>).

Despite the wide range of classificatory criteria employed in descriptions of Polish women, certain aspects, including religious or political affiliations, are almost exclusively omitted from the feminist rhetoric. This might be expressive of Gretkowska's general reluctance towards including in the party's political programme ([www.polskajestkobieta.pl](http://www.polskajestkobieta.pl)) issues pertaining to candidates' individual worldviews (<http://partiak.integrum>), hence the consistent labeling of the group's profile as one concerned with women's 'universal needs and interests' (<http://partiakobiet.blogspot.com>) – an approach which stands in marked contrast to the ideologically explicit positions of the ruling political formations. The unique proclivity of the Women's Party towards a generic, depoliticized agenda is best captured in the writer's populist catchphrase: 'Uterine cancer is neither leftist nor right-wing' (Elle, 05.04.07).

However, despite claims to universalist commitments, the official rhetoric of the feminist initiative betrays a favourable stand towards a particular class of women. The category of identity-role which has received almost singular attention in the political discourse of the Women's Party, and therefore deserves a section of its own, relates to women as mothers.

### **3.3 Asserting Motherhood**

The excessive accentuation and mythologization of ideal motherhood observed in the historical narratives of Polish national culture (see Chapter 2) have found coherent

expressions on both symbolic and practical levels. In a similar vein, the re-configurations of women as maternal subjects characteristic of Gretkowska's feminist project combine various dimensions of legislative and discursive reality. For instance, the majority of policy proposals submitted in the party's political programme ([www.polskajestkobieta.pl](http://www.polskajestkobieta.pl)) assume traditional forms of maternalist politics. These include, inter alia, recommendations to abandon the currently restrictive regulations preventing the setup of more nurseries and kindergartens, but also declarations of anesthetized deliveries performed free of charge and unrestrained access to ante-natal care and other specialist treatments designed for pregnant women. In discourse analytical terms, representations of Polish mothers draw upon and utilize a wide gamut of lexico-grammatical features:

(17) In Poland a woman is *a reproductive machine* ('equals belly'), a political object devoid of political identity (<http://wysokieobcasy.pl>).

(18) Compared to Sweden, Poland is still stuck in the Neolithic period, treating women in a barbaric way such as *machines for producing babies* and generating problems (Przekrój, 16.11.06).

(19) I am not delusional. The new government might turn out to be more civilized, but it will not become more favourable towards women. After all, why would it look after somebody who is *holding bottles with milk* rather than petrol (Przekrój, 16.11.06).

(20) Abandoned by men like dogs in the woods, we are tied not to the trees but *to our own children*. We howl in despair not being able to *feed them* (Gretkowska, 2008: 44).

(21) This is about a woman who has no money to live on, *a single mother* who is on benefits. No woman would sit quietly by *a hungry child* (<http://wyborcza.pl.1>).

(22) We focused on *motherhood*, mainly because it accumulates the highest level of women's humiliation: motherhood which is both voluntary and involuntary. While modern States assist mothers, Polish women become handicapped after giving birth. If the number of nurseries and kindergartens was sufficiently high, those women willing to work could find their employment (<http://wysokieobcasy.pl>).

(23) Poland is a woman and must have a guarantee of legal and social protection of *mothers*, comfortable labour, etc. (Przekrój, 16.11.06).

(24) We will make demands for decent health care for *mothers* and *their children*, anesthetized labour as well as refunds for infertility treatment (Elle, 05.04.07).

(25) Sometimes we fail to see the obvious. Women make up half of the population, they *give birth to* and *look after children*, manage the households, work professionally, and they are still represented by men (<http://partiakobiet.integrum.lub.pl.1>).

(26) I want a modern country, where a woman has a guarantee of a real equality, despite *giving birth to* and *taking care of children* (<http://newsweek.pl.1>).

(27) *A mother with a child* cannot afford to queue for hours to see a doctor. An ambulance service will always take a drunken man off the street. It does not have the same attitude towards *a mother with a two-month old baby* (<http://lazar.webpages.pl>).

As mentioned earlier, social actors can be functionalized or identified based on more permanent characteristics. However, as van Leeuwen (1996) so aptly observes, even the apparently stable identity markers are heavily conditioned by the politics of time and locality. What in one culture or historical period is regarded as an unchangeable feature, and thus represented as 'being', can in other contexts become an activity, something we 'do' on a more or less fixed basis. Van Leeuwen (1996) makes reference to Foucault's (1981) seminal work on human sexuality to illustrate how the formerly functionalized sodomites were turned into an entirely new 'species' in the nineteenth-century discourse

of sexology by being credited with more stable properties of identity based on their affiliation with homosexual orientation.

The relative and polyvalent nature of sociological and linguistic categorization can be seen in the quoted examples of motherhood identification which, similar to sexual typology, predispose to different orders of representation. For instance, some of the references to Polish women as mothers have been realized linguistically via ‘functionalizations’ – here defined as both the act of begetting and nurturing a child. We can see this type of categorization in excerpts 25 and 26, which describe women’s maternal occupation in terms of two seemingly related activities. Such representations construct the parental experience exclusively through the acts of conception and delivery, thereby tying motherhood to female anatomy.

By contrast, excerpt 19 defines motherhood solely through the activity of child feeding. The bottle of milk represents an attribute of young mothers and contrasts with the ‘barrels of petrol’, symbolic of power and prestige and associated with male leaders. On the other hand, excerpts 20, 21, and 27 express motherhood through ‘nomination’ (‘a single *mother*’) and ‘relational identification’ (‘tied to our children’, ‘a mother with a child’, ‘a mother with a two-month baby’) (van Leeuwen, 1996: 52-54). In the last instance, the relation between a mother and a child has been visibly brought to the foreground, unlike excerpts 17 and 22, where the act of possessing a child has been objectivated via ‘nominalization’ (‘voluntary or involuntary motherhood’) or ‘synecdoche’ (‘belly’) (Reisigl and Wodak, 2001: 57).

In the first sentence of excerpt 22 we can see how the objectivated action (‘motherhood’) adds purposes and evaluations to the representation and at a higher

level serves to demonstrate the author's own legitimation with regard to the representational politics endorsed by her party (van Leeuwen, 2005, 2008). In other words, by explicitly defining the position of motherhood in Poland as 'humiliating' Gretkowska defended her almost singular interests in women as mothers. At a purely linguistic level, we can see how two nominalizations ('motherhood' and 'humiliation') are connected to each other by a casual process, so that the evaluative function of 'humiliation' becomes transferable to and in effect synonymous with the situation of mothers in Poland (van Leeuwen, 2008).

Further examples of objectification, as illustrated in excerpts 17 and 18 are realized by synecdochizing devices, i.e. 'substitutions within the same field of reference' (Reisigl and Wodak, 2001: 57). For instance, one of the criticisms directed by the WP's leader against the current government in Poland relates to the treatment of women as 'bellies', in other words as reproductive machines designed to produce babies. The use of the 'particularizing synecdoche' where a part stands for the whole ('pars pro toto') (ibid.) not only dehumanizes women but also functionalizes motherhood by focusing solely on its reproductive potential.

### **3.4 Consensus, Solidarity and Identity Sharing: the Strategies of Authorial Self-involvement**

The reconsolidation of maternity as an ineluctable condition of being and a chief representational mechanism for translating contemporary gender identifications extends also to the construction of the implied reader. In the initial text of the Women's Party (Gretkowska, 2006) alone, commonly known as the 'manifesto', several strategies have

been used to establish the readers' identity as motherly and nurturing. Consider the example below where such positioning has been employed:

(28) Women, girls, *mothers*, you should not endure this. Do come forward (...) I am asking you to *do it for our little Poles* [małych Polek], for us, because Poland is a woman (Przekrój, 16.11.06).

The postulation of the reader's maternal subjectivity has been explicitly articulated and naturalized in the above fragment via a direct and 'overdetermined' form of address pointedly indexing women's 'relational identification' (van Leeuwen, 1996: 42, 47). In this communicative act, the author appeals to her audience by calling them 'mothers' and asking them to join her organization for their own sake, as well as for the good of their little daughters. As such she unites herself and her female readers into a single identity predicated on the common experience of motherhood.

The appearance of closeness and similarity characterizing the imaginary relationship between Gretkowska and her female audience is additionally enhanced through the strategies of 'synthetic personalization' which, as Fairclough (1989: 62) demonstrates, consists in treating the unknown masses of people as though they were individuals. Gretkowska achieves this effect through the friendly and informal way in which she addresses the reader, for instance when using the pronoun 'you' in questions and statements or employing the addressee-inclusive 'we' to indicate sameness (Talbot, 1998: 185). In the sentence: 'I am asking *you* to do it for *our* little Poles', both of these strategies operate in a union to create the illusion of a 'we group' and a 'community sharing a single destiny' (Volmert, 1989 quoted in Wodak et al., 2009: 45).

An examination of who the 'hailing' (Althusser, 2004: 699) is being addressed at and through what devices, allow us to determine a position of 'direct interpellation' (Althusser, 2004: 699; Sunderland, 2004: 108; see also Fiske, 2004) by means of which the author constitutes herself and her readers as maternal subjects in line with the dominant ideology of Polish womanhood. The establishment of the common ground between the writer and her female 'interpellees' also occurs in those fragments in which Gretkowska openly self-identifies as a mother, such as in the following statements:

(29) Poland is not composed of gender studies and the countryside. The majority of people live in between. Because *I am a mother*, and a Catholic, I tend to attract those women who closely identify with these characteristics (<http://wysokieobcasy.pl>).

(30) *I have a little Polka* [małą Polkę] in my house. I would like her to have a good life, just like you do. I called her this way because I imagined she would be living in a wonderful Poland (Przekrój, 16.11.06).

The last example where the position of the narrator almost seamlessly blends with the established personality of her readership is particularly revealing, as it demonstrates how the projected image of all women sharing similar norms and values is taken for granted and presupposed to the point it becomes self-evident and undebatable (Talbot, 1998). In a sentence 'I would like her to have a good life like you do', the writer is not only setting herself and her audience up as mothers, but also expresses an implicit assumption that all mothers want the best for their children. This idea has been further expanded in excerpts 31, 32 and 32, where the construction of women's in-group solidarity has been reified through monolithic descriptions of mothers' 'common' needs and interests. A self-denying struggle for the child's future prosperity represents one such concern:

(31) I believe in the solidarity of women who *jointly fight for the future of their children* (<http://wysokieobcasy.pl>).

(32) *We all care about the child's prosperity*. That is why we are struggling for children's family houses, sexual education, alimony fund (...) (Elle, 05.04.07).

(33) *Our programme is pro-family and pro-child*. *Our maternal egoism* does seem to be of help here (<http://lazar.webpages.pl>).

Furthermore, in these examples the construal of women's singular identity has been strengthened through deictic means, for instance via the all-inclusive use of the pronoun 'we' (Wodak et al., 2009: 45), as in 'our programme', 'our egotism' or 'we all care about the child's prosperity'. I would argue here that the co-articulations of meanings and linguistic 'cues' (Sunderland, 2004: 3) contained in the above statements are reminiscent and constitutive of the hegemonic gender discourse of exemplary and good motherhood (Hao, 2009), discussed at length in Chapter 2. By drawing on the exemplary mother paradigm, Gretkowska has contemporaneously given credit to a number of questionable assumptions. For the most part she appears to strengthen the Catholic/nationalist viewpoint according to which the activity of child-rearing, including preoccupation with the child's welfare, should be the preserve of women. Even more startlingly, she seems to directly invite her readers to identify with the ever-bountiful and self-giving mother who puts the needs of her offspring before her own in order to safeguard their success in the society (Basin et al., 1994; Liamputtong et al., 2004; Youngleson, 2006).

The overarching theme of the interpellation, as well as its linguistic markers indexed by the all-inclusive pronouns, illustrates rather clearly that the point of view of the narrator and the voice of the ideal reader are assumed to be common. Thus, what is effectively

the subjective perception and gaze of the writer becomes the cultural warrant or collective experience of Polish womanhood. The external and omniscient focalization (Benwell, 2002; Mills, 1995; Sunderland, 2007) of the narratives from the prescriptive perspective of the maternal identity-subject mirrors the historical depictions of traditional femininity (see Chapter 2), according to which the position of Polish women should be synonymous with that of mothers.

The systematicity with which the founder of the gendered political group ‘summons’ its readers into a narrow discursive space, while at the same time distancing herself from alternative forms of femininities, including homosexual identity, shows distinctly that the gender model of Polish motherhood remains deeply embedded in the cultural consciousness and individual psyches of contemporary women.

The next section considers in more detail how this culturally significant formulation of female selfhood has been imagined and recontextualized in feminist discourse by examining the evaluative meanings attributed to the modern identity of the 'Mother Pole'. In order to assess the values of attitudinal positioning produced in the claims and expressions about Polish mothers, I draw on a number of analytical concepts derived from the theory of evaluation (Hunston, 2000; Labov, 1972; Martin, 2000; Martin and White, 2005).

### **3.5 Becoming a Polish Mother: The Language of Evaluation**

In considering attitudinal meanings, we must confront those aspects of representation (both linguistic and visual) which convey positive or negative assessments. These include utterances where the speakers/writers openly indicate their emotional reactions towards phenomena being evaluated (‘authorial, 1<sup>st</sup> person attitude’), as well as

prepositions where the authors attribute their evaluation to some external entity or situation ('non-authorial, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> person attitude') (Martin and White, 2005: 5-8).

In the media texts produced by the Women's Party, the evaluative attributions are predominantly negative, resting on and responding to the facticity of women's suffering and victimhood caused by the experiences of Polish motherhood. The struggle of being a mother in today's Poland involves facing the challenges of economic uncertainty, which for some simply means living a life of destitution. Such is the case of many single mothers who, despite claiming social benefits, do not have enough money to buy food for their own children: 'We howl in despair not being able to feed them'; 'This is about a woman who has no money to live on, a single mother' (Przekrój, 16.11.06). Disempowered economically and deprived of adequate protection by the State, the Mother Pole in Gretkowska's accounts has no other choice but to cohabit in an atmosphere of fear and intimidation: 'We stay in humiliating relationships with a drunkard and a brute, protecting children from deprivation' (Przekrój, 16.11.06).

Contributing to the degrading condition of today's women is the 'instrumental rationality' (see Chapter 4) (van Leeuwen, 2008: 113) with which the former government approached their female electorate – as 'reproductive machines' rather than a category of citizens imbued with political power and agency: 'an object of politics devoid of political identity' (<http://wysokieobcasy.pl>). As the feminist author ironically reports, the State shows little interest in women, as they are seen to 'carry the less prestigious bottles with milk and not petrol' (Gretkowska, 2008: 43). Already powerless, the Mother Pole becomes even more restrained as she faces difficulties with resuming employment. In the words of the party's leader: 'Polish women become *handicapped* after giving birth [my emphasis]' (<http://wysokieobcasy.pl>).

By assuming a clear victimological standpoint, the feminist writer co-constructs in those statements a discursive portrait of Polish mothers as people who are oppressed, marginalized and suppressed from the public realm, while suffering from violence and subjugation in the private sphere. The hailing and ‘interpellation’ of women as victim subjects (Althusser, 1971) has been overtly indexed (‘inscribed’) in this cultural rhetoric (White, 2001c: 42) through a selection of emotionally laden words or phrases, which locate female referents within the negative frame of misery and exploitation. The categorization devices used by the female narrator to explicitly evaluate the ‘lifeworld’ of Polish mothers (Habermas, 1984) include nouns: ‘humiliation’; adjectives: ‘handicapped’, ‘barbaric’; or verbs: ‘abandon’ and ‘howl’. In the remaining examples the values of ‘affect’ are based on a combination of ideational meanings (‘tokens’) implicitly indicating affectual positioning (Martin and White, 2005: 61-8).

An important aspect of these appraised assertions relate to their comparative nature which, as Labov (1972) explains, is intrinsic of the system of evaluation. In the utterances below we can see how the more or less overt markers of comparison have been used to better characterize the anomalous position of Polish mothers:

(34) *Compared to Sweden*, Poland is still stuck in the Neolithic period, treating women in a barbaric way, as machines for producing babies and generating problems (Gretkowska, 2008: 59).

(35) *While modern States assist mothers*, Polish women become handicapped after giving birth (<http://wyborcza.pl.1>).

(36) *A man is not a ‘disabled’ worker* because of pregnancy. He does not stay at home with a baby hugged to his bosom. He does not lose two or three working years owing to a shortage of

kindergartens. He is not thrown out of his house by a drunken wife, frequently with children, as a result of domestic violence (Elle, 05.04.07).

Like Saussurian signs (1974 [1916]) in the language system, the signification of Polish maternal identity in the liberation narratives is equally governed by the processes of relation and ‘differance’ (Derrida, 2004: 279). As the above examples make evident, the conditions of motherhood in Poland have been negatively contrasted with those of Sweden or other modern States, but also compared against the yardstick of Polish men. The signals of dissimilarity are here carried by explicit lexico-grammatical ‘comparators’, such as ‘compared to’ or ‘while (...)’, as well as by the less overt expressions of negativity (‘not’) (Hunston, 2000: 13-4). The repetitive use of the same grammatical structure in the last extract further intensifies the meaning of the projected evaluation and as such prompts the reader towards accepting the value position advanced by the author (Martin and White, 2005).

The authorial evaluation establishes the members of Polish maternal community as the marked ‘other’ in relation to the civilized and liberal ‘autonomy-subjects’. By juxtaposing Polish mothers with the representatives of emancipated Sweden and other democratic nation-states, the feminist discourse ‘carves out distinction between ‘us’ and ‘them’, autonomous and oppressed, liberal and illiberal, civilized and barbaric, universal and particular’ (Jakobsen and Stenvoll, 2010: 282). The taxonomic appeal to difference in the quoted texts thereby serves concrete classificatory aims by positing difference not only as a category of gendered and ethnic distinction, but also and more importantly, as an element of social inequality.

Apart from negatively assessing the socio-emotional disposition of Polish women, the evaluative attitude underlying the ‘mother as victim’ construct simultaneously conveys

strong moral judgements of political actors and State institutions and thereby achieves a powerful politicizing effect. Similar to the linguistic expressions of indirect ‘affect’ discussed above, the articulation of ‘judgement’ (Martin and White, 2005: 52) relies on the interaction of multiple elements within an utterance:

(37) Sometimes we fail to see the obvious. Women make up half of the population, they give birth and look after children, manage the households, work professionally, and they are still represented by men (<http://partiakobiet.integrum.lub.pl.1>).

(38) A mother with a child cannot afford to queue for hours to see a doctor. An ambulance service will always take a drunken man off the street. It does not have the same attitude towards a mother with a two-month old baby (<http://lazar.webpages.pl>).

(39) Any manipulator in the style of a communist, provincial bigwig easily spends millions of zlotys from the State budget treating himself to a railway station. Lonely mothers with no income are given a 40 zloty handout for children's coloured pencils on a one-off basis (...) The State sadists working regular jobs with particular delight call this abuse of our sensitivity and conscience a ‘family commitment’ (Przekrój, 16,11.06).

The discursive acts of victimization are underpinned in these fragments by ascriptions of causality, which place the sources of women’s oppression in Poland’s socio-political structure, thus acknowledging the institutional forces that shape and contour it. In this view, the ‘otherness’ of Polish mothers results from the position of women in the broader power hierarchies and the exclusionary politics of the Polish state within the key public areas, e.g. medical, legal, political and social sectors.

In the last extract, which comes directly from the Women’s Party’s manifesto, the inscriptions of negative feelings (Martin and White, 2005) are directed at specific government actors and expressed through disparaging and insulting names, such as

‘manipulator’, ‘provincial bigwig’ and ‘State sadist’. By personalizing the evaluative targets, the representation summons men into an identity role of the villain, invoking and reconsolidating the familiar binary relations between female victims and male agents (Jacobsen and Stenvoll, 2010). As well as classifying the social actors linguistically, the referential categorizations ascribe attributive qualifications to the members of masculinized institutions based on negative ‘judgement of social esteem’ (‘capacity’) and ‘sanction’ (‘veracity’, ‘propriety’) (Martin and White, 2005: 52).

The evaluative traces and other linguistic markers employed to express women’s maternal role indicate that the discourse of the women’s organization is both intertextually connected and contrasted with the ‘regime of identity’ supported by the Catholic nation-state. The continuity between the two models shows in the unitary endorsement of the motherist orientation and its elevation to the centre of Polish gender politics. The second element in common is that the signification of women via maternal inscriptions has been premised in both representations on the experience of female victimhood. As noted before, the notion of ideal womanhood has been repeatedly formulated in Polish national mythology in terms of oppressive ideas, such as ultimate sacrifice and passive victimology. Even recently we watched in fear as the anti-abortion campaigner and member of the fundamentalist Catholic grouping posited women’s restrained freedom as a unifying principle of Polish national collectivity (see Chapter 2 for a detailed discussion).

What, then, distinguishes the representational politics of the Women’s Party from the nationalist project of Roman Giertych? The answer lies in the divergent repertoires of meanings that the two identity models adopt in relation to motherhood and victim subjectivity, along with their disparate political objectives. In contrast to the LPR’s

negativity campaign, which bolstered, in my view, the historic alliance between femininity and victimhood in a cynical bid to divest women of their institutional prerogatives (see Graff, 2007b), Gretkowska's initiative engages with the victim discourse in an attempt to gain recognition of women's rights and redress the ongoing social inequalities. The presented accounts of collective pain and systemic exploitation of Polish mothers are used by the feminist leader as an interventionist mechanism for securing appropriate institutional measures in order to abolish patriarchal norms and practices in the wider population.

The position of mothers as victims of structural oppression represents, in my view, a political identity act that is consciously adapted to effect cultural transformation. Placed in a contrastive relationship with the autonomous and emancipated Swedish woman, the Polish Mother becomes a semiotic category, which marks Polish difference in Europe: no longer as a prescriptive identity concept, but as a 'positive force', which is enabling in the way it seeks to transcend the normative conditions of women's subjugation (Hao, 2006). The 'maternal victim discourse' therefore has clear political effects, which ensue from the attribution of causes of women's collective harm to concrete practices of the polity and society. The analysis of the attitudinal positioning shows that the sources of suffering are located inside the community, as seen in the critique of thwarted social relationships with misogynist men (politicians, public sector workers, partners) or ascribed to the Polish culture and its internalized oppressive values (nationalist, patriarchal, undemocratic) (Jakobson and Stenvoll, 2010).

From discourse analytical perspective (Reisigl and Wodak, 2001, 2009; Wodak et al., 2009), we can see how certain linguistic strategies are effective in violating those restrictive principles undepinning hegemonic femininity. For instance, in her key

political declaration, Gretkowska (2008) openly rejects the cultural imperative lying at the heart of dominant representations of women as self-sacrificing family guardians. In the writer's words: 'A family life is not an ordeal, not a complete devotion to a despotic male, contrary to the viewpoint presented by the League of *Patriarchal* Families [my emphasis]' (Gretkowska, 2008: 42).

In this short but emotive abstract, Gretkowska not only problematizes, but also ridicules the aberrant discourse of Polish Catholic nationalism which espouses the politics of victimhood and subjugation. The statement represents a direct challenge to the normative ideal of woman as the 'brave victim' (Marody and Giza-Poleszczuk, 2000: 114). By considering the manner in which the writer concurrently re-produces and re-defines the cultural paradigm of maternal femininity, we can distinguish between the following representational strategies:

- Constructive strategies (working towards constructing Polish women as maternal beings, i.e. physical and emotional carers).
- Justificatory strategies (working towards reproducing and legitimating motherhood as good and exemplary by protecting the sanctity of the mother-child bond).
- Destructive strategies (working towards dismantling the 'brave victim' status).
- Transformative strategies (working towards re-constructing motherhood from oppressive and self-sacrificial to autonomous and emancipated) (Adapted from Wodak et al., 2009).

In the following section I focus specifically on those elements of the current political scene in Poland that, as inferred from the WP's opinion pieces, contribute to women's

diminished status within the society. The thematic representation of Poland's current socio-political profile will be investigated in terms of women's location within the civil domain and, more widely, their participation in the democratic processes of post-transition Poland. By looking at female identity as an 'interest group' and 'civil collectivity', I will attempt to uncover the limitations of Polish political/cultural systems and reveal the implicit attitudes and assumptions that have been instrumental in upholding discriminatory attitudes towards contemporary women.

### **3.6 The Incomplete Citizenship as Gender Representation**

One of the key areas of political and discursive struggles between the feminist organization and the present government in Poland concerns women's partial status as State citizens. The notion of citizenship, as defined by the British theorist T.H Marshall (1950), asserts a full membership of individuals within the community and an equal and undifferentiated status of all citizens with regard to civil, political and social prerogatives. In the WP's data the prevalent descriptions of the current political culture openly defy such principles, pointing to women's impaired access to State resources, as well as a deep violation of rudimentary human rights. The fragments below exemplify the position of Polish women as second-class civilians:

(40) My personal experience and general observations have been the basis of my involvement in the WP. *These show that women are in a very bad position* owing to the fact *they receive unjust and debasing treatment* by the existing legislation, as well as by the widespread social norms prevailing in our country (...) (<http://partiak.interium.lub.pl.1>).

(41) Because Poland is us - women who are *legally abused, pushed into an inferior position* and *treated inhumanly* (Przekrój, 16.11.06).

(42) *In Poland one humiliates women with an astonishing ease: manipulates them making and interpreting laws that put them at a disadvantage* (<http://newsweek.pl.1>).

(43) We are the most enterprising women in Europe, yet at the same time *the most humiliated* (...) We may not have to wear charshafs, we are, nevertheless, *mentally enslaved* (Przekrój, 16.11.06)

(44) A Polish woman has nothing but her gender identity. She is *totally bereft of her legal and economic dignity* (<http://wysokieobcasy.pl>).

The discursive presentation of female citizens, which simultaneously acts as a critical characterization of other political entities (above all, the present government and its leaders), reveals the presence of non-fallacious argument schemes, such as ‘topoi of humanitarianism and justice’ (Reisigl and Wodak, 2001: 78) (see also Chapter 1). According to the theory of argumentation (Kienpointner 1992 in Reisigl and Wodak, 2001: 75), ‘topoi’ or ‘loci’ represent ‘content-related warrants’ that link arguments with the conclusion. The parts of feminist arguments which attest to women’s inferior position within the ‘Stadtnation’ (Yuval-Davis, 1997: 20) focus on the abuse of women’s human rights and the ongoing practice of gender discrimination (‘topos of humanitarianism’). In a similar vein, the related concept of social justice, which derives from the premise ‘equal rights for all’ (‘topos of justice’), has minor significance in the context of Polish gender politics (Reisigl and Wodak, 2001: 78).

The specific arguments underlying the construction of women as minoritized subjects display specific linguistic realizations, which involve a highly affective lexis. The critical attitude (Martin and White, 2005), which no doubt lies at the heart of Gretkowska’s recontextualizations of Poland’s political present, conveys strong values of ‘affect’ and ‘judgment’, which combine prosodically to re-create the mental and

physical anguish experienced by Polish women. The instances of inscribed evaluations include the following lexicalizations: ‘abused’, ‘humiliated’, ‘mentally enslaved’, ‘treated inhumanly’, ‘bereft of legal and economic dignity’, ‘pushed into an inferior position’, ‘receiving unjust and debasing treatment’ etc.

Such affective inscriptions amplify the force of evaluation through semantic ‘infusion’ of qualities and verbal processes (Martin and White, 2007: 143). In other words, the lexical forms already imbue the utterances with a high depth of intensified feeling, without the need for grammatical qualifiers to reinforce the meaning. The frequent authorial reliance on the ‘upper-scale circumstance of manner’, exemplified by the words like ‘abuse’, ‘humiliate’ or ‘enslave’, emphasizes the emotional aspects of women's predicament and, as such, sharpens the critique and delegitimation of Poland's political practice.

Though evaluations of this kind are conducted for specific purposes that have fostered the politics of the women’s organization, the social issues highlighted therein constitutes a response to a stimulus which is ‘realis’, i.e. referring to existing conditions and states (Martin, 2000: 150). The representations underscore, therefore, the material practices of the Polish state at a macro-level, and equally demonstrate a range of micro-practices in which contemporary women partake as part of their daily struggles (Machin and van Leeuwen, 2008). The unequal positioning of women in relation to the State and other collectivities can be seen in the following statements expressed by the founder of the Women’s Party:

(45) Politicians muscle into my house, they try to enter my bed and sell medieval stories of how I should be living or reproducing. They discuss abortion, contraception, without consulting the most interested party. The new governments do nothing about explicit and implicit

discrimination of women, however contrary to the norms of the European Union (<http://newsweek.pl.1>).

(46) The existing anti-abortion legislation constitutes a compromise, according to the Church. The LPR's Founding Fathers of the New Republic of Poland decided to restrict it even more (...). It does not matter if their Mother Pole will survive this, or whether she feels like being a mother - omni-power over women by all Poles (Przekrój, 16.11.06).

(47) Nobody takes us seriously (...). The classmates of Anna watched indifferently or helplessly as their friend was being humiliated, nearly raped. In Sweden, the sexually liberal Sweden, the girls would tear the boys apart if they had harassed one of them - a matter of culturally varying attitudes. A woman up there is somebody. In Poland she is an object one can manipulate between their legs, a loophole in the regulation (Przekrój, 16.11.06).

The excerpts describe in detail the elements of State control and intervention that sustain women's status as an oppressed community. These encompass the modes of governance and regulation in the areas of social care, health or sexual education, which have proven inadequate in ensuring access to rudimentary civil resources. What is more, some of the political prerogatives, such as the already restricted rights to women's reproductive freedom, have come under renewed threats following the onset of the conservative revolution. The last fragment comments on the widespread problem of physical and mental violence against women. The case of Anna, a high school girl who committed a suicide after being physically abused by her colleagues, serves as an illustration of its severity.

### 3.7 'Tomboy', 'Mouthpiece' or 'Window-dressing' - Introducing Women Politicians

Several social issues received a prominent place in the feminist media debate. These relate to women's partial inclusion within the political bodies and their diminished role in the determination of their own interests:

(48) What are they [women] most of all grieving at?

*It is to do with their lack of voice: the fact that their problems cannot be raised at the public forum. They are part of this society and after several years of transformation they are still underrepresented* (<http://wyborcza.pl.1>).

(49) *It is men who are in power* and we would like to restore the balance. We have not received our share of rights, privileges and opportunities. We do not want 'sexmission', but normality (<http://lazar.webpages.pl>)

(50) We want to enter Parliament. It is an element of social life and women have their part in it by paying taxes as citizens. However, *they do not have their interests represented* (<http://wiadomosci.wp.pl1>).

(51) *There is hardly a handful of women in the Sejm. So, by looking at the number of female parliamentarians, it is men who decide about our fate, our future.* (<http://partiak.integrium.lub.pl.1>).

As the examples illustrate, women's membership in the legal and political realms of modern Poland has been founded on the principles of exclusion. Women participate less in the processes of decision-making, which frequently impedes the articulation and assertion of female perspectives and results in their suppression by male interests. Some of the utterances, which represent the voices of Polish women, express a strong feeling of dissatisfaction with regard to men's use of political rights and privileges and a deep

sense of anger at the fact that women's collective fate is still largely determined by outside decisions and actions. The most recent consequences of men's near monopoly of power have been boldly summarized in the following excerpts:

(52) Personally, I am tired of 'dietary politicians' or boors referring to women politicians as tomboys. Enough of sexual scandals, double morality (<http://partiak.integrium.lub.pl.1>).

(53) In the first Wrocław meeting the women spoke a lot about their unhappiness with their parliament. The current politicians do not represent their interests. I gather they are more interested in decommunization, security clearance, fights, or rough and tumble (<http://partiak.integrum.lub.pl.2>).

(54) (...) It has been like this for several years now, irrespective of who comes to power, the left-wing or right-wing. Once the suit-clad warriors usurp their power, there comes some real fights over who gets their share of post-communist and unionist loot (...) (Przekrój, 16.11.06).

(55) Power lost its prestige long ago. We can see its mechanisms; simpletons looking after their interests through criminal means (Przekrój, 16.11.06).

(56) In Poland there are no normal, daring politicians fighting for confessed values, people who are more than just money-grabbers. There are, however, office-bearers who strive for power and would do anything, however irrational, to get it (<wiadomosci.wp.pl.2>).

Disillusionment and contempt are barely disguised in the above opinion pieces. The women, interviewed by different newspapers in connection with the established feminist initiative, quote specific instances of the government's chauvinistic practices, including the involvement of some high-profile politicians in the national and well-publicized 'sex for work' scandals. The oral statement released by the member of PiS Jacek Kurski, quoted in *Rzeczpospolita* (30.11.06), caused similar concern and outrage in the feminist circles. When asked for his views on female MPs, the politician replied sneeringly; 'they are all tomboys' (<http://new-arch.rp.pl>).

In addition to displaying highly misogynist attitudes towards female leaders and women in general, the conservative groupings came under fierce criticism for making the issue of decommunization the focal point of their political agenda. Consequently, politics of resentment and irrelevance, fueled by countless suspicions, arguments and slanders, became a dominant feature of the political landscape in Poland, relegating the issue of gender equality to a secondary position.

The assessment of Poland's public and institutional realms endorsed through the narratives of the Women's Party reveals a strong moral evaluation of the government and its action (Martin 2000: 156). The carriers of attitude are here predominantly expressed denotatively and realized by the strategies of 'reference' and 'predication' (Reisigl and Wodak, 2001: 44). Deprecatory nominations like 'boor' or 'simpleton', employed to describe male leaders, impart negative 'judgment of capacity and propriety' (Martin and White, 2005: 53), without applying predicational qualification (Reisigl and Wodak, 2001: 45). By contrast, assessments of 'normality' and 'tenacity' (Martin and White, 2005: 53) have been presented directly by means of evaluative attributions. The negative traits ascribed to Polish politicians are 'abnormality', 'cowardice', as well as 'irrationality', all expressed in the form of attitudinal adjectives (Martin and White, 2005).

A significant number of evaluative statements conveyed in the WP's reports orient to 'social sanction' and as a consequence touch upon moral and ethical issues associated with legal or religious domains (Martin and White, 2005: 52). Nominations like 'money-grabbers' or 'office-holders', supported by a number of formulaic expressions which ideationally declare men's uncompromising quest for wealth and power, point to a violation of many institutional and democratic principles. The ordinary mechanisms

through which Polish MPs conduct their daily political affairs have been referred to by Gretkowska (Przekrój, 16.11.06), as criminal or gang-related ('gangsterskie metody').

In an analogous way, the feminist (ibid.) draws on the metaphor of 'tribe' to attribute primitive, almost animalistic characteristics to some of the less civilized parties. The men within these parties have been compared to 'suit-clad warriors' aggressively plundering 'post-communist loot' (extract 54). All of these attributions illustrate the uncivilized and uncultivated aspects of Polish political culture, laying bare the illegitimacy behind its many practices.

Equally worthy of notice is the position of women within these formations. Gretkowska has coined the expression of 'political sex' (extract 59) to refer to the role of women within what she calls ideological or patriarchal groupings. According to the philosopher and WP's advocate Katarzyna Miller (extract 58), a great number of women working within the conservative coalition serve as the 'mouthpiece' of men. This means they frequently defy their own principles to satisfy the needs of the male majority. As the examples below demonstrate, the female members of the government are commonly expected to support their parties' policy line, however contrary it might be to the interest of the female electorate:

(57) The female members of parliament are active within the ideological parties and represent their programme, which does not always agree with the interests and needs of Polish women (<http://partiak.integrum.lub.pl.3>).

(58) The current parties are patriarchal, and so the women within their ranks work for the benefit of men, whether they like it or not. They are free to be the mouthpiece of men. What they need to realize, though, is that in many cases they act against women, and thus against themselves (<http://static.zwierciadlo.pl>).

(59) Each of the present parties is a man's party. I refer to women working within such parties as a 'political sex'. They are the politically masculine women (<http://lazar.webpages.pl>).

Similar to the assessment of men's misguided actions, many of the behavioural standards displayed by female politicians or wives of political leaders have also deserved to be called 'tribal', in the opinion of the feminist writer. For instance, Gretkowska openly castigated the attitude of women from the Self-Defence party for publicly defending 'their' men's tarnished reputation in the wake of the sex scandals (extracts 60, 63). As part of female defensive reaction, a fellow party member and wife of the accused politician was said to express her pride at the defendants' sexual prowess. In a conversation with Radio RMF the woman retorted 'It is good that they are still potent' (<http://impresjee.blox.pl>).

Not surprisingly, the same group of female MPs poured scorn on the idea of a gendered party. Though unquestionably 'loyal' towards their male colleagues, the female members of Polish conservative parties were nevertheless repeatedly treated as dummies and window dressings by their party leaders. This and other observations made by the chair of the women's movement are summarized below:

(60) The statements made by the Self-Defence activists show *their politics is still tribal*. The statements put out by their women are statements of the *tribal women*. They are proud of their men's lust and treat other women like a commodity. This is not a party. *This is a tribe* from the Vistula. The Self-Defence party has the highest number of women within their ranks. *They are more like dummies* (<http://wyboreza.pl.1>).

(61) *The idea of establishing a [women's] party was initially jeered at not only by the male representatives of the political scene, but also by women who belong to the camp of the ruling parties* (<http://cafebabel.pl>).

(62) Recently I was sitting in a studio next to one of these women, who kept fleeing when I talked about the women's party and the rights of women in Poland. The female parliamentarians who represent PiS or other parties do not care about us (<http://exclusiv.pl>).

(63) Following the sex scandals, *the women from the Self-Defence or PiS have to warm up the parties' image (...) as if they were some kind of underpants*. By identifying with their parties' priorities, these women have little to offer to other women (...) It is a questionable, almost ambiguous process, as they legitimize and justify a dubious politics with regard to women's issues (<http://exclusiv.pl>).

(64) It is unacceptable that women in politics are being marginalized or used as *a tool for warming up the image*, and thus, pushed to the first row whenever European parliamentarians come in for a visit (<http://gala.onet.pl>).

A detailed discussion of the instrumental positions 'designed' for political women by the affiliated networks of media and parliamentary cultures will be provided in the form of socio-semantic analysis (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004; Reisigl and Wodak, 2001; van Leeuwen, 2008) in Chapter 4. For the moment, I would like to draw attention to the party's own use of symbolic resources in the process of articulating and translating women's collective self-hood.

### **3.8 Poland - The Fallen Woman**

An important semantic concept applied in this characterization is the catchphrase of the organization: 'Poland is a Woman' (Przekrój, 16.11.06). This metaphorical expression, which caught journalistic interest from the moment it appeared as the party's banner, serves as a linguistic tool for drawing Poland's socio-political or even economic profile. The multi-layered structure of the metaphor can be seen in the fragments below:

(65) *The Polish economy is a fallen woman*: she has a tendency to fall if she does not watch herself. She resembles a feudal woman, a woman from harem (<http://lazar.webpages.pl>).

(66) *Is Poland sexy?* Even if only a little bit sexy, then potatoes must be the aphrodisiac. (Gretkowska, 2008: 18)

(67) *'Cause Poland is us- women who are legally abused, pushed into the inferior position and treated inhumanly* (Przekrój, 16.11.06).

(68) Let's try and leave *the Polish women's hell* (Gretkowska, 2008: 43).

(69) Unless they throw off their apathy (...) they will not abandon *their ghettos* (<http://wysokieobcasy.pl>).

(70) *Poland is a female desert* (<http://wyborcza.pl.1>)

(71) (...) *The enslaved, dirty and grey Poland* (<http://exclusive.pl>).

The extracts above are useful for revisiting some of the central themes that remain crucial to the WP's identity work. The question which I find particularly relevant for this analysis is what kind of woman is 'Poland' today? According to Gretkowska, 'she' is a 'fallen woman', a member of the most oppressive systems based on homage ('feudalism') and servitude ('harem'). She is also a suffering victim ('women's hell'), abandoned ('female desert') and marginalized ('ghetto') by residing in a place of torment and destruction – an area which is desolate or inhabited by the excluded communities. The highly emotional rhetoric underlying the representations of Polish public identity points to the existence of an overarching metaphor of prison and slavery which appears to define the experience of contemporary females.

The imagery and language of this interpretation is an almost exact replica of the nineteenth-century impersonation of Polonia: the crucified, dying and enslaved woman who serves as the political allegory for Poland's loss of independence. The problem with this conceptual borrowing is that it implicitly accepts and reproduces the negative construction of female victimhood, once again placing women's identity at the centre of national martyrdom. Though the writer sees no major contradiction in appropriating the elements of cultural semiosis that maintain fundamental links with the oppressive ideology of Polish messianism, the danger of being 'drawn into the discourse and logic from which [she is] trying to differentiate' (Taylor, 1997: 2003) is, I would say, rather tangible.

It appears somewhat misguided, if not futile, in my view, to even attempt to dismantle the normative claims on which the nationalist identity model is based without taking into consideration the origin of the model. Despite the similarities between the two embodied representations, their political motivations are, nevertheless, diametrically different. The strategic reliance on the metaphorical language in the women's nationwide campaign constitutes an instrument of feminist critique against the government's failure to achieve constitutional equality. The image of Poland co-defined through these persuasive narratives indicates a national habitus that is fearful, backward, unsafe and oppressed. The following quotations obtained from the published interviews with Manuela Gretowska, as well as from her most recent novel (2008), provide further insights into the limitations of Poland's volatile democracy:

(72) *We have no sense of solidarity or citizenship. Nor are we convinced we make a society where everyone is free and has their rights safeguarded* (<http://exclusive.pl>).

(73) *We are not yet fully developed as a civil society.* We are bereft of normal, constructive instincts. Everything here is reactive and artificial. Either a conformist kitch or a prewar heroism.

(74) (...) Hence, all the recent scandals, whether moral or sexual, did not draw a proper social response. In a normal country scandals like these would reach a magnitude of an earthquake (<http://exclusive.pl>).

(75) *A backward world, a weird atmosphere of fear and confusion.* A faked mentality, hypocrisy enforced by the authority. The European normality conjures up images of the West-Atlantic system. The phrase sounds like the North-Atlantic Treaty; military and dangerous. As yet there are no cars arresting those who are disobedient. There is still a freedom of speech (Gretkowska, 2008: 13).

The statements point to the incompleteness and underdevelopment of the country's civil domain, which accounts for the society's diminished sense of security and freedom, but also explains the general confusion with regard to what rights and responsibilities are the hallmarks of democracy. The impaired status of Polish civil community, marked by weakened solidarity and decreased political awareness, means that even the most outrageous moral scandals, such as the simulated rape on the school girls Anna or job-for-sex scandals, have not induced a proper public response.

The government's relentless focus on the country's heroic past, manifest through the utopian idealization of solemn patriotism, provides little assistance in improving Poland's democratic standards. The image of the Polish nation in a state of regression and suffering from continuing mental anguish dominates the feminist rendering of national representation. A frequently selected metaphorical device used to impart the sense of political inertia is a time trope, as demonstrated below:

(76) *The Renaissance* - the last era of Polish normality (Gretkowska, 2008: 18).

(77) The Polish women are *lost in time*, somewhere *between the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century* (<http://gala.onet.pl>).

(78) Poland (...) is still *stuck in the Neolithic period*, treating women in a barbaric way (Gretkowska, 2008: 59).

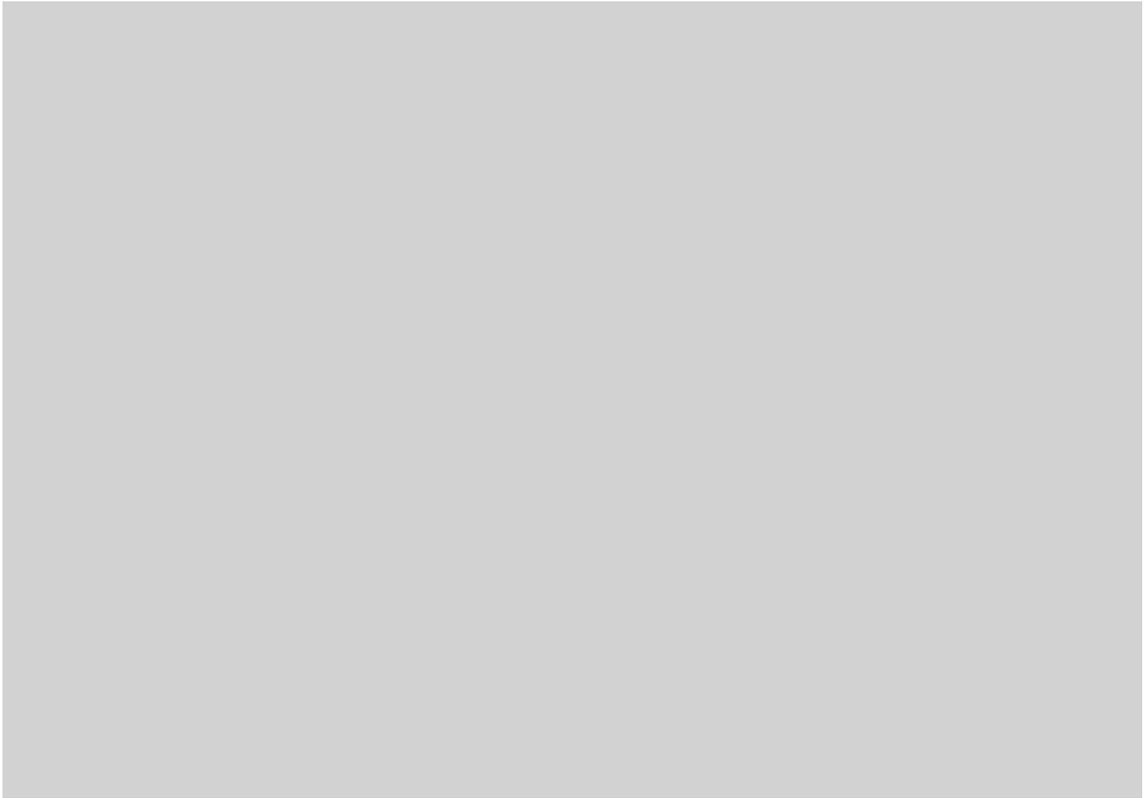
(79) Let us leave *the nineteenth century*. We do have a right to equal citizenship (Gretkowska, 2008: 41).

(80) In every term of office, every dozen years we are rolling a boulder up a hill of civilization, only to watch us fall down, straight into *a mentality which goes back fifty years* (Gretkowska, 2008: 38).

In addition to dismantling those highly confining practices which hinder women in the pursual of their interests, the feminist writer has also opened up a new space for expressing alternative voices and discourses. I will discuss this topic in the next section.

### **3.9 From Mother Pole to Mother Civilian: Re-fashioning Female Identity**

The ideological challenge to and reformulation of female subjectivity undertaken by Gretkowska's party demonstrates the use of a wide range of material and semiotic resources, which assist in the formation of a new discourse setting where other, potentially subversive, elements of women's identifications can be freely developed and co-articulated. This is largely done by means of multi-modal representation. The altered site where women's social identities have been transformed and re-configured is the party's official website reproduced below:



**Figure 3.1** The Women's Party web page: <http://www.polskajestkobieta.org/>

The most salient element constructed through the digital pathway, as well as the nucleus of pictorial information, is the party's campaign poster placed on the top of the page. The use of visual language in political branding is a popular marketing technique whose underlying aim is the communication of private attitudes and values, thereby providing the electorate with effective modes for developing new allegiances and identifications. As Mitiskopoulou (2008) describes:

(..) Differentiation during election periods is now often based on the image and the personality of leaders. The importance of political branding has often been summarized in the following arguments: branding adds emotion, offering clues that make voter's choice easier, since political ideologies have become so alike: the emotional relationship ensures loyalty to the brand (the political party) (...)

(Mitiskopoulou, 2008: 357)

It comes then as little surprise that the subjects of the *mise en scene* on the computer-mediated representation are the members of the gendered organization: Manuela Gretkowska and other nationally recognized female figures (e.g. actresses, singers, journalists, TV presenters, models), who have pledged their support for the feminist initiative. The real motive behind using the well-known names as the flagship of the political campaign is summarized in the abstract below:

(81) We are heading for a change because we are worth it, our lives are valuable. Why is it that only advertisements for creams can be colorful and aesthetic? The letters we receive are brimming with strength and enthusiasm. We have to show it. Banner pictures like ours need famous faces, associated with views and private lives. We need female symbols that can unite intellectual women and soap lovers, yuppies and village-dwellers.

(Gretkowska, 2008: 52)

As may be inferred from this direct citation, the artist has consciously readopted the conventions of the commercial world to create an online site in which the new identity of females could be resignified based on modern and progressive values. Strength and confidence are posed as the qualities of women's reinvented status and reinscribed ('re-semiotized') by means of visual adaptation (Iedema, 2003). The women that appear in the picture frame are shot in positions of dominance and power, which can be seen at all three levels of semiotic representation, known as experiential, interpersonal and textual

meta-functions (Halliday, 1985/1994) (see Chapter 1). For instance, the choice of a 'demand' picture over an image act, which represents an 'offer' (ibid: 121-130), contributes to the impression of women's assertiveness and self-confidence (see also analysis in Chapters 2 and 5). Rather than putting themselves up as objects for the viewer's scrutiny, the represented participants initiate a visual form of address by actively inviting the viewer to establish eye contact with them. The vectors formed by women's direct gaze fully acknowledge the viewers' presence. The combined use of non-verbal clues, such as a smile or a friendly-looking face, suggests that the demanded relation is a friendly and amicable interaction (Kress and van Leeuwen, 1996; Machin, 2007).

The social meanings expressed by the interpersonal resource parallel another layer of representation related to the ideational function. Here, the use of the 'narrative', rather than 'conceptual' structure (Kress and van Leeuwen, 1996: 43, 79) imparts positive values to the visual message. Kress and van Leeuwen (1996) distinguish between images that encode experience by focusing on actions and processes of change to those featuring static, almost timeless qualities of representation. The poster of the Women's Party orients towards a 'narrative' and 'transactional' schema (ibid: 56, 61) by showing women involved in an active process of movement. The trademark of the visual transaction is the presence of the vector which, in the case of the above illustration, emanates from the participants' limbs, but which could also be 'fused' with the actor's bodies (ibid: 56). Such vectorial patterns bestow on the image strong features of dynamism and directionality, rendering the presented subjects in charge of their immediate context.

In addition to being placed in the realm of self-control and unrestrained mobility, the women in the feminist poster participate in the 'bidirectional' processes, assuming the roles of both 'actors' and 'goals' (ibid: 63). The relations of 'simultaneity' ensue from the participants' performances of gestures of mutual embrace, realized once again through vectorial devices. The socio-semantic function of the embrace or the handhold, so prominently displayed in the political ad, has yet another meaning in the visual language. It adds to the expression of women's group identity, projecting sameness and solidarity on the entire composition. The lack of framing elements in the poster's spatial layout indicates that the women not only operate as a team, but are also part of a single and overarching category, most certainly defined by their common gender and equivalence in socio-cultural status (ibid: 215).

The placement of all the mature actors at a similar distance towards horizontal and vertical lines enhances the impression of female unity. The correspondence between women is also strengthened by their almost identical posing. Such a collectivized image is furthermore signposted via linguistic means (Barthes, 1977), as evidenced from the party's combined name ('The Woman's Party'), reproduced in the right top corner. The selected referential term already contains a double plurality, linking a mass noun 'party' with the plural form 'women' (Machin, 2007: 118).

Considering compositional codes and their integration throughout the field of representation, we can see that the political ad has been structured along a vertical line. The opposition between upper and lower section construes, according to Kress and van Leeuwen (1996), different information values. The researchers observe that the great majority of Western advertisements utilize the top space to illustrate the 'promise of the product', devoting the bottom part to more down-to-earth and factual characteristics

(ibid: 193). The sense of contrast invoked through the system of vertical structuring prompted the scholars to divide the visual space into two separate domains, termed 'ideal' and 'real' (ibid: 193).

In the multi-modal website of the Women's Party, the ideal and thus ideologically foregrounded elements of communication have been expressed pictorially, as illustrated by the political poster. As the carrier of its exemplary value, the top section of the cyber space encapsulates the re-affirmed and re-invented essence of women's new identity – connoted by means of glamorous and aesthetic framing. The billboard portrays female celebrities in their double roles, as both mothers and professionals, thereby constructing a positive image of women as complete citizens. The representatives of Gretkowska's political narrative are shown as active and politically aware subjects who, in addition to nurturing their own children, display a high level of professional autonomy and agency. Portrayed from the right are the soap actress-turned-mother Magdalena Strużyńska, the singer and a mother of two Anna Maria Jopek, the journalist and celebrity critic Karolina Korwin-Piotrkowska and the TV presenter Magda Mołek.

As members of the Polish public scene, the women have proven themselves to be highly entrepreneurial and capable of self-managing their demanding lives and careers. This had clearly influenced the leader's decision about their involvement in the party's promotional campaign. According to Gretkowska (2008: 70) 'women love stars [as] they are normal girls just like them, ambitious and wise'. The projected ability of the female stars to unite and captivate all groups of women provided justifications for celebrity branding.

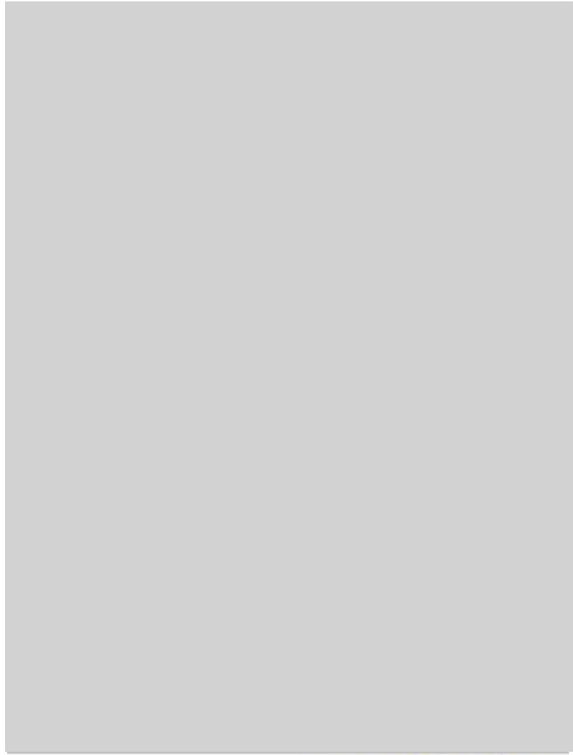
However, along with creating common points of identification, the visual text has also been instrumental in providing an 'aspiration lifestyle', covertly promising women access to a better lifehood. Referring to the work of O'Shaughnessy (2001), Mitsikopoulou (2008; 358) draws attention to the similarities in the marketing of politics and commodities, 'with the most being the fact that politics sell an abstract and intangible product, which is value laden and which embodies an attractive life vision and a promise about the future'. The new product 'delivered' via WP's promotional discourse represents a transformed female identity, imbued with power and attractiveness and associated with a better future. The glamorized portrayal of female celebrities, placed in the strategic spot of the party's official website, captures the idealized essence of this new identity.

The common visual criteria applied for gauging the realism ('modality') of the image are colour and background (Kress and van Leeuwen, 1996: 159-180). The use of exaggerated and saturated colours in the political poster, along with the plain, unmodulated background, enhances the impression of 'hyper-reality', showing women in terms of generic rather than individual characteristics. A skillful mixture of 'abstract' and 'sensory' modalities (ibid: 170) not only imparts the idealized message, but also provides a deep source of pleasure, enabling the viewer to experience a sense of affective enjoyment. The positive, emotional appeal expressed by means of vivid reds and purples in connection with warm and soothing blues effectively fixes the audience's attention on the main subjects of the *mise en scène*. At a deeper, subliminal level, the high condensation of emotive and sensory hues encourages the idea that these women's high social status, as well as its associated qualities of success and desirability, might be transferable to ordinary women.

The re-inventive potential of the upper section becomes particularly prominent once we compare it with the information placed in the realm of the 'real' (Kress and van Leeuwen, 1996: 193). The textual space formed directly underneath the image contrasts with the flawless visual by laying bare some of the harsh facts underlying women's social predicament. Enlisted within an amalgam of different headlines is the UN report highlighting Polish women's restrained access to contraception, abortion or anti-natal screening, followed by some shocking statistics on domestic violence. The contrast formed between the two modes of representation exposes a huge gap between the ideal of womanhood endorsed by the Women's Party and the politically structured habitus that continues to infringe on women's daily lives.

### **3.10 The Unashamed Body Politic: Stereotypes and Boundaries in the Feminist Campaign**

Though clearly innovative and potentially subversive in its approach to challenging the socio-cultural determinants of women's ingrained inferiority, the politics of representation proposed by the Women's Party simultaneously contains elements which re-inscribe entrenched gender norms and perpetuate essentialist assumptions. Almost one year on from the party's official registration, another visual announcement appeared on the feminist website, as represented below:



**Figure 2.2** The Womens' Party election poster: <http://www.polskajestkobieta.org>

The political poster released ahead of Poland's parliamentary elections in October 2007 immediately grabbed the attention of local and international media. Below are some of the original headings reproduced by foreign electronic press, accompanied by the translated versions of Polish headlines:

**Polish women strip off** in bid to woo voters (<http://telegraph.co.uk>).

**Naked women** promote Polish political message (<http://timesonline.co.uk.1>).

**Women's Party bares all** on election poster (<http://spiegel.de>).

**Naked women** are taking on the men in suits (<http://timesonline.co.uk.2>).

**Polish women party posts nude posters** for upcoming election (<http://digitaljournal.com>).

**'Naked and real'** - women's party election poster bares all (<http://dnaindia.com>).

**Women nude force** in Polish politics (<http://theaustralian.com>).

**Naked but not cheerful** (Wprost, 30.09.07).

**Electoral erotism** of the Women's Party (<http://pardon.pl.2>).

Women's Party **tries to enter the Sejm naked** (<http://dziennik3rp>).

The public furore spurred by the women's election campaign centred, as the above titles indicate, on the semantics of body and nudity. The trivializing and sensational tone adopted by some of the stories (e.g. 'Naked and (not) cheerful' directly invokes the Polish translation of 'The Full Monty') reveals the abidingly conventional and sex-stereotyped lens through which the media, particularly the local ones, chose to view the electoral message. The use of highly debasing frames, marked by clichéd and sexist commentaries, only confirmed the fears expressed by some of the leading feminist scholars. In the article for *Gazeta Wyborcza*, Graff (2007d) says that:

It is not possible to exist in politics by reinforcing stereotypes that for years impeded women's entry into political arena - namely, that a woman in the public sphere remains public property [kobieta publiczna]. Naked means obscene, sexually available.

(<http://wyborcza.pl/> my translation).

Without spending too much attention on the symbolic implications of this clearly misguided representation, I would like to refocus the election debate on the linguistic caption that elaborates the image. I am referring here to the slogan of the campaign poster featuring the phrase: 'All for the future and nothing to hide' ('Wszystko dla przyszłości i nic do ukrycia'). The full meaning of this political motto has been further expanded by the founder of the party in the form of a special commentary, which was

made available on the website: <http://www.polskajestkobieta.org>. The following is the translated version of the original manifesto:

Everything for the future - we are not concerned with the past, nor looking to open the secret archives or expose undercover agents.

All that interests us is a safe and predictable future.

We are courageous, strong and independent. Naked and true.

We are innocent and honest - we have clean hands, clean hearts and clean intentions.

We are not ashamed of our femininity. Dressed or naked we are not only sex objects.

We have faces, eyes, thoughts and convictions that we can defend.

(<http://polskajestkobieta.org>)

As well as providing insights into the party's political interests, the fragment is particularly revealing as a source of identity-related attributions. The benevolent traits (Jost and Kay, 2005) directly ascribed by Gretkowska to the feminist campaigners reflect stereotypical female strengths such as 'innocence', 'honesty' and 'purity'. The second component of women's 'intrinsic' characteristics has been construed ideationally (Martin and White, 2005) and expressed in reference to biblical symbolism. As proclaimed in the Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament (Botterweck et al., 1998: 558), the purity of hands pertains to the purity of intentions, while a clean heart implies ethical deeds. In this definition, the construction of would-be politicians unveils highly essentialist assumptions underlying the culturally established beliefs in a differently gendered consciousness (Ross, 2002) (see also analysis in Chapter 4). In other words, the predicated qualifications mentioned above position women as more

principled and ethical than men and, as such, help to reiterate and entrench traditional gender distinctions.

Drawing on the vast volume of literature on political advertising, Kahn (1996) argues that people's stereotypical perceptions of politicians stemming from gender categorization have a direct bearing on the candidates' self-evaluation. She concedes that political leaders often intentionally play with stereotypes, giving importance to gender-specific predications, as a result of the appraisal they obtain from the wider society. The Women's Party's focus on female super-morality signals an equally conscious strategy designed to substantiate the ethical basis of women's political behaviour in contradiction to the 'ruthless' and 'unscrupulous' style of men's governance.

However, the public endorsement of stereotypical female strengths has wider ramifications for women. Firstly, by portraying female candidates as pure and innocent, the advertisement conveys the message that women are 'not of politics' and therefore, should not embark on the 'dirty' route of government affairs. In Ross's (2002: 40) words: '(...) what other position is possible when thinking of mother, babies, and apple pie?'. A further implication of this argument is that, by getting involved in the public sphere, women will inevitably lose the 'intrinsic' personal resources which endow them with special goodness and extraordinary intuition (Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, 2004) (see Chapter 2).

Secondly, the discourse that claims to speak in favour of differently gendered morality presupposes inter-gender singularity, homogenizing all women and discounting individual differences that account for their differential interests, perspectives or

behaviours. Such representations attest to a narrow and one-dimensional view of female identity. Furthermore, they commonly pave the way for other totalizing assertions, including the highly fallacious generalization that female political style should differ radically from that of male leaders (Ross, 2002).

Finally, a frequent corollary of the use of benevolent appraisal in discourses about female MPs is another erroneous anticipation, namely the equation of personal integrity with better standards of political behaviour. Such assumptions create unrealistic expectations and offer opportunities for damning criticism, which the media continuously directs at female legislators. The positioning of female candidates as 'saviors' or 'agents of change' (Norris, 1997b) is evident in the following statements, which qualify the political style and character standards of the Women's Party:

(82) After the next general election it will be us – wise, bright and enterprising women - who will replace the parochial, slow-witted, unsuccessful politicians (Przekrój, 16.11.06).

(83) Those neuroticised blokes in grey suits have done little so far. I rest my hopes in these women [Women's Party] (<http://www.polskajestkobieta.org/?p=50>).

(84) Women are more down-to-earth. They are smart, pragmatic, better educated and better adjusted to this busy, modern and quick change world. It is not easy to stupefy them ideologically (<http://newsweek.pl.1>).

(85) The women in Poland are more enterprising than men. Entrepreneurship is one of the things we particularly concentrate on in our political programme (<http://lazar.webpages.pl>).

(86) Politics in Poland has become terrible boorish. It is permeated with hatred, aggression and malice. I feel that a higher number of women, who do not represent the 'masculine' parties, will provide it with the much needed elements of care and nurturance. In other words, they will bring culture and rebirth to public life (<http://zyciewarszawy.pl>).

Collectively, the statements encourage the conviction that the feminist initiative provides a panacea for the moral decay and internal chaos of Poland's masculinized politics. It has been assumed, rather unproblematically, that women's presence in the government will 'naturally' replace the parochial habits, bringing renewal and reconciliation to the unduly aggressive and neurotic boy's network. Among the authors of the essentialist pronouncements are the main architects of the project, Manuela Gretkowska and Professor Wiktor Osiatyński, followed by the political scientist Radosław Markowski – all of whom uncritically pinned their hopes on the prospective successes of the female leaders. Though conforming to the voters' traditional expectations might seem to ensure electoral success (Kahn, 1996), the long-term consequences for women's identity politics remain undisputed, as Elisabeth van Acker (2003) so aptly illustrates:

To expect women to bring a different 'feminine' style to either parliament or the media, thereby challenging the 'masculine' style, sets up a false dichotomy of gender which is attached to women and men in different ways (...) If stereotypes give way to diversity and politicians seek to resist gender norms, this avoids easy media representations setting women up to reach unattainable goals or disparaging them.

(van Acker, 2003: 132)

In closing I would like to refer to another observation made by the leading scholars in identity research (Hall, 1990, 1996; Reisigl and Wodak, 2001; Krzyżanowski and Wodak, 2008; Wodak et al., 2009), who notice that any search for self-definition inevitably entails the creation of difference. The relational functions of identity construction reveal themselves through oppositional and bipolar predications used in the positive or negative presentation of 'self' and 'other' (Reisigl and Wodak, 2001: 58). The

boundaries of such dichotomized depictions are thus constantly reconfigured in relation to different points of identification (Hall, 1990).

In the previous section we have seen how the oppressive status of women as Polish citizens was negatively juxtaposed with the position of women in more developed countries, particularly that of Sweden. Similarly, the specific identification of the Women's Party with the politics of 'honesty', 'morality' and 'trustworthiness' evolved in direct distinction from the aggressive and calculating approach of the current male leaders. By choosing to differentiate themselves from the political style of their male colleagues, the representatives of the feminist organization have unwittingly reinscribed and naturalized the existing hierarchy between two gender poles – masculinity and femininity – thus putting forth another false dichotomy.

### **3.11 Conclusion**

Evidence from this analysis shows that the gendered discourses inherent in the WP's political narratives are both tied to and differentiated from the leading identity discourse espoused by the Catholic nation-state. By giving priority to maternal politics, the party has manifestly re-affirmed the traditional gender model, once again consigning female subjectivity to a narrow definitional space. In the process of embracing the culturally prescriptive identity, Gretkowska's organization has simultaneously contributed to the feminist agenda by helping to transfigure motherhood from a negative and reductive category into a positive and politicized label. It has achieved this effect by openly engaging with multiple sources of women's victimhood. The reformulation of female identity based on a collective experience of harm and suffering brought attention to the

structural and systemic determinants of oppression, giving rise to its contestation on a socio-political level.

The open rejection of the 'brave victim' status and the altered conceptions of autonomous and emancipated motherhood are both compelling indices of cultural transformation. It is perhaps particularly disenchanting that the subversive statements are closely accompanied by the essentialist and totalizing assertions that place women on a different morality scale to that of their male colleagues. However, as many social theorists have repeatedly shown, the construction of 'self' in discourse is an elaborate and chaotic practice, characterized by ongoing struggles between different political interests and frequently in juxtaposition with established discursive meanings (Hall, 1990; Krzyżanowski and Wodak, 2008; Leisenring, 2006; Litosseliti, 2006; Norris, 1982). The hegemonic cultural narrative serves in this process as a major source of interpretative resources on which the gendered political organization consistently draws in order to redefine women's position in the social order. In the following chapter I will consider how the underlying motives and interests of the political-media 'machine' play out in the construction of female cabinet ministers.

## Chapter 4

# WOMEN AND GOVERNMENT

*How good does a female athlete have to be before we just call her an athlete?*

(Unknown author)

*We make her paint her face and dance (...) Woman is the nigger of the world.*

(John Lennon, 1975)

### 4.1 Introduction:

The conservative revolution that swept through Poland's political landscape following the unexpected election of the Law and Justice in September 2005 has diverted public attention from the genuine problems of women. Yet, it is the issues surrounding gender and sexuality that soon became the marker of Kaczyński's repressive administration (July 2006 – November 2007) (see Chapters 2 and 3 for a detailed description of their governance).

The social disquiet over the orthodox direction taken by the politics of modern Poland quickly extended beyond the abortion campaign, embracing a much bigger field of women's and LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender) rights, as well as public education. Waves of protests triggered by Polish students against the former Minister of Education Roman Giertych were aimed at thwarting his concerned efforts to intensify religious teaching. A growing concern in the feminist and LGBT communities evoked the abolition of the office of the Government Plenipotentiary for the Equal Status of

Men and Women. The position, resumed later by Tusk's administration (November 2007 – present), plays a pivotal role in the protection of women and sexual minorities.

Paradoxically, in the midst of serious political endeavors to suppress women's rights, the Polish media became unilaterally focused on the government's 'feminist' gains in the area of political representation. The 'woman's breakthrough' frame (Norris, 1997a; 1997b) monopolized the coverage of women's cabinet activity in both print and electronic media and thus strategically detracted from a whole range of issues responsible for the right-wingers' decreased appeal among female voters. In this chapter I critically discuss a total of 20 articles (news reports, regular columns and feature articles) which appeared in the mainstream press in Poland in connection with women's alleged advances in the government's structure. My analysis will demonstrate:

- How the practice of women's political 'inclusion' has been recontextualized in the Polish press and what legitimations have been offered in support of women's political agency, as well as those against it (van Leeuwen, 2008; Reisigl and Wodak, 2001).
- It will also show how the elected female ministers have been represented, classified and evaluated by the pundits, journalists and other politicians; and
- What ideological values, forms of knowledge and 'regimes of truth' have been built and drawn upon as a consequence of such practice (Foucault, 1980b: 131).

In investigating the above topics, I use a number of theoretical and methodological tools applicable to the small-scale (micro-) and larger-scale (macro-) qualitative analyses of discursive data (Richardson, 2007). These encompass the following linguistic categories (discussed at length Chapter 1): 'transitivity', 'rhetorical tropes', 'lexical style', 'naming

and predication strategies', 'argument schemes' and 'media frames', all of which play an equal part in the re-production and control of social power.

Three main political weeklies ('Wprost', 'Polityka', 'Newsweek Polska') have been searched for the presence of topics related to women's rise in the political activity. Significantly, no articles have been found in the two weeklies that represent a mixture of social and liberal views. ('Polityka', 'Newsweek Polska'). By contrast, the more conservative 'Wprost' published a total of ten articles which, together with the coverage from the electronic press, serves the political interests of the ruling elite, including those of the media themselves. The data covers a period between April 2007 and July 2008 and captures the early parliamentary election following the dissolution of the parliament in September 2007.

#### **4.2 'The Woman's Breakthrough': Framing Conventions in the Aftermath of 2006 and 2007 Parliamentary Elections**

The appointment of female candidates to ministerial positions following the legislative elections of 2006 and 2007 has been framed in Polish journalist discourse in terms of the 'woman's breakthrough' (Norris, 1997b: 161). As an illustration of these new gender dynamics, a great number of articles released by electronic and press media converged upon exposing women's 'record-breaking' participation. For instance, the feature article published in the December edition of *Wprost*, entitled 'The Matriarchy of Poland's Fourth Republic', reports that:

(1) In their closest circle Lech and Jaroslaw Kaczyński *focused on the fair sex* to the extent that nobody else has. The government has *a record number of five women* (...) In Kaczyński's time women *advance* and *take over* real power.

(Wprost, 12-19.08.07)

In another commentary available online, *Portal.pl* alludes to the accomplishments of Kaczyński's government, herein referred to pejoratively as 'womanish' ('Babski rząd Kaczyńskiego'). The article points out:

(2) This government is actually *record-breaking* when it comes to *the number of women in the cabinet*.

(<http://pardon.pl.1>)

In a similar vein, a regular columnist for *Wprost* publishes a text, featured by the controversial title 'The Fourth RP is a woman', where he steadfastly asserts:

(3) The fourth Republic of Poland *gave popularity to dozens of women* whose existence has so far been acknowledged only by their family.

(Wprost, 02.09.07)

Significantly, the same macro-proposition continues even after the change of the old guard. Only two months after the election of the new government the following statements appear in the same publication:

(4) The Cabinet of Donald Tusk is *the most feminized government in Polish history* (...). No other Polish government has been represented by such a *high percentage of women as Tusk's cabinet*.

(Wprost, 26.12.07)

The claims about the feminization of the party's composition were given an extra impetus by the accompanied photograph, featured on the front page, and depicting the new prime minister towering above 'his' female ministers, nominated collectively as his 'women's drive' (Wprost, 02.09.07). See the image below:



**Figure 4.1** ‘Tusk women’s drive’ (Wprost, 26.12.07) - ‘a visual narrative of masculine control’ (Walsh, 2001: 43)

In addition, a numerical summary of women’s political representation in the Polish government since the first democratic election in 1989, placed centrally below the picture, highlights the significance of recent appointments, adding credibility to the asserted statements. Thus, in accordance with the statistics released by *Wprost* (26.12.07), female participation in the cabinet reached a record twenty-three percent under Kaczyński’s rule, only to be surpassed by the figure of twenty-five percent obtained by Tusk’s ‘feminized’ administration.

The consistent patterns in the semantic macro-structure of all texts discussed here raise a number of ideologically-significant questions with regard to the interests served by the almost monolithic coverage. One way of approaching this question is by reference to the theory of framing (Entman 1991, 1993; Entman and Rojecki, 1993; Gitlin 1980; Goffmann 1974; Norris, 1997a). The media frames are ‘persistent patterns of cognition,

interpretation, and presentation (...) by which symbol-handlers routinely organize discourse, whether verbal or visual' (Gitlin, 1980: 7). In other words, through the process of selection and emphasis, frames allow for an efficient structuring of the perceived reality, providing journalists with a 'peg' for their narratives. Owing to the time pressure and organizational demands within the newsroom's practice, the use of a framing device proves a useful way of managing the load of unstructured information (Carrol, 1999: 7).

However, I would argue that the interpretative lens through which the journalists frame their political messages are in effect synonymous with descriptive and conceptual discourses (Sunderland, 2004), which systematically organize and structure the topics of their investigation, as well as 'give expression to the meanings and values of the [media] institution' (Kress, 1985: 6-7). Thus, in covering the post-election results through the frame of the 'women's breakthrough' (Norris, 1997a, 1997b) the Polish publicity experts utilized a number of linguistic frameworks or schemes, characterized by the presence of 'thematically reinforcing' word clusters or similar-sounding stock phrases such as '*a record number of women*', '*a high percentage of women*', '*a record-breaking government*', '*the most feminized government*', etc. (Entman, 1993: 52).

But was there really a historic breakthrough in Polish politics with regard to women's ministerial gains or their exercise of parliamentary power? A more comprehensive analysis suggests that the rise in women's participation was insignificant compared to the statistical difference achieved in the previous elections (Wprost, 26.12.07). For instance, the gap in female representation between Kaczyński's government and that of his predecessor was only three percent: equivalent to the numerical difference between Tusk and Kaczyński. In contrast, under Marcinkiewicz's administration (September

2005 – July 2006) the governmental promotion of women was considerably higher. According to the same data released by *Wprost* (26.12.07), it increased by a significant thirteen percent, rocketing from a mere six percent in 2004 to nineteen percent in 2005. Interestingly, no major discussion of female political breakthrough was held in the Polish media in that period.

The peculiar focus of public opinion on the cabinet's feminist progress is even more surprising if we consider the decreased numbers of women who have managed to secure their seats in parliamentary elections. According to the figures obtained from the woman's organization Ośka (<http://www.oska.org.pl>), there has been a five percent drop in the number of posts accorded to women in the Sejm (the lower house), as compared to the last term, and almost half the number fewer seats assigned to female candidates in the Senat (the upper house). As an instance of feminist practice and a sample of progressive journalism, the Ośka's coverage markedly deviates in terms of its framing conventions from the mainstream press presented here. The difference in selection and salience is perhaps best captured by the report's title: 'Fewer women in Sejm and Senat' (Ośka, *ibid.*), ideationally defying the dominant theme which emerges from the regular examples of political writing.

In the context of these facts, and also when compared with the critical mass index obtained by female MPs in other European countries (for instance Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Netherlands etc.) (Norris, 1997a), the widely quoted claims about Polish women's political advances seem disproportionately exaggerated and magnified, if not entirely misplaced.

By way of illustration, other alternative news schemas can also be detected in the main body of the feminist press, which shows the subjective nature of framing and selectivity behind the topic formation (van Dijk, 1991). For instance, the same minority publication alerts its readers to the fact that the newly elected female ministers were put in charge of less prominent, so called 'soft' departments. Once again we see a contrast here with the prestigious and 'quintessentially masculine' government positions occupied by female cabinet ministers in other countries, for example France or Germany (Ośka, <http://www.oska.org.pl>). We could, therefore, attempt to rephrase and directly re-signify the press account of the recent elections by means of the following headlines: 'Less power and prominence for female ministers' or 'Female candidates in charge of less prestigious departments'. When viewed against the background of such news, the 'women's breakthrough' frame appears far less pretentious and effectively devoid of its persuasive potential.

As the carriers of democratic, modern values, media 'facts' must be subject to multiple interpretations and looked at from a variety of perspectives. What appears particularly puzzling is that in the apparently polyvocal society like Poland, both electronic and print publications seem to adopt a unitary and delusively simplistic perspective. The 'intertextual' links forged through different texts (with almost identical-sounding phrases and expressions employed in a wide range of publications) appear to exist not only in different media genres such as news reports, feature articles or columns, but also in different public spaces, including that of virtual communication.

The accentuation of women's professional gains in the coverage of Poland's recent elections reflects a wider trend in news reporting to overemphasize the importance of gender in the periods of political transitions. This tendency has been observed, for

instance, in North America where the media's preoccupation with the female electorate during the 1996 presidential elections produced a semi-fabricated category of female voters, labeled condescendingly as the 'Soccer Moms' (Carrol, 1999: 7). By the same token, the 1994 congressional elections were hailed as the 'Year of the Angry White Male' (Norris, 1997a: 5). In Poland, the prospect of the EU accession (May, 2004) prompted a slew of articles devoted to the issues of gender, sex roles and reproduction. The intensified preoccupation of the Polish media with the gender-specific phenomena highlighted, according to Graff (2008), the country's internal fear and deep-seated ambivalence with regard to the possible effects of political transition. The narrative about gender served, in her view, as a coded discourse for dispersing anxieties about national/gender identity, endangered by the prospect of East-West reunion.

Placed in the centre of Polish cultural politics, the representation of women's leadership assumes thus a new significance when viewed in the context of local interests and modalities of power. Driven by the political pressures at hand, the focus on the discourse of 'women's breakthrough' not only displayed the government's spurious commitment to feminist ideas, such as equality in political representation, but also diverted media attention from other controversial issues and ideologically contested areas such as abortion, contraception, in vitro fertilization, etc., which have brought the right-wingers into major conflicts with their female voters. The public restoration of the ruling party's 'unfeminine' image became, accordingly, a pressing matter under Kaczyński's governance, particularly as the emergence of the Women's Party in January 2007 threatened to win over a part of their electorate. In a similar vein, the exceptional media acclaim earned by Donald Tusk's 'most feminized government in the

Polish history' (Wprost, 26.12.07) has successfully kept those 'dangerous' and polemical issues away from the political and media discussions.

### 4.3 A Woman in a Man's World

The adoption of a gender-specific news frame in reports about political events offers yet another benefit: it provides a newsworthy story angle by emphasizing the novelty of women's political leadership (Sreberny-Mohammadi and Ross, 1996; Norris, 1997b). The relative rarity of women in the upper echelons of the political world means that their sex continues to be visible and marked by virtue of their mere presence (Baxter, 2010). The modes of discourse which invite undue attention to the saliency of female political candidacy have been noted in a number of news reports in the electronic press. For instance *Gazeta.pl* alerts to the expected 'innovation' in the government's forthcoming appointment of a *female* spokesperson, encapsulated in the newsworthy story headline: 'My spokesperson will be a *woman*'. The main body of the article elaborates on the significance of the prime minister's nomination by drawing attention to the following statistics:

(5) In his conversation with the portal *gazeta.pl*, Slawomir Nowak from PO [Civic Platform] rejected the rumours that Hanna Smoktunowicz will be the government's spokesperson (...). Tusk himself only acknowledged it is going to be *a woman*. So far there have been *three women* among the spokespersons.

(<http://wiadomosci.gazeta.pl.1>)

The image of a woman breaking the mould of traditional femininity (see Norris, 1997b) has been captured in parallel stories released by the political weeklies. For instance, the appointment of Marta Alf as the President of the Polish Football Association (PZPN)

was hailed by the conservative *Wprost* (2008) as the ‘revolution in the Polish football’. The article featuring Alf dressed in a smart women’s suit, boisterously touching the ball with a shining black stiletto, carries an even more bizarre title: ‘A woman by the ball’ (*Wprost*, 31.05.08). The same rhetorical pattern can be seen in practically any sphere of women’s professional activity. Here are some fragments from Polish magazine discourse:

(6) *The earth is a woman*. An interview with Professor Susan A. Ross, a feminist theologian, about restoring ethics, history and religion with women’s help (*Polityka*, 09.06.07).

(7) *A baton of the feminine gender*. An interview with Agnieszka Duczmal, a conductor and head of the Polish Radio Amadeus Chamber Orchestra (*Polityka*, 13.12.08).

(8) *Revolution is a woman*. Does literature have sex? Do women write differently? (*Polityka*, 13.12.08).

(9) *The female economy*. The twenty-first century will be the century of women. They work, manage and earn more and more. It is only a matter of time before economics textbooks start using the term ‘female economy’ [ekonomika] (*Wprost*, 21.10.07).

The explicit mention of the sex of the female professional observed in such diverse areas of women’s reporting appears to be a general feature of media coverage about public sphere women in contemporary Poland. This finding coincides with the results of other feminist studies obtained in different cultural environments (Braden, 1996; Heldman et al., 2000; Ross, 2004; Sreberny-Mohammadi and Ross, 1996). Correspondingly, Ross and Sreberny-Mohammadi (1997) and Braden (1996) notice that women’s sex is always visible and acts as the main descriptor in the institutional contexts of both media and politics. In the words of the U.S. politician, Senator Ruth Pratt:

A man enters public life and not the slightest attention is paid to the fact that he is a man. A woman runs for office and there is more interest in the fact that she is a woman than in her qualifications for the job she seeks. It is then that she learns how tenacious the tag 'woman' is—how palpably she is a woman, how completely shackled by her sex.

(quoted in Braden, 1996: 31)

While a woman remains conspicuous in view of her feminine status, a man represents the political norm. He is part of the 'unmarked' and default category which carries the universal values of parliamentary culture and political personhood; his masculinity being taken for granted and presupposed to the point it is no longer perceptible or contested (Mills, 2008; Sinclair, 2005). This is best captured by the fragment from *Dziennik.pl*, characteristically entitled 'Another woman in Tusk's government', where the failed candidacy of Jarosław Gowin as the Minister of Education is not preceded by the masculine marker. By contrast, the nomination of Elżbieta Hibner includes an explicit reference to her sex:

(10) The 'Journal' found that the ministry for regional development will be run by Elżbieta Hibner. The newspaper reports that this is *yet another woman*, beside Katarzyna Hall, who appeared on the journalist market (...) The Journal reports that, contrary to previous announcement, Jarosław Gowin will not be given the ministry of education portfolio (...).

(<http://news.money.pl>)

Defined by her difference to her male colleague, the female candidate is not simply a politician, she is the 'Other', hence marginalized and singled out as deviant, atypical and aberrant (Baxter, 2010; de Beauvoir, 1973; Ross, 2002). In the androcentric discourse such as Polish political reporting, the woman is placed outside the governing male norms and subject to descriptive criteria, which, as Beauvoir (1973) observes, are

not infrequently negative. She is characterised by a certain lack, which in the political context denotes the absence of desired (masculine) qualities that make a perfect politician or meritorious leader. As one of the *Wprost's* articles reports: 'Besides *four key politicians* there were also *three women*' (Wprost, 01.04.07).

It might thus be said with little exaggeration that a woman in Polish politics is an oxymoron and a 'weirdo', at best an oddity – a character who violates the heavily guarded rules of political (gender) normalcy (Graff, 2001). She is constituted in discourse as part of a special group, as expressed in the following media text commenting on the nominations for ministerial posts under Kaczyński's governance:

(11) While considering the candidates Czarniecki passes over Professor Ryszard Legutka, who will replace him as the head of education, only to *focus upon a woman*. Another woman in the government.

(<http://pardon.pl.1>)

The description of the female candidate as a bizarre object we can 'focus' our lens on makes a stark contrast to the reference through 'nomination' ('Ryszard Legutka'), applied in the representation of the male politician. The man has been 'titulated' ('Professor') and thus dignified by mention of the honorary credentials (van Leeuwen, 1996: 53).

The covertly expressed male bias (Mills, 2008) serves an important function by helping to sustain the often invisible nexus between politics and masculine identity (Sinclair, 2005). A further example of women's exclusion from the public sphere stems from the lexical organization of the Polish language, which privileges masculine forms relative to feminine (see Chapter 6 for a thorough analysis). This includes a lack of female

equivalents in the words like ‘statesman’ (‘mąż stanu’), ‘politician’ (‘polityk’), ‘prime minister’ (‘premier’) or ‘minister’ (‘minister’) (Graff, 2001: 35). Hence, the slavish adherence to ‘marked’ and compound forms composed of extra words or morphemes, such as woman/lady, which specifically denote the feminine gender (‘pani minister’).

However, as Fowler (1991: 96) explains, such expressions connote irregularity and deviation, unnecessarily indexing and overexposing the ‘unnaturalness’ of female roles or positions. It will come, then, as little surprise that many successful women in Poland reject the use of marked forms in favour of the masculine ones in the belief that the former camouflage their power and authority (Graff, 2001). Although the masculine terms generally contain a reference to women, they are nevertheless endorsing the frequently obscured connection between public prestige and masculinity.

#### **4.4 The Male Warrior as the Precursor of the Political Leader**

The assumption that politics is the sphere of men, so heavily coded in the Polish language, boasts a strong historical pedigree, which has its roots in the challenges of Poland’s socio-political context. In the eighteenth century, the country underwent three partitions and as a result disappeared from the map of Europe. The engagement of Polish men in the national struggles for independence led to the formation of a powerful archetype of a male warrior. The emergence of the trade union ‘Solidarity’ in 1980 revived this Romantic ethos by re-adjusting it to the Communist realia (Janion, 2006b).

It is thus the language of political opposition that is considered by many researchers to be the most demonstrative indication of the symbolic intertwining of the ideologies of political leadership and masculinity (Graff, 2001; Pasyukova, 2004; Kenney, 1990). It abounds, as Kenney (1990) observes, with the imagery of strong and charismatic men,

dynamically leaping factory fences or heroically withstanding persecution by the oppressive authorities. Characteristically, most of the sites where the major political protests were held are the quintessentially masculine industry sectors (Kenney, 1990).

In contrast, the role of women in these key periods of unrest typically involved passing on 'food, news from home and words of support' (Gajda 1982; Pasyukova, 2004). The gates of the factories thus came to be seen by some researchers as the symbolic borderline between the masculine world of politics and civil action and the feminine sphere of hearth and home (Pasyukova, 2004; Graff, 2001). By far the most powerful testimony to the gendered character of Polish struggle for independence is in the shipyard graffiti, which appeared in Gdańsk during the worker's strike in 1980, containing the slogan: 'Women! Do not interfere with us! We are fighting for Poland' (quoted in Kenney, 1990: 40). Strikingly, the content of the message caused no indignation among the Polish community. Rather, it moved them deeply as a poignant expression of the 'workers' folklore' and a reference to Romantic wars of liberation (Graff, 2001: 24).

The consolidation of masculinity in the Solidarity period went hand in hand with the exclusion of women from participation in the public sphere, which led many foreign observers to assume that women in Poland played a marginal role in the political opposition. A recent publication by the American feminist Shana Penn (2003) has successfully restored the gender balance, uncovering what later came to be termed the 'public secret' of the underground revolution (Penn, 2003: 46).

Penn (ibid.) revealed that, during the period of Solidarity's undercover activity, women frequently managed the informal structure of the movement, acting as messengers,

writers, editors and publishers of clandestine material (ibid: 43). At a time when many male activists faced arrest or suffered persecution, women were the sole breadwinners of their families, fulfilling the roles that originally belonged to the male leaders.

However, despite their immense contribution to advancing the democratic order, the female activists' achievements remained largely unacknowledged. In fact, women themselves rarely asserted their independent status and were more willing to define themselves as 'wives of the persecuted' rather than 'autonomous leaders' (Penn, 1994: 15). Even more shockingly, they saw their role as secondary and merely supportive, which is why they went down in history as 'comrades-in-arms' or 'anonymous heroines' (Pasyukova, 2004: 5-6).

Underpinning the hierarchical construction of social roles was the chivalrous nature of gender relations characteristic of the oppositional community. The emergence of the Polish man as a national hero forced women to assume the position of a 'lady' (Walczewska, 2006: 95). The noble gender contract between ladies and knights, with its root in the Middle Ages, has been a permanent model of gender relations in Poland (ibid: 92-7). Moreover, within the revolutionary circle, men's attitudes to women have been characterized as exceptionally friendly and protective (see Chapter 2 for a detailed discussion of 'benevolent sexism'). In the words of the 'Solidarity' activist Barbara Labuda: 'They [men] were the leaders and we [women] were the protective mothers' (Kondratowicz, 2001: 170). The reference to women as 'protective mums' not only belittled women's achievements within the union, but simultaneously constituted the man as a political leader.

To summarize, the experience of war, occupation and resistance in particular strengthened the binary division of separate spheres for men and women and constructed the political norm along the lines of gender.

#### **4.5 ‘Governmental Sexmission’ and the New Gender Trouble**

In order to see if the public/private dichotomy is sustained in political media I propose to focus on a cluster of concepts embedded within the structures of the articles’ headlines. According to van Dijk (1991), headlines fulfill important textual and semiotic functions. They provide the reader with the mental ‘model of the situation’, summarizing and evaluating its most important aspects (van Dijk, 1991: 50-52). Given the cognitive potential of the headlines, I want to pay particular attention to their ideological content established through the lexical style and rhetoric. The preoccupation of several media outlets with women’s political participation found its most vivid manifestation in the articles’ titles and captions:

**Women’s Strike** (Wprost, 01.04.07)

**Women’s Weapon** (Wprost, 10.06.07)

**The Matriarchy** of Poland’s Fourth Republic (Wprost, 12-19.08.07)

**The Governmental Sexmission** (Wprost, 29.06.08)

The Fourth Republic of Poland is a **Woman** (Wprost, 02.09.07)

The Real **Women’s Party** (Wprost, 30.09.07)

Kaczyński’s **Womanish Government** (<http://pardon.pl.1>)

**Another Woman** in Tusk’s Government (<http://news.money.pl>)

My Spokesman will be a **Woman** (<http://wiadomosci.gazeta.pl.1>)

There Comes an Era of **Women's Rule** in Poland (<http://wiadomosci24.pl2>)

Tusk **Women's Drive** (Wprost, 26.12.07)

Donald Tusk Wants to be a **Woman** (<http://wiadomosci.dziennik.pl.1>)

Will Donald Tusk Make His Government More **Beautiful and Sexy**? (<http://wprost.pl.1>)

Even a cursory glance at the above translations suffices to conclude that most headlines are rich sources for rhetorical exploration. The titles typically make use of metaphorical and hyperbolic devices, some of which derive specifically from Polish cultural idiom ('Sexmission' 'The Fourth RP is a Woman') and which collectively imply a threat of female invasion. The language of 'siege', couched in the above headings, makes recourse to military terms such as strike or weapon. Combined with other martial tropes ('storm', 'fight', 'war', 'offensive' etc.), which can be found in different parts of the main texts, the framing highlights the warlike nature of female political participation, casting women in the role of a violent attacker. Viewed this way, they are hardly a partner in the political processes, but rather an intruder violating public space through illegitimate actions ('women's strike', 'women's offensive' etc) (Beckett, 2003) (see also the reformulated metaphor in Chapter 5).

Moreover, the presence of exaggerated, hyperbolic terms offers unequivocal evidence that Polish politics is genuinely overflowing with female leaders. This argument is advanced in the following headlines: 'All Women's Government', 'The Real Women's Party', 'The Matriarchy of Poland's Fourth Republic', 'There Comes an Era of Women's Rule in Poland'. The fear of women's ascendancy over men and their seizure of political prestige pertains not only to women's activity within the party or

government structures. As one commentator put it: ‘the [whole] Republic of Poland is a Woman’ (*Wprost*, 02.09.07).

Particularly powerful in their rhetorical force are the ‘intertextual’ allusions to radically feminist concepts, one of which has been captured by *Wprost* (12.08.07) in the headline ‘The Matriarchy of Poland’s Fourth Republic’. The utopian imagery of the ‘matriarchal heaven’ plays an important role as a gendered metaphor of chaos. The fantasy of the female ‘Garden of Eden’ (Elshtain, 1981: 214) ruled solely by one sex takes a crucial place in Polish consciousness, especially as it evokes a painful memory of women’s empowerment in the socialist period. The vocational activation of female population under the Communist regime paralleled the suppression of civil rights in the public sphere. The experience of political exclusion with regard to the lack of opportunities for exercising public authority had particularly negative effects on men, who not only felt disempowered but also emasculated (Watson, 1993a).

One of the most compelling depictions of the Communist period comes from the cult comedy ‘Sexmission’ (Machulski, 1983). The movie tells the story of two men who undergo a human hibernation procedure and wake up fifty years later in the underground world governed by a radical women-only society. Read as an allegory for the Communist dictatorship, the movie simultaneously explores a gender theme by exposing the bleak reality behind the sex-role reversal. For instance, one of the remaining male characters who survived the terror of female despotism, known by the name ‘Her Excellency’, indulges in the ritual of cross-dressing for fear of being exposed and annihilated by the man-hating rulers (Graff, 2007a). A reference to this culturally specific metaphor can be seen in another heading from *Wprost* (29.06.08), as well as in

the body of two other texts in the same weekly, where the entry of women into government structures has been framed as the ‘governmental sexmission’.

The cognitive and ideological implications of such representations cannot be easily ignored. Their cognitive recall capacity is greatly enhanced not only through their placement in the most conspicuous part of news reports but also through the constant repetition and frequent allusions to culturally significant symbols and conventionalized metaphors (Entman, 1993). The presence of aggressive and radically feminist terms in the headlines of the articles informing about the numerical progress in female political representation points to the existence of an underlying ‘conceptual’ metaphor (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980) which identifies women with problems and implies an ‘irrational dread’ of female incursion (Cameron, 1990: 5). A similar rhetorical pattern has been found in the rationalizations for women’s exclusion from priesthood, noted by Walsh (2001). The women in this priestly parlance were metaphorized as ‘a virus in the bloodstream’ that would ‘destroy’ and ‘disembowel’ the Anglican Church (Walsh 2001: 167). Both descriptions suggest the existence of an androcentric perspective, even though not all articles quoted in my debate were written by male journalists.

The definition of the process of political inclusion that emerges from the journalist discussion of female nominations represents a language of disempowerment, offering no support for the enforcement of democratic principles and values. By comparison, an alternative media frame, indicative of a more favourable disposition toward women’s public sphere activity, could present female political participation as a ‘gateway to a more representative democracy’ or as ‘a logical step in the direction of an equal society’. Unfortunately, this position is hardly existent in the Polish press or electronic

media, which, on the contrary, spin a melodramatic tale about gender reversal and its terrible consequences for Polish culture.

In order to better grasp the processes underlying such conceptual dynamics, I propose to interpret the discursive acts in the context of two major political events that Poland has been part of since 1989: the democratic transition and the EU accession. As already mentioned, the period of Communism has gone down in its history as a period of ‘symbolic castration’ of the male population (Graff, 2001: 22-3). In contrast, the new democratic conditions enabled the experience of ‘masculinism’, which according to Watson (1993a), lay at the heart of gender relations in the post-Communist Eastern Europe.

The opportunities that arose from the country’s regained freedom encouraged the emergence of the ‘political man’ who, in the previous system, had no chance to develop (Watson, 1993b). The most powerful way of expressing masculine agency in the early years of Poland’s democracy was via the constitutional renunciation of women’s rights to abortion (Watson, 1993a, 1997). The legislative control over women’s bodies helped to reactivate and politicize the conservative model of femininity, highly compromised due to women’s entry into gainful employment. The institutionalization of women’s relinquished prerogatives therefore became a powerful indicator of men’s resumed authority and a sign of a successful return to gender normalcy.

The traditional gender order, along with the pure and native character of Polish national identity, was once again endangered following Poland’s accession to the European community. A recent study by Graff (2008, 2007a), exploring the links between gender and nationalism, points to the existence of anxieties and fears which accompanied

Poland's reunion with the 'corrupt' and 'degenerate' Western states. These feelings of tension were then consistently relieved by means of a whole series of articles published in all three political weeklies ('Wprost', 'Polityka', 'Newsweek Polska'), which unanimously extolled the 'naturalness' and 'normativity' of the traditional gender hierarchy and warned against its violation by the liberal 'zealots'.

I would like to propose that a similar logic is at work in the media's recent preoccupation with women's political participation. The highly melodramatic tone of some of the texts reviewed here indicates Polish society's deep-seated anxieties with respect to women's 'excessive' public authority, aggravated by their now unlimited access to political leadership. The general opprobrium against women transgressing the boundaries of traditional femininity is vividly captured in the two columns written by the male journalist for *Wprost* Wojciech Wencel. The articles, entitled 'Oafocracy' (09.12.07) and 'The Fourth Republic of Poland is a Woman' (02.09.07), draw a detailed picture of Poland's 'distorted' reality, a consequence of which has been an apparent crisis in masculine identity. This view is expressed in the following extract:

(12) By the end of the last century we heard that men were from Mars and women were from Venus. Today we know it is exactly the opposite. The representatives of the gentle sex are strong, tenacious and expansive, while their male friends are weak, impatient and oafish. Polish politics provides many examples of this phenomenon. One hardly needs to mention about Jan Maria Rokita, who has only just contemplated the prime ministerial post, and who is today looking like the character from 'Man-woman wanted'. Every morning, while taking his wife to the airport, he listens to the orders: 'Let Marysia go to the shop and buy five kilos of sugar. And after returning home, let him obligatorily turn on the tv to inform his wife how well did she do.

(Wprost, 09.12.07)

In this one page long editorial, the journalist quotes a key text from popular psychology, i.e. 'Men are from Mars, Women are from Venus' (Gray, 1992), which premised on the biologically deterministic view of gender and the misleading appearances of scientificity, and helped to legitimate the dichotomized relationship between men and women. This prominent example of anti-feminist backlash is subsequently juxtaposed with an amusing illustration of sex role reversal derived from the Polish political scene. The portrayed couple are the former Civic Platform politician Jan Maria Rokita and his wife Nelly Rokita, currently a member of the leading party, the Law and Justice. The couple became a common topic in the media after Jan Maria Rokita abandoned his political career under the pretext of enabling his wife to fulfill her ambitions in the opposition party. This event is quoted by the commentator of *Wprost* as the evidence of effeminacy and general weakness of the male sex. The male politician became an object of ridicule for allowing his decision to affect his masculine identity. He is therefore addressed by the second name, which oddly enough, is of feminine origin. His effeminacy is purposely exaggerated by the use of a diminutive term 'Marysia' instead of 'Maria' (Wprost, 09.12.07).

The participation of women in the processes of Polish political life has led, according to the male columnist, to 'various anomalies', posing a real danger to the principle of order linked so closely with male domination. Consequently, instead of 'sweaty blokes chasing after power, who used to pay much attention to their public duties, we now have loafers smelling of Calvin Klein, imbued with delicate notes of musk and bergamot' (Wprost, 02.09.07). In this new social set-up, the female presence in the government is not only an obstruction to an effective delivery of statesmen duties, but more importantly a direct threat to the ideals of manliness prevalent in Polish society.

The fear for the loss of traditional masculine identity is pervasive in most of the texts. As one of the headlines alarmingly reports, even ‘Donald Tusk wants to be a woman’ (Dziennik.pl, 07.03.08)’. The proclaimed ‘degeneration’ of the masculine element, which continues to produce ambiguous forms and vague definitions, results, according to the journalist (Wprost, 09.12.07), from the violation of divine and biological order:

(13) As long as the axiology based on natural law was still in force, people had no time to philosophise but followed their divine direction or natural inclinations. Today they split hairs, wondering whether they can live a responsible life or if they might be single, gay, DINK (Double Income, No Kids) or other transvestites.

(Wprost, 09.12.07)

The transgression of the natural law discussed in the context of women’s appointments has shaken, according to the conservative press, the once clear and unquestionable division between what is normal, respectable and manly as opposed to feminine, weak and degenerate. Besides homosexual conduct, viewed as a direct product of Western liberal philosophy, women’s presence in politics represents an imminent threat to Polish (masculine) respectability, which has been stressed by recourse to aggressive, sensational style and melodramatic rhetoric. This type of defensive reaction leads, in Walsh’s view (2001: 40), to two kinds of public conducts: the intensified performance of traditional male bonding, also known as the ‘boundary heightening’ phenomenon (Powell, 1993: 114) and a spectacular assertion of macho masculinity. Both acts of fraternal solidarity have been displayed in the media’s recontextualization of women’s political activity.

#### 4.6 Women as Political Instruments

In contrast to the rhetorical effects of the articles' headlines, the argument schemes (Reisigl and Wodak, 2001) that justify changes in the government composition show a tendency to position women as objects rather than subjects of political processes. With the exception of one article, which frames women's political achievements by reference to a democratic development (Wprost, 10.06.07), the majority of texts under analysis explicitly argue for the usefulness of women's candidacy for the government's internal purposes. The 'topos of advantage and usefulness' (Reisigl and Wodak, 2001: 75) underlying the majority of legitimations in the political press is clearly to the benefit of men ('pro bono nobis') as opposed to women ('pro bono eorum'), not to mention the advantage of the general public ('pro bono publico') (ibid.) (see Chapter 1). The arguments are deployed in the contents of the following claims, which see the rise in women's political representation as a valued tool for countering the masculine image of the ruling elite:

(14) The peculiar, advanced feminization of Kaczynski's government by electing Joanna Kluzik-Rostkowska as the Minister of Labour brings not only an enhancement to the government's factual knowledge, but is also a warm-up to its image.

(<http://pardon.pl.1>)

(15) Was the focus on women only a marketing trick, which the Prime Minister will shortly secretly abandon? Or, on the contrary, the ministers in skirts will warm up the government's image, allowing Tusk to take important decisions. In addition they will also reduce some of the opposition's ammunition. Even more so, given that the Kaczyński find it more difficult to criticize women than men.

(Wprost, 26.12.07)

As mentioned earlier, the restoration of the unfeminine image of the Law and Justice emerged as a pressing issue following the formation of the Women's Party in January 2007. The appointment of female ministers provided the parties with a quick fix to press their political agenda. In the words of the journalist for *Wprost*:

(16) Under the new strategy of PiS each lady has to fulfil her role. The minister for regional development Grażyna Gęsicka and Gilowska have to demonstrate that women can be in charge of the State budget, Kluzik-Rostkowska show that the Right is not antifeminist, while Streżyńska wins over the Internet generation.

(Wprost, 01.04.07)

Even within the camp of the Catholic-nationalist League of the Polish Families (LPR), recruiting female ministers became a dominant element in the party's modernization process. As revealed by *Wprost*, 'softening Giertych's countenance is one of the aims of LPR. The deputy prime minister should therefore be seen in the company of young, attractive and educated women' (Wprost, 01.04.07).

Positioned as 'instruments' of men's internal games, the female ministers constitute an effective media strategy for improving the government's tough and anti-women appearance: this way they maintain the current leaders in the position of influence, simultaneously helping to control their political opposition. According to a male writer for *Wprost* (29.06.08), female MPs impact on the government's image in two ways: they weaken the critical edge from the opposition parties, while at the same time remaining immune to the harsh judgement of the electorate. As noticed by Maliszewski (2008) in the article which marks a prominent example of a sexist discourse (Wprost, 29.06.08), pretty looks triggers a 'halo effect'. In other words, beautiful people are seen as not only more attractive but also smarter. It is therefore more difficult to criticize an

attractive woman. The psychologist maintains that ‘this effect was exploited by the security service in the Arab countries, where women served in personal protection for rulers and leaders. The assassins, when faced with a beautiful woman, acted slower by a fraction of a second’ (ibid.).

As I demonstrate further in the analysis, the objectification and sexualization of female ministers is pervasive in most of the quoted texts, which justify and thereby mitigate female political contributions by reference to the government’s pragmatic aims and desired marketing effects. The ‘instrumental rationalization’ (i.e. legitimation in terms of goals, uses and effects) (van Leeuwen, 2008: 113) which forms the basis of the majority of arguments discussed here is realized explicitly by reference to the terms and assumptions of ‘managerialism’.

The philosophy of business ethics, which constructs women as a means to men’s political (aesthetic) ends is reflected in the selection of lexical and grammatical forms. These include ‘derived nominals’ (Fowler, 1991: 79) (see Section 4.7), which make the language sound tough and managerial (e.g. ‘the *promotion* of women’; ‘the *imigation* of the marketing tricks’), along with the business terms (e.g. ‘objective’, ‘goal’, ‘strategy’, ‘marketing move and trick’, ‘marketing textbook’, ‘promotion’, ‘ratings’ etc.) associated with the registers of marketing and management (Beckett, 2003; Hawkins et al., 2001). Below are some of the examples indicative of the ‘transactional’ character of Polish political discourse:

(17) *The new marketing strategy* of PiS and LPR is to reveal that in these parties women at least co-rule (Wprost, 01.04.07).

(18) *The objective* is to soften the party's image and win over female electorate (Wprost, 01.04.07).

(19) *The promotion of women* in Polish politics was accompanied by the *imitation of the marketing tricks from the West* (Wprost, 29.06.08).

(20) This is not a coincidence, but *a well-thought marketing move* (Wprost, 26.12.07).

(21) Maliszewski implies that Tusk's government was selected according to the rules of *American marketing textbooks* (<http://wprost.pl.1>).

(22) Her activity fits into the *LPR strategy* consisting in warming the image of the party's leader (Wprost, 01.04.07).

(23) We are being perceived as an anti-woman party. Therefore we urged the prime minister to *implement our idea*, says Adam Bielan (Wprost, 01.04.07).

(24) Softening Giertych's countenance is *one of the objectives of LPR* (Wprost, 01.04.07).

(25) *The strategy* of the Prime Minister is the result of the latest psychological research (...) (Wprost, 29.06.08).

(26) *Today's political projects* must not only be good, but also have the right face (Wprost, 29.06.08).

The argumentative force of these rationalized legitimations is additionally augmented by reference to institutional or expert authority (van Leeuwen, 2008). Typically, in the majority of examples the expert authorization reflects and reconsolidates the professional standing of men. Among the voices quoted are the politicians from the coalition parties ('The MP and member of PiS Tadeusz Cymański'; 'the MP from LPR Andrzej Mańka'), MPs, political journalists, sociologists ('Professor Andrzej Zybertowicz'), image specialists, as well as prime ministers from Spain (José Zapatero) or France (Alain Juppé).

The thriving political careers of the last two politicians were quoted by Polish journalists in evidence of the effectiveness of their feminized projects. Such discourse claims once again expose the dangerous ‘synonymity between feminizing and modernizing of the party’s structures and policy’ (Walsh, 2001: 75).

The construction of women as being at the receiving end of the activity of political inclusion – a rhetorical scenario painted by the fraternal networks of politicians and media workers (‘the authors’ of the idea to feminize PiS are the MEPs Michał Kamiński and Adam Bielan’) (Wprost, 01.04.07) – is heavily coded in the grammatical organization of the media discourse and reflected in its socio-semantic categorization. According to Halliday’s functional tradition (1994: 36) (see Chapter 1 for a detailed explanation), all uses of language are simultaneously expressive of three major meta-functions known as ‘ideational’, ‘interpersonal’ and ‘textual’. The ideational (or experiential) metafunction embodies those aspects of representation which construe the experience of the speaker. It is realized by the grammatical system of ‘transitivity’ – a configuration of processes, participants and circumstances (Martin et al., 1997: 100).

The analysis of the process types and socio-semantic roles that different participants play in the media practice discussed here reaffirms the positioning of women as mere objects in men’s political game. As van Leeuwen (1996: 42-5) demonstrates, a representation can bestow on social actors an active or passive function. This can be achieved via ‘participation’, a depiction of social actors as ‘agents’ or ‘patients’ (ibid.) in relation to a particular action or event. The active roles of participants vary depending on the process types and include those of an ‘actor’ (‘material processes’), ‘behavior’ (‘behavioural processes’), ‘senser’ (‘mental processes’) or ‘assigner’ (‘relational processes’) (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004: 179-248).

In the majority of texts described here, the recontextualized practice of gender inclusion has been represented predominantly as the ‘doings and feelings’ of male politicians (van Leeuwen, 2008). The activated participants, who include, predictably, the main political figures, such as the former Prime Minister Jarosław Kaczyński, the current government leader Donald Tusk, the twin brothers Lech and Jarosław Kaczyński and many other right-wing politicians or former leaders from European countries, appear primarily as ‘agents’ in transactive material, mental and verbal processes. Below are some of the examples of activated clauses, with male leaders construed in dynamic roles:

(27) In their closest circle Lech and Jarosław Kaczyński *focused on* the fair sex to the extent that nobody else has (...). Sometimes they *promote* women even artificially (Wprost, 12-19.08.07).

(28) “We *believe in* women and focus on women,” *announced* the MEP Michał Kamiński (Wprost, 01.04.07).

(29) The problem was the Zalewski unwittingly *touched upon* the Kaczynski brothers’ weak point—the women (Wprost, 12-19.08.07).

(30) Was the focus on women (...) only a marketing trick, which the Prime Minister will shortly secretly *abandon* (...). In the meantime, Jarosław Kaczyński *put* the level of challenge really high. Tusk could not be worse. This is why for ten or fifteen days he *was searching* for women who could sit in the government’s benches (Wprost, 26.12.07).

(31) When in 1995 Alain Juppé *brought* into his government 12 women, it became a sensation on a European scale (...). Only a few months later the Prime Minister had to *dismiss* the majority of juppettes from the government. He *explained* his decision by *pointing out* that second-league female politicians lacked political experience. Donald Tusk *has* only just *followed* in the French Prime Minister’s footsteps (Wprost, 26.012.07).

Endowed with the capacity to ‘transact’, the agentialized male leaders are without a doubt more powerful and influential than those subjected to their action. Significantly, the vast majority of participants affected by male agency and thus likely to be secretly ‘dismissed’ or ‘abandoned’ are women themselves, who appear to act as ‘goals’ (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004: 180) in the political practice of which they should be the leaders.

As already inferred from the analysis of content-related argument schemes, the rise in women’s share in the cabinet activity has been valued predominantly as a practical way of softening the government’s hardened appearance. This contention is realised grammatically by circumstantial elements in which women are cast as ‘instruments’ or ‘means’ used to achieve specific cosmetic aims (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004: 139). Grammatical expressions of means usually involve prepositions ‘by’ and ‘with’, as manifested in the following statements:

(32) The peculiar, advanced feminization of Kaczyński’s government *by electing Joanna Kluzik-Rostkowska* as the Minister of Labour brings not only an enhancement to the government’s factual knowledge, but is also a warm up for its image.

(<http://pardon.pl.1>)

(33) In 2008 he [Zapatero] won another election and refreshed the government’s image *with female nominations*, including the important position as the Minister of Defence.

(Wprost, 29.06.08)

In another example from *Wprost*, the construction of ‘means’ has been achieved by the interrogative ‘how’, as seen in this highly persuasive extract:

(34) *How* to improve the government's image? Elect women ministers, preferably pretty and sexy. (Wprost, 29.06.08)

There are also a couple of sentences with the prepositional phrase 'thanks to', explicitly indexing the instrumental rationality that informed the cross-institutional legitimations of female political appointments:

(35) On the one hand, harsh criticism of the government by the opposition becomes *thanks to them* [women] more difficult. On the other hand, the voters forgive women more easily. (Wprost, 26.12.07)

(36) The PiS politicians do not conceal the fact that *thanks to Kluzik-Rostkowska* they plan to reach those young women who value both family and professional life. (Wprost, 01.04.07)

Subjected or instrumentalized, the women appear in this recontextualized account as objects of doings and happenings orchestrated by male figures. The mitigation of their professional success and agency results also from the use of passive clauses (see Fowler, 1991), which represent female ministers as submissive recipients of men's decisions and actions or 'sufferers' undergoing a process on which they have no visible impact. The following media utterances exemplify this point:

(37) Although in Tusk's government there are already five female ministers. They *were*, nevertheless, *not selected* in accordance with the formula which proved a success in Italy or France (<http://wprost.pl.1>).

(38) Tusk's angels *were given* the most difficult assignments (Wprost, 29.06.08).

(39) Both Szczypińska and Kluzik-Rostkowska *were entrusted with* the task of establishing contacts with women's organizations (Wprost, 01.04.07).

(40) Exactly for this purpose Hanna Wujkowska ‘*was dragged*’ in to the LPR camp (Wprost, 01.04.07).

(41) There [France] the ministerial portfolios *were assigned to* attractive women who visibly emphasise their virtues (<http://wprost.pl>).

In accordance with the statements, the female ministers undergo selection based on the criterion of attractiveness, as proclaimed by the recent marketing research. Alternatively, they ‘are entrusted with’ specific tasks that serve to demonstrate the government’s pursuit of the feminist agenda. Significantly, a substantial part of journalist reports shows a tendency to deactivate and therefore objectify not only women but the whole practice of female political activity. This is realized in texts through ‘nominalizations’ – syntactic transformations of clauses whereby adjectives and verbs are turned into nouns (Fowler, 1991: 79; also Fowler et al., 1979). Here are some of the examples of derived nominals taken from the mainstream magazine press, including the electronic sites:

(42) *The promotion of women in Polish politics* was accompanied by *the imitation of marketing tricks* from the West (Wprost, 29.06.08).

(43) The peculiar, advanced feminization of Kaczyński’s government by electing Joanna Kluzik-Rostkowska as the Minister of Labour brings not only *an enhancement* to the government’s factual knowledge, but is also *a warm up for its image* (<http://pardon.pl.1>).

(44) Perhaps in four years *women’s share in Polish politics* will become so commonplace that nobody will count what percentage of ministers in the new government are women (Wprost, 26.12.07).

(45) The authors of *the idea to feminize PiS* are MEPs Michał Kamiński and Adam Bielan (Wprost, 01.04.07).

(46) Although *the placement of women into politics* seems nice, in actual fact it leads to various anomalies (Wprost, 02.09.07).

(47) *The inclusion of attractive women into State government* improved the ratings of several foreign governments (<http://wprost.pl>).

(48) *The popularity of beautiful women in politics* shows that the voters need them as celebrities (Wprost, 29.06.08).

One of the functions of nominalization is, as Fowler (1991: 80) observes, that of 'reification', which consists in ascribing to processes or qualities the status of things. As realized in the above media statements, the entry of women to government has been largely 'objectivated' (Van Leeuwen, 2008: 63), i.e. described as a kind of abstraction or phenomenon ('feminization', 'the idea to feminize', 'popularity', 'women's share') rather than as a volitional action undertaken by women themselves. Moreover, the use of the nouns derived from material verbs ('placement', 'inclusion') points to the existence of an external agent who instigates the action, thereby bringing about a change in the material (political) world. Again, the resulting effect is the passivation of female participants.

Van Leeuwen (2008: 64) indicates that, in the objectivated representations, the action loses importance in order to give priority to another event or statement. In respect to the media's treatment of women's professional achievements, we can see how the focus on female ministers quickly gave way to the issues of political marketing and managerial competence, thus once again reproducing the androcentric perspective. The use of the nominalized verbs also made room for extra legitimations (van Leeuwen, 2008). This can be seen very clearly in the first two sentences, quoted above, where one objectivated action ('feminization of Polish politics'; 'the promotion of women') has

been linked logically to another action ('image warm-up'; 'the effectiveness of Western marketing research'), ideologically supporting the thesis that women's presence might revive the government's outmoded appearance.

In addition, nominalisations allow for 'premodifications' of clauses, which in itself carries immense ideological importance (van Leeuwen, 2008: 65). For instance, in two of the above sentences the value of 'appreciation' (Martin and White, 2005: 56) was used to describe women as beautiful and attractive. Taking into account the official context in which the media claims are embedded (public political discourse), it can be argued that the fragments show a disregard for journalist professional standards (Norris, 1997a). They also make a classic example of a sexist discourse.

#### **4.7 'Preferably Pretty and Sexy': Naming and Evaluation of Women Leaders**

The analysis of linguistic strategies of 'reference' and 'predication' (Reisigl and Wodak, 2001: 45) adds credibility to my thesis that the narratives that political media produce about Polish female ministers further contribute to women's vocational exclusion. The framing of female government officials as entities rather than dynamic agents can be seen in some of the examples of referential categorization – the linguistic strategy for construing or representing social actors (ibid.).

Many of these depictions impart debasing meanings without having to add further qualification, such as when referring to female politicians by means of impersonal nouns. This is the case in the following sentences where the referential categorization through 'impersonalisation' (van Leeuwen, 2008: 46) was sufficient to commit sexist insults:

(49) The promotion of women in Polish politics was accompanied by the imitation of marketing tricks from the West. This looked more like selling *fake designer goods* at the Dziesięciolecie Stadium (Wprost, 29.06.08).

(50) Joanna Mucha and *the new angels* will not make *an original product*, but maybe this time they will not be its *caricature* (Wprost, 29.06.08).

(51) As *the party's flagships* three women appeared next to four key politicians (Wprost, 01.04.07).

(52) All of them [women ministers in Tusk's cabinet] are *the weakest cogs* in the machine of PO and PSL and the worst-rated ministers in the government's half-year administration (Wprost, 29.06.08).

(53) Today's political projects must not only be good but also have *the right face* - preferably *beautiful* (Wprost, 29.06.08).

(54) It is not the first time she has acted as *the female face* of the ruling party (Wprost, 01.04.07).

(55) Will women entering the government reveal themselves as *hastily recruited female fillers* or, on the contrary, a strong team, as described by Ewa Kopacz (Wprost, 26.12.07).

(56) Zalewski unwittingly touched upon Kaczyński brothers' *weak point* - the women (Wprost, 12-19.08.07).

Many of the objectifying terms used to identify female ministers have been taken from the business and engineering registers, and it is from these that they therefore infer their connotations (Beckett, 2003; Hawkins et al., 2001). These include words like 'products', 'goods', 'flagships', or 'drive', as in 'Tusk's women's drive' or 'cogs in the machine of PO and PSL'. Apart from displaying commodified aspects of political practice by turning women into aesthetic, or even purchasable, objects on which male politicians base their reputation, most of the namings additionally convey negative

evaluations. Thus, according to some publications by *Wprost*, the female ministers do not ‘make an original product’ but, conversely, are the ‘weakest cogs in the machine of PO and PSL’, resembling ‘fake designer goods’. They have also been considered ‘the worst-rated ministers in the government’s half-year administration’.

Another important characteristic of the above identifications is their frequent ‘possessivation’: the attribution of women to the ownership of individual politicians (‘Tusk women’s drive’; ‘Tusk’s angels’) or their political assembly (‘party’s flagship’; ‘clogs in the machine of PO and PSL’, etc.), which symbolically diminishes women’s professional achievements and understates their political identity. One particular case in point is the reference to women as ‘Tusk’s angels’, which suggests a close analogy with collective terms applied to female politicians in other countries, for instance Great Britain (‘Blair’s Babes’, ‘Blair’s Backwrenchers’; ‘Gordon’s Gals’, ‘Brown Sugars’; ‘Dave’s Dolls’, ‘Dave’s Divas’, ‘Cameron’s Cuties’; ‘Nick’s Nymphetes’) or Scotland (‘Donald’s Dollies’) (Platell, 2010; Ross, 2002a, 2004; Vasvari, 2011; Walsh, 2001;).

In all these examples, the professional image of women as competent politicians has been discredited not only by means of the possessive apostrophe, but also by naming them debasingly and derogatorily using sexually-loaded terms like ‘babes’, ‘cuties’, ‘sugars’ or ‘dollies’. In Ross’s words: ‘Framing serious women politicians in this way might be seen as merely irreverent or even playful, but it signals a dangerous tendency to denigrate and neutralize the potency of women to be actors and leaders on the political stage’ (Ross, 2001: 63).

Walsh (2001: 43) argues that the collocation ‘Blair’s Babes’ endows women with a ‘homogeneous synthetic identity’, which makes it hard for the public to see them as

‘politicians of conviction’. The sexual innuendo projected through the trivializing classification of women as ‘Tusk’s angels’ derives its meaning from the more or less explicit connotation with the popular 1970’s TV series ‘Charlie’s Angels’ and especially its recent big-screen adaptation starring Cameron Diaz, Drew Barrymore and Lucy Liu as an explosive trio of beautiful and sexy private eyes.

Among other dehumanizing terms applied in the categorization of female ministers are rhetorical tropes such as metaphors (‘paprotka’/filler) and synecdoches (‘face’) featured in the following sentences:

(57) Today’s political projects must not only be good but also have *the right face* - preferably beautiful (Wprost, 29.06.08).

(58) It is not the first time that she [Joanna Kluzik-Rostkowska] has been acting as *the female face* of the ruling party (Wprost, 01.04.07).

(59) Will women entering the government reveal themselves as *hastily recruited female fillers* or, on the contrary, a strong team, as described by Ewa Kopacz (Wprost, 29.06.08).

(60) Ewa Kopacz has no intention of acting as *the filler* (Wprost, 26.12.07).

The term ‘paprotka’, which in the Polish language literally means a pot plant (‘polypody’), is a particularly powerful cultural metaphor used to describe somebody who acts as a filler member in the elective institution. This appellation was frequently applied to female representatives of the Communist elective bodies, whose role in the Socialist parliament was mainly to complement society’s composition and demonstrate the government’s achievements in reaching political equality for women. In reality their function was purely ornamental (Nelson, 1985; Siemieńska, 1991).

The contemporary narratives of Polish mediatised politics often allude to this category of politicians, which proves a very simple strategy for derogating women's professional status. The discursive effect behind its usage can be seen in the above sentences, which refer to female ministers in Tusk's government as 'hastily-recruited fillers', as well as many other examples of linguistic derogation which explicitly pronounce against women's political advances on the grounds that their role in the government is purely decorative.

Paradoxically, the same articles espouse the instrumental treatment of female candidates as a means of refreshing the party's ossified image. The use of a 'particularizing synecdoche' (Reisigl and Wodak, 2001: 57) – a metonymical reference where a part is used for the whole – illustrates this point: 'Today's projects must not only be good but also have the right *face* - preferably sexy' (Wprost, 29.06.08). Sadly, most of the traits predicated to the female ministers relate to their aesthetic assessment and involve evaluations of their physical appearance. Some of the sentences reproduced below exemplify in more detail how the value of 'appreciation' (Martin, and White, 2005: 56) construes female political figures as sexual objects:

(61) An almost certain candidate for the government position following its reshuffle is the distinctly beautiful MP from the Civic Platform, Joanna Mucha (Wprost, 29.06.08).

(62) One of the goals of LPR is to soften the countenance of Giertych. The deputy prime minister is to be seen in the company of *young, attractive* and educated *women* (Wprost, 01.04.07).

(63) The women entering European governments do not act as *men in skirts*, but *distinctly emphasise their virtues*, making use of their *sex-appeal* (Wprost, 29.06.08).

(64) The popularity of *beautiful women* in politics shows that the voters need them as celebrities (Wprost, 29.06.08).

(65) Modest, conciliatory, but *endowed with sex appeal* [Joanna Mucha] (Wprost, 29.06.08).

(66) The well-known events where *the fair sex* played its role were so many that certain female motifs started to repeat themselves (Wprost, 02.09.07).

(67) The image specialists suggest that Donald Tusk elect as ministers and deputy ministers *beautiful* and *sexy women* (Wprost.pl, 21.06.08).

(68) How to improve the government's image? Elect women as ministers, preferably *pretty* and *sexy* (Wprost.pl, 23.06.08).

(69) It makes it all the difference when the elected minister is *a beautiful woman* who almost *incapacitates* the critics and her ideas, though not ground-breaking, are accordingly well-received (Wprost, 29.06.08).

Although the value of the appreciative assessment appears uniformly positive (it is mostly inscribed in texts by means of evaluative adjectives: 'sexy', 'attractive', 'pretty', 'beautiful'; attitudinal verbs: 'overpower', 'incapacitate'; or derived nominals: 'sex-appeal', 'fair-sex') it can surely be a source of further stereotyping and discrimination by associating serious politicians with sexualized bodies. I would argue that its use in the political context is dysfunctional and utterly inappropriate.

#### **4.8 'Nurturing, Emotional, Faithful': Sex Stereotypes in Political Reporting**

Aside from the appraisal in sexualised terms, most other descriptions of female ministers carry stereotypes along gender lines, characteristically derived from the private sphere. A peculiar mixing of motherhood classification and mawkish femininity underlines the following extract taken from the opinion piece published by *Wprost*:

(70) The Kaczyński brothers, particularly Lech, adore women who are like mothers to them and who discreetly take care of them. Besides, they also like to feel admired, like all men do. It is hard to imagine Zyta Gilowska in this role. Therefore she will never be one of those superprivileged. Take Elzbieta Jakubiak whose strong position in the government is a clear case in point. As the head of the cabinet she took care of the president's working schedule and would very clearly give the guests to understand they were unnecessarily bothering him (...) Not to mention Jola Szczypińska, with her faithful and devoted look, going into raptures over the Prime Minister at every opportunity. As regards Jarosław Kaczyński's affection, none of the MPs can withstand the squabble (...)

(Wprost, 12-19.08.07)

The construction of women as matriarchal and maternalistic is explicitly indexed in this fragment through a number of lexical items. In the original text the terms include verbs like 'matkować' (to mother), 'roztaczać opiekę' (take care of) or 'dbać' (look after), which demonstrate simple extrapolations of women's domestic roles from the private into the public domain. The Minister for Sport Elzbieta Jakubiak has been described as endowed with stereotypically feminine strengths, such as 'expressiveness' or 'empathy'. For instance, she would categorically turn the guests out when she noticed the president was tired. Jakubiak is presented as nurturing, compassionate and understanding, which invites the reader to see her more as a private guardian of men rather than a serious and competent leader. Her role in the cabinet has been trivialized by the ascription of stereotypically feminine virtues, a tendency which has, for years, undermined women's activity on the political scene (van Acker, 2003).

The text also implies that women's political success is directly related to their fulfilment of traditional duties. Those ministers who conform to the expected gender behaviour belong to 'the circle of privilege' and are therefore 'treated with special deference' by

the ruling elite (Wprost, 12-19.08.07). The Minister for Finance Zyta Gilowska who, according to the journalist, defies the norms of traditional femininity, has been placed outside the proclaimed sphere of influence.

The same logic seems to apply in other publications of the conservative press. For instance, Maliszewski (Wprost, 29.06.08) openly suggests that the apparent lack of success seen in the political management of some female politicians relates directly to their inability to make use of their 'female weapon'. One prominent example of this category of politicians is Hillary Rodham Clinton, who the journalist refers to patronizingly as the 'man in a skirt'. The publicist contends that 'Clinton only recently realized she should be more like a woman and so, in accordance with that stereotype, began to smile, cry and better communicate (...)'. In Maliszewski's view, the transformation took place too late, which led to her defeat by Barack Obama (ibid.).

Many terms employed in classifications of female ministers under Kaczyński's governance are popular in tone, bearing a strong similarity with a low-status romantic fiction. Among the highly loaded affective descriptors are verbs ('adore', 'go into raptures'), adjectives ('faithful', 'devoted') and nominalizations ('affection', 'hero'), which predicate emotional responses and dispositions to the represented participants (Martin, 2000). As you may have gleaned from the text above, the targets of this attitudinal positioning are predominantly female members of PiS, such as Jolanta Szczypińska who 'goes into raptures' at the sight of Jarosław Kaczyński and confides to tabloids 'she sees the Prime Minister whenever she closes her eyes' (Wprost, 12-19.08.07). In the same, infantile manner the former Minister of Foreign Affairs Anna Fotyga has been shown to publicly hail the President as the 'hero' of the EU summit, saying he deserves an Oscar for his role.

The attitudinal qualities ascribed to women and directed at the key politicians from PiS are mawkish affection and relentless admiration, which shows a veiled cultural reference to ‘a noble gender contract’ between ladies and knights, so pervasive in the Polish culture. As Walczewska (2006: 93) vividly describes: ‘the duty of a man-knight is to fight, protect and look after a woman. The role of a woman is complementary – she is to support him spiritually, give him rest and award him after the fight’ [my translation].

To some extent this medieval pattern of gender relations has been recycled by *Wprost*. The female ministers were shown to fulfill their ‘female’ role, for instance by publicly admiring the President’s aggressive stand at the EU summit. In return, the conservative men offered protection and gallantry, as required by the medieval decorum, for instance when bringing disciplinary proceedings against Jacek Kurski, a fellow politician who informed the media that one of the female politicians from PiS owned a fake Chanel bag. In the words of the journalist, ‘the famous bullterrier from PiS felt in danger. The only thing he could do was to flatten his ears back, buy a bouquet of roses and in the company of his colleagues apologise to Szczypińska’. To sum up, Kurski redeemed his ‘battered’ image by acting as a man-knight (*Wprost*, 12-19.08.07).

Although no doubt playful in its tone and content, the inclusion of ‘affect’ (Martin and White, 2005: 45) in the text designed for political reporting has, predictably, a number of important ramifications. By defining female politicians as ardent, emotional and highly impressionistic, the Polish media contribute to perpetuating the stereotype of the ‘irrational woman’. In a world which strongly favours practical rationality, such an image appears particularly doomed, mainly as it is devoid of institutional authority and power, but also because it carries private connotations. It is the portrayal of female

leaders as private beings, whether as mothers (Elżbieta Jakubiak), or infantilized lovers (Jolanta Szczypińska), which undermines their public perception as professional experts or political authorities.

Only in the main text under analysis (Wprost, 12-19.08.07) two of the conservative politicians been identified by their first names or referred to by means of diminutives (Mills, 1995) ('Elżbieta', 'Jola' instead of Jolanta). Although most of the evaluation construed by the publication has been non-authorial and attributed, that is, presented as the emotive qualities of female ministers, it nevertheless still reflects the attitudinal position of the journalist (Martin, 2000). More than that, it should be seen as directly reinforcing the ideological values of the weekly.

Closely linked with the binary distinction between public man and private woman is the theory of gendered ethics, which ascribes to women higher moral virtues (e.g. patience, integrity and principality, etc.). In many accounts of 'difference feminism' (Pollitt, 2005; Ross, 2002a), the construction of differently gendered consciousness between men and women has been credited respectively to psychosexual development (Chodorow, 1978), biological determinism (Gilligan, 1981) or involvement in child-rearing (Ruddick, 1989). The conviction of the intrinsic 'goodness' of women, widely debated by feminist and non-feminist writers, is shared by the author of the 'The Matriarchy of the Fourth Republic' (Wprost, 12.08.07), who contends that the rise in the number of female ministers in Kaczyński's government can be attributed to the general 'loyalty and faithfulness of women'. The article observes that the President and the Prime Minister have experienced disloyalty from men on many occasions through their lives, yet hardly ever from women.

If we compare this finding with other studies of female leaders conducted in different cultural contexts, we shall find many references to essentialist descriptions like the ones above. Although I acknowledge their universal basis and pan-cultural presence, I will argue that many sex stereotypes reported here have specific Polish roots. For instance, the theoretical position of the conservative press with regard to women's differential morality can be traced to the ontological discourse of the Catholic Church (i.e. concerned with the essential difference between men and women) (Bucholtz, 1999), which depicts women as endowed with the 'capacity for others' and a 'deep institution of the goodness' (Ratzinger, 2004: 8) (see Chapter 2). The most cherished ideal of femininity, as epitomized by the Holy Mother, contains multiple references to stereotypically feminine virtues, such as 'humility', 'faithfulness' and 'purity' (Środa, 2007: 661).

Although it is very difficult to pinpoint the exact origin of many of the press inferences, the significant influence of the Catholic Church on the lives of the majority of Poles, as well as its direct impact on the shape of the public debate, makes the link logical and justifiable. The female-superiority view, which forms the bedrock of Polish cultural idiom and whose resonance can be found in key religious texts such as 'Mulieris Dignitatem' (John Paul II, 1995) or the never-fading myth of the Polish Mother (Kowalczyk, 2003; Sz wajcowska, 2006; Titkow, 1993), carries negative implications for women willing to pursue public duties.

The corollary of such sentimental depictions is that women are simply too pure to get involved in the dirty work of State politics (Ross, 2002a: 40). Graff (2001: 60-81) playfully describes how the stereotypically feminine projections in the campaign of Poland's former presidential candidate Hanna Gronkiewicz-Waltz were unequivocally

defeated by the aggressive style of Lech Wałęsa. In many ways, these more or less consciously produced, idealized representations or distortions of feminine traits and behaviour, helped, as the researcher reports, to further rationalize ‘the status quo’ by showing Gronkiewicz-Waltz as ill-adapted for the harsh world of politics.

On the other hand, the assertion that women display a stronger sense of morality might produce higher expectations about the ability of female leaders to purify politics and more effectively guard the morals of other (male) politicians. Similar arguments accompanied the nineteenth-century struggles for women’s suffrage which, as Elhstain (1981) concedes, repeated many older misconceptions and unexamined presumptions. Such reasoning, informed by conventional wisdom and driven by expediency solutions, appears to be a general property of *Wprost*’s socio-political ideology.

For instance, in the article ‘Tusk women’s drive’ (*Wprost*, 02,09.07), the weekly proclaimed that Poles are tired of aggressive politics and that women’s entry should soften this image and make the environment a lot friendlier. The above statements, as harmless as they appear, in reality burden female leaders with *unrealistic expectations*. Van Acker (2003) reveals in her study of female politicians that the media often lift women on to a pedestal, only to attack them fiercely when they cannot meet their overly high expectations (see also discussion in Chapter 3).

There is, however, a strong assumption expressed in the writings of other scholars that sex-stereotypes in the political arena may prove an advantage for female leaders (Iyengar et al., 1997; Kahn and Gordon, 1997; Norris, 1997b). This argument, again premised on the expediency solution, constitutes a number of problems, which I refer to in Chapter 2. Primarily, as ‘it conflates and renders invisible all those differences among

women which determine specific perspectives, behaviours, and actions' (Ross, 2002a: 41). The real danger of ontic thinking has been blatantly captured in the statement of the Civic Platform politician Julia Pitera:

I see nothing wrong in the fact that men are put in charge of the most important departments. They are really fit for those positions. It was proved a long time ago that female and male brains are built differently. Men are better in special orientation, while women are more precise, they attend to every detail. By talking to my female colleagues I can see they are more interested in social issues than managing the country's most strategic sectors. I feel the same. I would not like to manage the CBA [Central Anti-Corruption Bureau] as I have never been into guns or service. I prefer analytical action and working with people to ruling from the top, away from society.

(<http://www.wiadomosci.wp.pl.3>)

By calling for respect of 'biological facts' the central-right politician not only naturalized the gender binaries in terms that appear to stress the complementary nature of men's and women's identities and roles, but also provided a scientific explanation for women's underrepresentation within the key government sectors, thereby helping to discount the real nature of their discrimination.

#### **4.9 Conclusion**

By critically examining a sample of texts derived from electronic and print outlets, I have unveiled a number of manifest and latent media strategies which jointly take part in the construction, reproduction and legitimation of women's professional inequality. I have demonstrated that the consistent patterns of discrimination embedded in the representations of female government officials reflect more general forms of power and dominance exercised by political classes, social groups and professional (media) institutions at the macro level. The linguistic manifestations of androcentric views and

perspectives have found their expression in different layers of discourse structure, including those of syntax, semantics, lexis, rhetoric, and argumentation.

Thus, in spite of their high political status (and increased media visibility), female ministers have been construed by the press as passive recipients of men's decisions and actions. This position is most clearly visible at the level of arguments which, based on instrumental rationalization ('topos of usefulness') (Reisigl and Wodak, 2001; van Leeuwen, 2008) and expedient management solutions, consider women as a panacea for men's failing media appeal. The mitigation of female political agency is coded grammatically in the structures of sentences and their socio-semantic categorization (Fowler, 1991; Halliday, 1985). Typically, women are cast as the affected participants ('instruments', 'goals') in the transactive processes of which men are the authors.

The power of male leaders also derives from their unrestrained access to public discourse (van Dijk, 2008). It is the opinions of the male politicians from PiS, LPR or PO, as well as other management specialists, that are mostly quoted as expert and professional voices and whose interpretations of political events have been acknowledged as more valid than others. There is little doubt about the hegemonic impact of the masculine voice on the larger narratives of the conservative *Wprost*, an echo of which reverberates in other modes of public representations, such as electronic communication.

This perspective appears to legitimate the privileged position of (some) men by directly advancing their political interests. For instance, the accentuation of women's political progress at a time of deep ideological conflict helped to consolidate the position of the current leaders by showing them as defenders of women's interests, while distracting

attention from pressing social issues. The character of the media-political relations represented by *Wprost* in this account demonstrates the magazine's susceptibility to control by government forces.

As a direct product of newsroom practice, news, and other forms of journalistic writing, are subject to professional criteria ('news values') (see Bell, 1991: 2), which not only govern the processes of topic selection but frequently dictate the tone of the discussion (Fowler, 1991). In many ways the narratives about female ministers fulfill these criteria by offering a newsworthy story angle and providing opportunities for 'infotainment'. The analysis in this chapter has illustrated the prevalent forms that classifications of female ministers take in Poland's mainstream socio-political media. In the next chapter I want to focus on those aspects of representation which, as I will argue, can be used to create positive terms for women.

## Chapter 5

# WOMEN AND PROFESSIONALISM

*Her politics are full of sharp corners, right angles, staccato opinions. She is forthright, a doer and a talker (...) literally a force.*

*(The Times Magazine in its description of the British MP, Priti Patel: 21.05.11)*

*I believe that our future salvation lies in a movement away from sexual polarization and the prison of gender toward a world in which individual roles and the modes of personal behaviour can be freely chosen.*

*(Carolyn Heilbrun, 1973: ix-xi)*

### 5.1 Introduction

In this chapter I take a critical metaphor approach (Charteris-black, 2004; Chilton, 1996; Goatley, 2007; Koller, 2004a, 2004b) in order to examine discursive constructions of the professional identities of three high-profile female politicians, as they emerge in the framing practices of Polish political media. The subjects of my study are: the ex-Finance and Deputy Minister in the PiS government Zyta Gilowska, the former Secretary of State and Head of the Central Anti-corruption Bureau (CBA) Julia Pitera and the Chief Executive of Polish Telecom (UKE) Anna Streżyńska. All three women are well-acclaimed political leaders who have played a prominent role in Polish politics.

Aside from symbolic and instrumental powers associated with politics as a profession, the prestige enjoyed by the women derives also from the ‘gendered’ evaluation of the positions they have occupied, still prevalent in Polish society. In Poland, certain areas of government activity are credited with higher status than others. For instance, the Office of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is deemed more prominent and distinguished than the

less 'strategic' position of the Ministry of Labour. The differential appraisal of political sectors, resulting in their separation into 'hard' and 'soft' departments – an extension and reinforcement of the traditional public-private dichotomy (Cameron, 2007) – reveals a highly gendered assumption underlying Polish interpretation that certain work is best suited to men and not women (McElhinny, 1998). Given the perception of some women's roles as transgressive, it is important to further examine this attitudinal bias by critically exploring the socio-discursive lens through which Polish media frame their public personas.

To assist in the identification of narrative scripts (Mills, 1995) underpinning public accounts of the acclaimed leaders, I will draw on the theories and methods of Critical Metaphor Analysis (CMA) (Charteris-Black, 2004, 2005). The adopted perspective, which characterizes more recent approaches to metaphor analysis and description (Goatly, 2007; Koller, 2004a, 2005; Lakoff, 1996; Stockwell, 2000), brings together two research paradigms: Cognitive Linguistics (CL) and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). The integration of the two models into one analytical framework stems from the recognition of the ideological potential of metaphors which, as van Dijk (1998b) points out, involves both cognitive and socio-cultural aspects.

The interrelation between cognition and socio-cultural practices is convincingly demonstrated by Koller (2004a: 37), who notices that 'metaphorical expressions as instantiations of underlying conceptual metaphors are a valuable starting point to study cognitive and ideological determinants of discourse'. Thanks to the persistence of conceptual metaphor, the figurative uses of language account for much of the cognitive construction of social reality, mediating our understanding of the world and impacting on its practices (Koller, 2004a, Charteris-Black, 2004). The analysis of metaphorical

properties of discourse can thus prove a useful means for investigating ‘socially poignant representations’ (Charteris-Black, 2004: 29). Like any aspect of language, the metaphor can be equally valid as a vehicle for generating, reproducing and legitimizing gender attitudes and ideologies. In view of the constitutive functions of figurative concepts and expressions which, as Knowles and Moon (2006) observe, convey attitudinal meanings and positions, this chapter will attempt to achieve the following set of objectives:

Explore the articulations of women's institutional and gender identities through a textual analysis of metaphorical themes, focusing specifically on relations of power through which these particular cultural constructs achieve their discursive definition.

Assess if the metaphorical expressions and their associated ideological principles and values participate in the production of normative/schematic conceptions of gender identified in professional workplace studies (Baxter, 2010; Holmes, 2006; Jamieson, 1995; Kendall and Tannen, 1997; Mullany, 2007; Wodak 1995). More specifically, examine whether, and to what extent, the proposed identity models and configurations of gender ideologies challenge the promotion of positive experiences for women, thus paving the way for a correlative advancement of their public image.

By focusing on the gender-based scripts (Mills, 2008) which are brought into play in representations of women in authority, I will attempt to uncover whether the institutionalized discourse in Poland is organized to illustrate and enforce the legitimacy of women's political power or, on the contrary, to undermine their professional status

and effectiveness as senior political leaders.

To interpret the data, I draw on feminist and post-structuralist accounts of ideology, gender and power, making the notions of ‘deconstruction’ (Baxter, 2003, 2008; Bing and Bergvall, 1996; Derrida, 1981) and ‘gender depolarization’ (Bem, 1993; Heilbrun, 1973) the central focus of my analysis. The aim of these two processes is to undermine and denaturalize the culturally imposed relation between ‘the sex of the body and the gender of the psyche’ (Bem, 1993: 167) which, as this chapter will reveal in considerable detail, assumes the form of hierarchical oppositions, such as male/female, transactional/transformational, instrumental/expressive, autonomous/connected, etc. (Baxter, 2003; Bem, 1993). One of the ways in which the principle of deconstruction has been applied in critical discourse research is through the strategy of ‘overturning’ (Derrida, 1981; Cooper, 1989), which consists in reversing the discriminatory mechanisms of binary structuring that are present in the cultural discourses and practices of public institutions.

The Critical Metaphor Analysis undertaken in this chapter builds upon the principles of social constructionism by considering metaphor as a discursive tool of ‘ideological contention’ (Kress, 1989: 70). Consequently, by critically examining the rhetorical themes employed in the women's corpus, I aim to find out whether the projected socio-cultural scripts and discourses about female leaders contest the ideological organization of bipolar relations and whether the use of such themes in women's descriptions adds to the feminist transformative agenda.

More importantly though, I want to ask if the particular metaphorical strategies, as discursive expressions of gender and symbolic resources for classification, can be used

to construct a viable model of women's professional identity. All these questions and the related theoretical frameworks will be addressed fully in the course of the chapter. I shall now present my data by focusing on the lexical fields on which the prevailing definitions of women's institutional identities have been premised.

## 5.2 Women of Action: Deconstructing Conflict-based Metaphor

Metaphors are instances of discursive representation that result from an 'interaction' between two semantic fields, or to apply cognitive terms, between 'source' and 'target' 'domains' (Forceville, 1996: 5, 213). Linguistically this entails transferring or mapping a lexical item from one lexical domain ('source') to another domain ('target') (Goatly, 2007: 12). The analysis of figurative expressions that appear in women's magazine corpus shows that the 'source' domain from which the metaphors most typically derive is that of 'war'. Among the most prevalent lexical items deployed in political media reporting are the conventionalized and directly analogous terms such as 'fight', 'combat', 'battle' and 'war', as in the following examples:

(1) Zyta Gilowska declares *battle against* fake goods (<http://wiadomosci.gazeta.pl.2>).

(2) It is the first serious defeat of the head of UKE - the uncompromising *fight for* a demonopolization of the Polish market gained her enormous popularity (Polityka, 02.06.07).

(3) Though holding seemingly second-rate position, Anna Streżyńska had great achievements. She *declared war against* monopolies and has been *fighting* it successfully ever since (Wprost, 28.08.07: 45).

(4) Anna Streżyńska and Grażyna Piotrkowska-Oliwa play in opposite teams, but the aim of the game is the same: let the Poles come to an agreement. This year both ladies have been *fighting a battle* over charge rates. Regardless of what divides the two ladies, they are united by their success. They are not yet 30 but boss Polish communication around (...) Streżyńska was

repeatedly awarded for *combating* monopoly. It is thanks to this *fight* that we are now offered public services cheaper or free of charge (<http://www.przekroj.pl>).

(5) Looking at subsequent lives and the political career of Julia Pitera, it is not easy to understand why today she is *not fighting against* the system in the ranks of PiS, but is *fighting PiS* in the ranks of PO (Newsweek Polska, 16.12.07).

Related conceptually and defined through a relationship based on close synonymy, this specific set of combative expressions works to convey an underlying concept: POLITICS IS FIGHTING (Goatly, 2007: 72). Situated at the centre of metaphoric action are three female politicians: the Minister of Finance Zyta Gilowska, the Anti-corruption Minister Julia Pitera and the President of UKE Anna Streżyńska. The dominant lexical cluster employed to describe female leaders rests on a very specific notion of fight, as of intense and laboured effort or personal struggle undertaken with the aim of achieving various political objectives. This particular representation of fighting emerges from the insightful study of the metaphorical structure of the English lexicon, carried out by Andrew Goatly (2007).

In his broad semantic overview of lexical units underpinning the metaphorical theme ACTIVITY IS FIGHTING, Goatly (2007: 73) suggests seeing the meaning of fight as to 'work hard to achieve'. In a comparable vein, he defines the parallel concept of battle as an 'attempt to achieve something in a difficult situation'. The conceptualization of fight as a crusade for an important political cause underlies example 4, where two of the highly appraised women politicians, though 'playing in opposite teams' have been recognized for acting in concert in order to negotiate acceptable charge rates. In excerpt 3, a positively valenced 'struggle' for a demonopolization of the Polish communication market constitutes the main locus of political agency and control for the President of

Telecommunication Anna Streżyńska.

In both cases, the conflict metaphors expressed by the words 'battle' and 'fight' and their prepositional collocates 'over' or 'for' imply an orientation to the semantic category of 'defence' (Charteris-Black, 2004: 69). The two political leaders have been framed as defenders of important social aims represented by abstract processes and entities such as demonopolization or monetary policy. Following the definition of a 'battle' as a high-level personal challenge (Goatly, 2007: 73), we can see how the word fits squarely into another classificational domain, which Charteris-Black (2004: 69) refers to as the metaphor of 'struggle'.

Complementing the semantic division of military terms into categories of 'defence' and 'struggle' is the metaphor of 'attack' (ibid: 70), conveyed in extracts 1, 3, 4 and 5. Here the meaning of fight, exemplified by expressions such as 'combat', 'fight against' or 'declare/wage wars against' extends into a form of resistance and represents an attempt at preventing processes and activities from happening or taking further effect (Goatly, 2007). For instance, examples of counteraction undertaken by Zyta Gilowska and Anna Streżyńska include countering an illegal flow of counterfeit goods, as well as precluding exclusive control of the telecommunications market by Polish Telecom.

By contrast, the political performance of Julia Pitera (extract 5) has been defined in the opinion-forming press through continuous, though unspecified, activities aimed at curbing the political power of the Conservative Party. The following descriptions of women's political actions delineated through different sub-types of conflict-based lexis betray a systematic 'rhetorical pattern' which, as Charteris-Black (2004) illustrates, defines the character of the projected evaluation. The analyst contends that 'the conflict

is either for abstract social goals that are positively evaluated (...) or against social phenomena that are negatively evaluated'. In either case, the construed evaluations legitimate women's political behaviour by providing justification for their decisions and actions (Charteris-Black, 2004: 91).

Even more important from the viewpoint of feminist discourse analysis is the role that the metaphors of 'defence', 'attack' and 'struggle' play in defining politics as a sphere of activity where women exhibit a significant level of agency and control. The metaphoric scenario of 'politics as action' underlying contemporary media discourse about female leaders projects an image of women as capable and responsible subjects actively engaged in the performance of a wide range of goal-oriented and frequently challenging political assignments. An elaboration of the action scenario is a 'movement' script (Koller, 2004a) expressed through a combination of symbolic and literal means:

(6) The anti-corruption minister seems the only person in the new government able *to retake the last earthwork* from PiS - the Central Anticorruption Bureau (Newsweek Polska, 16.12.07).

(7) Gilowska *counter-attacks*. In an attempt to *regain real power over the financial sector*, the deputy prime minister Zyta Gilowska *formed an alliance* with Slawomir Skrzypek (Polityka, 11-18.08.07).

(8) It [the surgery] will determine whether Gilowska's comeback to the political *front line* will be possible (<http://wiadomosci.dziennik.pl.2>).

In her comprehensive analysis of business media discourse, Koller (2004a: 82) drafts a metaphoric scenario of 'movement' which, as she argues, helps to establish the notion of market as a combat ground and a territory in struggle, with various business contenders attempting to seize that territory via aggressive movement. The analogous fight for space can also be seen in the representations of the Polish political domain,

which, as the above examples demonstrate, has been conceptualized as a 'battlefield' over which female leaders fight numerous strategic battles: launch attacks, forge alliances with other political parties and which they try to control.

This specific scenario of 'movement', with its underlying goal-oriented motives, helps to construct a particular image of women as competitive, ambitious and calculating in their quest for political success. For instance, the hidden agenda behind Zyta Gilowska's informal interaction with the MP Sławomir Skrzypek was to secure a complete domination of the financial sector. The move represents a highly instrumental and mechanical operation upon people and, in conjunction with two other excerpts, serves as an illustration of women's extraordinary powers and strategic abilities including the capacity to do things or get the outcomes they want.

For instance, example 6 showcases the remarkable performance of Julia Pitera by depicting her as 'the only person in the new government able to take back' the key territory ('earthwork') from PiS, namely the Central Anticorruption Bureau (CAB). The construction of female politicians as people of influence and power reverberates in fragment no. 8, which metaphorizes the prospective transfer of the Finance Minister back into the 'political front-line' following her serious illness. While the word 'front' refers to a 'particular area of activity', the conjoined phrase 'front-line' marks those taking part within that activity as distinguished and prominent contestants ('front-runners') (Goatly, 2007: 73).

In order to fully illustrate how the metaphorical expressions of 'instrumentality' and 'goal-orientation' function to express and legitimate women's interests, I draw on feminist accounts of power (Hartsock, 1983; Hoagland, 1988; Lips 1991; Pitkin, 1972),

also known as ‘empowerment-based theories’ (Allen, 2011). The central theme that links feminist theorizations is the contention that power should be reconsidered in terms of potentiality or capacity to act as opposed to domination and control (Hartsock, 1983: 225). For instance, Hoagland (1988: 118) proposes a definition of power as ‘power-from-within’, which she conceptualizes as ‘ability, choice and engagement’.

The pro-active and transformative view of power (Wartenberg, 1990) as creative and positive force or action emerges from the writings of Dorothy Emmet (1953-54), who outlines in more pragmatic terms the modes through which power could be attained and accomplished – for instance through generating ideas, maximizing productive input or strengthening vitality (Emmet, 1953-54 in Hartsock, 1983). Implied in the feminist concept of ‘good power’ (Janeway, 1980: 87) is the view that the way to empowerment involves an experience of growth and development which, as Lips (1991: 8) points out, comes from a sense of a person's autonomy and belief in his or her own abilities.

In her recent book ‘Love, authority and manipulation in close relationships’, Mandal (2008: 34), drawing on Goodchilds’ (1979) tripartite framework of personal power (‘the ability to get one’s way’; ‘the ability to get things done’; ‘the ability to get along with others’), indicates a discrepancy that exists in the types and manifestations of power enacted by men and women. Mandal (2008) notices that only a third aspect of personal power – one which relates to establishing and maintaining harmonious relationships with other people – has been traditionally associated with women. The remaining two components are stereotypically inscribed with the performance of masculine identity.

Of all three manifestations of personal power, it is the third variant, namely ‘referent power’ – premised on likeability and social attractiveness (Carli, 1999: 83) – which

proves the most accessible to female gender. Following Mandal (2006), I consider it imperative that women focus on those aspects of power which pertain to action and effective achievement of goals and ultimately learn to see power in terms of accomplishments rather than relationships. In this way, the differences between men and women with regard to the source and manner of power exertion could be diminished (Mandal, 2006; Lips, 1991).

In view of these considerations, I want to suggest that the use of military metaphors in descriptions of female politicians in my data fulfills exactly this corrective role. The discursive function of metaphorical expressions undermines and transcends the binary designations of gender classifications which continue to assign oppositional styles of speech and behaviour to men and women. The stereotyped interpersonal norms and expectations determining the character of gender behaviour, particularly as applies to professional and other public settings, have been described based on a substantial body of research in terms of two primary psychological variables: communion and agency (Bakan, 1966; Cameron, 2007; Eagly et al., 1992; Eagly and Karau 2002; Eagly and Steffen, 1984; Parsons and Bales, 1955).

Accordingly, as Eagly and others note (Eagly et al., 1992; Eagly and Karau, 2002), femininity is associated with a communal orientation, defined as 'selflessness, concern with others and a desire to be at one with others', whereas masculinity is identified with an agentic orientation and encompasses antithetical features of self-assertion, independence and instrumental competence (Eagly and Steffen, 1984: 736; Eagly et al., 1992: 6). The major differences in the attribution of personal qualities to both genders derive, according to Eagly and Steffen (1984), from the asymmetrical relations of men and women to occupational structures of employment and homemaking, respectively.

Thus, the socio-cultural association of men with high status vocational roles accounts for their strategic positioning in the 'less-well-liked yet respected quadrant of competence' (Glick et al., 2004: 714). Conversely, deprived of expert authority and denied access to traditional avenues of power, women, whose personal characteristics correspond directly to nurturance and caring (Wojciszke et al., 1998), 'land in the warm, but not too competent quadrant (Glick et al., 2004: 714).

In the context of empowerment-based theories of power (Hartsock, 1983; Hoagland, 1988; Janeway, 1980) and factor-analytic studies on gender stereotyping (Broverman et al. 1972; Eagly et al., 1992; Eagly and Steffen, 1984), we can see how the metaphorical expressions of fighting play a contestive and disordering role within political representations by signalling women's alignment with normative masculine features of agency, instrumentality, potency, competence and activity – traits which, as Glick et al. (2004) point out, relate to high status, authority and expert power. Hence, by indicating women's adherence to agentic and transactive values, the rhetorical utterances defy the stereotypical injunctive norms (Eagly and Karau, 2002) which construct women as affectively and person-oriented (Holmes, 2006), thereby contributing to a displacement of a binary model of gender. In this function, the metaphors act as hierarchy-destabilizing significations, i.e. discursive strategies that challenge the stability of the gender order.

As carriers of non-stereotypical and counter-hegemonic identity positions, the distinguished rhetorical devices actualize progressive conceptions of gender, which lie at the heart of feminist and subversive discourses. Such discourses which, as Sunderland (2004) argues, contest traditionalist gender ideologies, are sporadically present in the popular depictions of top female politicians in the Polish press, as

evidenced by my critical metaphor analysis.

The identified metaphorical patterns and their associated discursive meanings that accentuate women's potency and capacity signify, in my view, a (feminist) 'discourse of female agency' – an instance of a binary-disabling representation, which entails the conceptualization of women as capable, driven and successful professionals. The projected model of female agency delineated in my data matches the description of a professional identity construction defined by Wodak (2003: 692) as the 'assertive activist' – a woman who is proactive, knows what she wants and will fight to reach her objectives.

The portrayal of women in an active gender role constitutes, in my view, a viable alternative to existing identity models available for women in the achievement setting (Kanter, 1977) which, as will be shown later on in the thesis, offer a highly stereotypical and restricted view of women's professional performance. Let us now look more closely at the specific instances of metaphorical expressions to see how they influence the media portrayals of individual female politicians.

### **5.3 The Verbal Battles of Zyta Gilowska**

A particularly prolific metaphorical cluster that frames representations of Zyta Gilowska revolves around the notion of verbal attack. In this subtype of conflict-based lexis, the concept of attack refers to an intense verbal dispute or strong, adverse criticism and hence might be associated with the structural metaphor ARGUMENT IS WAR (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980: 61), or its more specific subset CRITICIZING/ARGUING IS ATTACKING (Goatly, 2007: 75). The following fragments illustrate the battling aspects

of political arguments ascribed to the linguistic behaviour of the former Finance Minister Zyta Gilowska:

(9) Zyta Gilowska returned from political holiday and fiercely criticized the government during yesterday's meeting with the economists (...) she straight away began to *attack* the government over its fiscal politics: "The state of public finances diverges considerably from the government's promises!" thundered Gilowska (<http://wiadomosci.dziennik.pl.2>).

(10) The *clash* of coalition ladies.

After a clash at the line of Ludwik Dorn-Zbigniew Ziobro a new serious *conflict* is threatening the government. *Underhand tactics* have been used in the competition for the title of the first lady of Jarosław Kaczyński's cabinet. *Positioned against each other* are Zyta Gilowska and Grażyna Geśicka. Gilowska *launches a counter-attack*. "What a rubbish talk!" shouts Gilowska, and refuses to hear about the proposals of the Ministry of Regional Development (Newsweek, 25.02.07).

As illustrated, the metaphorical expressions for arguing/criticizing comprise sequences of attacks or counter-attacks, which have received a further elaboration in text through a description of combative moves and military strategies, such as 'clash', 'underhand tactics' or 'defence'. The high concentration of military terms in these short texts corroborates the thesis advanced by Lakoff and Johnson (1980: 63) that the concept of argument is 'comprehended and carried out in terms of war'.

The evidence for metaphorical structuring comes from a high number of systematic and isomorphic correlations that link the domain of warfare with the institution and practice of social argument. Knowles and Moon (2006) identify the conceptual mappings between the source and target domains with the following set of correspondences; just as the barricades or deployment of extra soldiers fortify the positions of military teams,

so the strength of conviction and the legitimacy of factual claims decide about the victory in political campaigns. The weak points in the systems of fortification parallel inconclusive data and false statements presented during adversarial contests in media and parliamentary debates.

Consequently, the identification of opponents' weaknesses and the construction of a strong line of defence is the shared and overriding aim of both warfare and argument (ibid: 33). Analogously, Charteris-Black (2004: 91-92) singles out a ritualized model of action which structures 'politics as conflict'. This includes, inter alia, a presence of a threat, identification of the enemy, a call to action, victory, surrender, or punishment. This particular model or cognitive script (Charteris-Black, 2004) is well depicted in excerpt 10, which pictures two prominent female ministers competing for the title of the first lady. The representation shows the following structural moves:

1. The existence of a threat - 'a new serious *conflict* is *threatening* the government - a *clash* of the coalition ladies'.
2. The identification of the enemy - '*positioned* against each other are Zyta Gilowska and Grażyna Geśicka'.
3. The performance of action - '*underhand tactics* have been used in the competition for the title of the first lady of Jarosław Kaczyński's cabinet'.
4. Punishment - "'what a rubbish talk!'" *shouts* Gilowska, and refuses to hear about the proposals of the Ministry of Regional Development'.

(Charteris-Black, 2004: 91-92)

An even more aggressive instance of political argument emerges from the next extract where the conflicting positions of different members of the Polish Cabinet are expressed

via ruthless verbal tactics of intimidation, threat or recourse to authority (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980):

(11) The person in question is Zyta Gilowska who last year was the most dynamic politician in the Civic Platform. She *entered into sharp polemics* with politicians from SLD, Self-Defence and LPR, *argued* with the ministers in the cabinet of Leszek Miller and Marek Belka. When she was offended by the deputy prime minister Jerzy Hausner, whom she earlier *vehemently attacked*, the chivalrous Donald Tusk came to her defence demanding Hausner's apology (...). The conflict with Gilowska was Tusk's mistake - one that might have contributed to PO's failure in the parliamentary elections (<http://wyborcza.pl.2>).

In this 'no-holds-barred' governmental dispute, Zyta Gilowska carries out a series of vehement attacks on the then Deputy Prime Minister Jerzy Hausner. In response to her aggressive acts Hausner offends the minister, which forces the Civic Platform politician Donald Tusk to demand a public apology from Hausner by resorting to his public authority.

These particular strategies based on intimidation, belittling and invoking authority actualize a basic antagonistic script of force dynamics called the 'antagonistic force movement', which Koller (2004a: 107) defines as follows: 'While the fast, goal-oriented movement scenario refers to several parties moving from one point to another or ahead of them, the force schema rather encapsulates movement by two parties against each other, the aim being to push the opposing party back behind its starting point'. As noted by Goatly (2007: 78), one 'exerts force' against those parties whose ideas and values contradict our own purposes and evaluations.

Considering the discourse at hand, it could be seen that the antagonistic movement extends predominantly from one political actor, i.e. Zyta Gilowska, who appears to

instigate a wide range of literal and metaphorical processes in her speech, with the effect of enacting considerable power over the opposition. Similar to the goal-oriented scenario, the verbal actions of the Minister of Finance take visible effects on the political world, thus upholding the image of women as capable and forceful contenders.

In addition to asserting the minister's agentive powers, the scheme places special emphasis on the competitive aspects of political contests, for instance when metaphorizing verbal disputes between the major political formations (PO/PiS) as matches between two sporting teams. The metaphor of sport, contained in fragments 12 and 13, provides a conceptual support for the main military cluster, intensifying and further elaborating its antagonistic qualities:

(12) The first *public attack* by Gilowska against PO's government took place on Thursday during the meeting of the president Lech Kaczynski with the electorate. Known for her razor-sharp tongue, Gilowska did not dissappoint the PiS activists and fiercely criticized the Civic Platform. She handed the green card to the Tusk government (<http://wiadomosci.dziennik.pl.2>).

(13) Zyta Gilowska returns to politics and makes a strong entrance; she harshly reviews the achievements of Donald Tusk's government. On Saturday the former deputy minister appeared on the side of Jarosław Kaczyński. Why? To hand a yellow card to the government. Politicians warn there will be more *attacks* from Gilowska in this campaign (<http://wiadomosci.dziennik.pl.2>).

As the two extracts demonstrate, the focus lies on the binary opposition between the government and its closest competition represented as opposite football teams. The sentence 'to hand a yellow card to the government' covertly defines Polish political practice as an activity with clearly defined goals (winning) and equally unquestionable outcomes (victory/defeat), the ultimate aim being the expulsion of the opponent from

the fighting ground (Koller, 2005). It is noteworthy that in the Polish media accounts, the person endowed with the authority to enforce rules and thereby influence the game progression is the female lawmaker Zyta Gilowska.

The politician, who has been inscribed in discourse in the executive role, appears as the key judge and overseer of the cabinet's professional performance. The woman has been shown administering a yellow card to the opposition party, which signals an infringement of the official code of conduct but, more pointedly, showcases the ability of the female actor to secure a compliance of other political players by warning, reprimanding and penalizing their unruly behaviour.

The intermingling of politics and sport constitutes a conventional feature of both mediatized and official political reporting in many linguistic contexts. Jansen and Sabo (1994) show how the sport and gaming tropes structured the coverage of the Persian Gulf War, thus helping to promote the US government pro-military agenda. By contrast, the 'spectacularization' of football imagery in the official discourse of the Italian Prime Minister Sylvio Berlusconi proved a successful strategy for symbolizing national unity and justifying the entrance of a non-political figure into the highly exclusive and elite public arena (Semino and Masci, 1996: 250).

A variation on the military metaphor through the use of sporting vocabulary in the women's corpus also conveys a double function. It confers upon Polish politics and, by implication, the female protagonist, the qualities of 'enthusiasm, competitiveness and personal involvement', typically linked with sporting events, particularly football (ibid: 251). More importantly though, the sport-based metaphor plays a legitimizing role by re-affirming the professional identity of Zyta Gilowska as a prominent political leader

and key government authority. I now wish to focus in more detail on the evoked expressions of leadership by examining a group of speech acts which, though non-metaphorical, amplify the meaning and discourse structure of the ARGUMENT as WAR metaphor (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980).

#### **5.4 The Language of Authoritarian Leadership: Constructing Professional Identity in Interaction**

The construction of leadership in media depictions of Zyta Gilowska operates predominantly through representations of speech and is reflected in the way the minister is shown to negotiate her workplace relationships in political settings. In other words, the portrayal of Gilowska as a leader is based directly on her expressive and interpersonal conduct, which the press attributes to her professional interactions with other political figures. The ensuing definition of leadership as a 'communicative process or an activity' (Holmes, 2005a: 3) represents a more dynamic view, which equates leadership with a particular 'effect of interaction' (Bass and Stodgill, 1981: 16), in contrast to a more static personality approach focusing on a fixed set of identity characteristics (Holmes, 2006: 34).

Such a 'performative' approach (Baxter, 2010: 12) presupposes a different framework of power to that stipulated by the empowerment-based models of 'power-to' or 'power-within', discussed in the previous section, one which conceives of power as a relation of domination and control – as 'power-over' (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2005). The semantic shift towards the interpersonal dynamics diverts my research focus onto discursive norms of interaction; the communicative strategies and linguistic styles of accomplishing workplace identities and the role these play in the construction of

professional relationships (Baxter, 2003; Holmes, 2000; Holmes and Marra, 2004; Mullany 2004).

Holmes et al. (1999) identify a number of more or less explicit techniques through which individuals discursively enact and negotiate power within the workplace, for instance when expressing approval, making corrective statements or issuing challenges and directives. Such features are widely present in the media accounts of Zyta Gilowska, as the following 'mentoring strategies' (Holmes, 2005b: 1779) illustrate:

(14) Zyta Gilowska returns to politics and makes a strong entrance: she *harshly reviews* the achievements of Donald Tusk's government. On Saturday the former deputy minister appeared on the side of Jaroslaw Kaczynski. Why? To hand a yellow card to the government. Politicians warn there will be more attacks from Gilowska in this campaign (<http://wiadomosci.dziennik.pl.2>).

(15) Zyta Gilowska returned from political holiday (...) and *fiercely criticized* the government during yesterday's meeting with the economists (...) she straight away began to attack the government over its fiscal politics: "the state of public finances diverges considerably from the government's promises!" *thundered* Gilowska (<http://wiadomosci.dziennik.pl.2>).

According to the presented scenario, Gilowska resumed office following a break from politics and, upon arrival, embarked on the process of correcting the performance of the new government. She gave a critical report on the work of Donald Tusk's administration, pointing out flaws in the financial policies. By overtly challenging the government over its failure to keep the previously made promises, the female legislator has emerged in discourse as a powerful critic and supreme authority to whom other politicians should be accountable. The above excerpt defines the construction of leadership as a direct and unidirectional exertion of influence. The 'corrective powers'

(Simpson and Mayr, 2010: 2) of the minister are signified in text via speech verbs, such as 'harshly review', 'fiercely criticize' or 'thunder'. All the expressions mark power relationships overtly and represent strategies through which managers establish and maintain control over the conduct of others.

The construction of Gilowska's expressive behaviour via critical and challenging statements serves as an illustration of her power, which appears to me to be coercive, unilateral and constitutive of significant status differentials. Patemann (1980) designates such open assertions of dominance as an instance of 'oppressive' discourse and juxtaposes it with more covert and 'repressive' manifestations of power (Patemann, 1980 in Holmes et al., 1999: 355). Correspondingly, the deeply critical comments (e.g. 'harshly reviews', 'fiercely criticizes', 'thunders') ascribed to the minister with respect to the government's enactment of the policy agenda sound to me not only disapproving but also admonitory and face-threatening. Consider also the second interaction which signifies Gilowska's position of authority relative to her female colleague:

(16) After a clash at the line Ludwik Dorn-Zbigniew Ziobro a new serious conflict is threatening the government. Underhand tactics have been used in the competition for the title of the first lady of Jaroslaw Kaczynski's cabinet. Positioned against each other are Zyta Gilowska and Grazyna Gesicka. Gilowska launches a counter-attack. "What a rubbish talk!"- *shouts* Gilowska, and refuses to hear about the proposals of the Ministry of Regional Development (Newsweek Polska, 25.02.07).

Here the strategy of disapproval finds its linguistic expression through the verbal process 'shout' and the generally abusive comment which negatively evaluates the speech act of her associate. In the quoted text Gilowska not only disparagingly appraises the policy proposals of her rival by using aggressive and foul language

('rubbish'), but also engages in a discourse of resistance ('refuses to hear'), renouncing cooperative and conciliatory measures. Both strategies, which express power up front and overtly, create a dominant position for the female politician, conferring upon her the right to make independent decisions and disregard competing interests of more junior colleagues.

The above fragment serves, in my view, as a linguistic assertion of the minister's 'legitimate power', which Carli (1999: 85) defines as follows: 'Legitimate power can be best conceptualized as a form of entitlement. A person who possesses legitimate power has the right to exert influence over others, command their respect, and expect their deference'. The association between an interactional style and a social power has been demonstrated by Aries (1996), who found that the use of less polite influence tactics, manifested by unmitigated requests or directives, is typical of persons with high power. This view is supported by Carli (1999: 89), who notices that 'regardless of gender, people use more direct or assertive forms of influence when they feel relatively powerful'.

The tendency of the Polish press to define the female politician through the prism of excessively contentious behaviour is aptly summarized in the excerpt from the quality paper 'Gazeta Wyborcza', which shows her actively disputing and controverting claims made by legislators from other political formations:

(17) The person in question is Zyta Gilowska who last year was the most dynamic politician in the Civic Platform. She *entered into sharp polemics* with politicians from SLD, Self-Defence and LPR, *argued* with the ministers in the cabinet of Leszek Miller and Marek Belka. When she was offended by the deputy prime minister Jerzy Hausner, whom she earlier *vehemently attacked*, the chivalrous Donald Tusk came to her defence demanding Hausner's apology (...) The

conflict with Gilowska was Tusk's mistake - one that might have contributed to PO's failure in the parliamentary elections (<http://wyborcza.pl.2>).

The high concentration of confrontational devices in the above fragment construes the relations between the minister and her associates as hardly balanced and amicable. The representations of political arguments comprising highly charged evaluative statements ('sharp polemics', 'vehemently attacked') project the image of Gilowska as a belligerent and combative leader.

The language of aggression underlying the interactive portrayal of leadership in the quoted texts plays an important interpersonal function which can be explained with reference to instrumental theories of aggression (Cambell, 1991; Tedeschi et al., 1974). According to Tedeschi et al. (1974: 553), there is an intimate link between aggression and control, where the former acts as a tool for influencing and dominating the conduct of others. Viewed as such, aggression is nothing but an expression of coercive power – 'the use of threats and punishments to gain compliance and have demands met' (Cambell, 1993; 13). It is an act of exerting authority and a process by which an agent wins the opponent's submission.

I want to suggest that the instrumental use of aggression is at the base of Zyta Gilowska's identity construction. The contentious character of verbal interactions which the press attributes to the minister's public persona asserts her interpersonal ascendancy over other political actors. The representation of Gilowska as the principal influence agent demonstrates the extent of her interpersonal and social power ('power over'), which Carli (1999: 82) refers to as the 'potential to influence or control others'. The linguistic means through which the quest for domination and control has been conveyed are the overtly expressed strategies of correction, disapproval and challenge (Holmes et

al., 1999). The lexical realizations of these strategies, such as the emotionally-laden and face-threatening verbs ('shout', 'thunder', 'attack', 'criticize') or their qualifying adjectives ('fiercely', 'vehemently'), serve as an illustration of public humiliation and punishment that meet those who fail to comply with her minister's directives.

Such overt representations of power in the form of unidirectional, top-down influence relationships underlie the coercive and authoritarian view of leadership (Bass, 1960; Holmes, 2006). As Northouse (2004: 69) observes, the authority-compliance style of leadership 'places emphasis on task and job requirements and less emphasis on people (...) This style is results-driven, and people are regarded as tools to that end. The [authoritarian] leader seems as controlling, demanding, hard-driving and overempowering'. In a similar vein Steinberg (2008: 359) defines the concept of 'dominant leadership' as characterized by competitive, oppositional and overbearing conduct.

Both interactive patterns associated with authoritarian and dominant leadership have been captured in media portrayals of the Polish Finance Minister. The projections of coercive power and authority, along with a display of workplace hierarchies, strike a strong contrast with 'transformational' and people-oriented approaches to leadership, which seek to accommodate different interests, stress cooperation, collegiality and play down differences in status (Berryman-Fink, 1997; Martin Rojo and Gomez-Esteban, 2003; Northouse, 2001). Both styles of leadership, authoritarian and transformational, correspond to stereotypical and dichotomous conceptions of men as agentic and women as communal, discussed at length in the previous section. When applied to professional behaviour, the agentic and communal evaluations 'suggest that female-stereotypic forms of leadership are interpersonally oriented and collaborative, whereas male-stereotypic

forms of leadership are task-oriented and dominating (Eagly et al., 1992: 6).

In view of the gendered conceptions of leadership, the characterization of Zyta Gilowska's linguistic behaviour based on normatively masculine interactional strategies performs a subversive function within the representation by questioning and disturbing the traditional signifieds of difference between male and female leaders. In other words, the use of directive, unmitigated language in the description of the minister's professional identity helps to contest the notion of authoritarian leadership as masculine in style and, by implication, poses a direct challenge to the stereotype of the female leader as collaborative and interpersonally-oriented. As Holmes (2006: 67) points out, the adoption of such strategies initiates the process of de-gendering, which allows for the linguistic conventions to be re-signified as 'tools of leadership discourse', rather than solely male discourse'.

Furthermore, I will argue that, by challenging the descriptive norms governing the performance of women's professional identities (that women talk in a direct and confrontational manner), the political representations simultaneously redefine the prescriptive norms (that women should act in a powerful manner), which essentially expands the pool of interactive resources available to women within the professional setting. The non-normative and counter-stereotypical depictions of Zyta Gilowska as a direct influence agent and a powerful, authoritarian leader thus successfully 'trouble' the institutional boundaries of female leadership by acknowledging and permitting other modes of women's management performance and consequently broadening the scope of their professional agency.

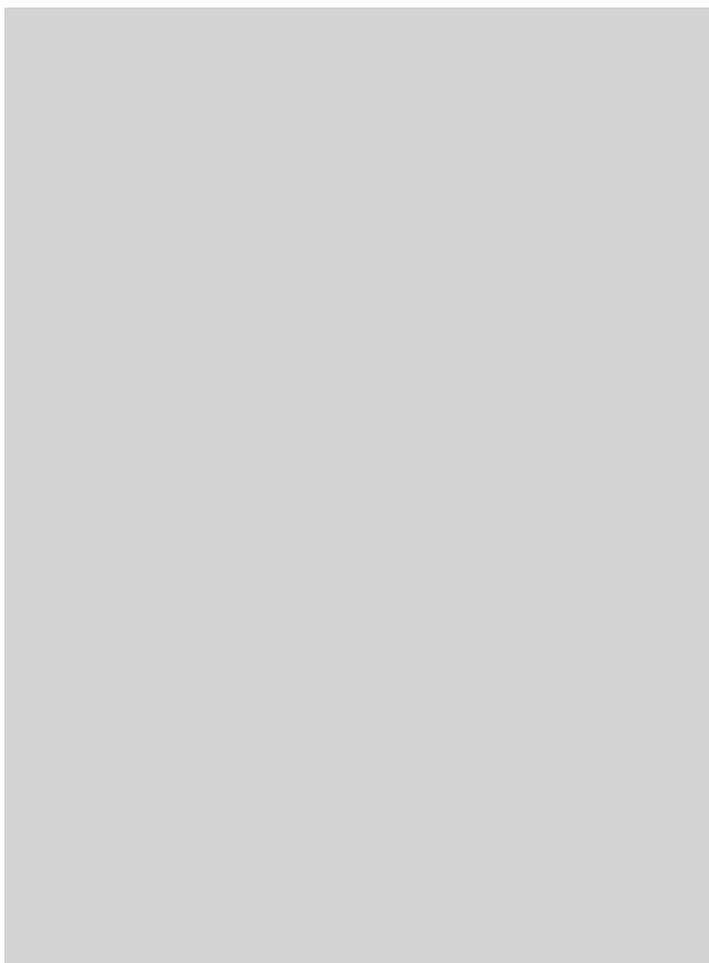
In the previous sections I have proposed that the characterization of Zyta Gilowska's

contentious behaviour has been primarily premised on the following structural metaphors: CRITICIZING/ARGUING is ATTACKING (Goatly, 2007) and ARGUMENT is WAR (Lakoff and Johnson, 1985). I will now supplement these examples by looking at a more richly elaborated construal of political argument stemming from the media discussion of the Secretary of State and Anti-corruption Minister Julia Pitera. The analysis is based on a single article by *Newsweek Polska* (16.12.07), which has been singled out from a larger corpus owing to its creative incorporation of pictorial devices.

### **5.5 'The Minister Who Shoots': Representing Political Arguments**

In one of its winter issues, the Polish version of the *Newsweek* magazine featured the Government Commissioner for Anti-corruption Policy Julia Pitera on its cover page clad in a cowboy outfit and pointing a revolver (Fig. 5.1). The meaning of the visual has been anchored (Barthes, 1977) by the following caption: 'Sheriff Pitera. She already has a plan how to shoot the head of CBA' (*Newsweek Polska*, 16.12.07). Considering the codes of dress, along with its verbal reinforcement, we can see how the magazine makes a more or less direct and somewhat humorous allusion to Pitera's newly appointed position as the head of the anti-corruption watchdog (CBA).

The core of the message forms a multimodal metaphor brought about by combining different systems of signs, in this case pictorial and linguistic (Forceville, 2008). In conjunction the verbo-visual elements invite the reader to perceive and understand the newly established ministerial role in terms of an old-time profession of the peace officer. The resulting metaphor can thus be framed as follows: 'JULIA PITERA IS A SHERIFF'.



**Figure 5.1** 'Sheriff Pitera already has a plan' (Newsweek Polska, 16.12.07).

Just like the use of linguistic metaphor, the pictorial representation requires a delineation and marking of parallel mappings between the 'source' and 'target' domains (i.e. the semantic area from which the metaphor is drawn or to which is it applied) (Knowles and Moon, 2006), or to adopt Black's (1979) terms, between the 'primary' and 'secondary' subjects. In the researcher's words: 'The metaphorical utterance works by 'projecting upon' the primary subject a set of 'associated implications', comprised in the implicative complex, that are predicable of the secondary subject [emphasis in original]' (Black, 1979: 28). The exact notion of the implicative complex has been captured by Forceville (1996), who defines it as a collectivity of properties, beliefs and

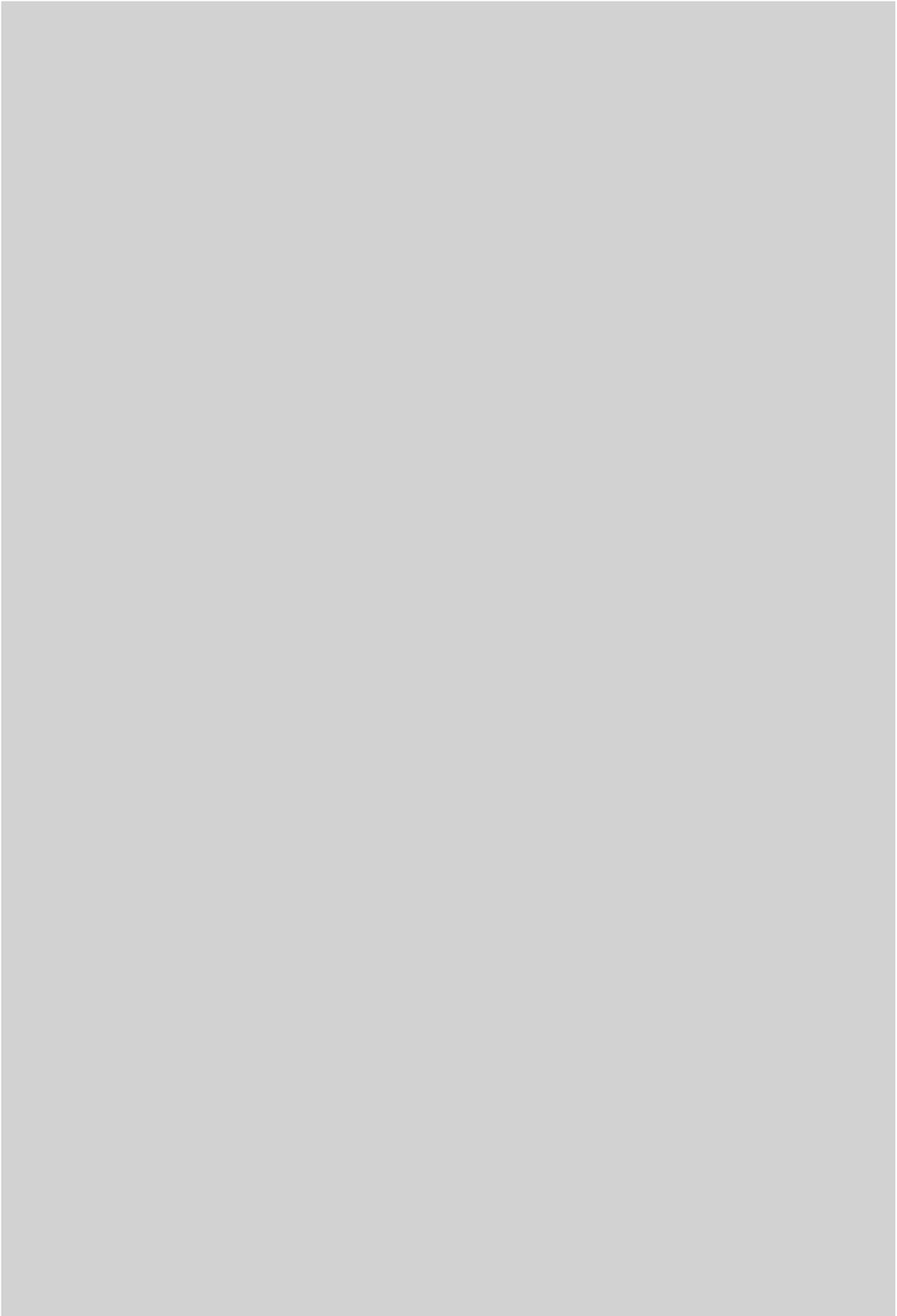
ideas surrounding the identity of the secondary subject.

In the figurative depiction of the cabinet minister by the opinion weekly ‘*Newsweek Polska*’, the source of implication relates to a totality of historical facts, cultural clues and symbolic meanings associated with the image of the sheriff. Such associated implications are then matched against the ‘primary subject’, in this case the anti-corruption politician, leading to its conversion into a 'single gestalt', the figurative concept of the sheriff-like Pitera (Forceville, 2008). In my reading of the *Newsweek* metaphor, the key nodes of isomorphic mappings (Black, 1979) which underpin the sheriff-minister relation emphasize the commonality of prevailing aims and values shared by the two law-enforcing professions.

Firstly, both roles are endowed with special duties to preserve good governance and enforce criminal law by preventing illegal practices committed within the private and public sectors. Secondly, similar to the appointed office of the Anti-Corruption Minister, the profession of the sheriff has an elected status. Both offices equally enjoy a limited immunity, which provides protection from liability for certain acts performed in conjunction with their public duties. However, in addition to capitalizing on the co-transferable attributes and characteristics that link the two positions of government officials, the WOMAN AS SHERIFF trope evokes a more abstract and implicitly coded complex of signifieds (Barthes, 1972) by connoting the values of authority, confidence and power. The representation calls for at least two readings, one of which is the expression of scornful mockery towards the woman who, as many undoubtedly thought, took over a ‘man’s job’. Far from this obvious interpretation, I argue here that the woman’s classification is not straightforwardly negative and that irony can be a good vehicle for subversion.

In this view, the visual depiction of Julia Pitera takes on the connotation of eminence and supremacy. The effect ensues from the skillful combination of semiotic resources and formal codes which all form part of the pictorial landscape. Particularly worthy of notice is the interactive force of the visual, that is, the strength with which the image aligns the represented participant with the viewer. The two key markers of the interpersonal positioning are gaze and distance (Machin, 2007: 110), both of which play an important role in the pictorial message. A close-up of the politician, coupled with a pointing gun gesture and stern, penetrating look directed explicitly at the viewer, defines the mood of address as one of superiority or even intimidation. The sense of insecurity and threat that the audience is invited to infer from the visual metaphor reinforces the position of Pitera as a powerful political persona.

Adding to the symbolic power of the cover image is the photograph introducing the main article (Fig. 5.2) reproduced below:



**Figure 5.2** 'The Minister who shoots': Newsweek (16.12.07).

Unlike the static description on the magazine front page (Fig. 5.1), here the represented participant performs the semantic role of an ‘actor’ (Halliday, 1994: 109) by instigating a form of attack, rendered pictorially through a metaphor of shooting – hence the article's headline, which translates as ‘the minister who shoots’ (ibid: 18). According to the theory of visual grammar (Kress and van Leeuwen, 1996: 56), the picture actualizes a model of dynamic action. Such representations, called ‘narratives’ (ibid: 43), depend on the presence of vectors that fulfill the function of visual verbs.

In the current text the vectors have been formed by the minister's pointing gun gesture and the general position of her body, which invests the image with strong features of agency and directionality. As no other participants are to be seen in the visual frame, the resulting action can be described as non-transactional. Such a visual pattern fits squarely into linguistic structures of ‘non-transitives’ – the clauses in which the verb does ‘extend to some other entity’ (Halliday, 1994: 110) – an illustration of which is the article's title where the verb ‘shoot’ appears without the object. In this pattern, the caption simply acts as the replica of the iconic message, in line with the Barthesian (1977: 40) concept of ‘anchorage’. As Barthes elaborates, at the level of the denotative message, the language ‘directs the reader through the signifieds of the image’ and in consequence narrows the range of possible interpretations (ibid.).

In a comparable vein, Franklin (1988: 164) demonstrates that ‘although titles may sometimes function simply as designators, they more often play a significant role in structuring meaning’. The linguistic process of ‘focusing’ (ibid.), just like Barthes’ function of ‘anchorage’, proves not only selective but frequently incomplete (Forceville, 1996). In reference to the image discussed, the title fails to account for a whole gamut of ‘material impacts’ that the minister's actions cause to other represented participants. I

now wish to shift attention to the varied discursive functions and effects that the metaphorical expressions of attack achieve in different parts of the linguistic text (see *Newsweek Polska*, 16.12.07).

Though the instances of combative lexis are distributed evenly throughout the article, the clustering of metaphorical tokens in the early part of the article points to their significant role in the system of representation. This role consists in structuring and defining the topical content of the message (Koller, 2004a). In this form the metaphor acts as a principle knowledge script and organizing principle for the entire text, thus participating in the production of ideational meanings (Halliday, 1985). As an illustration of the representational function of the metaphor, consider the following caption:

(18) Julia Pitera poses as the main tough guy of the new government. The minister is preparing the ammunition for the final battle with the boss of the CBA [Anti-Corruption Bureau] (*Newsweek Polska*, 16.12.07).

Along with the main title, the extract establishes and actualizes a particular cognitive model of situation which, I would argue, is highly constitutive of the female minister's professional identity. The metaphorical expressions of war ('shoot', 'ammunition', 'battle') compressed in the attention-grabbing headline (p.18) serve principally to characterize the competitive and adversarial liaison between Pitera and the President of Anti-Corruption Bureau Mariusz Kamiński. The relationship has been elaborated on in great detail within the main body of the article (*Newsweek Polska*, 16.12.07), based on sequences of attacks expected to be launched by the female politician in her bid to gain full control over the Anti-Corruption Bureau. As the magazine put it, 'Pitera is already

tying the knots on the rope which she will tighten around Kamiński's neck' (p. 19). The knots on the rope, numbered from one to three, correspond to allegations of professional misdemeanour professedly committed by Kamiński, which create the opportunity for Pitera to call for his dismissal. The use of the metaphor in the argumentative role continues in the next excerpt from the same article (Newsweek Polska, 16.12.07), reinforcing the image of the female politician as an aggressive and belligerent contestant:

(19) Arguments accompanied her also within the party. She *threw out the gauntlet* to Korwin Mikke himself. This is not about democracy, which is still new to us, but power control, she explained at the time. Ms Julia made an attempt to take over power within the party by putting forward a proposal for dismissing Kowrin-Mikke from the party to the statutory organ called the Guard (Newsweek Polska, 16.12.07).

(20) In the next term (...) Pitera felt more secure in the Warsaw Council and became even more conspicuous. She *aimed at* the mayor of Warsaw Paweł Piskorski and his close circle (Newsweek Polska, 16.12.07).

(21) As the independent councillor Pitera sharply *attacked* both PO and PiS. She *reviled* Piskorski, *argued against* the mayor of Warsaw Lech Kaczyński. But by the end of 2004, one year before parliamentary elections, she began to realize that without the support of a major party she stands no chance of breaking *the mould of the spitfire* (Newsweek Polska, 16.12.07).

It is noteworthy that in all of the interpersonal processes, the source of action passes exclusively from one participant, namely the female protagonist. The remaining contestants have been positioned at the receiving end of the minister's material and verbal actions. Such 'direction of causality' (Kress and Hodge, 1979: 42) establishes Pitera as a super agent and a fist-mover on the political scene. I want to argue that the highly systematized, unidirectional movement of the 'causal chain' (ibid.) lends extra force to

the dynamic schema conveyed by the metaphor of fighting. In other words, the assertive and oppositional traits projected to Pitera through metaphorical transfer accord with the syntactic expressions of the woman's agency and ability.

Both aspects of the representation are potent indicators of the symbolic ascendancy of Julia Pitera in the current depiction helping to assert her professional status as a leading politician. Just like lawyers, politicians in an adversary environment are frequently expected to be antagonistic and to show a combative style in interactions with other parliamentarians (Bogoch, 1999). The semantico-syntactical agreement, therefore, reinforces this dominant political model and simultaneously acknowledges the ability of the female leader to perform competently in what is still largely a masculine sphere of action.

The efficacy of the text in fostering a coherent image of Julia Pitera as a tough and dynamic political player results also from the intricate linkage that exists between various metaphoric tokens that convey the notion of verbal argument. The metaphors relate to each other in a logical way, forming so-called 'metaphoric chains' (Koller, 2004a: 85). For instance, the numerous political clashes between Pitera and her work colleagues have been coded figuratively via activities of 'shooting' ('the minister who shoots', 'She is just preparing the ammunition for the final battle with the head of CBA') (p. 18), 'throwing' ('Pitera is already tying the knots on the rope she wants to tighten around Kaminski's neck') (ibid: 19) or 'cutting' (' (...) The disloyal Pitera can sooner or later stab him [Tusk] in the back') (p. 22).

The structuring of the article by conceptual chains which elaborate and extend the meaning of the central metaphor helps to intensify the cognitive force of the projected

scenario. It is also by dint of such metaphoric links that this particular instance of media discourse gains its textual cohesion (Koller, 2004a).

Aiding in the achievement of conceptual conformity are additional metaphoric terms, which provide a major lexical reinforcement for the principal metaphor. The non-military expressions, which comprise highly evaluative names or nominalized phrases such as 'system tracker' (p. 20), 'lonely rider' (p. 20), 'political demiurge' (p. 21), or 'enemy' (p. 20), are equally important in constructing the image of Julia Pitera as a strong and hard-nosed contender. For instance, the term 'lonely rider' typifies a highly individualistic conduct characterized by exaggerated ambition and a lack of empathy for others. The full meaning of the metaphor, as applied to the minister, has been summarized in the following fragment:

(22) It has always been so in politics, that whenever she had it in for somebody, they would always end up badly, while she continued to climb the ladder. Julia has a nature of a lonely rider. She is not a positivist organizer (Newsweek Polska, 16.12.07).

In a similar vein, the classification of the politician's behavioural style based on a derogatory term 'enemy' as in 'once a friend, today an enemy' (p. 20) shows that the personal quest for political power and privilege takes precedence over interpersonal issues or ethical considerations. The reference to Pitera as a 'political demiurge' (p. 21), on the other hand, emphasizes the power of her authority. According to the Oxford dictionary (<http://oxforddictionaries.com>), demiurge is a 'heavenly being that is considered to be the controller of the material world'. In the magazine *Newsweek Polska*, such divine and superhuman abilities are transposed on the Anti-Corruption Minister, who has been conceived as the dominant creative force of contemporary Polish politics. The phrase 'system tracker' (p. 20), coined in relation to Pitera's

corrective approach towards illicit practices within the Polish legal system, is another symbolic term which connects the source of causality with the minister's professional performance.

The evaluative profile constructed by means of the metaphorical phrases acquiesces to a professional identity model labeled variously as the 'iron maiden' or the 'iron lady' (Baxter, 2010: 35; Kanter, 1977: 236): the firm and self-assertive feminist who Tannen (1995, 2008) refers to as 'the dragon lady' (Mullany, 2007: 44). As Halford and Leonard (2001) point out, women encapsulated into this role are shown as exceedingly tough and militant, almost superwomen. Such imagery clearly moves beyond the conventional and socially expected depictions of females as 'mothers', 'seductresses' or 'pets', widely documented in management studies (Kanter, 1977; Martin Rojo and Gomez Esteban, 2003; Olsson and Walker, 2004; Wodak, 1995). This view has been repeated later on by Baxter (2010: 35), who notices that 'iron maidens refuse to take account of wider social discourses about gender that suggest that women are not supposed to speak and behave aggressively'.

Considering the above role alignment, we can see that the representation of Julia Pitera in the political weekly directly subverts the socio-culturally defined attitudes and values that would identify her as 'typically female', thus instantiating a resistant discourse of marked and non-stereotypical femininity (Mullany, 2007). This is done through ascriptions of normatively masculine traits and qualifications which, though 'negatively valenced', are nevertheless strongly linked with the achievement of influence and status (Glick et al., 2004: 714). Such traits, expressed in texts via metaphorical classifications, display an uncompromising quest for power, a willingness to win at all costs, regardless of ethical or social imperatives and eagerness to achieve one's goals and get ahead,

irrespective of other's feelings (ibid: 714).

Though sociologically undesirable and certainly ethically contested, I view such values as consistent with the context-driven requirements of the current institutional realities, in particular politics and management. Exploring the construction of leadership identities in the top UK business and management corporations, Baxter (2008: 210) notes that 'for female leaders, demonstrating non-nonsense, tough behaviour in more 'difficult' contexts' constitutes an 'essential, definitive and non-negotiable part of their job'. The researcher acknowledges that the dominance-oriented traits are both 'imposed upon and contained within the subject position of the leader' (ibid: 211). Concurrently, Walter (2010: 210) quotes the normatively feminine behavioural patterns, such as patience, empathy and risk aversion, as useless qualities in the context of electoral politics.

Though many of the stereotypical 'male' traits may, nevertheless, be evaluated less positively on general valency measures, as Glick et al. (2004) so well demonstrate, they are simultaneously extolled and recognized as indispensable properties of organizational cultures. According to Holmes (2006), competitive and adversarial styles of interaction underlie descriptions of authoritative, powerful and assertive talkers. In a comparable way, the metaphorical constructions of women as suitable for dominance and authority represent an effectual means through which individuals enact power in discourse.

Notwithstanding, a large body of language and gender research examining perceptions of women in positions of authority (Eagly and Makhijami, 1992; Lakoff, 2003; Martin Rojo and Gomez Esteban; Mullany, 2007; Wodak, 2008) observes that the defiance of traditional patterns of gender behaviour often leads to a negative evaluation of female

professionals, which takes the form of the 'double bind'. What follows is a direct attempt to address the above question, by looking at how the well-acclaimed political leaders who have transcended the rigid and arbitrary modalities of normatively ascribed identities, are assessed in relation to the enactment of their workplace roles.

## **5.6 'Professional but Warm': Transcending the Competence/Femininity Bind**

Researchers of organization and communication studies, as well as feminist linguists (Baxter, 2010; Brewis 2001; Jamieson, 1995; Kendall and Tannen 1997; Lakoff, 1975, 1990; Tannen, 1995; Walter 2010), call attention to the existence of prejudice against authoritarian women, who are caught in a double bind regarding competence and femininity. Lakoff (1975) describes the dual constraint experienced by the professional woman as follows:

If she refuses to talk like a lady, she is ridiculed and subjected to criticism as unfeminine: if she does learn, she is ridiculed as unable to think clearly, unable to take part in a serious discussion (...) These two choices which a woman has - to be less than a woman or less than a person - are highly painful.

(Lakoff: 1975: 6)

The paradox of the bind means that the actual choices presented to women will inevitably lead to a negative evaluation. Hence she is 'damned if she does and damned if she doesn't' (Lakoff, 1975: 6). In Hochschild's terms (1974), women who occupy powerful positions risk rejections on two accounts: for failing to be a good woman, and hence 'de-feminized' or when appearing as an ineffective executive, in which case they face 'deprofessionalization' (Hochschild, 1974 in Chase, 1988: 283).

The operation of the competence/femininity bind is aptly summarized by Walter (2010),

who cites the evaluative ascriptions assigned to prominent political leaders: Ségolène Royal and Hillary Rodham Clinton. Both women have met with continued criticism based on the enactment of their public roles. While the candidate for French presidency acquired a media profile as 'elegantly feminine' but 'insufficiently authoritative', the American nominee was repeatedly recast in the mould of a successful yet inhuman professional (Walter, 2010: 211-212).

Along the same lines, the Polish socio-political magazine *Newsweek Polska* (16.12.07: 22) launched a series of vicious attacks on the 'improperly' unfeminine identity of the Anti-Corruption Minister Julia Pitera by dubbing her a 'spitfire', a 'prosecutor' and a 'bloody vampire'. A real demonstration of how power in the hands of women is typically seen as deviant and sinister comes from another media excerpt, published by the competing magazine *Wprost* (Wprost, 22.07.2007). The following text appeared in the front section of the right-wing weekly, which is typically concerned with telling light-hearted stories about politicians from the opposition party:

(23) One day we saw Julia Pitera on two different channels. Well, as long as we live we have not yet seen on telly such *engaging fits of rage*. Some *9 points on a 12-point scale*, which put the minister near the best score of Stefan Niesiołowski. We never expected that anyone should be in the position to make Piotr Gadzinowski and Jacek Kurski look like meek lambs, simply *overtly polite mutes*. Only because Kurski went to Gdańsk at the time, has he managed to *retain his trachea in one peace*. We have a polite request that the lady on telly does not *shout so much* because our *cat's fur has got electrified* and we can now *charge batteries* from it [my emphasis].

(Wprost, 22.07.07)

Like most commentaries published in this format, the fragment has been framed in a frivolous and amusing style. It focuses on a TV appearance of the Anti-Corruption

Minister, recast humorously as a dramatic spectacle of anger. According to the male authors of the feature, the interpersonal behaviour of Julia Pitera merits a full eight points on a 'twelve-point aggression scale', which puts her ahead of two male politicians, typically known for their violent tempers. The unconstrained fits of anger attributed to the female minister makes the other two protagonists look like 'meek lambs' and 'overtly polite mutes' (Wprost.pl, 29.2007).

Though the humorous take on the story clearly alleviates the force of the projected evaluation, the operation of the traditional stereotype in this short extract is easy to observe. Its ideological constraints work to ensure that the linguistic conduct of the female politician is subject to stricter evaluative criteria than it would normally be the case with a male leader (see Carli, 1999). Pitera is judged negatively for failing to adopt the interactional style that is deemed appropriate to her gender. By resisting the stereotypical role assignment and aligning herself with a more assertive professional model, the Minister for Anti-Corruption effectively transgresses the boundary of acceptable femininity, which makes her unnatural and deviant.

Negative reactions towards women in power are well attested across many research contexts, which prove the ubiquity of gender stereotypes on a cross-cultural level (Braden, 1996; Brikse, 2004; Moustgaard, 2004; Ross, 2004). Subjected to the effects of defeminization are frequently women who have adopted linguistic forms or revealed personality traits or styles of appearance indirectly indexed with the opposite gender. Accusations for transgressing the aesthetic boundaries of traditional femininity have been found in descriptions of Jacqui Smith, who was publicly admonished for wearing a 'prison warder haircut', or Angela Merkel who faced criticism for appearing 'unstylish' and 'frumpish' (Walter, 2010: 212).

The characterization of Baroness Vadera's unfeminine behaviour in *Spectator* magazine showed extensive use of gender-specific expressions like 'assassin', 'ass-kicker' or 'axe-wielder' (ibid: 214). In a similar way, the UN Ambassador Jeane Kirkpatrick 'heard her speeches dismissed as lectures, her rebuttals of charges against the United States as 'confrontations'' (Jamieson, 1995: 129).

As Lakoff (2008) and others (Baxter, 2010; Martin Rojo and Gomez Esteban, 2003) correctly observe, the same behaviour when displayed by a woman is viewed less favourably than if it is performed by a man, which provides strong evidence for the existence of double standards in linguistic usage. Thus, a woman in quest of power is often labeled aggressive, harsh or careerist. She is described derogatorily as a bitch and a shrew – both expressions connote the inappropriateness of her conduct (Lakoff, 2008). By contrast, the terms used to appraise men are highly positive, as exemplified by the following qualifications: ambitious, direct or goal-oriented. Rather than being bitchy, the man 'knows what he wants' and is a 'tough leader' (Wodak, 2008: 672; Stafford 1993 in Jamieson, 1995: 122). In Baxter's (2010) words:

Relatively positive (or at least conventional) qualities used to describe male leaders such as *aggression*, *assertiveness*, *abrasiveness* and *competitiveness* are translated into negative qualities when they are used to describe women (...). Furthermore, when women leaders demonstrate qualities stereotypically associated with men, a distortion of the language often occurs; the reasonably positive adjective *assertive* becomes *aggressive*, *bossy* or *strident* [emphasis in original].

(Baxter, 2010: 36)

The theory that most successfully accounts for the discrepancies in reactions to men's and women's leadership behaviour is the role congruency account of prejudice

developed by Eagly (1987), which provides a conceptual elaboration of Heilman's (1983) 'lack-of-fit model of bias'. Both theories posit that gender stereotypes 'spill over' into workplace settings in a way that can cause incongruity or a 'lack of fit' with professional roles. According to Eagly (1987), the expectations that people hold about women's gender behaviour, defined predominantly in terms of communal characteristics, are largely inconsistent with the agentic attributes which are thought to be necessary for the performance of effective leadership.

This point is further demonstrated by Jamieson (1995) who notices that the attitudinal bias against female leaders stems directly from the stereotypical concept of femininity, which produces the image of women as the defective other. Specifically, the researcher argues that the construal of female identity based on the lack of logical aptitude or psychological integrity places women in an antithetical position to the norms and values of professional practice.

The perceived incompatibility between the stereotype of female gender role and the ideas inscribed within the professional status, or as Jamieson (1995) argues, between femininity and competence, leads to a role conflict that triggers negative evaluations. The main source of prejudice, as the role incongruity principle makes evident, is thus the violation of gender-schematic prescriptions, according to which women should be affectionate, kind, nurturing and interpersonally empathic as opposed to dominant and controlling (Eagly, 1987).

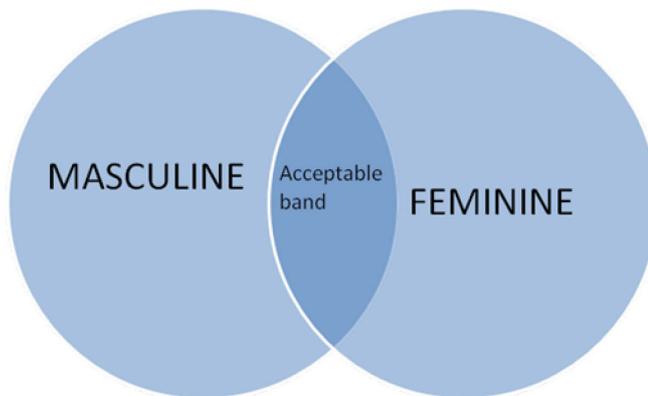
While women meet with contradictory demands, which largely restrain their freedom of action, men face no such constraints because the ideas that compose their gender image parallel people's views on what makes an effective leader (Halford and Leonard, 2001;

Vinicombe and Singh, 2002). Consequently, the attainment of power and privilege enhances rather than impairs men's gender image – whereas the latter is true for female leaders. According to Eagly et al. (1992: 6), 'men's style may be less consequential for how they are evaluated because their leadership is not viewed as problematic. Given that leadership by men is ordinarily perceived as legitimate, the details of their performance are less likely to be questioned (...)'.

Holmes (2006) says that the gendering of leadership identity gains force through popular representations of leadership, but also through the institutionalization of behavioural standards and discourse norms that accord with the concept of hegemonic masculinity. Deborah Tannen (1995: 167) takes the argument even further by asserting that 'the very notion of authority is exclusively identified with maleness'. Accordingly, as women still lack the legitimacy of men, they are likely to attract negative reactions the moment they attain the little expected status as influence agents or intellectual authorities. The above statements have been empirically tested by Butler and Geis (1990) in their incisive study measuring non-verbal affect responses to male and female leaders, which lends more credence to the social interpretation of prejudice proposed by Eagly's (1987) theory. The devaluation of women's leadership performance based on non-verbal disapproving clues is directly related, according to Butler and Geis (1990), to the transgression of stereotypical gendered behaviour.

The incongruity between competence and femininity thus gives rise to conflicting demands that are difficult to reconcile. Correspondingly, if a woman produces 'feminine' traits, she risks being seen as incompetent and unprofessional. If, on the other hand, she tries to adopt the 'masculine' norm of competence, she risk being assigned a deviant identity label and painted as a 'man-hater', a 'tyrant', a 'militant feminist', a 'dragon

lady' or a virilized 'pseudo man' (Chase, 1988; Martin Rojo and Gomez Estaban, 2003: 263; Mullany, 2007; 44, 171; Tannen, 1995: 164). Figure 5.3 graphically depicts women's problems with projecting an acceptable identity. As the model illustrates, the scope of appropriate public behaviour for women in high-level positions is very limited (Holmes, 2006: 35).



**Figure 5.3** Masculine and feminine styles of leadership (Morrison, White, van Velsor and the Center for Creative Leadership, 1987 in Holmes, 2006: 36).

A number of researchers and writers (Baxter, 2008; Holmes, 2006; Jamieson, 1995; Mullany, 2010; Wodak, 1997) suggest that the adoption of self-regulatory strategies might allow women to mitigate the damaging effects of the professional/femininity bind and thereby directly avert situations that lead to prejudicial evaluations. Jamieson (1995) draws attention to the importance of establishing women's credentials as confident professionals before the femininity/competence bind has even a chance to take effect. In her view, a woman who builds up a formidable reputation of intellectual authority is less likely to be resisted as a leader. Developing an authoritative persona that draws on images of motherhood represents, according to Wodak (1995) another sure way of gaining acceptance among biased subordinates. The effectiveness of the

model rests on two accounts. Firstly, as one of the oldest paragons of female authority, the mother role achieves recognition and social legitimacy. Secondly, by adhering to the principles of democracy and consensus, the model helps to play down status differentials, which reduces the reluctance towards female authority (Kendall and Tannen, 1997).

An interesting solution to averting women's identity conflict comes from Holmes' study (2006) of management discourse. The researcher identified a discursive position which allowed the female manager examined under her study to display power while simultaneously appearing feminine and gracious. The woman, labeled by her colleagues as 'Queen Clara', assumed a 'slightly ironic and distant, but very functional, 'queenly' persona, which resolved the problems of authority, but also allowed her to express her femininity when appropriate' (Holmes, 2006: 55). Similar to the queenly construction, which permits women to play on different aspects of their identities, the personality of a 'good joker', discussed in the same study, draws on humour as a pragmatic resource for alleviating a sense of unease expressed towards powerful women (ibid: 63).

In light of the above studies, I want to suggest that the exploitation of humour as an interactive strategy constituted an important tool that safeguarded Zyta Gilowska against negative facial reactions from the press, contrary to her colleague Julia Pitera, whose representations most evidently imply a loss of femininity. Despite both women appearing equally authoritarian, only one of them attracted prejudicial evaluations, a fact which incontrovertibly points to the difficulty which women in power encounter with regard to projecting an acceptable social identity (Alvesson and Billing, 1997).

The centrality of humour in the enactment of Gilowska's public persona is evident from

a number of media sources. As revealed by the electronic press during her time in office, Gilowska had gained a reputation as the champion of sound-bites, receiving on several occasions nominations for the 'Silver Lips' plebiscite – an award granted to the authors of the most intelligent and remarkable utterances (<http://www.plejada.pl>). The aim of the plebiscite is to record the most witty statements produced by Polish MPs, expressions distinguished by vivid metaphors, cutting retort and unusual rhetorical figures (<http://www.gazetaprawna.pl>). The view of Gilowska as a clever and witty orator emerges also from the interview with Katarzyna Kwiatkowska, a successful actress who works as an impersonator for Polish politicians and celebrities in the popular comedy programme 'Szymon Majewski Show'. The woman says;

In the preliminary for Szymon Majewski show I played Zyta Gilowska. In order to personate Gilowska, whom I adore and respect, I had to avoid causing offence to her and find something special. In her case it was firmness combined with a sense of humour and outstanding intelligence.

(<http://kobieta.gazeta.pl/> my translation)

The characterization of the Minister of Finance through a confluence of complementary attributes such as firmness, humour and intelligence accords with the image of a successful female professional, which Henrik Qvontrup, the editor-in-chief of the Dutch weekly magazine *Se & Hor*, describes as 'woman with a capital W'. According to Qvontrup, the key to a successful public persona lies in a skillful combination of power with femininity. The woman who plays those two parts in tandem is less likely to experience resistance to her influence (Moustgaard, 2004: 30). The following fragment released by the online press gives testimony to the validity of his statement:

If you want me on the register, here I am. A married couple sitting behind me found it hard to control emotions. *Zyta, Zyta, Zyta*. Miss Gilowska said the woman after second thoughts and then mumbled under her breath. Eee, she will not get offended. She is *such a normal woman*.

([http://info.wiadomosci.gazeta.pl/my emphasis](http://info.wiadomosci.gazeta.pl/my%20emphasis))

To sum up, through an intricate linkage of professionalism and warmth of demeanour the Polish Minister of Finance has managed to alleviate a sense of discomfort and stigma which the society expresses towards powerful women.

In the final part of this analytical chapter I summarize the implications of my study. I consider the discursive impact of the conflict-based lexis by showing where the metaphorical concepts achieve their symbolic power. I begin by briefly presenting some dominant views on the use of military imagery, derived primarily from the analysis of journalist rhetoric. The selected cultural interpretations will then be followed by my own assessment of the role that metaphorical utterances play in mediatized representations of women leaders.

### **5.7 From Male Bias to Female Empowerment: De-gendering Military Metaphor**

Contrary to the position adopted in this chapter, it is almost unanimously assumed by most contemporary analysts of war-centred discourse that the metaphor creates and perpetuates a gender-biased media frame. The dominant critique of the military models has focused for the most part on delineating the masculinized conceptions of warfare and highlighting the role of the vocabulary of war in excluding and marginalizing female identities and interests. For instance, Jansen and Sabo (1994) report that the heavy reliance on war/sport imagery in the coverage of the Persian Gulf War helped to

validate hegemonic constructions of masculinity (see Connell, 1995, 1998), exaggerating symbolic connections between men, violence and power.

This point is further expanded by Desmond (1997: 4), who argues that the inter-cultural renderings of war produce 'hyperbolic' images of gender difference that strengthen the 'logic of binary oppositions'. The researcher contends that despite some women's recent involvement in military activity, few cultural icons reflect the position of women as warriors or fighters. In contrast to the lionized portrayals of masculine heroes, women in such representations are typically cast in the role of 'victims' (Jansen and Sabo, 1994: 11), 'seductresses' and 'schemers' (Desmond, 1997: 5) or coded collectively as 'the protected' (Stiehm 1983 in Wilson, 1992: 5). Though placed on the margins of discourse activity, representatives of the female sex are nevertheless heavily 'appropriated and commodified' in consonance with the andocentric rules of the 'war machine' (Desmond, 1997: 1).

The symbolic devaluation of women in a situation where men appear valorized and glorified extends also to other socio-cultural domains, such as sports and business. According to Koller (2004a), the wide network of cognitive connections that links the sphere of the military with the practices of corporate and athletic cultures plays a paramount role in the assertion of dominant masculinity. The analyst maintains that the cultural paragon of men's heroic virtue ascribed historically to the figure of the soldier has found a subsequent substitute in the image of a strong and virile athlete (Koller, 2004a: 110).

Winsor (1996: 4) elaborates the interrelations between the three domains, noticing that 'the discipline, systematization and proficiency endowed by athletic training have long

been viewed as critical to the indoctrination and seasoning of future military and business leaders'. Explaining the recent increase in the popularity of strategic military concepts in contemporary business literature, the researcher describes how the books help to create a discursive space where managers self-metamorphose into prominent and all-powerful rulers (ibid: 2).

Thus, in line with the above interpretations the three domains of public action, along with their associated representational practices, provide a rich source of symbolic resources that aid in the construction of 'hegemonic masculinity' (Connell, 1995: 77). More specifically, by exclusively appealing to men's ego the war and sport tropes are seen as a fundamental manifestation of anti-women backlash. Some researchers mention the negative impact that the professedly 'male' metaphors exert on female identity, causing some women to feel alienated or excluded. According to Burke (1992), the incongruity between men's and women's past experiences makes it unlikely for women to fully embrace, not to mention enjoy, some of the intricacies of the masculinized rhetoric.

Arguably, the most vocal argument against the use of military concepts focuses on the masculinizing impact of the metaphor on the wider domains of discourse and cognition. In accordance with this view, the mental models constructed through conflict-based lexis display and reinforce male-defined views and values. As proclaimed by Jansen and Sabo (1994: 10), the inherently masculine qualities espoused by the models are 'aggression', 'competition', 'dominance', 'territoriality' and 'instrumental violence'. For Desmond (1997: 7), the features of 'individuality' and 'instrumental rationality' as well as competition – all of which are strongly accented in the literature on corporate strategy – represent examples of cognitive traits and values which indirectly index

masculinity. In their critique of 'bounded rationality' Mumby and Putnam (1992), on the other hand, argue that the focus on reason devalorizes the 'feminine' domain of emotionality, celebrating instrumental reasoning and individualism at the expense of experiential thinking and collective interests (Mumby and Putnam, 1992 in Desmond, 1997).

Though many of the theories of warfare appear well-founded, there are some whose logic I would like to contest. My main critique concerns the tightly-woven 'chains' of symbolic associations that surround the construction of masculine identity. Such chains encompass a set of heavily naturalized behavioural and mental dispositions, such as rationality, aggression, individuality or competition, which count as examples of gender-appropriate conduct. The key question one should ask at this point is by virtue of what do these associations hold? I would like to propose that the notion of gender inherent in some of the interpretations continues to be encumbered by the exclusionary principles of patriarchal knowledge. This knowledge takes up the reductionist and stereotypical form of bipolar oppositions which sharpen and naturalize distinctions between femininity and masculinity.

Take, for instance, the dualistic conception underlying the sexual division of the epistemological realm, as mentioned above, which Lloyd (1998: 166) summarizes as follows: 'Feminist claims that reason is male are taken as a reaffirmation of female irrationality or a misleading literal claim of exclusion from the practices of professional philosophy. Drawing on the findings from her most recent study, Mullany (2007) reports how the stereotypical gendered discourse of 'female emotionality and irrationality', which inform the evaluative depictions of female managers, positions women in direct opposition with rational and objective values of scientific modernism, typically

associated with the workplace ethos.

Another poignant example of binary thinking implied by the dominant theorizations of warfare concerns the establishment of aggression as an exclusive province of men. According to Cambell (1991), males and females are liable to distinctly different norms governing aggressive behaviour. Such norms correspond to 'instrumental' and 'expressive' views of aggression (Cambell, 1991: 10-11) which impacts on the development of both sexes in a different manner. In agreement with the instrumental theory assimilated by men, aggression is a means of interpersonal control and dominance (ibid.). In contrast, the expressive paradigm, internalized by girls during childhood and maintained successfully throughout women's adult life, defines the experience of anger as a 'failure of self-control' (ibid: 1).

According to Cambell (1991), the differences in social representations of men and women's aggression, reinforced through the processes of gender conditioning, are directly responsible for different patterns of behaviour in the two sexes. While men take pride in their strategic manifestation of coercion and power, women remain fearful of social condemnation. They see their assertive acts as shameful and humiliating and frequently repress the experience of anger (ibid.). I believe that the association of aggressive lexis with a masculine sphere of action, observed in the studies of military metaphor (Koller, 2004a, 2004b), has a similar repressive effect on female identity. It denies women the right towards more forceful and decisive forms of behaviour, hence strengthening the force of social stigma.

The interpretations of behavioural differences between men and women inferred from the analyses of warfare rhetoric belong, in my view, to a more general discourse of

'gender differences' (Sunderland, 2004: 52). Such discourse defines human identities, aptitudes and responsibilities in terms of a bipolar set of categories (Cameron, 1992, 1997a, 1997b; Tannen, 1989, 1997; Wodak, 2003). The construction of gender in this binary model proceeds from the variously framed dualities: public/private, reason/feeling, objective/subjective, power/love, active/passive, competitive/cooperative. The terms on the left side of the dichotomy represent the masculine domain, habitually linked with the public sphere of action. By contrast, the right side of the spectrum, indicative of feminine values, derives directly from the private setting (Cameron, 1992b: 82-89; Desmond, 1997: 3).

Cameron (1992: 84) observes that the qualities assigned to both genders are not only oppositional but also 'hierarchical', with the masculine side being seen as more valuable than the feminine. For instance, men are active, rational and objective, while women are passive, illogical and easily influenced; the last traits, as discussed before, are highly consonant with representations of mental ill health and psychological immaturity (Broverman et al., 1970). The classification of gender into contrasting social systems is thus constitutive of strong power differentials. It collaborates in the production of normative prescriptions for behaviours and social roles, as well as ideological expectations that weigh heavily on both sexes, particularly women. As an instance of representational practice, the process of categorical polarization is especially subject to heavy stereotyping: it 'reduces, essentializes, naturalizes and fixes difference' (Hall, 1997b: 258).

Since one of the central premises of feminist deconstructive movement (Baxter, 2003) relates to the rejection of gender identity as a bipolar construct, I believe it is of paramount importance to once again reformulate the above notions based on a new set

of gender-neutral signifieds. One could start, for instance, by challenging the socio-cognitive assertion that war and sports are masculine domains or that men are active and women passive. Many of the above-mentioned theorists already proclaim, somewhat at odds with their earlier assertions, that neither war nor gender are conceptually rigid categories.

For example, the capacity of war to conjure up a wide range of frequently conflicting discursive positions is aptly captured by Desmond (1997), who elucidates a complex web of connotative meanings and symbolic interpretations that infiltrate the notion of warfare. Thus, we can see war as a 'game of strategy (...), as the unfolding of a drama (...), as a fire or epidemic in cataclysmic philosophy, as a pastime or adventure, as a ceremony, as a death wish or as an absurdity (...)' (Desmond, 1997: 2). The striking feature of these examples is the fluidity with which the main concept spans across the spectrum of variously appraised representations. Accordingly, the positive view portrays war as a sensible and calculated solution to a problem, while the negative perspective stresses the flawed and irrational logic of the 'mutually assured destruction' (ibid: 2).

In light of these competing definitions, I would like to suggest another perspective on warfare which, as I will argue, is fully supportive of the feminist agenda. The transformative effect of this new formulation ensues from the expansion of the implicature complex of the metaphorical target domain (Black, 1962) in a way that induces a shift of meaning from 'war' to 'fighting'. It is through this change of focus, which Chilton and Ilyin (1993: 12) refer to as 're-specification', that the metaphor gains some important semantic features, which directly dispute allegations of male bias implied by the dominant critiques of military rhetoric. Based on the analysis of women's media corpus, the re-signified cognitive construction draws attention to the hitherto

overlooked elements of the discourse schema such as agency or ability, which help to construe the image of women as important political actors.

Correspondingly, by further deconstructing the notion of fight contained within the political media discourse, we can identify a vast range of highly activating patterns. As mentioned earlier, the meaning of fight signifies an intense and laboured effort or a contest pursued with the aim of achieving a number of politically driven objectives. Among the prominent metaphoric terms deployed to convey the concept are the conventional military expressions such as 'war', 'battle', 'fight' and 'combat'. Taken together, the terms appear to form a semantically definable category which induces an expression of female agency. The resulting cognitive script based on a series of goal-oriented actions is further supported by the grammatical paradigm of 'actional' (Kress and Hodge, 1979: 39). Both the causative lexicalizations as well as the 'transactive model' (ibid: 40) highlight the position of women as capable and responsible subjects actively engaged in the performance and implementation of various political goals.

By showing women as 'warriors' and 'crusaders' capable of pushing through challenging political tasks and reforms, the metaphorical representations reinforce women's agentive powers. Such powers include the capacity to do things and to get the outcome they want. The positive slant of such depictions consists in the recognition of women as competent and prominent contesters who are not only up to the challenge but frequently in the forefront of political action. The construction of female professional identity based on the role of proactive and assertive activist (Wodak, 2003) serves, in my view, as an open affirmation and acknowledgement of women's vocational success and achievement in the race for a political career.

Furthermore, by directly opposing attitudes and values that would mark them as 'typically female' and identifying with allegedly masculine traits and behaviours, the representations destabilize the tightly woven chain of metaphorical oppositions which reproduce dichotomous conceptions of gender (Cameron, 1992). I want to argue that the use of such features in women's descriptions has a subversive impact on the wider cognitive and discursive domain of socio-politics. It stirs, namely, the process of de-gendering and simultaneously exposes the conceptual fluidity and social constitutiveness of social identities.

In this process the dichotomized modes of differently gendered interactions serve as illustrations of socially policed norms and expectations that impact on the linguistic behaviours of both sexes. It is by violating such linguistic prescriptions – for instance, by describing women in a style marked as typically masculine – that the interface between language and gender becomes problematized, granting epistemic access to novel definitions.

The appropriation of the military concepts in the representations of female leaders achieves, in my opinion, a highly denaturalizing effect, for instance by helping to *re-signify* aggression as a gender-neutral characteristic and countering the stereotypical conceptions of authoritarian leadership as necessarily masculine in style. By linking females to war and politics, the military metaphor defamiliarizes the meanings of the two social concepts – gender and warfare – and, by doing it, compels the reader to reformulate their mutual connections in a way that equally incorporates both sexes.

## 5.8 Conclusion

In this chapter I critically evaluated military metaphors employed in the portrayals of female politicians in terms of the effects they have as both cognitive categories and discursive expressions of gender. I argued that, if appropriately re-formulated and re-specified' (Chilton and Ilyin, 1993; Black, 1962), metaphors provide an effective tool for achieving female empowerment. Their subversive potential derives from the re-articulation of the base conceptual schema of 'warfare' into a feminist scenario of 'fighting'. Such conceptual framework gives consideration to the previously de-emphasized semantic properties, such as ability and capacity, which may serve as a potent expression of female agency.

By showing women to be suited to the roles and positions of political management, the metaphorical expressions of fight linguistically establish the female representatives of the cabinet as genuine and legitimate members of the political in-group. The women emerge from such discursive events not only as strong and talented agents but equally as insiders and key figures of the dominant political elite. Apart from reifying women's institutional status, the WOMAN as FIGHTER metaphor serves an important discursive function by constructing an acceptable model of female professional identity. The adduced identity position of an 'assertive activist' constitutes a viable alternative to existing stereotypical roles of female leadership, a discussion of which I reserve for the final chapter.

A closer look at women's individual profiles reveals that metaphorical constructions of women in power work to undermine and transcend the binary theorization of gender – a classification which stereotypes and essentializes men and women. This is first and

foremost reflected in the non-normative depictions of women as 'iron maidens' and 'authoritarian leaders'. By evoking such models, the metaphors contribute to a displacement of the binary designation, for instance by helping to contest the notion of authoritarian leadership as masculine in style (Holmes, 2006).

Appropriately, through its associations with normative masculine values of instrumentality and goal-orientation, the military lexis, when used in texts about female leaders, occasions the process of de-gendering. This establishes the linguistic conventions along with their associated symbolic values as neutral signifieds of leadership discourse rather than just male discourse. Following Baxter (2003) and Holmes (2006), I have posited such expressions and values as a general 'property' of professional and political discourse, thus attempting to sever the traditional connections between sex and gender stereotyping.

However, despite all the evidence that points to the widespread acceptance and recognition of women as persons of great influence and authority, there are also indications in my data that appear to support the double bind (Lakoff, 1975) and gender-role congruency perspectives (Eagly and Karau, 2002). Both theories, whose tenets have been substantiated by the critical analysis of Polish media discourse, appear to endorse the view that autocratic and directive leadership – if performed by a woman – meets with harsher evaluative criteria than if it is performed by a man. The last finding lends justification to the statement expressed by Eagly et al. (1992: 18), namely that even the highest level of female success and expert power may not be sufficient to safeguard women from the deleterious effects of the social stigma that comes from the violation of gender schematic behaviour. The linguistic manifestations of those 'self-

defeating traps' (Kanter, 1997: 10) and polarities also form part of my discussion in the next chapter, though my focus will shift from managerial authority to femininity.

## Chapter 6

# WOMEN AND OTHERNESS

*The cultural space for women, captured and framed in images, is one big Show Word. There remain but one kind of look: the looking at.*

*What distinguished man from woman is his access to representation, to cultural symbolization, the power of naming, in which he uses women, along with other silent animals, as symbols, as objects for representation.*

(Susan Kappeler, 1986: 81; 68)

### 6.1 Introduction

In this chapter I move to the opposite side of the femininity/competence bind (Jamieson, 1995) to that examined in the previous sections, so as to explore the diversity of discursive practices which are relevant to the construction of female MPs as ‘differently gendered’ subjects. My aim is to show the concrete linguistic processes that occasion this divergence – that is, routinized and habituated patterns of signification by means of which Polish media professionals discursively assign gender meanings to female policymakers. Gendering in this chapter relates to discursive rules and modes of description which contribute the production and maintenance of unequal relations of power between men and women. These encompass ideas and practices which:

- highlight women’s gender when it is not relevant
- position women differently from men in ways that reproduce and naturalize the bipolar conception of sex roles

- result in the constitution of identities and relations which are unfavourable to women, for instance by focusing on their appearance or sexuality (Bem, 1993; Devere and Graham Davies, 2006; Eckert and McConnell-Ginet, 2003; Kroon Lundell and Ekstrom, 2008; Mills, 1995).

By scrutinising the gendered dimension of political representations, I hope to render visible the many mechanisms through which Polish journalists encode and authorize the acquired notion of female difference. I intend to demonstrate that it is possible to distinguish linguistic strategies and (inter)textual framing devices that are particularly apt for preserving stereotypes and generalizations about women.

Reference is made in the course of analysis to different representational sites in which gendering processes take place within the institutional texts of the Polish media. In their order of presentation, the first part of the chapter examines (inter)textual constructions of women tied to the attribution of varying narrative roles. Eight iconic role types have been identified, all of which centre around different behavioural properties corresponding to dominant cultural readings of femininity. Section 6.2 investigates the ways in which these archetypal gender models implicate the characters in relations of power, focusing on the options available to political women in terms of the construal of identity positions.

Part two, composed of Sections 6.3, 6.4 and 6.5, considers the language processes that occur in designations of gender at the level of individual words and sentences. It evaluates address terms for women's professional roles, as well as referential and predicational patterns based on (discursively) dissonant collocational clusters, which function to naturalize the view of female inferiority and marginalization. The final part

of the chapter, numbered from 6.6 to 6.8, deals with the aspect of women's exclusion pertaining to the construction of female MPs as embodied and sexualized beings. The representational techniques of body fragmentation, sexual exposure and sartorial presentation are posited as important devices for achieving delegitimation in discourse and bolstering hegemonic ideologies of gender. The aim of Section 6.9 is to summarize the complex contextual factors that all have a bearing on the gendered practices within Polish political media.

## **6.2 Media Lenses on Women's Identities and Roles in the Archetypal Images of Female Politicians**

The representations and portrayals of women in positions of governmental power frequently orient to and interact with other genres and discourse conventions in ways that produce creative and intertextually complex depictions (Fairclough, 1992, 1995a; Sunderland, 2004). The heterogeneity and hybridity of Polish journalistic output shows itself significantly in the projection of stylistic features and character descriptions, associated with the fictitious genre of fairy tales, in the printed spaces of political media. Such intertextual mixing of linguistic elements and narrative structures associated with different semantic fields and domains of practice represents a common strategy that political commentators in Poland explore in their dealings with female news actors.

The symbolic adaptation and re-codification of the fairytale genre in the mass media offers multiple benefits to the producers and consumers of such texts. Firstly, by framing women's public profiles in terms of categories derived from classic and literary pre-texts, the journalists create a 'conventional peg' for their stories (Norris,

1997a: 2), thus providing the reader with a familiar context from which the new discourse participants can be viewed and (de)legitimated (van Leeuwen, 2008). As the arrival of women on the government scene is a relatively recent phenomenon, the evocation of well-known identity models allows the creators of political news to maintain an ‘interpretative control’ (Lakoff, 1995: 29) of the rather novel circumstances that gave rise to female professional authority.

A specific realization of this ‘cognitive shortcut’ is the categorization of female office holders in terms of narrative roles or fictional characters patterned on iconic female archetypes (see Kanter, 1977; Moustgaard, 2004; Ross and Sreberny, 2000). Such universal and mythified gender paradigms, which Kramarae and Spender (2000: 85) define as ‘recurrent clusters of images and patterns of behaviour associated with certain dominant types of the feminine’, serve as pre-scripted gender frameworks through which women’s professional identities have been publicly re-contextualized and examined. Examples of archetypal images recycled by the Polish press as presentation media are: the beautiful and delicate ‘Princess’, the innocent ‘Cinderella’, the scheming and manipulative ‘Witch’, the cunning and opportunistic ‘Seductress’, as well as the ‘good girls’ from the private sphere: the ‘Housewife’, the ‘Bride’ and the ‘Mother’ (Wing Bo Tso, 2010: 18).

For van Leeuwen (2008: 111), comparisons in discourse predominantly play a (de)legitimizing role by triggering moral evaluations. As well as invoking intertextual analogies, the appraised content in the heterogeneous depictions relies also on discursive strategies of storytelling (‘mythopoesis’) and symbolization – the ‘overdetermination’ of social actors by associating them with fictional characters or practices (van Leeuwen, 2008: 117; 47). Yet, the real strength of the evaluation

emanates, I would argue, from the high concentration of connotators in texts (Barthes, 1977) and the images they call upon as carriers of shared cultural meanings. In this regard the archetypes behave like stereotypes which, by virtue of their high level of generalization, impart a complex knowledge of a wider social structure (Perkins, 1979). The usefulness of these types for presenting women as new entrants in the political arena derives from their conceptual superiority which, as Perkins (1979) explains, involves a high degree of simplicity, instant recognizability and implicit allusions to assumed cultural meanings and values. It is by dint of these characteristics that the intertextually informed representations of women in power enjoy a special currency among journalistic practices of representation.

In the following section I present the analysis of discursive positions that the mainstream political magazines in Poland have created for female politicians as participants in political processes. Characteristically, I am interested in the evaluative potential of the depictions as structural carriers of gender ideology, notably the role that these classifications play in the wider discourse of male-dominated institutions. The original and translated fragments of the articles from which the following image-role typology has been inferred have been provided at the end of the thesis (Appendix 2).

### **The Witch:**

“Alarm! Sisters! Danger! He knows you are a witch (...). I will personally mix the poison,” said Pitera calmly, tidying her hair and browsing in the plastic bag with the inscription “the Warsaw department store”.’ (Wprost, 29.07.07).

This canonical image of the female antagonist achieves its mythical signification as a symbol of women’s ultimate power. Popular representations of ‘witches’ have tended to

construe them as old and ugly crones riding on broomsticks in conical-shaped hats or stirring a magic cauldron as part of devilish plotting. Alternative depictions show them as alluring and bewitching temptresses leading men astray (Kramarae and Spender, 2000). In each of the two characterizations the construction of the evil female character draws on a similar configuration of personal attributes. It is the unlikeable character profile of the witch, driven by ambition, vengeance; malice, ingenuity and scheming, that sets her apart from the innocent and girly female protagonists (see Wing, 2010).

From the feminist viewpoint, the negative portrayal of women as witches creates salient ideological effects. It issues, namely, a cautionary and admonitory message against women's 'incursions' into masculine spheres of privilege and authority and, in the case of individual women who have successfully surmounted the obstacles placed in their way, it works by undermining their claims to power (Wing, 2010: 23). According to Kramarae and Spender (2000: 2041), the identification of women with witches is equivalent to 'demonization' which, as the researchers observe, assumes different forms, for instance physical (when women's sexuality is deemed dangerous) or spiritual (when they are viewed as incompetent, weak or incapable of knowing).

These and other discriminatory sentiments and belittling ascriptions conceived in the context of women's growing social independence underlie a short feature article by *Wprost* (29.07.07) (Appendix 2, Extract 1), published under the suggestive title: 'The Witch rally'. The text is distinguished by its playful and ironical language, which serves as a cover for and distraction from the more serious and sexist nature of its propositional content. The characters of the column, to whom the readers are invited to turn their attention, are female professionals associated with the Polish public domain.

With the exception of two high-status participants, the TV presenter Justyna Pochanke and the former Minister for Anti-Corruption Julia Pitera, who have been marked by their full names and thus referred to by means of ‘specific reference’ (van Leeuwen, 2008: 35), the categorization of women in this media excerpt position them as anonymous and unspecific members of the imagined and totalizing category ‘female’. The ‘genericisation’ (ibid.) of women’s identity has been realized in text by means of pluralized or mass nouns such as ‘women’, ‘women on broomsticks’, ‘a sizeable crowd of sisters’ or the titulated noun phrase the ‘witch rally’. According to Fowler (1991: 93), group categorization constitutes an important instrument for practising discrimination as ‘justification for such practices is given not in terms of the individual, but in terms of some assumed group to which the person allegedly belongs’. The analyst demonstrates how the cohesive notion of women as a group is frequently alluded to in discourse and used as a tool for gender stereotyping (ibid: 94).

The stereotypical knowledge claims regarding women and femininity – characteristically expressed in the form of firmly held, common-sense convictions – are widely in evidence in this editorial abstract, drawing on and recycling some of the most familiar and socially dominant gendered discourses. These include discourse of ‘traditional femininity’ (Mills, 2008; Sunderland, 2004), discourse of ‘female sexuality’ (Mullany, 2007) and ‘woman as gossip’ discourse (Spender, 1980) which, all together, produce a devalued image of excessive femininity. I will now look at these depictions in more detail.

One of the central propositions expressed by the text is that women’s looks and beauty are the most crucial assets. This is signified linguistically by means of descriptive analogies, such as the comparison of the place of women’s gathering to the reception at

Sheraton hotel, which allegedly bears a close resemblance to a 'gaudy promotion of anti-wrinkle creams' (line 4). Exemplary as the markers of traditional femininity (Mills, 2008) here are the stereotypically gendered behaviours and dispositions, which the author of the article ascribes to famous female professionals, for example the styling of the hair or browsing in a shopping bag intentionally branded with a logo of one of Poland's department stores ('Domy Towarowe Centrum'). The projected 'female' concern with outward appearance, or more generally trite and insignificant surface details, can also be seen in the characterization of women's speech activity: 'They gossiped, as usual, about trendy shops, the latest eyeliners as well as the most efficient techniques of leading men astray (lines 6, 7). In this short sentence unit, the view of women as frivolous and superficial coexists with two other equally demeaning representations: the stereotypes of the female manipulator and gossip.

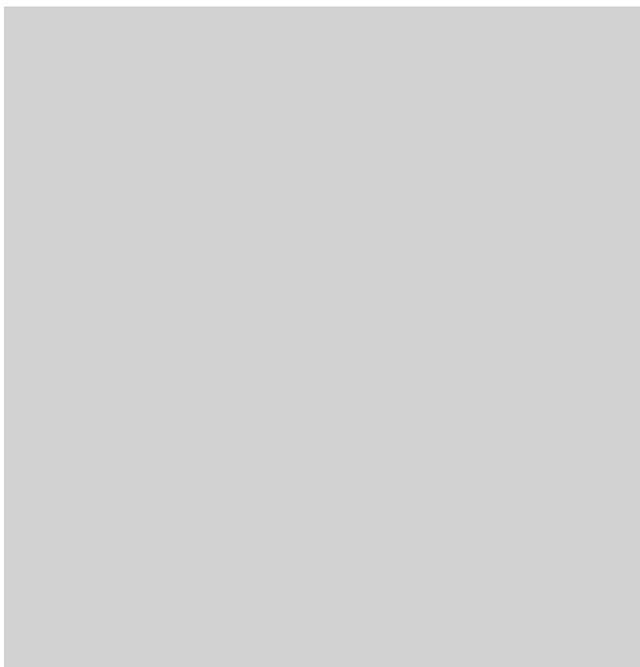
With regard to the first identity category, we can see here an appropriation of a widely held belief which associates females with manipulative and insincere behaviour. The proximity of this mythologized appraisal with discourses about excessive femininity additionally projects the idea to the reader that, in order to manipulate, the female professionals 'play' their gender and trade on their 'sexual wiles' to get their way (Mullany, 2007: 199). Examples of these demeaning representations focusing on women's image and sexuality feature in lines 7 and 9 ('After singing the anthem the women began to present their papers. Among the many banal and uninteresting talks, the most interesting was the paper by Julia Pitera on "how to manipulate Donald Tusk'). Discussions of the techniques of 'leading men astray', including the Prime Minister himself, have been posited at the centre of female identified activities.

Also within the same text, the author recovers a common folklinguistic myth that serves to stereotype women's speech as effusive and vacuous talk. In line 6, the descriptive verb 'to gossip' is used opprobriously to affirm women's linguistic deficiencies. Several feminist studies (Spender, 1980; Macdonald, 1995) have already drawn attention to the pejorative connotation of the term, which the producer of the text clearly draws upon as a means of communicating his ideological position towards the represented participants. For example, Macdonald (1995: 54) distinguishes between two significations of the verbal process: the first meaning implies 'a talk about everyday matters', while the second meaning, equally derogatorily, refers to the practice of 'voyeuristic' and manipulative 'prying'. Both senses conveyed by the word have been historically denigrated because of their association with femininity. According to Caldas-Coulthard's speech verbs' typology (1993, 1995), the verb 'gossip' is not only metalinguistic but also 'metapositional': it reveals and evaluates the ideological stance of the speaker. Perhaps more importantly, the linguist points out that the lexeme reiterates the prevailing sociolinguistic assumption about the nature of gender relations – that men talk while women gossip (Caldas-Coulthard, 1993: 203-204).

The lack of semantic equivalence between the two terms, along with their different collocational patterns premised on gender lines, points to the existence of a double discourse, which gauges men's and women's linguistic production according to different standards. This view is elaborately discussed by Spender (1980), who notices that within male supremacist societies female forms of speech have been measured not in comparison with men, but with silence. The excessive talkativeness of women constitutes, in this feminist account, a direct violation of the prescriptive rule governing

gender relations – the rule, which posits silence as the ‘desired state for women’ and associates it with the expression of ideal femininity (Spender, 1980: 42).

Gossip, like bitchiness, is thus a predominantly social construct, which operates as a control myth by marking and reiterating the boundaries of acceptable gender behaviour. Consequently, by casting women’s voices as inferior, odd, trivial or secondary, the categorization of public sphere women based on the archetypal figure of the witch simultaneously elevates men to the unmarked and socially valued position of ‘verbal control and self-restraint’ (Macdonald, 1995: 56). The satirical text (Wprost, 29.07.07), which provides a crypted commentary on the growing unease in relation to recent female activity within the Polish public domain, attempts to re-establish these gender distinctions. It works by recycling old stereotypes, myths and atavistic classifications upon which the contemporary political discourse appears still largely dependent. Figure 6.1 shows how the leading participant in Poland’s legislative assembly has been parodied in the political cartoon – a signification which suitably embroiders the already humorous publication.



**Figure 6.1** Julia Pitera as the ‘dark sister’ of Polish politics (Wprost, 29.07.07)

### **The Mother:**

‘The mother of the nation (...), the madonna of the left can hope for the support of those who want someone to mother them and who consider this the basic task of the country's leader (...)’ (Newsweek Polska, 06.05.07).

The ‘mother’ is one of the primordial and socially revered symbols of womanhood. It is also one of the few models of female authority generally accepted within society (Kendall and Tannen, 1997: 91). However, in spite of its high status within the domestic setting, the transference of the maternal role into professional or political domains produces a number of disempowering effects (Baxter, 2010: 32).

Firstly, the typecasting of female professionals as default carers symbolically dissociates women from public sphere roles to which they aspire, positions that offer them high prospects of success and recognition. As Tannen (1995: 162) points out: ‘Mothers are associated with the home, and professional women are trying to escape the

old adage that home is their rightful place'. The second, equally significant implication of this stereotypical positioning is the expectation that women will incontrovertibly exhibit and cultivate some of the traditionally nurturing skills as part of their professional roles. This view is in evidence in the media construction of the French politician Ségolène Royal (Appendix 2, Extract 2), dubbed by the Polish press as 'the mother and nanny of the nation' (line 7) (Newsweek Polska, 06.05.07). The representation makes it clear that the electoral support behind Royal's presidential nomination is based on the simplistic conviction that the politician will 'mother' the nation, thus performing the fundamental duty of the (female) head of state: ' (...) The madonna of the left can hope for the support of those who want someone to mother them and who consider this the basic task of the country's leader' (line 2) (ibid.).

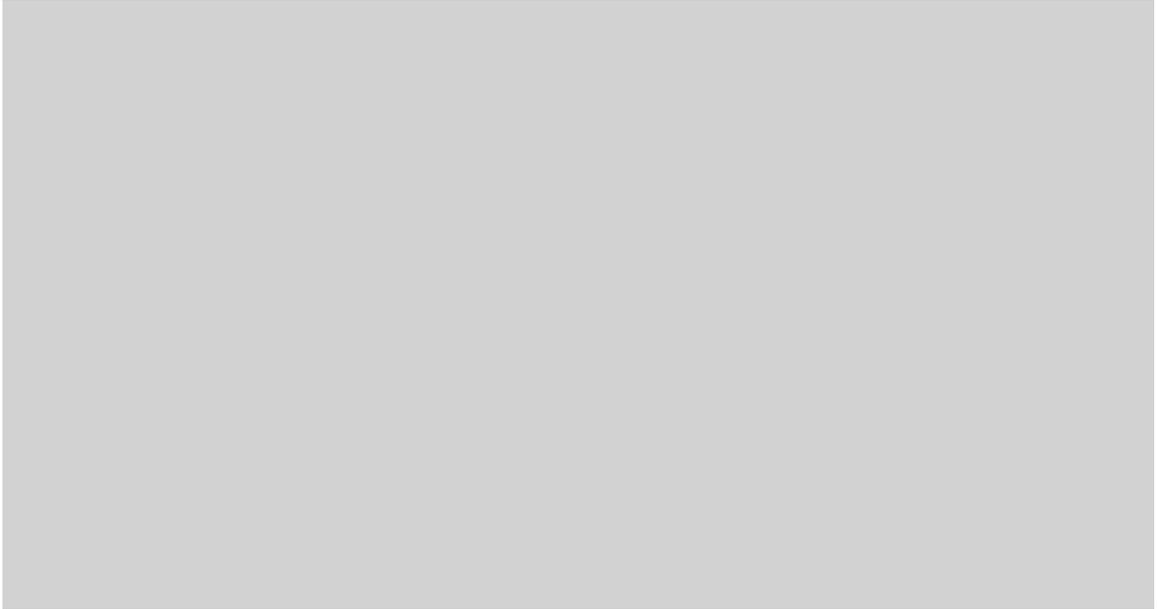
The maternal designation that operates at the level of discourse to differentiate the female presidential candidate from the more mainstream, male contestants in the run-up to general elections, illustrates rather clearly the severe limitations that accompany the 'woman as carer' construct. These relate to the essentialist reading of a woman's nature: belief in the internal qualities of the 'female' (Bohan, 1993), which construe women as naturally sympathetic, compassionate and moral and expect them to use their civilizing and elevated qualities in a whole range of professional or public contexts. The discourse of 'woman as nurturer' is linguistically identifiable in lines 4 and 5 when the author, trying to assess the appeal of Royal for her voters, asserts in a self-righteous manner that 'a great many of them most certainly shares the conviction that Segol will familiarly look after them' (Newsweek Polska, 06.05.07).

The view of Royal as an emotional specialist and sympathetic comforter appears to delete her claims to professional expertise and authority, a point additionally reinforced

by the informal reference to the politician via the diminutive form of her first name 'Sego'. Thus, in addition to suppressing her political credentials and achievements, the representation in the Polish publication simultaneously invites the suggestion that Ségolène Royal is especially suited to committing herself to a narrow range of publicly subordinate issues.

The association of the female politician with the 'soft' portfolio agenda, such as social benefits or public care provision (line 5 and 6), encourages the reader to see the area of her expertise as inevitably determined by women's 'natural' abilities ('She will make sure they [the voters] will not be deprived of any social benefits or corporate privileges, but instead will gladly shower them with presents'). The tendency of the Polish media to define women's public roles by analogy with the roles they have traditionally performed within a domestic setting poses huge risks of 'vertical segregation' – the relegation of women to less privileged and subordinate areas, a practice commonly observed in parliamentary institutions (Puwar, 1997).

Despite the risks implied by this role-type, its evaluations revolving around the sentimental qualities, such as 'maternal', 'kind', 'nurturing' and 'caring', make it unlikely that the women will face charges of sexual provocation (Baxter, 2010: 32) – a problem which appears to be particularly troubling for the next identity model.



**Figure 6.2** Ségolène Royal in a gesture of embrace – the connotative representation of her ‘maternal’ politics (Newsweek Polska, 06.05.07).

### **The Seductress:**

‘Perhaps it is a cunning trick of a young woman for whom highly powerful men in middle age are a good vehicle for making a political career?’ (Polityka, 28.07.07).

The term encapsulates one of the most semantically derogated images of femininity (Kanter, 1977), highly pervaded by sexual stereotyping. The women characterized as ‘seductresses’ are appraised predominantly in terms of their physical appearance and recognized for the capacity to attract and seduce men (Baxter, 2010). The research by Kanter (1977) on token women shows the prevalence of this identity model in professional and managerial settings.

As his analysis demonstrates, encapsulating female professionals into this sexualized role presents women with a series of problems. To use Kanter’s illustrative comparison: while ‘the mother can have many sons: it is more difficult for the sexually attractive to have many swains’ (Kanter, 1977: 234). What this comment encapsulates are the usual

charges of promiscuity and loose morals that surround the representational profile of the ‘woman-as-sex object’. On the other hand, the unidirectional shift in the woman’s sexual attention towards a single man, which potentially protects against sexual debasement, may incur other risks, such as general resentment and suspicion with which her professional status will inevitably be viewed (Halford and Leonard, 2001).

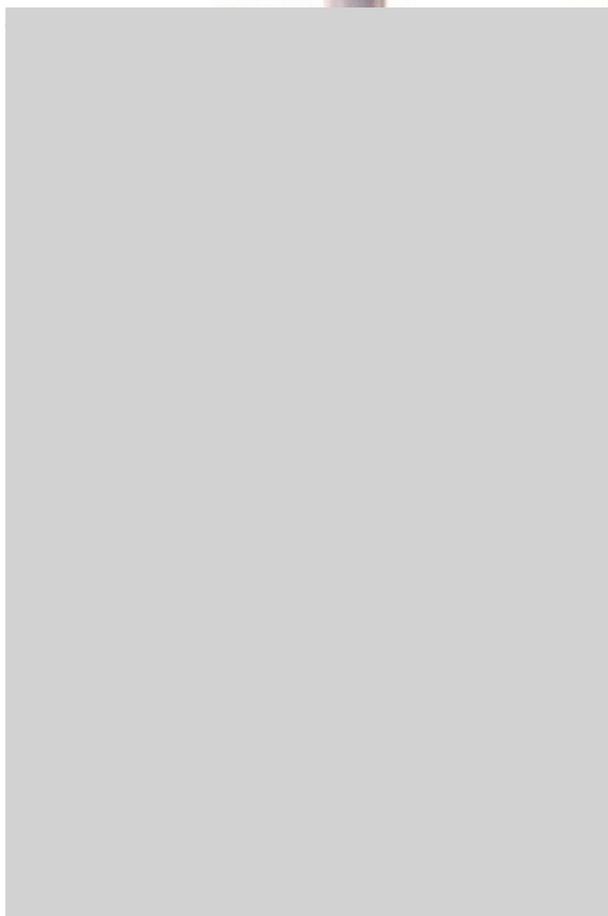
The image of a young, sexually alluring ‘femme fatale’ who trades on her femininity in order to ‘climb up the career ladder’ is salient among other discursive positions created by the Polish media to characterize the Self-Defence politician, Sandra Lewandowska. The exemplar text illustrative of the gender construct discussed here comes from the most prestigious of all three weeklies reviewed in this study – *Polityka* (28.07.07). The article, reproduced partially in extract 3 (see Appendix 2), is an interview with Sandra Lewandowska. I have chosen it among other representations owing to its high incidence of textual traces (contained within the questions’ section of the interview), which operate collectively against the background of gender knowledge expressed above, to posit a singular view of the female MP as a regular and unashamed seductress.

The defining feature of the interview’s interrogative components is their inferred and semi-accusatory character. The questions rely on patterns of assumed presuppositions and inferences (Mills, 1995) to create a specific ideological construction of the female MP as someone who exploits her sexuality and deliberately incurs protective instincts in order to obtain job benefits. For instance, question 1 clearly insinuates that the politician’s success is down to her young age and good looks (‘A young, pretty woman and an MP for two years. A dazzling career, it cannot be denied. Allegedly everything started when Jerzy Szmajdziński made a huge impression on you? What was it about him? Is it because he resembles J. F. Kennedy, something he admits himself?’) In

questions 2 and 3, references are made to some key members of the Polish political scene, who allegedly felt 'impressed' with the young MP and, as a consequence, employed her in their offices ('It so happened that you were later impressed by K. Janik, who, impressed by you, employed you in the office of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Administration and provided you with paternal care?'; 'Interestingly, it was A. Lepper who then provided you with paternal care and, of course, he managed to impress you as well?'). The male politicians appear in the discourse of the left-leaning publication in the roles of protectors or 'fathers' of the much younger MP, though the real character of the father-daughter relationship is revealed by the interviewer himself, who makes the following insinuations about the politician: 'It looks like there were many fathers', 'You played the 'fathers' game' rather skillfully' (nr 3, 4).

Both statements bear discernible traces of negative judgement oriented to morality (Martin and White, 2005) – a condemnatory sexual appraisal attributable to the woman's ascribed allegiance to different men. This derogatory attitude is expressed more openly in the semi-question number 4, where the interviewer draws on the dominant feminine 'discourse of sexual manipulation' (Mullany, 2007: 181) to discredit the interlocutor. The question reads as follows: 'Perhaps it is a cunning trick of a young woman for whom highly powerful men in middle age are a good vehicle for making a political career?' As a follow-up to the repeated accusation levelled against the MP with respect to her 'undeserved' political status, the interviewer establishes an inferential relation between the woman's rejection of political transfer and the shortage of paternal support within the proposed formation. It is the lack of connection rather than the woman's political convictions that, according to the male journalist, fully determined the outcome of her decision.

The final, and perhaps most important, problem associated with the sexually-oriented gender model relates to the de-professionalization of the woman's identity by her co-workers. Though, as Halford and Leonard (2001: 108) illustrate, seductress 'is never short of attention', the interest in her is, nevertheless, purely of a sexual nature rather than for any substantive achievements. The evidence of how the image of the female sex object rejects the woman as a professional, while fully acknowledging her sexuality, comes from the last fragment of this supposedly political conversation. The struggle by the male journalist to understand, at the end of the three-page interview, why the 'young and not bad-looking woman chooses politics and tussles with men' is a perfect illustration of how the emphasis on femaleness and sexuality can overshadow the woman's professional credentials. The links between the sexual role type and the incidence of sexual harassments, referred to by Davidson and Cooper (1992: 93), illustrates another major problem, of which the sex-charged interview (see the article reproduced in Extract 3, Appendix 2) is the best example. The objectifying character of the journalist's appraisal gains extra force through the visual representation of the MP featuring a sexualized 'head cant' (Goffman, 1979: 63) and a seductive gaze (Fig. 6.3).



**Figure 6.3** The ‘seductive’ demeanour of Sandra Lewandowska in the article by ‘Polityka’ (28.07.07).

### **The Eccentric:**

‘ (...) lace gloves, openwork tops and hats (...) Rokita adores juggling styles and surprising with her image, hence Poppins - the eccentric nanny’ ([http:// newsweek.pl.2](http://newsweek.pl.2)).

This is a popular character that features in modern children’s stories. When used intertextually in discourses about female MPs, the image of the ‘eccentric’ appears to gain a powerful evaluative force, which the media producers cynically exploit in order to create a marginal position for female politicians as marked and atypical professionals.

In the two texts quoted in extract 4 (Appendix 2), the conservative politician Nelly Rokita has been related symbolically to the identity-role of the eccentric, represented by

three fictional characters, the central of which is Mary Poppins. As a result of the discursive taxonomy invoked by the texts, the two categories of participants stemming from different representational realms (fictional and factual) have been associated together and classified as members of the same order of signification. The linguistic structures used in encoding the relation of similarity between the two discourse participants are relational identifying clauses, expressed by the following ‘copula’ constructions (Martin et al., 1997: 106):

1. She is a slightly modernized Mary Poppins (Newsweek Polska, 30.09.07).
2. The eccentric Nelly Rokita is the outcome of Mary Poppins, Pippi Langstrup and Izabella Lecka (<http://newsweek.pl.2>).
3. Baggy donkey jackets in connection with her little conventional countenance and gesticulation are obvious allusions to the image of Pippi Langstrup (<http://newsweek.pl.2>).

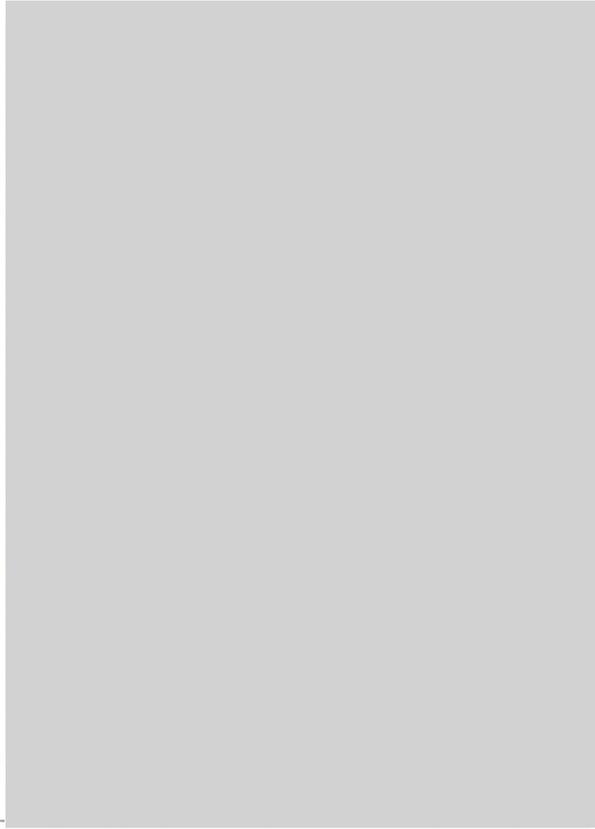
The main function of relational identifying processes, as Butt et al. (2003: 59) recount, is to assign a new meaning (‘value’) to a known participant (‘token’), in this case the Law and Justice MP Nelly Arnold Rokita. The intertextual references contained within the socio-political texts therefore provide an important semantic resource by which media commentators express their social positions with respect to the newly elected government advisor. The interpersonal meanings co-articulated in representations pertain to descriptions of sartorial style (‘colourful gloves, ‘baggy donkey jackets’, ‘thick sock’, ‘infantile cloaks’) and physical appearance (‘little conventional countenance and gesticulation’), which conjointly produce an interpretation of the politician as parodic, comical and deviant (Extract 4).

Classifications of this sort correspond to valuations typically applied in descriptions of things, for instance reactions to natural or semiotic phenomena, which Martin and White (2005: 56) discuss under the term ‘appreciation’. However, the ultimate meaning of the attitude lies, I would argue, in the inscription and invocation of the authorial ‘judgment’, which imparts a negative value of ‘normality’ (ibid: 52). The realizations for this major category of personal evaluation, involving assessments of the politician’s ‘social esteem’ (ibid.), are illustratively conveyed by the following adjectives: ‘odd’, ‘eccentric’, ‘retro’, ‘infantile’, ‘colourful’, ‘little conventional’, ‘egocentric’. Collectively, the terms work to promulgate a caricatured and debased image of Nelly Rokita as an aberrant ‘woman’ professional (Appendix 2, Extract 4).

The strategy of humorous sartorial allusions, frequently observed in the portrayal of this cabinet minister in the weeklies examined in this study, appears to have gained a wider currency across other outlets of Polish quality media, which explains the barrage of similarly voiced representations featured in the equally trivializing titles of mainstream socio-political publications (‘what does Nelly hide under her hat’ (Gazeta Wyborcza, 2007), ‘the lady in the hat will not save us’ (Przekrój, 2007). Worthy of attention, and possibly part of the same undermining tactic, is the tendency of the written press to visually classify the Law and Justice politician in terms of static pictorial structures categorized by Kress and van Leeuwen (1996: 89) as ‘analytical’. The pictorial representation realizing the analytical model of representation is marked, according to semioticians (ibid.), by the absence of ‘vectors’ (see Chapter 2 for a discussion of vectorial patterns in narratives), as well as by the lack of compositional symmetry, characteristic of ‘narrative’ and ‘classificatory’ processes respectively. Instead, the analytical structure depicts participants based on a ‘whole-part’ relationship signified

through the presence of the ‘carrier’ (the individual who carries the attributes) along with the associated ‘possessive attributes’ (in this case the parts of the MP’s wardrobe) (ibid: 90) (see also relational processes in Chapter 1).

According to Kress and van Leeuwen (1996), the analytical communication model typically shows how the participants ‘fit together to make up a larger whole’. Such processes work primarily to identify the carrier by allowing the readers to carefully examine their possessive attributes (ibid: 49). Similar to fashion shots or advertisement pictures, the press visuals of Nelly Rokita vividly resemble a static and purposefully displayed collection of various sartorial ingredients. As with every representational practice, during which some selected characteristics are marked as prominent while others are suppressed or entirely excluded (Kress and van Leeuwen, 1996), the one-sided depictions of the right-wing politician in terms of a jumbled compilation of contrasting styles and garments also betray an ideological and highly conscious decision to portray the newly arrived government official as an outsider within.



**Figure 6.4** Nelly Arnold Rokita - Polish Nelly Poppins (Newsweek Polska, 30.02.07).

### **The Housewife:**

‘When the husband took the intellectual effort of writing a daily blog about the benefits of functioning outside the politics, the wife decided to shine as the housewife of the political salon’ (Newsweek Polska, 13.04.08).

The ‘housewife’ is a classic female archetype (Wing, 2010), defined purely in domestic and familial terms, whose concerns and capabilities revolve mainly around the performance of household tasks, such as housekeeping or provision of emotional labour. When used by the media to classify female policymakers, the traditional gender figure becomes, I would argue, a vehicle for downgrading and trivializing female professional involvement. Similar to the maternal construct mentioned before, the identity role of the housewife invites the assumption that female MPs are suited to a limited range of public

duties. By casting women in practical and subordinate support roles, the conservative representation consolidates the division of professional labour along public and private lines, the result of which is the reconstruction of the sex-role partition within the political domain (Walsh, 2001).

The detrimental impact of this identity model on the general perceptions of women's professional abilities, aspirations and agency is well captured in the short article by *Newsweek Polska* (13.04.08) (Appendix 2, Extract 5). The magazine cogently establishes the narrative role for the Law and Justice politician Nelly Rokita as the 'housewife of the political salon' (line 2), thereby skillfully detracting from her political success involving her recent presidential appointment as the Women's Affairs Advisor. The undermining force of Rokita's categorization – linguistically detached from the political power structure – can be seen through a number of narrative sequences that portray the new government appointee in the stereotypical work setting.

The story focuses, typically in the humorous and playful fashion, on the celebratory event organized by the politician in connection with the right-wingers' electoral victory, but also on the occasion of consecrating her new office. It portrays the victorious female MP performing narrowly defined and traditionally gendered, secretary-like functions. For example, she is reported to have sent invitations to other members of her party to attend the meeting in her office, and treated these guests with drinks (lines 3 and 6). By consigning the member of the Polish Cabinet to a confined range of stereotypical female jobs, the conservative weekly has explicitly undercut her professional status as a serious and legitimate politician.

Further instances of this undermining practice in relation to Rokita's institutional nomination come from the trivialization of the activities associated with her role as the women's advisor. The contemptuous attitudes expressed by the media with regard to the politician's performance of 'non-essential' government functions has been inscribed in the text (Newsweek Polska, 13.04.08) through different discursive means. For example, the topical content of the meeting, which involved the discussion of cervical cancer, has been mentioned in the final section of the article, as an ironical side comment following the wry appraisal of the woman's hosting abilities.

The devaluation of the 'women's issue' is expressed even more bluntly through the use of negatively charged, semi-sarcastic phrases: the reference to the oncological presentation as 'refined attractions' (line 8), or the labeling of the political meeting in colloquial parlance as 'the bash at Nelly's' (lines 8, 9). As if naming the government high-status official via an informal and diminutive address term was not enough for the journalist to signal his discriminatory stand, the comparison of the participants of the meeting to 'desperate visitors' visibly aggrandizes the disparaging message expressed by the authorial appraisal.

Like many other identity categories discussed in this section, the narrative role of the housewife, as I have tried to demonstrate by drawing on the article from the leading national publication, could prove highly damaging to women's public image. The picture accompanying the linguistic message (Fig. 6.5) complements the sarcastic description.



**Figure 6.5** The ‘housewife of the political salon’ (Newsweek Polska, 13.04.08).

### **Cinderella:**

‘The Słupsk establishment has greeted Szczypińska's sudden fame with consternation. “Cinderella, our Isaura,” comment with a sneer old acquaintances from the Słupsk's Solidarity’ (Polityka, 13.10.07).

This archetypal image of the idealized heroine undergoes a change from a mousey and boring ‘Cinderella’ to a beautiful princess (Moustgaard 2004: 35). The representation of Cinderella dovetails with other depictions of fairy tale protagonists ‘relegated to passive roles, relying on others to provide guidance, motivation and solutions to their problems’. (Jones, 2002: 65). This encapsulates a tendency of the fantasy discourse to cast women in subordinate and dependent positions relative to the rational and agentic male heroes.

An example of such representational strategy appears in the feature article of the magazine *Polityka* (13.10.07) (Appendix 2, Extract 6), where the representative of the

Law and Justice, Jolanta Szczypińska, has been symbolically associated with the fairy-tale character Cinderella. The text, closely modelled on the plot and the narrative structure of the fairy tale, traces the professional development of the female MP from an anonymous and ordinary nurse to a nationally recognizable parliamentarian and vice-president of the leading political formation. The alluded discourse of female transformation is explicitly marked in different sections of the article, as the following quotations illustrate:

1. The ordinary Szczypińska. Only two years ago even in Pomerania hardly anyone knew she existed. With lightning speed she became the new face of the Kaczyński brothers' party (..)
2. (...) Nothing suggested she would one day become a politician. Szczypińska is one of those people who has only recently been given the chance of tasting the sweet fruit of transformation. Prior to that she had only suffered unpleasant consequences.
3. She is the biggest surprise of the whole year. Janik, observing Szczypińska in the Commission, never assumed she would be the vice-president of the parliamentary grouping (...).

(Polityka, 13.10.07)

Though the depiction of the politician's socio-professional profile appears to form the focal point of the story, the analysis of the text's syntactic choices shows that the semantic role selected for Szczypińska is significantly inferior and secondary in comparison to the accompanied discourse participants. Thus, out of eighteen clauses contained within the main fragment of the representation, only three of them (lines, 14,15,16) correspond to 'material-action-intention' processes (Mills, 1995: 143), thereby marking the position of Szczypińska as an agent ('actor') (Halliday, 1985) actively in control of her environment.

By contrast, the overwhelming majority of syntactic structures used to classify the female politician have a more disabling and passive character. These are predominantly relational clauses ('She was not particularly visible or involved'; '(...) She became the new face of the Kaczyński brothers' party') (lines 2, 3, 9), whose linguistic function consists in linking the female character with her past and present identity and description (Butt et al., 2003: 58).

As the transitivity patterns make evident, the re-invention of Jolanta Szczypińska from the lesser mortal to a successful politician occurs beyond the control and agency of the parliamentarian. The woman has been syntactically assigned the new professional status through 'identifying relational' means (Martin et al., 1997: 106) but also via the influence and agency of 'activated' social actors (van Leeuwen, 2008: 33) whose names and political affiliations have been overtly indicated:

In the opinion of Solidarity's oppositional activities from Słupsk, the Law and Justice has unjustly made Szczypińska the principal victim of the regime's oppression

Prior to that she has only suffered unpleasant consequences (...) until the first star came out. In July 2006 as Jarosław Kaczyński was taking on the prime-ministerial role he gave her his place in the first bench' (Polityka, 13.10.07).

As the above sentences make clear, the political success of Jolanta Szczypińska, according to the Polish press, is the direct outcome of Kaczyński's support, hence the specific identity ascribed to the politician as the 'new face' of their party. Interestingly, the only representation of activated clauses where the female professional is performing the role of an 'actor' (Halliday, 1994: 109) occurs in a description of her romantic encounter with the Prime Minister Jarosław Kaczyński:

While she ran to him after he delivered his exposé holding a red rose and then on behalf of the parliamentary grouping gave him the whole bouquet. He paid her back with a kiss. And so she became the parliamentarian of love' (Polityka, 13.10.07).

However, despite this activating pattern, the reference to the female politician in terms of a metaphorical 'script' (Mills, 2008: 148) stemming from a low-status romantic genre ('the parliamentarian of love') has a disempowering effect commensurate with a devaluation of her political credentials.

The analysis of this stereotypical fairy-tale construction in terms of the configuration of semantic roles and grammatical relations between the discourse participants lends validity to the argument expressed by Jones (2002) with respect to the differences in literary depictions of male and female protagonists. In Jones' account:

We can see a sexist bias evident when males are used predominantly to represent the ideals and models of behavior for a culture in its legends about itself, and females are relegated to the domestic roles of the family romances in fairy tales. Try as Cinderella or Snow White might, they are not heroic figures who benefit the entire community through their actions the way Beowulf does. Their successes are inherently rather more personal and individualized, and thus they do not become social paragons or paradigms.

(Jones, 2002: 65)

Far from becoming an illustration of an inspiring identity model for the reader to emulate, the discursive construction of the politician based on the archetypal character of Cinderella represents yet another symbolic resource for depicting professional women in the subordinate support roles, as decorative 'faces' and cosmetic elements within media political campaigns. The photograph of Jolanta Szczypińska changing

behind the screen (Fig. 6.6), which accompanied the article, reinforces the perception of her as mere 'window dressing'.



**Figure 6.6** The transformed Jolanta Szczypińska as the embodiment of Cinderella (Polityka, 13.10.07).

### **The Bride:**

'The MP does not hide her admiration for the Prime Minister. A kiss on the cheek when the Prime Minister left the lectern after delivering an exposé, the pride on being able to meet Jarosław and Lech Kaczyński's mother' (Newsweek Polska, 01.07.07).

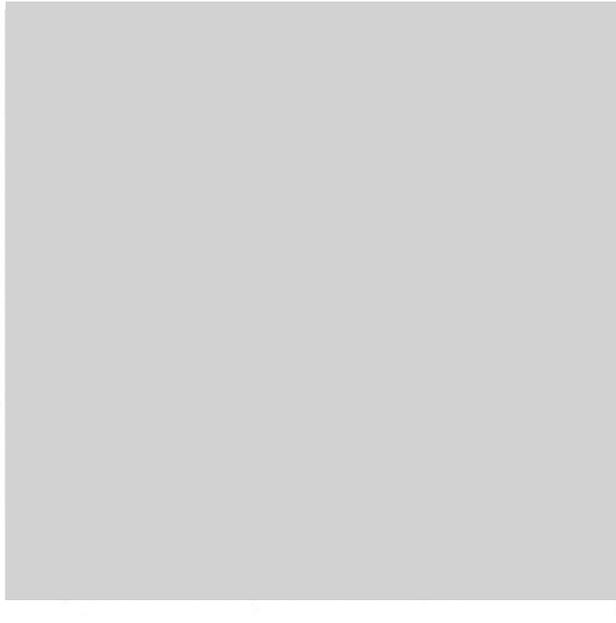
The 'bride' makes another example of a gendered classification which ensues from the relational identification with men (van Leeuwen, 2008). The model represents a traditional and circumscribed identity position by locating women in the private realm.

The role-type has been widely appropriated by public relations experts and political representatives as an element of Kaczyński's party image transformation. The strategy, employed equally by all Polish media, consisted in portraying the female MP Jolanta Szczypińska in a romantic liaison with her party leader and Prime Minister Jarosław Kaczyński. As the political scientist Dr Marek Suchar (*Polityka*, 13.10.07) reports, the popularity of Jolanta Szczypińska in the national media has been the outcome of a highly calculated tactic adopted by the male leaders of PiS, who saw the stereotypically feminine qualities of the female MP as a leverage for softening their public appeal.

In the short text produced by *Wprost* (Appendix 2, Extract 7), the metaphor of a parliamentary love affair has been brought into play as an important element of the pre-election game. The romantic script makes itself evident in the occurrences of lexical items associated with the wedding ceremony: 'a campaign to tie the knot', 'veiled', 'wedding dress' (*Wprost*, 21.11.07). In the remaining part of the commentary, the writer presents his readers with the image of the bride-to-be, which can be seen as almost functionally reinstating certain stereotypical beliefs about femininity. For instance, the magazine draws on the dominant representations of women as emotional and irrational (Mullany, 2007) by associating the female MP with volatile behaviour. The woman is shown out of control, alternately confirming and denying gossip about the parliamentary wedding ('The female MP denies it and flits with the newspapers by turns, saying she does not have a dress and that she must think about it') (lines 3, 4). She is also cast in the semantic role of the 'senser': construed via mental processes of affection (Martin et al., 1997: 105). She does not act, but mainly experiences sentimental emotions including 'admiration' for the Prime Minister or 'pride' on meeting his mother.

The evaluation of the minister in terms of affective states contributes to the general perception of her professional position as devoid of agency and control. Furthermore, just like the romantically inclined Cinderella discussed above, the role of the Bride in the political representation achieves its meaning only in relation to a masculine identity, without which it could not exist. It functions then as a covert legitimation of the ideology of romantic love, propounded as the most important factor in a woman's life.

Perhaps the most important consequence of this discursive construct is that, by linking serious female professionals with the characters and metaphors derived from popular romantic novels or soap fiction, the recontextualization devalues their political achievements by reinstating the connection between femininity and trivial concerns. It is by re-locating women's public identities into the realm of romance and personal relationships that these inherently stereotypical associations between femininity and the private sphere are reinforced rather than questioned. The photograph below captures the PiS politician in close interaction with Jarosław Kaczyński. The caption placed directly under the picture (Fig. 6.7) reveals that, apart from the media, it is the MP herself who, for some time, helped to paint the scenario of her romantic affiliation with the head of the government.



**Figure 6.7** Jolanna Szczypińska as the ‘bride to be’ (Polityka, 13.10.07).

### **The Teflon Princess:**

‘Ségolène Royal is frail, delicate and sweet but at the same time very strong. She creates panic in the enemy camp - a veritable Joan of Arc’ (Newsweek Polska, 07.01.07).

This compound term merges the stereotypical image of a delicate and pretty princess with the dominant, professional description of the iron-fisted leader.

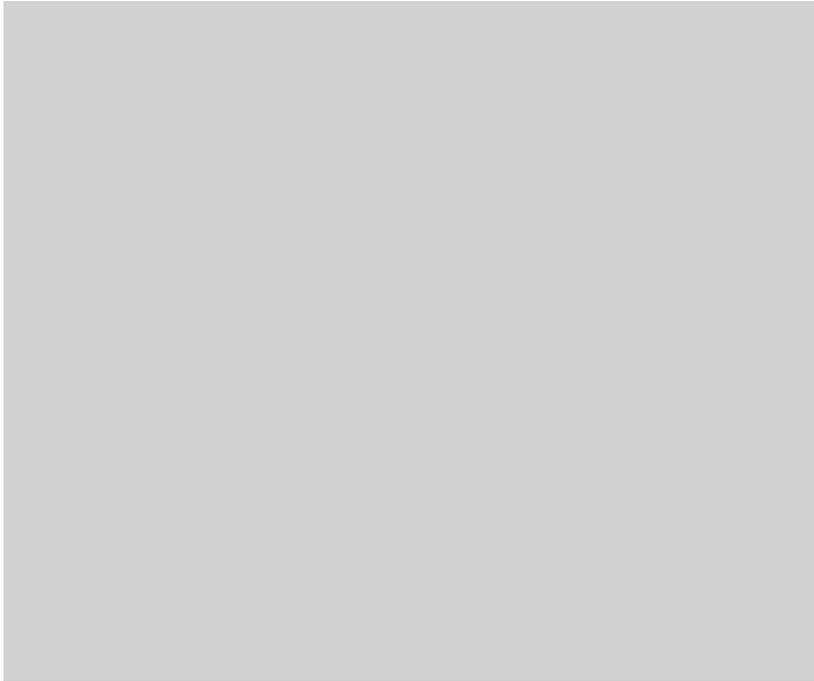
At first reading, the role appears to successfully shake the binary foundations of the femininity/competence bind (see discussion of ‘double binds’ in Chapter 5) by reconciling the qualities conventionally perceived as feminine with traits traditionally associated with men and revered within male-dominated contexts, such as politics. Thus, in the narrative of *Newsweek Polska* (07.01.07) (Appendix 2, Extract 8), the French presidential candidate Ségolène Royal has been pictured as frail, delicate and charming, but simultaneously strong and intimidating. The representation makes a veiled allusion to the political slogan ‘Tough and Caring’ invented by the US Senator

from California, Diane Feinstein, as reported by Jamieson (1995: 130). The inability on the part of the male commentators to ‘conceive of the terms as cohabitants’ resulted in the adoption of a substitute phrase which read as ‘Tough BUT Caring’.

Moreover, the liberatory potential of the gender classification in the Polish publication has been strongly undercut by the subsequent characterizations of Ségolène Royal based on activities and values derived from the private domain. Among the quality ascriptions invoked to naturalize the traditional definition of her gender identity are: a preoccupation with physical appearance (‘The charming type, who will bewitch some with her well-cut dress that makes her look like an angel’) (lines, 2, 3), maternal identification (‘Others will be enchanted with the pictures of four children’) (lines, 3, 4), as well as incompetence in relation to professional and non-domestic tasks (‘She is unlikely to bewitch the experts and political scientists’ (lines 4, 5) (Mills, 2008: 130).

The stereotypical female characteristics directly reinforce the impression that Royal is too feminine to be accepted in the political world (see photograph below), hence the double standards in quality descriptions-classifications based on gender-specific adjectives, such as ‘delicate’, ‘sweet’ and ‘frail’, which are absent in evaluations of male leaders. Despite the alleged lack of appropriate professional credentials, the French MP is, nevertheless, visible as an ‘agent of change’ and recognized for bringing a breath of fresh air into the ossified political culture (Norris, 1997b: 163): (‘Lacking political experience? Very well, she will bring freshness into the political salon (...) it is such a nice change compared to arrogant blokes from the old guard’) (lines 7, 8, 9). Teflon as she might be, the discursive portrayal of the French Socialist Deputy in terms of the iconic image of the bewitching beauty once again demonstrates that, in the eyes

of the Polish press, a woman's presence on the political scene offers little beyond the cosmetic 'splash of colour' (Norris, 1997b: 149).



**Figure 6.8** Delicate and in need of protection, despite her iron-fist - Ségolène Royal has been dubbed by the Polish media as the 'teflon princess' (Newsweek Polska, 07.01.07).

**In conclusion:**

The analysis of the images of female politicians based on intertextual references to archetypal or fictional characters and descriptions begs a separate question about the nature of identities produced as a result of positioning women through different discourses. A simple glance at the types of role encapsulation reveals a major characteristic immediately: the women are judged according to prevailing feminine stereotypes, which induct them into private roles. The two prime linguistic categories used to gloss women's personal designation in texts are 'relational and physical identifications' (van Leeuwen, 2008: 42-43), which attach them relationally to other social actors ('mother', 'bride', 'Cinderella', 'seductress') or qualify in terms of

physical attributes inscribed connotatively in the concept of traditional femininity ('princess', 'witch' 'seductress').

In many ways the characters played by female policymakers in the Polish press resemble the characters played by women in literary texts, as summarized by Joanna Russ (1984). Informed by normative gendered frameworks, the roles show women preoccupied with emotions rather than actions, consigned to the private domain instead of the public one, and typically serving as the appendages of men rather than being seen as persons in their own right (Russ in Mills, 1995: 170).

They also match the cinematic representations of Polish heroines featured in the 2007 Film Festival in Gdynia. The critic of the festival, Małgorzata Sadowska (Przekrój, 2008) , recounts tellingly how the filmic narratives position women in the background or use them as springboards to men's careers and personal transformations. The female actresses are reported to appear on the Polish screen in the minor, if not derogatory roles, warming the atmosphere, yearning, waiting, loving or mothering all kinds of male protagonists and villains. They have, however, no tangible impact on the films' action or plot progression.

The differential categorization of women relative to their male counterparts has indeed been widely documented across different sites of media practices. Looking at the representations of men and women speaking in British quality papers, Caldas-Coulthard (1993: 205-206) demonstrates how the male speakers are marked by their 'professional designations or position in the government', while the female actors are defined 'in terms of marital or family relations'. Gurian's (2011: 18) research on the stereotypical treatment of female murderers in criminal justice reporting draws attention to the failure

of the media to recognize the agency of women accused of committing grave offences. The disposition on the part of news professionals to refer to females in terms not typically used to characterize men has also been found in the media depictions of British female politicians and women priests, according to the insightful studies conducted by Walsh (2001: 78). The analyst identified repeated patterns whereby women's participation in the public sphere has been 'pulled back into the orbit of the private sphere'.

Such coverage points conclusively towards implicit discursive constraints that impact on women as participants in the public sphere discourse, which relegate them to a separate category downgraded in the power hierarchy (Caldas-Coulthard, 1993, 1995; Fowler, 1991). The construction of the female populace as a 'special group', as illustrated by the symbolic representations of female MPs, shares a common evaluative profile based on the following disabling attributes: relational dependence, passivity, immaturity, emotionality, a lack of verbal control, sexual and physical excess (Fowler, 1991: 95). The instances of identified moral evaluations are linguistically attributable to traditionally gendered discourses (Sunderland, 2004: 124; 149).

The outcome of this positioning is particularly damaging for female professionals as the images on which these representations draw do little to validate their competence and power. By establishing women's identities along the private lines, the media eclipse their professional credentials, which creates the impression of women's 'lack of fit' with the institutions and roles of organizational life (Walsh, 2001).

This causes an additional difficulty for female leaders working within the classic 'male-defined corporations' (Baxter, 2010: 23), such as politics. In such institutions, the

discursive positions available to women appear already markedly circumscribed by the untenably constricted boundaries of stereotypical gender expectations. The framing of female professionals as stereotypically gendered subjects additionally reinforces the offence by preserving the cognitive networks of inferential connections between the traditional and narrowly defined female attributes and gender, thereby confirming the initial categorization.

I would suggest that the stereotypes discussed here have a negative impact on the perception of women as professionals, as the characteristics ascribed to female politicians place them in conflict with the accepted rational and objective values of professional environments. In view of these dominant institutional norms which, as Brewis (2001: 293) explains, are governed by discursive rules of 'scientific modernism', the representations of female policymakers based on stereotypical feminine traits appear to render them unfit for organizational realities.

The construction of MPs as gendered subjects is directly contrary to the position of neutral professionalism against which men in authority are frequently gauged. Tannen (1995: 161) recognizes that 'simply being a male in a position of authority alone does not invoke stereotypes, whereas simply being female in such a position can call to mind stereotypical images of women'. The dominant cultural depictions of male leadership draw, as discussed at length in the previous chapter, on military or sports imagery. The typecasting of men in the roles of military commanders or sports captains enhances the power of their institutional authority. This makes a striking contrast to the highly informal and private categorizations of women in politics, which symbolically produce the effect of 'dequalification' (Norris, 1997b: 162).

The andro-centric rule responsible for the constitution of male and female leaders as opposite categories extends to other representational patterns, notably the naming and address terms for occupational roles, as we will now see.

### **6.3 The Visible Gender: Sexism in Referential Strategies**

When we refer to a man as a ‘politician’ (‘polityk’), the principal characteristic highlighted by means of this generic term is his occupational role and professional status as a lawmaker and member of the legislative body. But take the general pattern of naming prescribed to denote a *female* legislator and the picture is diametrically different, as it is her ‘gender’ which constitutes the most defining feature. Consider, for example, the following naming practices customarily employed by the Polish political press in reference to women in public sphere positions. For the purpose of illustrating the linguistic asymmetry, the terms have been juxtaposed with referential designations typically applied in ‘equivalent’ descriptions of men:

1. ‘The Female Minister with a Ball’ (Newsweek Polska, 24.06.07) - The Minister with a Ball
2. ‘The First Lady of Polish Diplomacy’ (Polityka, 31.03.07) - The Minister of Diplomacy
3. ‘The President of the RP in a Skirt’ (Newsweek Polska, 03.06.07) - The President of the RP
4. ‘The Female President Kirchner’ (Newsweek Polska, 28.10.07) - President Kirchner

The lexical difference between the two pairs of referential attributions is that the female form is ‘marked’ relative to the male form. Cameron (1985: 94), discussing the unmarkness of the masculine gender, alludes to a number of linguistic criteria: ‘One is whether a form is morphologically basic or whether it needs extra material added by way of an additional rule’. In Polish, feminine gendered terms are normally created

through the addition of special affixes or compound forms such as ‘pani’ (female) or ‘dama’ (lady) – though in my corpus of political writing one can also see frequent metonymic references pertaining to the manner of dress (‘the president in a skirt’).

The second criterion noted by Cameron (1985) is the capacity of the unmarked term to be used generically by embracing the marked form. Construction of the public sphere as an exclusive preserve of men means that the vast majority of terms that originally developed to designate high-status professional roles were entirely male-specific. These were later adjusted to keep pace with the changing social climate and have since evolved to incorporate women as well (Mills, 1995).

However, as the leading feminist scholars Cameron (1985) and Mills (1995), persuasively argue, this naming practice is not completely devoid of problems, as many language users still see the ‘generic masculines’ as more masculine than generic (Cameron, 1985: 118). According to Mills (1995: 95), the forms participate in the continued exclusion of women by making them invisible. In the researcher’s words, ‘since the generic is already coded as male, it seems as if women’s presence in the language is being erased’.

To counteract what they perceive as the lexicon of prejudice, many feminist-identified professionals in Poland advocate the adoption of specific feminine forms in order to mark women’s inclusion within the public domain. I will argue here against this strategy on several grounds. Firstly, the explicit marking of the feminine gender in non-gender occupational names lends support to the male-as-norm ideology by casting women in the anomalous and outsider position opposite the masculine standard. As Walsh (2001: 42) aptly contends, ‘the fact that ‘male politician’ and ‘male priest’ are

still regarded as tautologies suggest how far these roles are still seen as the preserve of men'. Hence, by explicitly differentiating women from a universal male norm, the female-specific professional terms contribute to the persistence of gender dichotomy, making the female candidacy appear like an act of oddity and divergence.

Secondly, names that draw attention to the woman's sex in a situation where it should be the least important feature have the effect of backgrounding her professional identity. The outcome of this is that whatever we say about a female politician will inevitably be tinged with gender, which clashes with the familiar and the commonsense (Graff, 2001). The qualities of the political man, on the other hand, merge into a discursive position of a non-gendered subject.

The semantic rule accountable for the existence of lexical asymmetry in languages such as English or Polish provides for the division of the vocabulary into two distinct and unequal categories: 'male and minus male' (Stanley, 1977). Thus, to be associated with a 'male' label is to be associated with positive and professional values (see Chapter 5). Conversely, to be marked as 'minus male' is to be marked by the absence of these qualities, hence carrying negative and debased meanings (Spender, 1980: 20). As Julia Penelope Stanley (1977: 66-68) indicates, the predominance of positive semantic space in English has been seized and utilized by men, who represent the norm and standard of humanity.

As an illustration of Stanley's theory, Susan Wolfe (1980), cited in Knutson (1989: 81), alludes to the masculine gender of prominent occupational titles, as well as agency-signifying nouns in languages of Indo-European origin. Terms like 'writer', 'professor', 'doctor' or 'worker' are typically linked, according to the scholar, with the [+male]

label both in languages with grammatical gender distinction as well as those without it. On the other hand, the lexicon characterized as [+female] is comparatively modest and exemplifies names for occupations culturally designed for women, e.g. 'prostitute', 'nurse', 'secretary', 'housewife' (Stanley, 1977: 67).

In the Polish language, one can see two main types of gender-marked professions where normative femininity constitutes the essence of the occupied positions. These include occupations traditionally associated with promiscuity such as 'singers' ('spiewaczka'), 'actresses' ('aktorka'), 'models' ('modelka') or 'dancers' ('tancerka'), as well as professions demanding considerable reserves of patience and assiduity, while offering low income and little prestige, for instance 'secretaries' ('sekretarka'), 'cleaners' ('sprzątaczką'), 'nursemaids' ('niańka') and 'nurses' ('pielęgniarka') (Graff, 2001: 36). Both categories, as noted by Graff (2001), show women in supportive and subordinate roles, some of which require high responsibility but carry very little economic status.

So what happens to those women who have succeeded in their attempts to enter the domains already taken and semantically marked by men, positions through which they assume public authority? According to Stanley (1997: 67), the women are accordingly assigned a special semantic label, which maintains their categorization within the 'negative semantic space'. The semantic label consists of the female-marked forms made of suffixes or whole words such as 'woman', 'lady', 'female' ('kobieta', 'dama', 'pani') which, attached to the occupational terms ('female politician', 'woman doctor'), signal the anomalous position of women in these roles. Spender (1980) summarizes the endeavors of professional women to transcend the classification of themselves as gendered subjects in the following words:

When women attempt to move outside the lesser spheres they do not join the ranks of those who enjoy positive status because they carry their femaleness, their minus maleness with them (...) No matter what they do they are still branded as women and cannot develop positive meanings and definitions of themselves.

(Spender, 1980: 20)

Far from stressing the importance of women's judgments and contributions, the gender-specific female terms code a discriminatory attitude constitutive of the representation of women as predominantly gendered beings. The counter-strategy, to which I fully subscribe, is to adopt the generic forms in all cases and mark them equally should the need arise to make a special reference to male or female members within the same grouping (Mills, 1995: 96). This is easily done in Polish, as noticed by the renowned Polish linguist Jerzy Bralczyk (2005), due to the changing forms of adjectives, verbs and pronouns, which already assume gender characteristics (e.g. *nasza/nasz prezes firmy*).

The use of gender-free or neutral language prevents, in my view, the unnecessary gender 'contamination' of professional terms, the process which forms part of a wider media trend towards emphasizing women's lack of fit with the public sphere roles (Walsh, 2001). The move from disparaging and trivializing connotations of the feminine, marked forms toward non-sexist generic terms brings us closer to (the discursively androgynous condition of) a genderless world (Bem, 1993).

#### **6.4 The ‘Minus Politician’. Semantic Pejoration of Female Professional Designations**

A related media strategy setting up the semantic division into positive male terms [+male] and negative female terms [-male] is the practice whereby originally neutral or positive designations undergo devaluation once they begin to form associations with women. Muriel Schultz (1975) referred to this systematic, lexical tendency as the ‘semantic derogation of women’. Among the examples quoted by Schultz as an illustration of the historic ‘downhill slide’ are words for old women (‘trot’, ‘crone’, ‘frump’), titles of women in high positions (‘lady’, ‘dame’, ‘mistress’) or female endearment terms (‘tart’, ‘minx’, ‘nymphet’), which all started off as positive or neutral but later became devalorized or imbued with sexually debased connotations (Schultz, 1975: 65-67).

A similar pattern of linguistic pejoration occurs in designations of ministerial or public sphere positions in my data where positive names for political roles, such as chairperson or minister, acquired a trivialized status when once they formed links with the female subject. The examples include the following transformations: The Health Carer (‘Opiekunka Zdrowotna’) (Wprost, 06.07.08) instead of the Minister of Health (Minister Zdrowia); The Minister of Family Promises (‘Minister Obietnic Rodzinnych’) (Przekrój, 2007) instead of the Minister of Family and Women’s Affairs (Minister do Spraw Rodziny i Kobiet); The Female Ball Minister (‘Pani Minister od Piłki’) (Newsweek Polska, 24.06.2007) instead of the Minister of Sport (Minister Sportu) or Girl with a Ball (‘Dziewczyna przy Piłce’) (Polityka, 31.03.08) instead of the Spokesperson of Football Association (Rzecznik Prasowy PZPN).

What these examples indicate is that terms which customarily express esteemed meanings in connection with professional men are subject to semantic derogation when they are marked for females, even though the positions assumed by women are completely identical to those occupied by men. It is almost as if there is a loss of prestige incurred by the entrance of women in to high-ranking posts, a process described by Spender (1980) in her ground-breaking book 'Man Made Language'. The researcher says: 'Even where they venture into areas which have ostensibly conferred high status upon males, females find themselves still labeled negative, as minus males, as 'not the real thing' (Spender, 1980: 21). The constitutive semantic rule which appears at the base of asymmetrical gender division within the language of the Polish media can be formulated as follows: there is only one positive semantic space reserved for the term 'politician', the [+ male]. Female MPs appear in this cultural space only as a negative divergence from the standard – they are the substitute man, the 'minus politicians' (ibid.).

In discourse dialectical terms (Fairclough, 2009), the semantic degeneration of female professional designations fulfills a dual role: it partakes in the construction of female inferiority and marginalization and helps to validate it. As Spender (1985) points out, in a society where women continue to be debased it comes as little surprise that terms underlying their descriptions also become devalorized. This brings me to the cause of pejoration, which involves two sources: the general 'prejudice' and reluctance against women's in-group inclusion and identification, but more importantly a 'contamination' by association with a degenerative concept of the female gender (Schultz, 1975: 71). The specific working of this kind of contamination concerns me in the next section.

## 6.5 Interdiscursive Resonances as Evaluative Resources

The third pattern of language use observed in the analysis of gender at the level of individual words and sentences deals with the construction of a conceptual tension between traditionally defined women and the exercise of a political profession. The perceived conflict can be inferred from the interdiscursive dissonances (see also Walsh, 2001) which are detectable within the texts of all three political weeklies – that is, intertextual traces of competing discourses that show typically within the salient sections of articles, such as titles or main headlines. Consider the following antonymic characteristics inherent in the terms defining female policymakers:

The **High Heels** of the Nation (Newsweek Polska, 30.03.08)

The **Wardrobe** of the Authorities (Newsweek Polska, 19.08.07)

The **Sejm Misses** (Newsweek Polska, 07.12.08)

The **First Vamps** (Newsweek Polska, 09.03.08)

**Pregnancy** on the Top of Power (Wprost, 14.09.08)

The **Mother** of the Nation (Newsweek Polska, 06.05.07)

The **Stepmother** of Europe (Wprost, 01.07.07)

The **Housewife** of the Political Salon (Newsweek Polska, 13.04.08)

The Female Minister who **Cooks** (Wprost, 04.02.07)

The Female Minister does not **Dance** (Poliyka, 31.03.07)

The contrast in each description lies in the co-occurrence of words that underlie the contradictory nature of women's public and private roles. Thus, the characterization of women as stereotypically gendered subjects works through the articulation of traditionally feminine activities and interests, such as cooking, dancing and mothering, or the use of sartorial metonyms, like 'wardrobe' or 'high heels,' as a manifestation of 'typically' female concern with physical appearance. By contrast, the lexical markers of women's professional identity correspond to designations of the political domain and encompass words such as 'nation', 'authorities', 'power', 'political salon' or the appellative term 'the minister'.

According to Fairclough (1995a), the intermixing of public and private identities in media accounts of political figures accords with the integrative and mediatizing function of the political media genres constituted through the interdiscursive interaction between the 'public discourse types and the lifeworld discourse of readers' (1995a: 189). Following Walsh (2001), I see a gendered element in such descriptions. The discursive discord between women's stereotypically feminine identities such as mother, housewife, cook, dancer or decorative object, and the male-identified role of political legislator provide linguistic clues to the 'residual surprise' and deep anxiety that the prospect of female leadership provokes in Polish society.

Moreover, I want to claim that the contrastive patterns of collocations habitually adopted by political commentators in connection with women's growing professional competence are derivatives of the same old double binds that have plagued women across different points in history. As observed in more detail in Chapter 5, the binds are highly constraining rhetorical constructs that burden women with seemingly unrealizable expectations based on the mutually exclusive notions of femininity and

professionalism they purport to advocate (Jamieson, 1995). Their power derives from defining women's identity as entirely incompatible with public sphere positions. The assumption that women cannot be both feminine and smart or 'exercise their brains along with their uteruses' results from the highly degrading concept of the feminine which, as Jamieson (1995) aptly observes, excludes psychological maturity and decision-making ability and, in their place, offers nurturing, passive and superficial qualities.

At the root of the construction is thus the preoccupation with the woman's proper place which, as the above private sphere ascriptions unanimously point out, fits squarely within a conservative ideology. The essence of this ideology is pertinently captured by Graff (2001), who makes the following observation with regard to the positionality of women within the male-dominated political scene:

Woman is one of the two categories that cannot be adequately substituted for the word human being or citizen. She is a separate category associated with privacy, family, motherhood, physiology, sex. The essence of woman's difference is continually reinforced and perpetuated, which is why masculinity is still taken as a constitutive feature of the politician.

(Graff, 2001: 40/ my translation)

I shall now consider in more detail how the gendered discourses concerned with female physiognomy and sexuality reiterate the difference within the political context.

## **6.6 The True Composition of Female Political Bodies**

The most frequent and elementary resource exploited by the Polish press for discriminating against female MPs is 'physical identification' (van Leeuwen, 2008: 42). Distinguished from 'functional' categorization, which activates social actors by

describing them in terms of professional occupation ('professionalisation') or role performance ('actionalisation'), the identifying reference represents discourse participants by means of physical attributes (van Leeuwen, 2008: 44; Reisigl and Wodak, 2001: 47-53 ).

The convention of referring to prominent female legislators as objects to be surveyed illustrates the chief mode by which femininity and politics coalesce, producing a distinctively gendered story angle, the effect of which is the undermining of women as politicians of conviction (Ross, 2002a). Of all the examples of objectification utilised, I would like to concentrate on its construction in forms which I consider particularly pernicious to women's identity image. I focus, therefore, on 'somatonyms' - depictions of women 'by synecdochisingly picking out a part or characteristic of their body: that is to say, by referring to a person on the basis of a metonymic semantic relationship' (Reisigl and Wodak, 2001: 53).

Various studies have pinpointed the representational technique of body fragmentation as a key resource for spreading hegemonic ideologies of femininity (Winship, 1981; Gill, 2007; Schields, 2003; Lemish, 2004). Visual and linguistic dissections of women's physicality reduced to dismembered and isolated body parts have been noted in a wide range of media settings, including advertising, pornography, romantic fiction or love poetry (Mills, 1995). My semiotic analysis of Polish political discourse discerned a similar pattern of physical fragmentation whereby female policymakers have been displayed to the public as a collection of anatomical elements. Consider the following descriptions from the quality press:

Sandra Lewandowska, Polish MP:

Last term they [the Sejm guards] had no problem remembering Sandra Lewandowska from the Self-Defence party. According to their ranking these were *the prettiest parliamentary legs* (Polityka, 22-29.12.07).

Alina Kabaeva, Duma Deputy since 2007:

Her looks are far from classic - *a square jaw, a horsey face* and rough attire do not make her charming (Wprost, 07.09.08).

Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner, President of Argentina:

What draws attention is her *expressive face*, especially her *distinct eyes*, made up a bit too much. The *feminine hairstyle* with *well-groomed, long hair* is a definite plus. Though it cannot be stated with absolute certainty, she uses collagen aside from botox - the *luscious lips* cannot be the work of nature (Wprost, 07.09.08).

Joanna Mucha, Iwona Arent, Polish MP's:

The internet users admired *Mucha's eyes* and Arent in her entirety compared among other things to a cream cake (Wprost, 07.09.08).

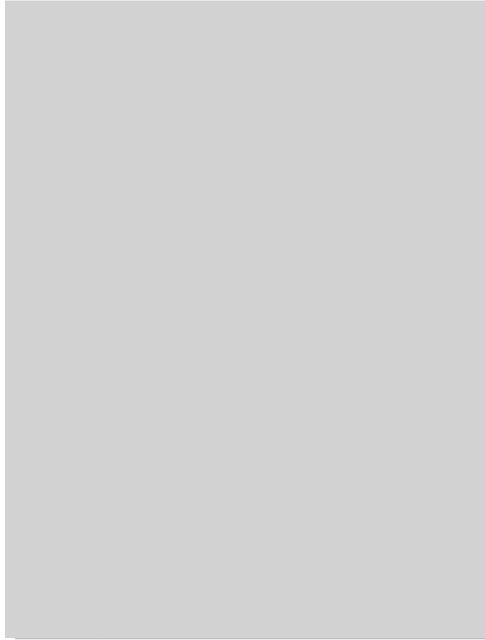
Julia Tymoszenko, Prime Minister of Ukraine:

Apart from her *hairdo*, the gorgeous Julia can show off *regular features* and a young look. Her *figure* ranks a bit lower - The Prime Minister of Ukraine is *a typical pearl*, though skillfully masking this imperfection with clothing (Wprost, 07.09.08).

Deconstructed via exhaustive descriptions of their physical features, the women are denoted by their eyes, lips, hair, legs and figures, all of which occur separately from the rest of their bodies. The salient corporeal details provide female politicians with a

singular identity, which points metonymically to a sexualized woman (Winship, 1981: 25). As an instance of physical identification, fragmentation is typically ‘overdetermined’ (van Leeuwen, 2008: 47). The connotative meanings carried by the value-laden descriptors such as ‘luscious lips’, ‘pretty legs’ and ‘feminine hairstyle’ inevitably appraise social actors based on their aesthetic and erotic appeal. It is through the system of evaluation which Martin and White (2005: 56) term ‘appreciation’ that the discrimination of female professionals occurs most frequently in my data. The treatment of women by means of categories customarily employed to measure and assess the properties of ‘things’ constitutes the principal semiotic resource for encoding sexism in discourse.

The technique of cut-up-ness gives rise to a double offence, as the fragmented women are not only shown as a thing or a commodity, but the thing is additionally reduced to its elemental parts, the consequence of which is the erasure of women’s humanity and subjectivity. A radical denunciation of this journalistic practice has been offered by Jhally, who states that depicting women as disintegrated and fetishized body bits prevents from seeing them as real people – individuals with their own mind, feelings and desires (<http://www.cabrillo.edu>). The following illustration of a decapitated female body, accompanied by the caption ‘pretty parliamentary legs attract immediate notice’, stands as powerful testimony to the devaluation of women’s intellect in favour of their external appearance.



**Figure 6.9** Even the respectable weekly *Polityka* (22-29.12.07), through its choice of cropping technique and sexually objectifying terminology, engages in the semiotic practice that sustains female political exclusion.

For Sara Mills (1995), the strategy of dismemberment is a ringing endorsement of androcentrism. She says:

Since the female protagonist is not represented as a unified conscious physical being, the scene cannot be focalized from her perspective - effectively, her experience is written out of the text. Fragmentation of the female is therefore associated with male focalization - the female represented as an object, a collection of objects, for the male gaze.

(Mills, 1995: 171-72)

Using the rubric of the hegemonic male gaze (Mulvey, 1975), the scholar illustrates the tendency of fragmented depictions to assume a heterosexual man's viewpoint. In this form of vision, the woman loses control of her look by being cast as the object of pleasure, rather than the possessor of the gaze (see also Kress and van Leeuwen, 1996 for the analysis of interactive meanings of images). The asymmetric relationship in

gender political representations, where the actively looking men (and women) project their socophilic fantasies onto prominent female legislators, is the topic of the next section.

### **6.7 Striptease Politics: Sexual Transgression as a Strategy of Reprobation**

The second type of sexual objectification recorded in my data manifests through presentations of provocatively transgressive and sexually exposing contents. An offshoot of a broader movement towards sexualization in the mainstream capitalist cultures (Walter, 2010) - a phenomenon which McNair (2002: 89) discusses under the term 'cultural striptease', this pernicious form of a sexual discourse illustrates the contemporary, global obsession with the practices of (self)exposure and public confession.

In the realm of political representation, the interest in the transgressive is shown by the sheer number of voyeuristic articles displaying politicians' bodies like 'carnavalesque spectacles' (McNair, 2002: 88), with intimate details of women's anatomy or wardrobe meticulously scrutinized by journalists. Nowhere is the sexual elite exposure more explicit than in the conservative *Wprost*, which states in categorical modality that 'as a proper heartbreaker [the Italian politician and businesswoman Michela Vittoria Brambilla] *always* loosens her hair and, when sitting down, *purposefully* crosses her legs, so that one can see the elastic stocking band' (Wprost, 07.09.08).

In another article entitled 'The Sexuality of the Female Spokesperson', the magazine *Newsweek Polska* (06.04.08) reveals a risqué profile of the Polish Minister of Education Ewa Sowińska, noting that the MP 'wears high heels, which she publicly removes to expose her naked feet'. Maintained in the spirits of postmodern, semi-confessional

reporting, the narrative contends that the politician's proclivity towards short skirts bears testimony to her 'eroticized specialization'. Allegedly, 'when she sits down, half of her tights get uncovered' (ibid.).

The media fascination with confessional performances involving the rich and famous, including increasingly the political elite, means that newsmakers are often actively on the lookout for compromising details that might expose their 'shameful' experiences (McNair, 2002: 93). In a publication presented under the frivolous title 'The Power of the Looks', *Wprost* (20.01.08) frames the world-famous female policymakers as 'candidates for European Miss Politics'. The magazine says: 'There has never been so many women in politics as in 2008 (...). Four MPs can boast the experience of undressing in front of the camera. The greater visibility of the beautiful sex in the political salons means these turn into catwalks and beauty pageants' (ibid.).

Aside from uncovering intimate details of politicians' appearance and attire, the article brims with transgressive particulars, delineating instances of women's indecencies and sexual misbehaviours. Lured by the suggestive headline, Polish readers learn, among other spicy 'facts', that Russian MP Svetlana Chorkina posed naked in the male press – in *Playboy* as a teenager, while at the age of 25 she 'graced the cover of *Maxim*' (ibid). They also learn about the achievements of her colleague, who came ninth in the ranking of the sexiest Russians, and whose 'main asset' is 'a beautiful, young body', which featured in the magazines such as *Maxim* or *Myedvyed* (ibid.).

Nothing is known about the professional successes of the Finnish Minister of Culture Tanya Karpela, apart from details of her sex affair with the incumbent Finance Minister. The seemingly seemingly distraught weekly also adds that the First Lady of France has

relationships with numerous prominent men under her belt, including Kevin Costner and Donald Trump. Bruni is additionally reported to 'parade naked' during her home interviews, showcasing the body whose price was set during a recent auction at ninety one thousand dollars (Wprost, 07.10.08).

This kind of taboo-breaking, transgressive framing which the Polish media conventionally employ in their handling of women as news actors is likely to have an adverse impact on the evaluation of female MPs and women in general. Though frequently marketed as progressive or merely sexual fun, this form of inquisitive writing does little to challenge or even rearticulate some of the oppressive ideas governing female gender image. Rather, the classificatory and evaluative meanings disseminated in the course of reiteration bring to light outdated and stereotypical views that Polish society still holds about women's sexual identity.

The portrayal of professional women as predatory and sexually obsessed illustrates that the culture still perceives female sexuality as having a deviant and excessive status. Thus, instead of exploiting the potential for subversion by transcending the moral imperative for goodness, the journalism of political sleaze reinstates the hegemony of patriarchy through consigning women to a vulnerable and 'faultable' position – a situation where they are made to feel embarrassed and in the wrong (Tannen, 1995: 260).

The subjection of women to an oppressive, sexualized gaze leads to a construal of a reading position which, I would argue, works as a strategy of reprobation. In line with this position, the transgressive behaviours of political women are viewed as immoral and highly inappropriate (see Caldas-Coulthard, 1996 for a meta-discussion of this

effect). The moral appraisal (Martin and White, 2005) is, nevertheless, carefully packaged in the form of inscribed and seemingly positive judgement, as well as hidden presuppositions. Such indirect realizations make it more difficult for the reader to detect its solid ideological basis. Thus, in the attitudinal profile of the French Minister Rama Yada, the magazine concludes that Yada ‘is one of the few beautiful women in politics whose past does not arouse controversy’ (Wprost, 07.09.08). It also explains about Carla Bruni in the commentary that ‘If necessary, Bruni behaves like a proper first lady’ (ibid.). Though apparently signaling positive attitudes towards the women portrayed, the statements encode values of negative ‘propriety’ - condemnatory appreciations based on ‘social sanction’ (Martin and White, 2005: 52) which the authors of the article attribute more generally to women.

Dismissed as bad and immoral, female policy advisors suffer from a loss of reputation, which makes them undeserving of public office. Similar to sexual insults, which constitute a prime social weapon for interpretative control and definition, the involuntary sexual exposure of the female political class in the Polish quality press serves a chauvinist aim of policing women’s sexual behaviour. Lakoff (1995) summarizes the power of sexualization as a political instrument for delegitimation in the following words:

A favourite way of discrediting women who attempt to have public influence is by sexualizing their activity and thereby rendering them both safe (seen as servicing men rather than threatening them) and unworthy of being taken seriously (because they are bad women).

(Lakoff, 1995: 35)

By reactivating age-old beliefs about the sexual nature of women, the representations mitigate the threat of women’s candidacy by keeping them safely in their place – locked

within the realm of sexualized and fetishized corporeality. It is interesting to observe at this juncture that the naturalized and discursively legitimate position of the male politician is, by contrast, defined by the fairly neutral status of ‘sexual invisibility’. While the male political body brings to mind a noble figure of a serious and respectable lawmaker, the female political body still connotes the contemptuous attributes of a sexual and sexually available woman (Edwards, 2006: 150-51).



**Figure 6.10** The naked feet of the Minister of Education, Ewa Sowińska, assumed the status of the male fetish in the article by Newsweek Polska (06.04.08).

Suggesting an improper style of dress is another recognized means which the Polish press often uses in order to maintain the marginal position of women within political formations. This topic is the basis of the next section.

## 6.8 'A Matter of Style': Discursive Construal of Political Delegitimation

The ascendant theme that runs throughout the reporting of Polish female MPs is sartorial presentation. Debates and meta-debates about women's aesthetic appearance, with details of their attire obsessively 'picked apart' by news writers, occupy more discursive space than any substantive accounts of their opinions or actions. Within the data corpus belonging to the Law and Justice politician Jolanta Szczypińska alone, I have counted six articles devoted to the topic of the woman's handbag, yet not a single publication shedding light on her political convictions.

The prevailing thread in all the fashion comments is the contention that female MPs almost never get their image right: being never the right age, wearing too much or too little make-up or, dressing up too loud or too boring (Ross, 2002b). The confines of the social binds which 'cramp the style' of high-achieving legislators feature prominently in the fragments from the political press. The women are appraised in the following way:

### **Too dull:**

Perhaps the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Anna Fotyga, would have a slightly better reputation if she had not been wearing a mourner's outfit (Wprost.17.09.06).

### **Too extravagant:**

She dresses up rather than gets dressed. Her outfits are not suitable for her age and the role she performs. The colours are much too bright and designs modelled on zebra or leopard (Wprost, 12-19.08.07).

**Too sexy:**

A style suitable for the sex shop, yet embarrassing in Parliament (...) Administration is not the right place for displaying extravagant clothes. Fashion does not go hand in hand with the image of the statesperson (Newsweek, 19.08.07).

**Not sexy enough:**

The dress stirs zero sex appeal. After the defeat in the January uprising, the women patriots dressed in black or grey. The severity of Gretkowska's outfit says: the men have died out. They are in Siberia or in exile (Wprost, 14.10.07).

Lieutenant Columbo's raincoat. Together with the bizarre suit makes the silhouette appear completely shapeless. As a result, the female symbol of PiS looks like a terribly clumsy man (Wprost, 14.10.07).

**Too abstract:**

The suit in the style of Sherlock Holmes but softened by a shirt made from an old curtain. The trousers fitting tightly around her belly, overemphasizing it. The whole thing is abstract and senseless (Wprost, 14.10.07).

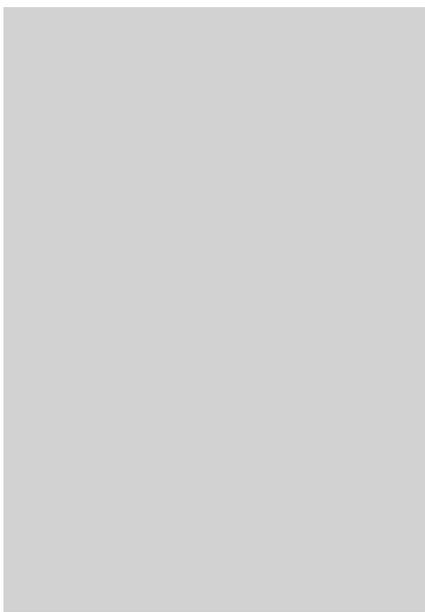
**Too infantile:**

The parliamentarian dressed in her usual frilly skirts could dance lambada in the Parliament. Infantile hair styles, flowery dresses and fake bags create an image of a small town fiancé (Newsweek.19.08.07).

Awfully bleached curls in combination with even worse flowery blouses, the village is dancing and singing. Lately she became known for a dreadful blue outfit in colourful butterflies (Wprost, 12-19.08.07).

According to Tannen (1995) the media's unprecedented interest in women's style of dress can be explained with reference to the linguistic theory of markedness, discussed

in more detail in the previous sections. She argues that, unlike men's stylistic choices, which are more constricted and able to convey less meaning, female appearance remains continuously marked, offering no alternative but to be noticed. Likewise, Ross (2002a: 90) notes that women's dress carries a far stronger statement about 'who they are and what they stand for', proving definite causal links between women's wardrobe and the public perception of their competence. As one Polish journalist put it: 'Perhaps the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Anna Fotyga, would have a slightly better reputation if she had not been wearing a mourner's outfit' (Wprost, 17.09.06).



**Michał Zaczyński**

**Figure 6.11** The 'grieving' Anna Fotyga in the article by Michał Zaczyński (Wprost, 17.09.06).

The argument behind the 'unwritten dress code' (Ross, 2002b: 194) appears to me to relate primarily to the question of political inclusion, reflecting yet another concern over the unsuitability of women for positions of government officials. I believe that the lack of public legitimation for female candidacy in Polish politics finds a covert expression in the media critique of women's aesthetic appearance. Presented in the innocent format

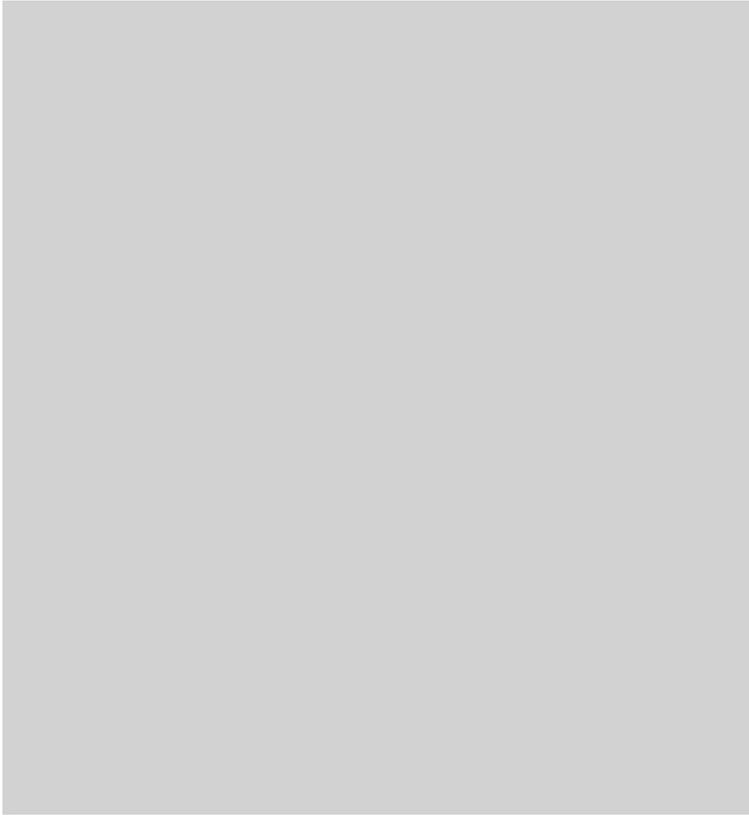
of 'soft' fashion columns, the articles, apart from fashion advice, convey a rather uniform view that being a woman is fundamentally in conflict with the prevailing conventions of Polish parliamentary culture. The censure over women's code of dress works as a disguised endorsement of the 'think politics-think male' paradigm against which female MPs are continuously measured (Ross, 2002b: 196).

Examining the mediatized rhetoric of Polish politics, Graff (2001) concludes that it is difficult to reject the assumption that a female MP appears on the professional scene as an intruder and that only a man exists in politics unconditionally. The scholar (ibid.) observes that a woman must always justify her political presence one way or another. Or the other way round, a politician must continuously excuse herself because of her femininity which, as the following sartorial descriptions illustrate, remains at odds with the masculinized image of the mainstream MP:

- It is hard to believe that the *tacky* woman in Barberella's outfit is the current *spruced up* member of the European Parliament. (Wprost, 07.09.08).
- Flowery dresses and jackets (...) It is all great, however the women seem to have forgotten that their style is more appropriate for *a romantic stroll* along a promenade and not for the Parliament of Poland (Newsweek.17.08.08).
- Beads and scarfs: the style of Joanna Szczypińska does not go hand in hand with the image of the politician, but with the image of *a small town fiancé* (Newsweek, 19.08.07).
- *Collars a la Glowacki* is a fetish of the female minister and the government spokesperson. *The vaudeville style* is more appropriate for *the female characters from the 'Dynasty' series* (Newsweek, 25.11.07).
- *The sweater in the Barbie tone* [Joanna Szczypińska, PiS], *the cramped outfit* of the minister Anna Fotyga, or finally *the shirtwaister* of Ewa Kopacz in which the minister looks like *a maid*.

In this attire the minister appeared at a conference in connection with a coach accident in Serbia. If the conference was taking place abroad, the minister could suffer the same fate as the former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, whom during the 1999 negotiation the Albanian delegation mistook for *a cleaner* (Newsweek, 17.08.08).

What these quotes indicate is that, within Polish press culture, the range of associations and signifiers of femininity is extremely narrow. The woman in Poland equals a 'trashy blonde', a 'small town fiancé', a 'heroine in a daytime drama', a 'maid' or a 'cleaner'. The identified social roles once again confirm the private subjectivity that the media habitually construct for women, framing them either as providers of romantic life or participants in domestic slavery. The language of these depictions casts a negative light, to put it mildly, on the image of future female policymakers. The disapproving valuations of women's style, which mark them for frivolousness and a lack of prestige, damage their professional credibility.



**Figure 6.12** ‘Fit for the sex industry, not politics’ - the sartorial appraisal of Joanna Senyszyn by Newsweek Polska (19.08.07).

The linguistic practice of ‘delegitimation’ (see van Leeuwen, 2008 in Chapter 1) conveyed through descriptive elaborations of women’s outward appearance is frequently endorsed by means of ‘expert authority’. Such expertise maintains a strong appearance of scientificity and is usually expressed overtly via professional attributes and credentials followed by ‘verbal process clauses’ (van Leeuwen, 2008: 106):

- Alicja Szubert-Olszewska, the fashion expert for the Catholic magazine ‘A Letter to a Woman’, *warns* that a minidress creates the appearance of an invisible woman, one without face and identity, which makes her no different from the industrial product (Wprost, 06.04.08).
- The researchers C. Joubert and S. Stern *argue* in the ‘Psychoanalysis of the Wardrobe’ that the tight-fitting clothes ‘help fulfill the need for body control, while the figure highlighted by means of spectacular red causes the woman to go into narcissistic raptures (Wprost, 06.04.08).

- ‘I might be mature and affluent to dress well, but deep down I am a sweet girl, who would like to play with My Little Pony’ - *writes* Hadley Freeman, the fashion expert for the British broadsheet ‘The Guardian,’ about the love of pink (Wprost, 17.08.08).
- Those who claim that a short haircut denies sex appeal of the female spokesperson are wrong. Already in the story by Ernest Hemingway ‘The sun also rises’ from 1926, the attribute of the frisky and domineering Beth was precisely short and slightly stiffened hair (Wprost, 06.04.08).

While the countless descriptions of female sartorial indiscretions aim, consciously or not, to lay the foundations of women’s political exclusion, the references to expert voices provide ready-made rationalizations for such attitudes. One of the things they demonstrate is the flexibility of the system of discrimination, where frequently contradictory or opposed arguments are equally adopted to serve the aims of political delegitimation. The semiotic subjugation of public sphere women has, as I have tried to demonstrate, a structural and institutional basis (see Mills, 2008). It is to the multiple factors which lie behind the establishment of the Polish political newsroom as a male-dominated corporation that I will now turn.

## **6.9 Masculinism of the Political Media and the Processes Behind it**

The instances of gendered ideologies documented here, many of which have a highly sexist content, suggest quite strongly that the institutional discourses of the Polish political press are visibly masculinist (Walsh, 2001). The professional culture defined as masculine is, as Baxter (2010) argues, in great measure a consequence of gendered discourses disseminated by that organization, which in turn bears an imprint of society and its values. The predominance of ideological forms which serve male interests and reinstate unequal divisions of power between men and women shows that men are

considered the chief subjects and the representative authority of the publications. They are both the 'cultural authors' and the 'cultural audience' (Kappeler, 1986: 57).

An important manifestation of masculinization within the Polish communication media is the general practice of designating male issues as elements of 'hard' news reporting, with a corresponding allocation of female concerns and topics to a peripheral, human interest segment. In all the three weeklies examined in this study, male stories have been placed most recurrently in the more serious, political and economy-oriented sections of the publication, such as 'Poland', 'Business, Money, Poland' and 'Politics' in *Wprost*, 'Country', 'Society', 'Market' in *Polityka*, or 'Business', 'Society' and 'Poland' in *Newsweek Polska*.

Significantly, the vast majority of articles devoted to women, almost all of which have been quoted in this chapter, derive from the more personalized lifestyle and entertainment sections, characterized by softer focus, shorter stories and colour photography. These are normally featured under the following headings: 'Life, Culture and Style', 'Updates and Attraction', 'Apolitical Questions' (*Wprost*), 'Flash', 'People and Events' (*Polityka*) or 'Lifestyle' and 'Caffee Newsweek' (*Newsweek Polska*). The gender-based differences in the selection and presentation of news topics, most notably the monopolization of facts by the masculine discourse, indicate that women and their professional views are not valued very highly. The human interest angle, emotional involvement and entertainment, with which women's stories are most frequently aligned, once again acquiesce to the devalued conception of femininity (van Zoonen, 1998).

The construal of hard news as predominantly male enterprise correlates, in my view, with the minority position of female journalists within Polish newsroom culture. The more profitable jobs, most notably that of editorship, are still in the hands of male professionals. It is rather noteworthy that the most important post of the editor-in-chief in all three weeklies, the oldest of which has been in continuous print since 1957, has been held exclusively by men. The conservative ideologies and values underlying Polish political press are thus an exact expression of the authority of men as members of the institutionalized power structure.

A further support to this argument comes from the analysis of the magazine's bylines. To that end, I investigated articles with an overt sexist bias, discussed in this chapter alone. The result revealed that sixty percent of the woman-centred stories have been written by male journalists. The similarities in the coverage can be explained with reference to the media fraternity, though as Walsh (2001: 76) accurately observes, 'one does not have to be male to be a member of the fraternity of media workers'. The fact that the remaining forty percent of discreditory texts are entirely of female authorship justifies the view that female journalists are just as apt at framing female politicians in abusive and condemnatory terms. In fact, the most derogatory opinion piece out of the whole data published by *Wprost* (07.19.08) under the title 'The Power of the Looks' ('Władza Urody'), has been written by two female commentators of an exceptionally young age. The article brims with an unprecedented amount of sleazy sex stories, revealing intimate and sexual details of the world famous parliamentarians.

Together with men, the women create a separate, gender-free class, which Kappeler (1986: 50) terms the 'third party'. Composed of members belonging to both sexes, the new class partakes in the oppression of women modelled on a misogynistic standpoint.

The paragon for this genderless group remains, nevertheless, inscribed by a male gaze acting as the objectifier. Kappeler says (1986):

The fact that women as individual subjects have inserted themselves into the cultural audience, have apprenticed to the male viewpoint which surveys women as objects (...) is itself one of the most fundamental sources of female alienation: women have integrated in themselves, have internalized, a permanent bastion of the other gender- the male surveyor.

(Kappeler, 1986: 57)

The relentless push towards objectification of women must also be seen in broader terms, as a product of commercial imperatives and degenerative effects of commodification within new relations of market provisions. According to Fairclough (1992, 1995a), commercial pressures and competition has led to a transformative shift in market power from producers to consumers. A struggle for readers and audiences forced the producers to ‘market their commodities in ways that maximize their fit with the life styles and aspired-to life styles of consumers’ (Fairclough, 1992: 110).

The gendered tendencies discussed here can thus be interpreted as an attempt to promote stereotypical characteristics of the target audience who is assumed to be male. The prevailing representations of female MPs as objects of the male gaze are, correspondingly, intended to please the ideal reader, in line with the familiar principle according to which ‘men gaze at women, while women watch themselves being gazed at’ (Berger, 1972: 47). The emphasis on the consumer culture driven by commercial motivations became, in consequence, broadly supportive of masculinist values, leading to a combined power of consumerism and patriarchy.

According to a report by the Polish Journalist Association (Machnicka, 2010), the prominence of Polish public debate has deteriorated radically within the last twenty years in both quality and popular media. A move towards tabloidization, primitive entertainment and sensational trivia, as part of a growing 'marketization' (Fairclough, 1995a) of the media industry, has significantly impaired the quality of the journalistic product. I would argue that the values enforced by the cultural marketplace, including the infiltration of the visual and verbal language of advertising and soft porn into the mainstream political discourse, have been particularly damaging for women, as they still score significantly higher than men on the human interest factor (Ross, 2002a). The price paid by the media's interest in them as novelties and celebrities, rather than professional authorities, is indeed very costly. As Walsh (2001) and Macdonald (1995) point out, double moral standards regarding women's sexual behaviour exist equally in private and public domains.

In Poland, rumours about the alleged affair between the members of the populist grouping ('Samoobrona') - Sandra Lewandowska and Janusz Maksymiuk - produced diametrically opposed commentaries in the press. The female MP has been unanimously condemned (through ascriptions of) culturally disparaged labeling, such as seductress, careerist and lady's companion (Polityka, 28.07.07; Newsweek, 05.08.07). Janusz Maksymiuk, on the other hand, was reported to admit in the same discourse (Polityka, 09.06.07) that since the media revelations about his affair have come to public attention, people have actually taken a liking to him. The divergent reactions towards the two political figures represent one of the many examples in which the media culture in Poland displays its masculinist credentials.

## 6.10 Conclusion

Gender is the all-important 'lens' (Bem, 1993) through which the Polish press observe female policymakers. Women and femininity are interpreted as different from the masculine political norm and the various forms through which this distinction emerges in political representations reinforce women's inequality. The analysis in this chapter shows very clearly that the linguistic processes underlying gendering are predominantly negative, resting on and endorsing the notions of female 'markedness', 'otherness' and 'deviance'. The reductive comparisons and lexical frames that relegate women to inactivity, sexual scrutiny or aesthetic function partake in the practice of 'symbolic annihilation' - a term coined by Tuchman (1978: 8) to describe the ways in which the media deny women's identities as people of qualities, treating them with condemnation, trivialization, or absence.

The renouncement of quality in the coverage of Polish female politicians correlates with the rise in tabloidization and personalization within political journalism, phenomena that have partly contributed to the reinstatement of the boundaries between the private and emotional realm of femininity and public, rational realm of masculinity (Pantii, 2005). However, framing professional women through the human interest stories is certain to have a negative impact on their perceptions as expert authorities. The encapsulation of serious legislators into domestic or sexual identity roles underscores their unsuitability for the positions of political management, thus contributing to women's marginalization and exclusion. The unreflexive use of gender-specific classifications and terminology that suppress the diversity of women's personalities and behaviours demonstrates beyond any doubt that the dominant values of Polish political newswriting are not only conservative but also profoundly undemocratic.

## 7. Concluding remarks

In this thesis I have explored discursive representations of female politicians produced by the Polish socio-political media in order to examine whether the press coverage of women in Poland preserves the values of patriarchal hegemony, thereby participating in women's 'symbolic annihilation' (Tuchman, 1972: 8) and exclusion from the public sphere.

My findings indicate that, despite being admitted to discursive practices and formations which, until recently, remained in official control of men, women's inclusion in the public domain has not been approached by the Polish press from an equality point of view. As Cameron (2006: 8) observes, exclusion does not always proceed from straightforward mechanisms of coercion or prohibition, but frequently takes an indirect expression through asymmetrical division of 'linguistic labour' or, as my research has shown, via differently gendered framing conventions, which place women at a disadvantage.

One obvious way in which Polish media discourse excludes female politicians is by granting them a status of invisibility. An important facet of women's marginalization in language is their omission from the socially valued forms of representation which constitute the essence of political reporting: in other words, the erasure of women as news subjects – people who are interviewed or who make the topics of the main stories. As we saw in Chapter 6, female politicians represent a fraction of hard news coverage produced by the quality press examined in this study. Their presence has been found to be markedly lower, compared to men, in the key sections of the magazines devoted to serious, socio-political concerns, such as government, politics, market, business or

economy. They remain, however, highly visible as objects of media entertainment or sources of personalized data.

The second aspect of women's exclusion from public language pertains to their suppression and marginalization as expert authorities in political opinion fora. The instances of discursive patterns which cast female MPs in active, vocational roles or in reference to components of their competence are indeed few and far between. The ways in which women's professional voices are silenced, compared to their male counterparts, presuppose ideas about status, authority and social power, which reflect gender bias.

Paradoxically, the type of coverage that female legislators most consistently attract within the Polish media context amounts to another form of silencing. Those women who have managed to secure a sizeable portion of linguistic space for themselves are often subject to limiting classificatory criteria which cast them into reductive and stereotypical roles, as Chapters 4 and 6 have demonstrated. The limited and narrow mediation of female MPs shows itself in the adoption of conventional news frames (Norris, 1997a, 1997b), which draw undue attention to women's gender, approach them as novelties, outsiders or deviants and generally make it difficult for the readers to perceive them as anything other than interlopers (Pantti, 2005). (Though one should add they are equally seen as objects of fascination).

An offshoot of this process is a tendency to frame female government officials as traditional gendered beings. The archetypal and clichéd images of parliamentarians examined in Chapter 6 and their associated linguistic practices reveal the 'benevolent' character of Polish sexism (Glick and Fiske, 1996; Jost and Kay, 2005) – the seemingly

positive and flattering orientation towards women, which is, nevertheless, prejudicial in content. As we saw in Chapters 2 and 4, the benevolent model of sexism reflects and actively promotes pro-social attitudes towards females, revering and idealizing their private subjectivities. It is shaped by the ideologies of chivalry, protective paternalism and competitive gender differentiation, which support complementary views of men and women's role-relationships and identities (Glick and Fiske, 1996).

Masculine and feminine distinctions derive in this binary perspective from polarized perceptions of women as expressive and communal, and men as agentic and transactive, the origin of which can be traced to the vocational positions occupied by men and women (Eagly and Steffen, 1984; Jost and Kay, 2005). Though in the Polish case, one must additionally give credit to the exceptional role of history in sustaining the 'medieval gender contract' (Walczewska, 2006) and reviving the maternal conception of womanhood – an ideology so strong it even underpins the emancipatory agenda of the Women's Party (as revealed by the analysis in Chapter 3).

The discursive roles of political women in contemporary media narratives do not diverge markedly from the symbolic depictions of the Polish gender order observed in the periods of historic struggles for national sovereignty. The highly divisive boundaries which the press recreates between the male, public sphere of politics and the female, personal sphere of privacy is reminiscent of the famous graffiti (quoted in Chapter 4) which featured on Gdansk's wall during the worker's strike in 1980 (Kenney, 1990). Only this time its slogan reads: 'Women! Do not interfere with us! We are 'governing' Poland'.

The roles played by women in current political affairs – as cosmetic instruments or ‘cogs in the machines’ (Wprost, 29.06.08) whose driving force are men – resemble the roles of ‘anonymous heroines’ assumed by women in the time of political unrest (Pasyukova, 2004: 5-6). The contribution of the female activists to the development of Poland’s democracy was correspondingly branded as secondary or merely supportive. As I demonstrated in Chapter 4, today’s female MPs are once again treated like pawns in the hands of ‘their’ male leaders: they sweeten, soften, dynamize, modernize or rejuvenate the compromised image of the masculine parties. They have hardly moved beyond the function of political fillers or decorative flowers (‘paprotka’) – the roles played by women in the Communist elective bodies and established as evidence of the government’s spurious commitment to gender equality. Only this time, as Środa (2009, 347) aptly illustrates, the female ministers make the flowers of the new generation: ‘sunbathed, energetic, beautiful, competent with lots of achievements’.

However, it is the objectifying imagery, as opposed to the pseudo-feminist engagements of the leading political formations, that is likely to set its stamp on the shape of Poland’s budding democracy. The relentless focus on women’s appearance, sartorial presentation or body language (examined at length in Chapter 6), which mark them for frivolousness and a lack of prestige, discredit their qualifications for statewide offices, causing damage to their professional credibility. The journalism of political sleaze, which subjects female MPs to sexual stereotyping and sexist scrutiny, in consequence consolidates men’s executive powers by consigning women to a ‘faultable’ (Tannen, 1996: 260) and delegitimated position, which makes them undeserving of electoral support. The media treatment of female political candidates therefore effectively

undermines Polish democratic foundations by distorting public understanding of women and their contributions to political processes.

Despite serving as the conservative gatekeeper of traditional social values, the media discourse in Poland occasionally provides space for alternative modes of describing women's political experience. Some representations in my corpus produce definitions which eliminate inequality between male and female office holders. In Chapter 5 I have specifically singled out the enabling properties of the military metapho, which, as I suggest, operates at the level of discourse to displace the boundaries of dichotomized depictions and express women's affiliation with professional, parliamentary norms and values.

Further research should still be conducted in order to show similar evidence of gender-neutral representations, ideally looking for direct comparisons with the dominant frames employed in the classifications of male leaders. A wider range of voices needs also to be accessed, especially those of politicians themselves, to search for traces of a 'metadiscursive gap' (Walsh, 2001: 2) between the way gender and politics are experienced by women in professional settings and the stereotypical lens through which their performances are externally measured by other sources. Research of this type would be extremely useful in producing insights into how female MPs respond to their media depictions. Finally, to give a full picture of the topic, further research should pay detailed attention to material processes of news production, though all together these make the subject of another investigation.

## **Appendices:**

### **Appendix 1:**

Original texts stemming from Polish print and electronic media (Chapters 2-5)

Chapter Two:

‘W naszym kraju kobiety są silne, przedsiębiorcze i wykształcone’ (<http://exclusiv.pl>).

‘Ja wiem, że kobiety w Polsce są zapracowane, ale nie można ciągle stać z boku’ (<http://echomiasta.pl>.1)

‘Czy Polki są bezbronne (...)? Nie są bezbronne, ale nie chcą brać na siebie odpowiedzialności z jaką wiąże się władza’ (<http://wiadomosci.wp.pl.2>).

‘Kobiety są zepchnięte w Polsce na margines, łatwiej im się kłócić niż jednoczyć’ (<http://wysokieobcasy.pl>).

‘My, kilkanaście milionów dorosłych Polek, żyjemy w europejskiej demokracji i jesteśmy pełnoprawnymi obywatelami.’ (Przekrój, 16.11.06).

‘Chcemy obudzić polskie kobiety, to ponoć najbardziej przedsiębiorcze Europejki’ (<http://newsweek.pl>.1).

‘Chcemy wejść do parlamentu. To jest element życia społecznego i kobiety mają w tym udział, płacąc podatki, będąc obywatelkami, tylko nie mają reprezentacji swoich interesów’ (<http://wiadomosci.wp.pl.1>).

‘Jesteśmy w Unii, ale się od niej oddaliśmy. Oddaliśmy się od naszej szansy na cywilizację’ (<http://gala.onet.pl>).

‘(...) Polska to dziewczyna ze wsi - ambitna, pracowita, pragnąca awansu’ (Gretkowska, 2008: 52).

‘Ktoś kiedyś powiedział: Polska jest kobietą, ale z małego miasteczka. I to do nich, jak sądzę, powinnyśmy docierać’ (<http://wyborcza.pl>.1)

‘Te kobiety chcą działać. Mają dość chodzenie z podaniami, użerania się o jałmużnę’ (<http://wyborcza.pl>.1)

‘Polki, podziwiając swojego mężczyznę (...) oszukują same siebie. Tak jak związek powinien być partnerski, bez obłudy i bez ściemniania, tak demokracja wymaga partnerstwa wszystkich, którzy w niej żyją’ (<http://gala.onet.pl>).

‘A rano idą do własnego małego biznesu (...) czytając gazety kobiece’ (<http://wysokieobcasy.pl>)

‘Zgłaszają się kobiety najbardziej świadome, bez względu na zawód i sytuację życiową. Inteligentne i wykształcone, specjalistki, i dyrektorki, i właścicielki firm, i bardzo wysoko postawione kobiety, kobiety mediów. Także bardzo dużo studentek, gospodynie domowe i kobiety bezrobotne (<http://wyborcza.pl.1>).

‘Średnia wieku zainteresowanych kobiet to 30-35 lat. To te najbardziej zabiegane kobiety, które próbują robić karierę i te, które właśnie stają się matkami oraz te już w życiu ‘ustawione’, i te, które wciąż nie potrafią się odnaleźć’ (<http://wiadomosci24.pl>).

‘Po mailach jakie już dostałam wnoszę, że będą bardzo różne panie: starsze, młodsze, studentki, nauczycielki, terapeutki, specjalistki. Nie zauważyłam, żeby jakaś grupa społeczna czy zawodowa była bardziej aktywna niż inne. Przekrój wiekowy: od studentek po emerytki’ (<http://trojmiasto.pl>).

‘Bo w Polsce kobieta jest brzuchem, obiektem polityki, bez własnej tożsamości politycznej’ (<http://wysokieobcasy.pl>).

‘Polska w porównaniu ze Szwecją tkwi jeszcze w neolicie, barbarzyńskim traktowaniu kobiet, myśleniu o nich jak o brzuchach do rodzenia dzieci i problemów’ (Przekrój, 16.11.06)

‘Nie mam złudzeń, następny rząd może będzie bardziej cywilizowany, ale nie okaże się łaskawszy dla kobiet. Niby dlaczego miałyby zająć się kimś, kto trzyma butelki z mlekiem, a nie z benzyną (...)’ (Przekrój, 16.11.06).

‘Porzucane przez mężczyzn jak psy w lesie, jesteśmy przywiązane nie do drzew, ale do naszych dzieci (...)’ (Gretkowska, 2008: 44).

‘Tu chodzi o kobietę, która nie ma z czego żyć, jest samotną matką, żyje z zasiłku. Żadna kobieta nie przejdzie obojętnie obok dziecka, które jest głodne’ (<http://wyborcza.pl.1>).

‘Skupiłyśmy się na macierzyństwie, bo w nim jak w soczewce skupia się poniżenie kobiet. W macierzyństwie niechcianym (...) i chcianym. Nowoczesne państwa pomagają matkom, a Polki, rodząc, stają się upośledzone. Gdyby była wystarczająca ilość żłobków i przedszkoli, kobiety, które tego chcą, mogłyby pracować’ (<http://wysokieobcasy.pl>).

‘Polska jest kobietą i musi mieć zagwarantowaną lepszą ochronę prawną kobiet, opiekę socjalną dla matek, komfortowe porody z darmowym znieczuleniem (...)’ (Przekrój, 16.11.06).

‘Czasem nie zauważamy spraw oczywistych (...) Kobiety stanowią połowę społeczeństwa, zarządzają gospodarstwem domowym, pracują zawodowo- a reprezentują je mężczyźni’ (<http://partiakobiet.integrum.lub.pl.1>).

‘Chcę nowoczesnego kraju, w którym kobieta ma zagwarantowane prawdziwe równouprawnienie (...), mimo, że rodzi i wychowuje dzieci’ (<http://newsweek.pl.1>).

‘Matka z dzieckiem nie może stać w kolejce u lekarza po kilka godzin. Alkoholika zawsze karetka zabierze z ulicy (Do matki z dwumiesięcznym dzieckiem takiego podejścia pogotowie nie ma’ (<http://lazar.webpages.pl>).

‘Kobiety, dziewczyny, matki - nie możecie tego znosić (...) Proszę Was o to dla naszych małych Polek, bo Polska jest kobietą’ (Przekrój, 16.11.06).

‘(...) Polska nie dzieli się na studia genderowe i na wiochę. Większość żyje pomiędzy. Dzięki temu, że jestem matką i katoliczką, przyciągam kobiety, które utożsamiają się z tym/ (<http://wysokieobcasy.pl>)

‘Mam w domu małą Polkę, jak wy chcę dla niej dobrego życia. Dając jej tak na imię marzyłam dla niej o wspaniałej Polsce’ (Przekrój, 16.11.06).

‘Wierzę w solidarność kobiet, które wspólnie walczą o przyszłość dzieci (...)’ (<http://wysokieobcasy.pl>).

‘Wszystkim nam zależy na dobru dziecka. Dlatego staramy się o rodzinne domy dziecka, edukację seksualną, fundusz alimentacyjny’ (Elle, 05.04.07).

‘(...) Partia Kobiet ma program prorodzinny, pro dziecięcy. Nasz egoizm-jako matek dzieci- tu pomaga’ (<http://lazar.webpages.pl>).

‘Polska w porównaniu ze Szwecją tkwi jeszcze w neolicie, barbarzyńskim traktowaniu kobiet, myśleniu o nich jak o brzuchach do rodzenia dzieci i problemów’ (Gretkowska, 2008: 59).

‘Nowoczesne państwa pomagają matkom, a Polki rodząc stają się upośledzone’ (<http://wyborcza.pl.1>)

‘Czasami nie zauważamy spraw oczywistych. Kobiety stanowią połowę społeczeństwa, a reprezentują je mężczyźni’ (<http://partiakobiet.integrum.lub.pl.1>).

‘Matka z dzieckiem nie może stać w kolejce u lekarza po kilka godzin. Alkoholika zawsze karetka zabierze z ulicy. Do matki z dwumiesięcznym dzieckiem takiego podejścia pogotowie nie ma’ (<http://lazar.webpages.pl>).

‘Byłe manipulanta w stylu peerelowskiego, prowincjonalnego kacyka lekką ręką wydaje z państwowych pieniędzy miliony złotych fundując sobie przystanek kolejowy. Dzieje się to w tym samym kraju, gdzie samotnym matkom bez żadnych dochodów rzuca się jednorazowo jałmużnę czterdziestu złotych na kredki dla dziecka (przypadek mojej siostry) (...) Wykorzystywanie tej naszej wrażliwości i sumienia państwowi sadyści na etatach nazywają z lubością “poświęcaniem się rodzinie” ’ (Przekrój, 16.11.06).

‘Życie rodzinne to nie gehenna, a już na pewno nie poświęcanie się męskiemu despotie wbrew temu co wyobraża sobie Liga Patriarchalnych Rodzin’ (Przekrój, 16.11.06).

‘Jednak podstawą mojego zaangażowania w tworzenie PK są osobiste doświadczenia życiowe i obserwacje, które mówią, że kobiety są w złej sytuacji; ze względu na niesprawiedliwe i poniżające traktowanie przez istniejące prawodawstwo oraz przez powszechne w naszym kraju normy społeczne’ (<http://partiak.integrum.lub.pl.1>).

‘Bo Polska to my, gwałcone w naszych prawach, spychane na ostatnie miejsce i nieludzko traktowane (...)’ (Przekrój, 16.11.06).

‘W Polsce poniża się kobiety z zadziwiającą łatwością, manipuluje się nimi, tworząc lub tak interpretując prawa, że działają na ich niekorzyść’ (<http://newsweek.pl.1>).

‘Jesteśmy najbardziej przedsiębiorcze w Europie, a zarazem najbardziej upokarzane’ (Przekrój, 16.11.06).

‘Polce zostawiono tożsamość płciową i zabrano wszystko inne, zwłaszcza godność ekonomiczną, prawną’ (<http://wysokieobcasy.pl>).

‘Politycy wpychają się do mojego domu, próbują mi wejść do łóżka, wciskając średniowieczne bzdury o tym, jak powinnam żyć, jak i kiedy się rozmnażać’ (<http://newsweek.pl.1>).

‘Obowiązująca ustawa antyaborcyjna jest według Kościoła kompromisowa. LPR-owscy Ojcowie Założyciele nowej Rzeczypospolitej postanowili ją zaostrzyć (...). Nieważne czy ich Matka Polka to przeżyje, czy ma ochotę być matką. Wszechwładza nad kobietami dla Wszechpolaków’ (Przekrój, 16.11.06).

‘Nikt się z nami nie liczy (...) Gwałconej Ani przyglądały się obojętnie lub bezradnie jej koleżanki. W Szwecji, w tej strasznie wyzwolonej obyczajowo Szwecji, dziewczynki rozszarpałyby chłopców znęcających się nad jedną z nich. Różnica mentalności i kultury. Tam kobieta jest kimś, u nas przedmiotem do manipulowania między nogami, między przepisami’ (Przekrój, 16.11.06).

‘Co je najbardziej boli? Brak głosu. To, że ich problemy nie mogą zaistnieć na publicznym forum. Są częścią tego społeczeństwa i po kilkunastu latach transformacji nie mają swojej reprezentacji’ (<http://wyborza.pl.1>).

‘Rządzą mężczyźni, a my chcemy siły wyrównać. Zostałyśmy pominięte przy podziale dóbr, przywilejów i szans. Nie chcemy seksmisji tylko normalności’ (<http://lazar.webpages.pl>)

‘(...) Chcemy wejść do parlamentu. To jest element życia społecznego i kobiety mają w tym udział, płacąc podatki, będąc obywatelkami, tylko nie mają swoich interesów’ (<http://wiadomosci.wp.pl.1>).

‘W Sejmie jest zaledwie garstka kobiet, więc ze względu na samą ilość, to mężczyźni decydują o naszym losie, o naszej przyszłości’ (wyznaje Małgorzata Siwiek z Krakowa) (<http://partiak.integrum.lub.pl.1>).

‘Osobiście mam dosyć posłów ‘dietetycznych’ czy też chamów mówiących o kobietach-politykach pogardliwie ‘kobietony’. Dosyć afer seksualnych, podwójnej moralności (<http://partiak.integrum.lub.pl.1>)

‘(...) Już na pierwszym wrocławskim spotkaniu kobiety mówiły dużo także o tym, że nie są zadowolone z naszego parlamentu. Obecnie władający Polską politycy nie reprezentują ich interesów (...)’ ([www.partia.integrum.lub.pl.2](http://www.partia.integrum.lub.pl.2)).

‘Posłanki działają w partiach ideologicznych i reprezentują program partii, co nie zawsze pokrywa się z interesami i potrzebami polskich kobiet’ (<http://partiak.integrum.lub.pl.3>)

‘(...) tak samo jest od kilkunastu lat, obojętnie czy rządzi lewica czy prawica. Gdy wojownicy w zbroi garnituru już się dorwą do władzy, kłócą się o podział postkomunistycznego i unijnego łupu’ (Przekrój, 16.11.06).

‘(...) Władza dawno straciła prestiż. Widzimy jej mechanizmy: prostytutki gangsterskimi metodami dopychają się o swoje’ (Przekrój, 16.11.06).

‘W Polsce nie ma normalnych, odważnych polityków walczących o wyznawane wartości, ludzi wykraczających poza format "ciułaczy posad". Oni walczą o władzę i dla niej poświęcą wszystko i przekroczą nawet normy rozsądku’ (wiadomosci.wp.pl.2).

‘Istniejące partie są patriarchalne, więc kobiety w ich szeregach, chcąc nie chcąc, działają na rzecz mężczyzn. Wolno oczywiście kobiecie być tubą mężczyzn, ale musi sobie zdawać, że w ten sposób w wielu sprawach występuje przeciwko kobietom, czyli sobie samej’ (<http://static.zwierciadlo.pl>)

‘Każda z istniejących partii jest partią mężczyzn. Kobiety, które w nich są, nazywam płcią polityczną, takimi politycznie męskimi kobietami (...)’ (<http://lazar.webpages.pl>).

‘Wypowiedzi działaczy Samoobrony pokazują, że to wciąż polityka plemienna. Wypowiedzi kobiet z Samoobrony to wypowiedzi kobiet plemiennych: Są dumne z jurności swych mężczyzn, inne kobiety traktują jak towar. To nie partia. To plemię z nad Wisły’ (<http://wyborcza.pl.1>).

‘Pomysł założenia partii był początkowo wyśmiewany nie tylko przez męskich przedstawicieli sceny politycznej, ale też przez panie przynależące do obozu partii rządzących’ (<http://cafebabel.pl>).

‘Siedziałam niedawno w studiu telewizyjnym obok jednej z tych pań i na moje słowa o PK i prawach kobiet w Polsce, ona uśmiechała się szyderczo. Posłanki reprezentujące PiS czy inną partię, nie dbają o nas’ (<http://exclusiv.pl>).

‘Kobiety Samoobrony czy PiS-u po seksaferze mają ‘ocieplać wizerunek partii’. Dosłownie użyto takiego sformułowania, jakby kobiety miały robić za kalesony. One realizując priorytety swoich partii, nie mają wiele kobietom do zaoferowania (...) To wątpliwy, wręcz dwuznaczny proces, bowiem te panie legitymizują i usprawiedliwiają swoim członkowstwem wątpliwą politykę wobec spraw kobiet’ (<http://exclusiv.pl>).

‘Puls Biznesu: Powiada pani, że Polska jest kobietą. Idąc tym tropem, kobietą też jest gospodarka. Manuela Gretkowska: Upadła kobietą (...) Ona ma tendencje do upadku jeśli się jej nie pilnuje. Przypomina kobietę feudalną. Z haremu’ (<http://lazar.webpages.pl>).

‘Czy Polska jest seksowna? Jeśli chociaż trochę sexy, to kartofle są afrodyzjakiem’ (Gretkowska, 2008: 18).

‘My spróbujmy wyjść z polskiego kobiecego piekła’ (Gretkowska, 2008: 43).

‘Jeśli nie wyrwą się z tego marazmu (...) to nadal będą żyć w getcie’ (<http://wysokieobcasy.pl>).

‘W Polsce jest kobieca pustynia’ (<http://wyborcza.pl>.1).

‘(...) Polska zniewolona, brudna i szara’ (<http://exclusiv.pl>).

‘U nas nie ma poczucia solidarności, więzi obywatelskiej, przeświadczenia, że jesteśmy społeczeństwem, w którym każdy jest wolny i ma zagwarantowane prawa’ (<http://exclusiv.pl>).

‘U nas nie ma rozwiniętego społeczeństwa obywatelskiego, nie ma zwyczajnych, konstruktywnych odruchów; wszystko jest reaktywne, polakierowane. Albo jest konformistycznym kiczem, albo bohaterstwem przed wojny (...) Dlatego te wszystkie niedawne afery, czy to moralno-obyczajowe, czy związane z molestowaniem nie mają prawdziwego społecznego oddźwięku’ (<http://exclusiv.pl>).

‘Sztuczny jest w Polsce mental, hipokryzja narzucana przez władzę (...) Europejska normalność nazywana jest kulturą zachodnioatlantycką Słowo pobrzmiwa paktem północnoatlantyckim, militarnie i groźnie’ (Gretkowska, 2008: 13).

‘Renesans – ostatnia epoka naszej normalności’ (Gretkowska, 2008: 18).

‘Polki są zagubione w czasie, między XIX a początkiem XX wieku’ (<http://gala.onet.pl>).

‘Polska (...) tkwi jeszcze w neolicie, barbarzyńskim traktowaniu kobiet (...)’ (Gretkowska, 2008: 59).

‘Wyjdźmy z XIX wieku, mamy prawo być równoprawnymi obywatelami’ (Gretkowska, 2008: 41).

‘Co kadencję, co ileś lat pchamy kamień pod górę cywilizacji i za chwilę znajdujemy się znowu na dnie, w cofniętej o 50 lat mentalności’ (Gretkowska, 2008: 38).

‘My mamy coś zmienić, bo jesteśmy tego warte, nasze Życie ma wartość. Dlaczego kolorowe i estetyczne mają być tylko reklamy kremów? W listach, które przychodzą jest tyle siły, entuzjazmu, trzeba to pokazać. Takie zdjęcie-sztandar potrzebuje znanych twarzy, kojarzących się z poglądami, z życiem prywatnym. Postacie-znaki, łączące intelektualistki i oglądaczki seriali. Yuppiskę i dziewczynę ze wsi’ (Gretkowska, 2008: 52).

‘Kobiety kochają Gwiazdę, zwykłą dziewczynę jak one, ambitną i mądrą’ (Gretkowska, 2008: 52).

‘Goło i Niewesoło’ (Wprost, 30.09.07)

‘Erotyka Wyborcza Partii Kobiet’ (<http://parton.pl.2>)

‘Partia Kobiet Startuje do Sejmu Nago’ (<http://dziennik3rp>)

‘Wszystko dla przyszłości – nie zajmujemy się tym, co było, nie szukamy haków, teczek, układów. To, czego pragniemy, to bezpieczna i przewidywalna przyszłość.

Jesteśmy odważne, silne i niezależne. Nagie i prawdziwe.

Nie wstydzimy Się naszej kobiecości. Ubrane czy nagie nie jesteśmy tylko obiektem seksualnym. Mamy twarze, oczy, myśli i przekonania, których potrafimy bronić’ (<http://polskajestkobieta.org>).

‘Po najbliższych wyborach to my-światłe i przedsiębiorcze- zastąpimy zaściankowych, nierozgarniętych, nieudolnych polityków’ (Przekrój, 16.11.06).

‘Te zneurotyzowane faceciki w szarych garniturach. Pokładam nadzieję w tych paniach’

‘Kobiety są realistkami, są bystre, pragmatyczne, lepiej wykształcone i lepiej przystosowane do ruchliwego, nowoczesnego świata szybkich zmian. Nie tak łatwo otumanic je ideologią’ (<http://newsweek.pl.1>).

‘Polityka w Polsce straszliwie nam schamiała, jest przesycona nienawiścią, agresją i złością. Sądzę, że większa liczba kobiet niebędących przedstawicielkami ‘męskich partii wniesie do niej tak potrzebne elementy troski i opiekuńczości’ (<http://zyciewarszawy.pl>).

‘Do tej pory te szarogarnitkowe, zneurotyzowane faceciki tego nie zrobiły, więc pozostaje mieć nadzieję, że te kobiety (...) mogą zrobić trochę dobrego’ (<http://polskajestkobieta.org/?p=50>).

### Chapter Three:

‘Lech i Jarosław Kaczyńscy w swoim otoczeniu postawili na płec piękną w stopniu, w jakim nie zrobił tego nikt’. W rządzie jest rekordowa liczba pięciu pań (...) Za czasów (...) Kaczyńskich kobiety awansują i przejmują realną władzę’ (Wprost, 12-19.08.07).

‘Ten rząd jest (...) rekordowy, gdy chodzi o ilość kobiet w rządzie’ (<http://pardon.pl>.1)

‘IV RP dała popularność dziesiątkom pań, o których istnieniu wiedziała dotychczas jedynie najbliższa rodzina’ (Wprost, 02.09.07).

‘Gabinet Donalda Tuska to najbardziej sfeminizowany rząd w historii Polski (...) W żadnym polskim rządzie kobiety nie stanowiły tak dużego odsetka wszystkich ministrów jak w gabinecie Tuska’ (Wprost, 26.12.07).

‘Sławomir Nowak z PO w rozmowie z portalem Gazeta.pl zaprzeczył pogłoskom, jakoby rzecznikiem rządu miała zostać Hanna Smoktunowicz (...) Sam Tusk przyznał jedynie, że będzie to kobieta’ (<http://wiadomosci.gazeta.pl>.1).

‘Ziemia jest kobieta’ (Polityka, 09.06.07).

‘Batuta rodzaju żeńskiego’ (Polityka, 08.11.08).

‘Rewolucja jest kobietą (...) Czy literatura ma płec? Czy kobiety piszą inaczej?’ (Polityka, 13.12.08).

‘Ekonomika (...) XXI wiek będzie stuleciem kobiet. Świetnie pracują i zarządzają, coraz więcej zarabiają (...) Tylko czekać, aż w podręcznikach ekonomii pojawi się termin ‘kobietonomika’’. (Wprost, 21.10.07).

‘Kolejna kobieta w rządzie Tuska’ (<http://news.money.pl>).

‘“Dziennik” dowiedział się, że ministrem rozwoju regionalnego pokieruje Elżbieta Hibner. Jak pisze gazeta, to kolejna obok Katarzyny Hall, kobieta, która pojawia się na dziennikarskiej giełdzie (...) Dziennik pisze, że wbrew wcześniejszym zapowiedziom teki ministra edukacji nie otrzyma Jarosław Gowin (...)’ (<http://news.money.pl>).

‘Ryszarda Legutkę profesora, który zastąpi magistra na stanowisku szefa resortu edukacji, Czarnecki w swoich rozważaniach pomija, by zatrzymać się przy kobiecie. Kolej kobiecie w rządzie kaczyńskiego’ (<http://pardon.pl>.1).

‘Damskie Uderzenie’ (Wprost, 01.04.07).

‘Broń Kobieca’ (Wprost, 10.06.07).

‘Matriarchat IV RP’ (Wprost, 12-19.07).

‘Seksmisja Rządowa’ (Wprost, 29.06.08).

‘IV RP jest Kobietą’ (Wprost, 02.09.07).

‘Prawdziwa Partia Kobiet’ (Wprost, 30.09.07).

‘Babski Rząd Kaczyńskiego’ (<http://pardon.pl>).

‘Kolejna Kobieta w Rządzie Tuska’ (<http://news.money.pl>).

‘Moim Rzecznikiem Będzie Kobieta’ (<http://wiadomosci.gazeta.pl.2>)

‘Nadchodzi Era Rządów Kobiet w Polsce’ (<http://wiadomosci24.pl2>)

‘Damski Napęd Tuska’ (Wprost, 26.12.07).

‘Donald Tusk Chciałby Być Kobieta’ (<http://wiadomosci.dziennik.pl.1>)

‘Czy Donald Tusk Upiększy i Useksowni Swój Rząd’ (<http://wprost.pl>)

‘Pod koniec ubiegłego stulecia mówiło się, że mężczyźni pochodzą z Marsa, a kobiety z Wenus. Dziś wiadomo już jednak, iż jest dokładnie odwrotnie. Przedstawicielki płci pięknej są silne, wytrwałe i ekspansywne, a ich koledzy słabi, niecierpliwi i łaszowaci. Polska polityka dostarcza wielu przykładów tego zjawiska. Dość wspomnieć o Janie Marii Rokicie, który niedawno przymierzał się do fotela premiera, a obecnie przypomina bohatera filmu ‘Poszukiwany, poszukiwana’. Codziennie rano, wioząc małżonkę na lotnisko, musi wysłuchiwać poleceń w stylu: ‘Niech Marysia idzie do sklepu i kupi pięć kilo cukru. A po powrocie do domu obowiązkowo włącza TVN 24, żeby wieczorem poinformować żonę, jak wypadła’ (Wprost, 09.12.07).

‘Dopóki obowiązywała aksjologia oparta na prawie naturalnym, ludzie nie mieli czasu filozofować, bo realizowali to, co doradzał im głos Boga bądź zew natury. Natomiast dziś dzielą włos na czworo, zastanawiając się, czy potrafią żyć odpowiedzialnie oraz czy przypadkiem nie są z natury singlami, gejami, DINK-ami (Double Income, No Kids) czy innymi tranwestytami’ (Wprost, 09.12.07).

‘Czy postawienie na kobiety było, jak w wypadku francuskiego kolegi, tylko marketingowym zabiegiem, z którego premier po cichu się wycofa? Czy przeciwnie-ministrowie w spódnicach ocieplą wizerunek rządu, uniemożliwiając Tuskowi podejmowanie trudnych decyzji? I dodatkowo wytrąca część amunicji opozycji? Tym bardziej, że braciom Kaczyńskim znacznie trudniej przychodzi atakowanie kobiet niż mężczyzn’ (Wprost, 26.12.07).

‘W nowej strategii PiS każda pani ma do odegrania swoją rolę. Minister rozwoju regionalnego Grażyna Gęsicka oraz Gilowska mają udowodnić, że kobeity mogą

trzymać państwowe finanse. Kluzik-Roskowska- pokazać, że prawica nie jest antyfeministyczna, a Streżyńska- pozyskać pokolenie internautów' (Wprost, 01.04.07).

'Nowa marketingowa strategię PiS i LPR ma pokazać, że w tych partiach kobiety przynajmniej współrządzą' (Wprost, 01.04.07).

'Cel? Złagodzenie wizerunku partii i pozyskanie damskiego elektoratu (...)' (Wprost, 01.04.07).

'Promowaniu kobiet w Polskiej polityce towarzyszyło kopiowanie sztuczek marketingowych z Zachodu' (Wprost, 29.06.08).

'Kobiety w rządzie to nie przypadek, lecz przemyślany chwyt marketingowy' (Wprost, 26.12.07).

'Maliszewski sugeruje, że rząd Tuska został skompletowany według zasad z amerykańskich podręczników do marketingu' (<http://wprost.pl>).

'Jej działanie wpisuje się w jednak w strategię LPR polegającą na ociepleniu wizerunku szefa partii (...)' (Wprost, 01.04.07).

'Jesteśmy postrzegani jako partia antykobieca. Dlatego namówiliśmy premiera, by zrealizował nasz pomysł- mówi w rozmowie z Wprost Adam Bielan' (Wprost, 01.04.07).

'Złagodzenie oblicza Giertycha to teraz jeden z głównych celów LPR (Wprost, 01.04.07).

'Strategia premiera Hiszpanii jest efektem najnowszych badań psychologicznych (...)' (Wprost, 29.06.08.).

'Dzisiejsze projekty polityczne nie tylko muszą być dobre, ale powinny mieć odpowiednią twarz (...)' (Wprost, 29.06.08).

'Lech i Jarosław Kaczyńscy w swoim otoczeniu postawili na płec piękną w stopniu, w jakim nie zrobił tego nikt (...)' Czasami promują kobiety wręcz sztucznie (...)' (Wprost, 12-19.08.07)

'Wierzymy w kobiety i stawiamy na kobiety – obwieścił eurodeputowany Michał Kamiński (...)' (Wprost, 01.04.07).

'Problemem jest to, że Zalewski nieświadomie wycelował w bardzo czuły punkt braci Kaczyńskich - w kobiety' (Wprost, 12-19.08.07).

'Czy postawienie na kobiety było (...) tylko marketingowych zabiegiem, z którego za jakiś czas premier po cichu się wycofa? (...) Tymczasem Jarosław Kaczyński ustawił poprzeczkę wysoko: w jego gabinecie aż pięć ważnych stanowisk ministerialnych

piastowały kobiety. Tusk nie mógł być gorszy, dlatego przez kilkanaście dni poszukiwał kobiet, które mogłyby zasiąść w rządowych ławach' (Wprost, 26.12.07).

'Kiedy w 1995r. Alain Juppe wziął do swego rządu 12 kobiet, stało się to sensacją na skalę europejską (...) Już kilka miesięcy później szef rządu musiał większość juppetek z rządu usunąć. Tłumaczył to tym, że wziętym z politycznej drugiej ligi paniom brakowało zaplecza politycznego. Teraz śladem premiera Francji poszedł Donald Tusk' (Wprost, 26.12.07).

'(...) swoista, dalsza 'feminizacja' rządu Kaczyńskiego przez mianowanie ministrem pracy Joanny Kluzik-Rostkowskiej to nie tylko merytoryczne wzmocnienie rządu, ale też 'ocieplenie' jego wizerunku'

'W 2008 r. wygrał on kolejne wybory (...) i od odświeżył wizerunek rządu nominacjami pań, w tym na ważne stanowisko ministra obrony' (Wprost, 29.06.08).

'Jak poprawić wizerunek rządu? Powołać na ministrów kobiety, najlepiej ładne i seksowne' (Wprost, 29.06.08)'.  
'Z jednej strony ostra krytyka rządu ze strony opozycji staje się dzięki nim trudniejsza. Z drugiej strony – wyborcy kobietom więcej wybacząją' (Wprost, 26.12.07).

'Politycy PiS nie kryją, że dzięki Kluzik-Rostkowskiej chcą dotrzeć do młodych kobiet, dla których ważne jest i życie rodzinne, i zawodowe' (Wprost, 01.04.07).

'Choć w rządzie Tuska pracuje już pięć kobiet (...), to nie zostały one dobrane według klucza sprawdzonego we Włoszech czy we Francji' (<http://wprost.pl>).

'(...) Aniołki Tuska otrzymały najtrudniejsze zadania' (Wprost, 29.06.08).

'I Szczypińska i Kluzik-Rostkowska dostały zadanie nawiązania kontaktu z organizacjami kobiecymi' (Wprost, 01.04.07).

'Właśnie w tym celu 'ściągnięto' do obozu LPR Hannę Wujkowską (...)' (Wprost, 01.04.07).

'Tam (...) taki ministerialne powierzono atrakcyjnym kobietom, wyraźnie podkreślającym swoje walory' (<http://wprost.pl>).

'(...) Być może za cztery lata udział kobiet w polskiej polityce będzie już taką oczywistością, że nikt nie będzie przeliczał jaki odsetek ministrów w nowym rządzie stanowią kobiety' (Wprost, 26.12.07).

'Autorami pomysłu ukobiecenia PiS są euro deputowani Michał Kamiński i Adam Bielan' (Wprost, 01.04.07).

'Choć usytuowanie płci pięknej w centrum polityki wydaje się sympatyczne, to w gruncie rzeczy prowadzi do licznych wynaturzeń' (Wprost, 02.09.07).

‘(...) Włączenie atrakcyjnych pań w zarządzanie państwem poprawiło notowania kilku zagranicznych rządów’ (<http://wprost.pl>).

‘Popularność pięknych pan w polityce świadczy o tym, że wyborcy potrzebują ich na takiej zasadzie jak celebrities’ (20.06.08).

‘Promowaniu kobiet w polskiej polityce towarzyszyło kopiowanie sztuczek marketingowych z Zachodu. Przypominało to jednak podróbki markowych rzeczy sprzedawane na warszawskim Stadionie Dziesięciolecia’ (Wprost, 29.06.08).

‘Joanna Mucha In nowe aniołki Tuska także nie będą oryginalnym produktem, ale może tym razem nie będą też jego karykaturą’ (Wprost, 29.06.08).

‘Jako wizytówki partii, obok czterech kluczowych polityków, pojawiły się tam także trzy kobiety (...)’ (Wprost, 01.04.07).

‘Dzisiaj projekty polityczne nie tylko muszą być dobre, ale powinny mieć odpowiednią twarz- najlepiej piękną’ (Wprost, 29.06.08).

‘Nie po raz pierwszy występuje jako kobieca twarz partii rządzącej’ (Wprost, 01.04.07).

‘Czy wchodzące w jego skład kobiety okażą się ‘paprotkami z łapanki’ (...), czy ‘silną ekipą’ (...)?’ (Wprost, 26.12.07).

‘(...) Ewa Kopacz (...) nie zamierza w rządzie pełnić funkcji paprotki’ (Wprost, 26.12.07).

‘Niemal pewną kandydatką do rządu po rekonstrukcji jest wyróżniająca się urodą posłanka PO Joanna Mucha’ (Wprost, 29.06.08).

‘Złagodzenie oblicza Giertycha to teraz jeden z głównych LPR. Wicepremier ma się pokazywać w otoczeniu kobiet młodych, atrakcyjnych i wykształconych’ (Wprost, 01.04.07).

‘Wchodzące do rządów europejskich panie nie są mężczyznami w spódnicach, wręcz przeciwnie- wyraźnie podkreślają kobiece walory, sięgając po swój sekapil’ (Wprost, 29.06.08).

‘(...) Skromna, ugodowa, ale obdarzona seksapilem (...)’ (Wprost, 29.06.08).

‘Głośnych wydarzeń z udziałem płci pięknej było tyle, że pewne damskie motywy zaczęły się powtarzać’ (Wprost, 02.09.07).

‘Co innego, gdy ministrem zostaje piękna kobieta, która wręcz obezwładnia krytyków, a jej pomysły, choćby nie były przełomowe, są lepiej przyjmowane’ (Wprost, 29.06.08).

‘Bracia Kaczyńscy, a przede wszystkim Lech, uwielbiają kobiety, które im w jakiś sposób matkują, dyskretnie roztaczając nad nimi opiekę. No i, jak wszyscy mężczyźni,

lubią się czuć podziwiani. Trudno sobie w takiej roli wyobrazić Zytę Gilowską, więc ona nigdy nie będzie należała do superuprzywilejowanych. Ale Stąd wynikała m.in. wysoka pozycja Elżbiety Jakubiak, która jako szefowa gabinetu dbała o to, by prezydent się nie przepracowywał. Potrafiła dać wyraźnie do zrozumienia gościom, że niepotrzebnie zwracają mu głowę (...). No, a Jola Szczypińska ze swoim wiernym, oddanym spojrzeniem, zachwycająca się premierem na każdym kroku. Jeśli chodzi o względy Jarosława Kaczyńskiego, w starciu z nią nie ma szans żaden z naszych posłów (...)' (Wprost, 12-19.08.07).

‘Nie widzę nic dziwnego w tym, że to mężczyźni kierują najważniejszymi resortami, bo to oni sprawdzają się lepiej na takich stanowiskach. Już dawno zostało stwierdzone, że mózg kobiety i mężczyzny jest inaczej skonstruowany. Mężczyźni są lepsi w widzeniu przestrzennym, a kobiety są bardziej dokładne, pochylają się nad szczegółem. Rozmawiając z koleżankami widzę, że bardziej interesują je sprawy społeczne niż generalne zarządzanie sektorami strategicznymi państwa. Ja myślę podobnie – nie chciałabym kierować CBA, bo nigdy nie podniecały mnie służby i pistoleciki. Wolę analityczne działanie we współpracy z ludźmi, niż rządzenie z wysokości stołka w oderwaniu od społeczeństwa (<http://wiadomosci.wp.pl.3>).

Chapter 4:

‘Zyta Gilowska zapowiada walke z podrabianymi towarami’ (<http://wiadomosci.gazeta.pl.2>)

‘To pierwsza tak poważna porażka szefowej UKE - bezkompromisowa walka o demonopolizację polskiego rynku przysporzyła jej sporej popularności’ (Polityka, 02.06.07: 17)

‘Anna Streżyńska, zajmując pozornie drugorzędne stanowisko dokonała rzeczy wielkiej. Wypowiedziała wojnę monopolistom i z sukcesem ją prowadzi’ (Wprost, 28.08.07).

‘Anna Streżyńska i Grażyna Piotrkowska-Oliwa grają w przeciwnych drużynach, ale cel gry jest ten sam: pozwolić Polakom się dogadać. W tym roku panie toczą walkę o stawki opłat. Niezależnie jednak od tego, co dzieli obie panie, łączy je sukces. Są tuż przed trzydziestką, a trzęsą polską komunikacją (...). Streżyńska była wielokrotnie nagradzana za zwalczanie monopolu, a dzięki tej walce wiele usług otrzymujemy taniej lub za darmo (<http://www.przekroj.pl>).

‘Patrząc na kolejne życia i karierę polityczną Julii Pitery, niełatwo zrozumieć, dlaczego dziś nie walczy z układem w szeregach PiS, tylko walczy z PiS w szeregach PO’ (Newsweek Polska, 16.12.07).

‘Pani minister do walki z korupcją wydaje się być jedyną osobą w nowym rządzie zdolną odebrać PiS jego ostatni szaniec- Centralne Biuro Antykorupcyjne (Newsweek Polska, 16.12.07).

‘Gilowska kontratakuje. Aby odzyskać realną władzę nad sektorem finansowym,

wicepremier Zyta Gilowska zawarła sojusz ze Sławomirem Skrzypkim. (Polityka, 11-18.08.07)

‘To od niej [operacji] będzie zależało czy powrót Gilowskiej na pierwszą linię politycznego frontu będzie możliwy (<http://wiadomosci.dziennik.pl.2>).

‘Zyta Gilowska wróciła z politycznego urlopu i wczoraj na spotkaniu prezydenta z ekonomistami ostro skrytykowała rząd (...) od razu przystąpiła do atakowania rządu za politykę fiskalną.- Stan finansów publicznych daleko odbiega od rządowych deklaracji-grzmiała’ (<http://wiadomosci.dziennik.pl.2>).

‘Starcie Koalicyjnych dam (...) Po starciu na linii Ludwik Dorn-Zbigniew Ziobro w rządzie nabrzmiewa kolejny poważny konflikt. Trwa wojna podjazdowa o miano pierwszej damy gabinetu Jarosława Kaczyńskiego. Naprzeciw siebie stoją Zyta Gilowska i Grażyna Gęsicka’ (Newsweek, 25.02.07: 34).

‘Mowa o Zycie Gilowskiej, która przed rokiem była najbardziej dynamicznym politykiem PO. Wchodziła w ostre polemiki z politykami SLD, Samoobrony i LPR, kłóciła się z ministrami rządu Leszka Millera i Marka Belki. Gdy została obrażona przed wicepremiera Jerzego Hausnera, którego wcześniej napastliwie atakowała- w jej obronie wystąpił rycerski Donald Tusk, żądając od Hausnera publicznych przeprosin (...) Konflikt z Gilowską a był błędem Tuska, który być może zawalczył na porażce PO w wyborach parlamentarnych’ (<http://wyborcza.pl.2>).

Pierwszy publiczny atak Gilowskiej na rząd PO nastąpił w czwartek podczas spotkania prezydenta Lecha Kaczyńskiego z ekonomistami. Na drugi nie trzeba było długo czekać. Gilowska pojawiła się na sobotniej konwencji PiS we Wrocławiu. Znana z ciętego języka i tym razem nie rozczarowała działaczy PiS. Ostro skrytykowała Platformę, a rządowi Tuska pokazała żółtą kartkę (<http://wiadomosci.dziennik.pl.2>).

‘Zyta Gilowska wraca do polityki. I zaczyna mocnym wejściem: ostro recenzuje dokonanie rządu Donalda Tuska W sobotę była wicepremier pojawiła się u boku Jarosława Kaczyńskiego. Po co? By dać rządowi żółtą kartkę. Politycy zapowiadają, że ataków ze strony Gilowskiej będzie w tej kampanii więcej (<http://wiadomosci.dziennik.pl.2>, 10.05.09).

‘Po starciu na linii Ludwik Dorn-Zbigniew Ziobro w rządzie nabrzmiewa kolejny poważny konflikt. Trwa wojna podjazdowa o miano pierwszej damy gabinetu Jarosława Kaczyńskiego. Naprzeciw siebie stoją Zyta Gilowska i Grażyna Gęsicka. (Newsweek, 25.02.07).

‘Julia Pitera pozuje na głównego twardziela nowego rządu. Właśnie szykuje amunicję do ostatecznej rozprawy z szefem CBA’ (Newsweek Polska, 16.12.07).

‘Awantury towarzyszyły jej również wewnątrz partii. Rzuciła rękawicę samemu Januszowi Korwin-Mikkemu (...) Nie chodzi o demokrację, która nie jest u nas zbyt popularna, ale o kontrolę władz- tłumaczyła wówczas. Pani Julia podjęła próbę przejęcia władzy w partii, kierując do statutowego organu, tzw. Straży, wniosek o

usunięcie z partii Korwin-Mikkego (...) W kolejnej kadencji (...) Pitera porzuła się w Radzie Warszawy jeszcze pewniej i było o niej jeszcze głośniejsze. Na cel wzięła prezydenta stolicy Pawła Piskorskiego z Unii Wolności i otaczające go środowisko' (Newsweek Polska, 16.12.07).

'Jako radna niezależna Pitera ostro atakowała tak PO, jak i PiS. Piętnowała Piskorskiego, występowała przeciwko prezydentowi stolicy Lechowi Kaczyńskiemu. Ale pod koniec 2004r., na rok przed wyborami do Sejmu, zaczęła zdawać sobie sprawę, że bez poparcia dużej partii nie ma szans na wyjście z gorsetu awanturnicy' (Newsweek Polska, 16.12.07).

'Zawsze było tak w polityce, że jeśli się na kogoś zawzięła, kończył on nieszczęśliwie. A sama dzięki temu systematycznie szła do góry. - Julia ma charakter samotnego jeźdźcy. Nie jest pozytywną organizatorem' (Newsweek Polska, 16.12.07: 20).

'Jednego dnia w dwóch różnych telewizjach widzieliśmy Julie Piterę. Otóż jak żyjemy, nie widzieliśmy jeszcze w telewizorze takich uroczych napadów furii. Jakieś dziewięć gabrielów w dwunastostopniowej skali, czym zbliżyła się do najlepszych wyników Stefana Niesiołowskiego. Nigdy nie sądziliśmy, że Piotr Gadzinowski i Jacek Kurski będą przy kimś wyglądać jak niewinne baranki, ugrzecznione niemowy po prostu. Tylko dlatego, że Kurski był w Gdańsku, ma jeszcze nieprzegryzoną tchawicę. Mamy uprzejmą prośbę, co by pani tak nie krzyczała w telewizorze, bo naszemu kotu sierść się naelektryzowała i można od niego teraz ładować baterie (Wprost, 22.07.07).

'Na castingu do programu Szymona Majewskiego pokazałam Zytę Gilowską (...) Żeby wcielić się w Gilowską, którą uwielbiam i szanuję, musiałam tak to zrobić, żeby jej nie urazić. Znaleźć 'coś'. W jej przypadku jest to stanowczość połączona z poczuciem humoru i wybitną inteligencją' (<http://kobieta.gazeta.pl>).

'Jeśli mnie chcecie na tej liście, to jestem'. Siedzącemu za mną małżeństwu trudno wręcz było opanować emocje. 'Zyta Zyta- Pani Zyta- zreflektowała się w końcu moja sąsiadka. Po czym dodała pod nosem. Eee, chyba się nie obrazi. To taka normalna kobieta' (<http://info.wiadomosci.gazeta.pl>).

## Chapter 5:

'Obcasy Narodu' (Newsweek Polska, 30.03.08)

'Szała Władzy' (Newsweek Polska, 19.08.07)

'Sejmowe Misski' (Newsweek Polska, 7.12.08).

'Pierwsze Wampy' (Newsweek Polska, 09.03.08).

'Cięża na Szczycie Władzy' (Wprost, 14.09.08)

‘Matka Narodu’ (Newsweek Polska, 06.05.07)

‘Macocho Europy’ (Wprost, 01.07.07)

‘Gospodyni Salonu Politycznego’ (Newsweek Polska, 13.04.08)

‘Pani Minister Gotuje’ (Wprost, 04.02.07)

‘Pani Minister nie Tańczy’ (Polityka, 31.03.07)

‘W zeszłej kadencji [strażnicy sejmowi] nie mieli problemu z zapamiętaniem Sandry Lewandowskiej z Samoobrony. W ich rankingu to były najładniejsze nogi’ (Polityka, 22-29.12.2007).

‘Za klasyczną jej urody uznać jednak nie można - kwadratowa szczęka, ‘końskie’ rysy twarzy i prząsny strój nie dodają Alinie uroku’ (Wprost, 07.09.2008).

‘Uwagę zwraca jej ekspresyjna twarz, a zwłaszcza pełne wyrazu oczy, trochę za mocno podkreślone makijażem. Duży plus za kobiecą fryzurę z bardzo zadbanymi, długimi włosami. Choć nie da się tego stwierdzić z całą pewnością, namiętne usta nie są chyba dziełem natury’ (Wprost, 07.09.2008).

‘Internauci zachwycali się oczami Muchy, a w wypadku Arent całokształtem, porównywalnym m.in. do ciastka z kremem’ (Wprost, 07.09.2008).

‘Poza fryzurą boska Julia może się pochwalic regularnymi rysami twarzy i młodym wyglądem. Nieco gorzej jest z figurą - premier Ukrainy to typowa gruszka, ale za to nieźle ukrywająca tę niedoskonałość strojami’ (Wprost, 07.09.2008).

‘Być może Minister Spraw Zagranicznych Anna Fotyga miałaby nieco lepsze notowania, gdyby nie pokazywała się w stroju załobnicy’ (Wprost, 17.09.2006).

‘Nosi bardziej przebrania niż ubrania, stroje niedostosowane do wieku i sprawowanej funkcji, zbyt jaskrawe kolory i desenie typu zebra lub panterka’ (Wprost, 12-19.08.2007).

‘Styl dobry do sex shopu, obciachowy w sejmie (...) Administracja nie jest miejscem na eksponowanie ekstrawaganckich ciuchów. Moda z wizerunkiem męża stanu nie idzie w parze’ (Newsweek, 19.08.2007).

‘Sukienka-zero seksu. Po klęsce powstania styczniowego patriotki nosiły się na czarno lub szaro. Surowość stroju Gretkowskiej mówi: mężczyźni zginęli, są na Sybirze lub emigracji’ (Wprost, 14.10.2007).

‘Prochowiec porucznika Columbo. W komplecie z dziwnym garniturem czyni sylwetkę absolutnie bezkształtną, co sprawia, że kobiecy symbol PiS przypomina potwornie niezgrabnego mężczyznę’ (Wprost, 14.10.2007).

‘Garnitur w stylu Szerlocka Homesa. Ale przellamany koszulą ze starej firanki. Spodnie mocno opinają i uwydatniają brzuch. Calość abstrakcyjna i bez sensu’ (Wprost, 14.10.2007).

‘Posłanka w swoich falbaniastych spódniczkach mogłaby tańczyć lambadę w Sejmie. Intantylnie fryzurki, kwieciste sukienki, podrabiana torebeczki składają się na wizerunek narzeczonej z Pcimia Dolnego’ (Newsweek.19.08.2007).

‘Fatalnie tlenione loczki w połączeniu z jeszcze gorszymi kwiecistymi bluzkami, ‘wieś tańczy i śpiewa’. Ostatnio zasłynęła fatalną błękitną kreacją w kolorowe motyle’ (Wprost, 12-19.08.2007).

‘Trudno uwierzyć, że ta tandetna blondwłosa dziewczyna w stroju Berberelli to obecna wymuskana posłanka Parlamentu Europejskiego’ (Wprost, 07.09.2008)

‘Kwieciste sukienki i żakiety (...) Jest pięknie, tylko panie zapomnialy, że takie stylizacje wypada im przyjmowac na romantycznym spacerze po promenadzie, nie zas w Sejmie RP (..)’ (Newsweek.17.08.2008).

‘Koraliki i chusty: styl Joanny Szczypinskiej nie pasuje do wizerunku polityka, ale do małomiasteczkowej narzeczonej’ (Newsweek, 19.08.2007).

‘Kolnierzyki a la Glowacki to fetysz pani minister i rzecznik rządu. Styl wodewilowy bardziej pasuje bohaterkom ‘Dynastii’ ( Newsweek, 25.11.2007).

‘Sweterek w kolorze Barbie, wymięty kostium minister Anny Fotygi czy wreszcie szmizjerka Ewy Kopacz, w ktorej minister wygląda jak pokojówka. W takim stromu pojawiła się na konferencji dotyczącej wypadku autokaru w Serbii. Gdyby konferencja odbywała się za granica, minister Kopacz mogłaby podzielić los byłej sekretarz stanu USA Madeleine Albright, którą podczas rokowań w 1999 r. albanska delegacja pomyliła ze sprzątaczką’ (Newsweek, 17.08.2008).

‘Alicja Szubert-Olszewska, ekspertka mody katolickiego pisma ‘List do Pani’ przestrzega, że mini ‘tworzy typ kobiety niewidocznej, bez twarzy i tożsamości, przez co nie różni się ona od produktu przemysłowego’ (Wprost, 06.04.2008).

‘Badaczki C. Joubert i S. Stern w ‘Psychoanalizie garderoby’ piszą, że obcisłe ubrania pomagają realizowac chęć panowania nad ciałem’, a uzyskana w ten sposób figura, podkreślona widowiskowa czerwienią, ‘wprawiają kobietęw stan narcystycznej egzaltacji’ (Wprost, 06.04.2008).

‘Może i jestem dorosła i mam pieniądze by się dobrze ubrać, ale w głębi serca jestem słodką dziewczynką, która chciałaby bawić się kucykiem My Little Pony’ - tak Hadley Freeman, ekspertka mody z brytyjskiego dziennika ‘Guardian’, pisze o zamiłowaniu do różu’ (Wprost, 17.08.2008).

‘Myli się ten kto twierdzi, że krótkie włosy przeczą seksulanym atrybutom wizerunku pani rzecznik. Już w opowiadaniu Ernesta Hemingwaya z 1926 r. ‘Słońce też wschodzi,

‘atrybutem rozbuchanej seksualnie i dominującej Brett były właśnie bardzo krótkie, lekko najeżone włosy’ (Wprost, 06.04.2008).

## **Appendix 2:**

Original and translated texts quoted in Chapter 5

Extract 1:

The Witch (the Dark Sister)

Złot Czarownic (Wprost, 29 lipcs 2007)

Odchodziła północ, Księżyc świecił mocniej niż białe zęby Justyny Pochanke z TVN 24. Wiatr delikatnie muskał policzki lecących na miotłach kobiet, które z gracją ladowały na stokach Łysej Góry. Zalesiona okolica, zwykle o tej porze wymarła, przypominała teraz krzykliwą promocję kremów na zmarszczki podczas bankietu w hotelu Sheraton (...) Wokół rozpalonego na szczycie góry ogniska zgromadziła się już spory tłumek sióstr z całego kraju. Plotkowano jak zwykle o modnych sklepach, najnowszych tuszach do rzęs i najbardziej skutecznych technik sprowadzania na złą drogę mężczyzn (...) Po zaśpiewaniu hymnu przystąpiono do wygłaszania referatów. Z wielu banalnych i nieciekawych przemówień interesujący wydał się ognisty referat Julii Pitery pt. ‘Jak manipulować Donaldem Tuskiem’ (...) Osobiście przygotowuję truciznę-powiedziała ze spokojem, poprawiając włosy i szukając czegoś w plastikowej siatce z napisem Domy Towarowe Centrum (...)

‘The Witch Rally’.

‘It was close to midnight, the moon glowed stronger than the white teeth of Justyna Pachanke from TVN 24. The wind delicately brushed the cheeks of women on broomsticks, who landed gracefully on the slope of the Bald Mountain. The forested region, usually deserted at this time of the year looked like a gaudy promotion of anti-wrinkle creams during reception in the Sheraton hotel (...) A sizable crowd of sisters from all over the country gather around the bonfire lit at the top of the mountain. They gossiped, as usual, about trendy shops, the latest eyeliners as well as the most efficient techniques of leading men astray (...) After singing the anthem the women began to present their papers. Among the many banal and uninteresting talks, the most interesting was the paper by Julia Pitera on ‘How to manipulate Donald Tusk’ (...) “I personally mix the poison,” said Pitera calmly, tidying her hair and browsing in the plastic bag with the inscription ‘the main department store (...)’.

Extract 2:

The Mother

(Newsweek, 06.05.2007)

Ségolène Royal: matka narodu, madonna lewicy, może liczyć na poparcie tych, którzy nadal chcą, żeby ktoś im matkował i uważają, że jest to podstawowe zadanie przywódcy państwa (...) Na co liczą ci, którzy chcą głosować na Ségolène Royal? Można powiedzieć, że skoro zabrakło im figury ojca, szukają chociaż matki. Znaczna ich część pewności kieruje się instynktownym przedświadczeniem, że Segó poźnie zaopiekuje się nimi. Że zadba, by nie odebrano im żadnej z licznych zdobyczy społecznych i przywilejów korporacyjnych. Że nie będzie za dużo wymagać, a za to chętnie obrzuci prezentami. Krótko mówiąc- że będzie nie tylko matką, ale i niańką narodu.

Ségolène Royal; the mother of the nation, the madonna of the left can hope for the support of those who want someone to mother them and who consider this the basic task of the country's leader (...). So what are those who vote for Ségolène Royal hoping for? One can say that since they lacked the father figure, they are now looking for a mother. A great many of them most certainly shares the conviction that Segó will familiarly look after them. That she will make sure they will not be deprived of any social benefits or corporate privileges. That she will not demand too much, but instead will gladly shower them with presents. In short - that she will not only be a mother but also a nanny of the nation.

Extract 3:

The Seductress

Sorry, nie jestem nastolatką. Rozmowa z Sandrą Lewandowską, posłanką Samoobrony, o urodzie w polityce (Polityka, 28.07.2007)

1. Młoda, ładna kobieta i od dwóch lat posłanka. Błyskotliwa kariera, nie da się ukryć. Podobno wszystko zaczęło się od tego, że zawiadła wrażenie zrobiła na pani postać Jerzego Szmajdzińskiego? Co w nim takiego było? Może chodzi o to, że jak sam przyznaje, jest podobny do Johna F. Kennedy'ego.
2. Tak się złożyło, że potem wrażenie zrobił na pani Krzysztof Janik, który, będąc pod pani wrażeniem, zatrudnił panią w gabinecie politycznym MSWiA i otoczył ojcowską opieką.
3. Ciekawe, że potem ojcowską opieką otoczył panią Andrzej Lepper i oczywiście też zrobił na pani wielkie wrażenie. Jakoś dużo tych ojców było.
4. Może to taki chytry zabieg młodej kobiety, dla której wiele mogący mężczyźni w średnim wieku są dobrym wehikułem w politycznej karierze? Dość umiejętnie zagrywała pani z nimi na ojca.
6. Już jako posłanka otrzymała pani propozycje przejścia do PiS. Dlaczego się pani nie skusiła? Nie było tam dobrego kandydata na ojca?
8. Ma pani w Sejmie kłopoty przez swoją urodę?

9. Czy w klubie toczy się gra o wpływy u przewodniczącego Leppera?

10. Rozumiem, że bycie blisko posła Maksymilniuka też zbliża do szefa?

11. Wyczytałem też, że pani nie pije i nie lubi seksu. Wychodzi na to, że nic, tylko pani pracuje, czyta Senekę, pomaga ludziom.

12. Rozmawiamy, a ja ciągle nie rozumiem, po co młodej, niebrzydkiej kobiecie ta polityka jest? Użeranie się z goniącymi za władzą facetami o mocno przerośniętym ego, którzy lubia załatwiać sprawy we własnym gronie. Chce im pani coś udowodnić?

‘Sorry, I am not a teenager’. An interview with Sandra Lewandowska, the MP from the Law and Justice, about the beauty of politics.

1. A young, pretty woman and an MP since two years. A dazzling career, it cannot be denied. Allegedly everything started when Jerzy Szmajdzinski made a huge impression on you? What was it about him? Is it because he resembles John F. Kennedy, something he admits himself.

2. It so happened that you were later impressed by Krzysztof Janik, who, impressed by you, employed you in the office of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Administration and provided you with paternal care

3. Interestingly, it was Andrzej Lepper who then provided you with paternal care and, of course, he managed to impress you as well. It looks like there were many fathers.

4. Perhaps it is a cunning trick of a young woman for whom highly powerful men in middle age are a good vehicle for making a political career? You played the 'father's game' rather skillfully.

6. Already as an MP you received the proposal of transfer to the Law and Justice. Why did you not get tempted by it? Was there no candidate for being the father?

8. Do you have problems in the Sejm by virtue of your looks?

9. Is there a competition in the parliamentary grouping for the chairman Lepper's attention?

10. I understand that being linked with the MP Maksymilniuk also brings one closer to the boss?

11. I also read that you do not drink nor enjoy sex. It seems that all you do is work, read Seneka and help other people.

12. As we talk I still struggle to understand why such a young and not bad looking woman needs politics? Tussling with men chasing after power who have an overblown ego and like to deal with things within their own circle. Are you trying to prove something to them?’

Extract 4:

The Eccentric

4A:

Liga Czerwonych Krawatow (Newsweek, 30.09.2007).

To trochę uwspółcześniona M. Poppins, bohaterka powieści Pamelii Travers. Poppins w oryginalnie egocentryczna i prozna niania posiadająca magiczne umiejętności, nosiła dziwne kapelusze, charakterystyczne pantofelki retro, rękawiczki obszyte koronkami i infantylne pelerynki.

4B:

Nowe Szaty Wiejskiej (Newsweek.pl, 27.11.2007)

Rokita uwielbia zonglować stylami i zaskakiwać wizerunkiem, stąd Poppins-ekscentryczna niania. To nie jedyna postać literacka, od której posłanka PiS czerpie inspiracje. Obszerne kufajce i grube skarpety-getry w połączeniu z bardzo niekonwencjonalną mimiką i gestykulacją to ewidentnie nawiązania do image'u Pippi Langstrup. Ekscentryczna Nelly Rokita to wypadkowa image-u Mary Poppins, Fizi Pończoszanki i Izabelli Leckiej.

‘The League of Red Ties’

‘She is a slightly modernized M. Poppins. Poppins, originally egocentric and vain nanny who possessed magical skill, wore odd hats, characteristic retro shoes, lace-edging gloves and infantile cloaks’.

‘The New Robes from the Wiejska Street’

‘Rokita adores juggling styles and surprising with her image, hence Poppins- the eccentric nanny. This is not the only literary character which inspires the MP. Baggy donkey jackets and thick socks/tights in connection with her little conventional countenance and gesticulation are obvious allusions to the image of Pippi Langstrup. The eccentric Nelly Rokita is the outcome of the image of Mary Poppins, Pippi Langstrup and Izabella Lecka’.

Extract 5:

The Housewife

Salonowa Lwica (Newsweek Polska, 13.04.2008)

Kiedy mąż podjął intelektualny trud codziennego pisania bloga o zaletach funkcjonowania poza polityką, żona postanowiła błysnąć jako gospodyni salonu politycznego. W zeszłym tygodniu Nelly Rokita-Arnold (PiS) rozesała do 80 ViP-ow

zaproszenia na czwartkowe spotkanie we własnym biurze. Pretekst? Świątowanie ubiegłorocznego zwycięstwa wyborczego piękniejszej połówki państwa Rokitów oraz poświęcenie pomieszczenia, w którym spotyka się ona z obywatelami. Nelli Rokita gości podjęła wyciskany przez asystentkę sokami. Aby wieczór zyskał głębię, posłanka zaprosiła też eksperta by opowiedział zebranym o.. raku szyjki macicy. Z przykrością donosimy, że mimo zapewnienia tak wyrafinowanych atrakcji balanga u Nelli została zbojkotowana niczym olimpiada w Pekinie przez rząd Donalda Tuska. Stawiło się na nie zaledwie 20 desperatów.

‘The Lioness of the Political Salon’

When the husband took the intellectual effort of writing a blog about the benefits of functioning outside the politics, the wife decided to shine as the housewife of the political salon. Last week Nelly Rokita-Arnold (Law and Justice) sent to 80 VIPs invitations to attend a Thursday's meeting in her office. The alleged reason being the celebration of last year's electoral victory of the more beautiful half of Mr and Mrs Rokita, as well as the consecration of the room in which she sees the citizens. Nelly Rokita served juices to her guests, which were squeezed by her assistant. In order for the evening to gain in value, the MP also invited an expert to speak to the assembled company about (...) cervical cancer. We are sorry to inform that despite providing such refined attractions, the bash at Nelly's had been boycotted like the Olympics by Donald Tusk's government. It was attended by only twenty desperate visitors.

Extract 6:

Cindarella:

Zwykła Szczypińska (Polityka, 13.10.2007)

Jeszcze dwa lata temu nawet na Pomorzu mało kto wiedział o jej istnieniu. Błyskawicznie stała się twarzą braci partii braci Kaczyńskich.

Bajka dla Kopciuszka:

Słupski establishment wyniesienie Szczypińskiej przyjmuje z konsternacją. Kopciuszek, nasza Izaura- mówi z przekąsem jej dawni znajomi ze słupskiej Solidarności. Chodzi głównie o miarę zasług w walce z komuna. O to, że PiS w odczuciu słupskich działaczy solidarnościowej opozycji bezpodstawnie kreuje Szczypińska na główną prześladowaną przez reżim (...) Anita Waka, emerytowana słupska lekarka, twierdzi, że gdy tworzyła się Solidarność, Szczypińska, wtedy Jola Joachimak, nie była specjalnie widoczna ani zaangażowana - Cicha, niczym się nie wyróżniała. Owszem, w okresie stanu wojennego nosiła bibułę, ale wszyscy wtedy nosiliśmy. Nic nie wskazywało, że kiedyś będzie politykiem. Szczypińska należy do tych, którym dopiero od niedawna dane jest kosztować słodkich owoców transformacji. Wcześniej doświadczyła tylko przykrych skutków (...) Przyszła jednak pora na gwiazdkę z nieba. W lipcu 2006 r. gdy Jarosław Kaczyński obejmował urząd premiera, to jej przekazał swoje miejsce w pierwszym rządzie. A ona po wygłoszonym expose podbiegła do niego z czerwoną różą, a potem w imieniu klubu wręczyła cały bukiet. Zrewanżował się pocałunkiem. I została 'posłanką

miłości'- To media wykreowały tę bajkę - powiada posłanka (...) Jest zaskoczeniem ostatniego roku. Janik, obserwując Szczypińską w komisji, nie pomyślała, że może ona zostać wiceszefową klubu, osobą wypowiadającą się tak autorytatywnym tonem w kwestiach dużej polityki.

‘The Ordinary Szczypinska’.

‘Only two years ago even in Pomerania hardly anyone knew she existed. With lightning speed she became the new face of Kaczynski brothers' party (...)’.

A Fairy Tale for Cinderella:

The Slupsk establishment has greeted Szczypinska's sudden fame with consternation. “Cinderella, our Isaura,” comment with a sneer old acquaintances from the Slupsk's Solidarity. The issue lies in the scale of achievements in fighting the Communist regime. In the opinion of Solidarity's opposition activists from Slupsk the Law and Justice has unjustly made Szczypinska the principal victim of the regime's oppression. The retired nurse Anita Waka claims that at the time Solidarity was being formed, Szczypinska was not particularly visible or involved - She was quiet and did not stand out in any way (..) Nothing suggested she would one day become a politician. Szczypinska is one of those people who have only recently been given the chance of tasting the sweet fruit of transformation. Prior to that she had only suffered unpleasant consequence (...). Until the first star came out. In July 2006 when Jaroslaw Kaczynski was taking on the prime-ministerial role he gave her his place in on the front bench. While she ran to him after he delivered his exposé holding a red rose and then on behalf of the parliamentary grouping gave him the whole bouquet. He paid her back with a kiss. And so she became the parliamentarian/politician/deputy of love. It is the media who created the fairy tale- says the female politician (...). She is the biggest surprise of the whole year. Janik, observing Szczypinska in the Commission, never assumed she would be the vice-president of the parliamentary grouping, someone who speaks with the authoritative voice on issues of grand politics.

Extract 7:

The Fiancé

Kampania na Ślubnym Kobiercu (Wprost, 21.11.2007)

Mimo obowiązującej ciszy wyborczej - nie będzie wolna od kampanii, choć nieco zawołowanej. Na ślubnym kobiercu maja tego dnia stanąć (...) - jak głosi rozpowszechniana w mediach plotka - Jarosław Kaczyński i Jolanta Szczypińska. Posłanka PiS na przemian zaprzecza i kokietuje gazety, że nie ma ślubnej sukienki i musi o tym pomyśleć. Zawieranie małżeństw przed wyborami to pomysł polityków na ocieplenie wizerunku.

‘A campaign to Tie the Knot’

Despite the current pre-election silence - it will not be free of campaign, though slightly veiled. As the media rumour has it, Jaroslaw Kaczynski and Jolanta Szczypinska are to tie the knot. The female MP denies it and flits with the newspapers by turns, saying she does not have a dress and that she must think about it. Tying the knot before elections is the politicians' idea for warming up the image.

Extract 8:

The Teflon Princess

(Newsweek Polska 07.01.2007)

Ségolène Royal jest krucha, delikatna i słodka, ale jednocześnie bardzo silna. Budzi popłoch w obozie wroga. Istna Joanna d'Arc. Typ czarujący - jednych urzeknie jej świetnie skrojona biała sukienka, w której wygląda niczym anioł, innych - zdjęcia z czwórką dzieci, innych - retoryka rodem z telenoweli ('Demokracja jest jak miłość. Im więcej z niej czerpiesz, tym bujniej rozkwita'). Raczej nie urzeknie ekspertów i politologów. - Nie wiem wszystkiego, ale wiem, gdzie leży problem - mówi, trzepocząc intensywnie rzęsami. Teflonowy polityk. Każdą wpadkę potrafi przemienić w sukces. Niedoświadczona w polityce? Bardzo dobrze, wniesie trochę świeżej krwi na salony. Nie ma własnych pogądów? Tym lepiej, jaka miła odmiana w stosunku do aroganckich facetów ze starej gwardii.

Ségolène Royal is frail, delicate and sweet but at the same time very strong. She creates panic in the enemy camp. A veritable Joan of Arc. The charming type, who will bewitch some with her well-cut dress that makes her look like an angel. Others will be enchanted with the pictures of four children or the rhetoric of soap opera ('Democracy is like love. The more you draw on it, the more it grows'). She is unlikely to bewitch the experts and political scientists. I do not know everything, but understand where the problem is, says Royal intensely fluttering her lashes. The teflon politician. She can turn any slip-up into a success. Lacking political experience? Very well, she will bring freshness into political salon. Lacking own views? Even better, it is such a nice change compared to arrogant blokes from the old guard.

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